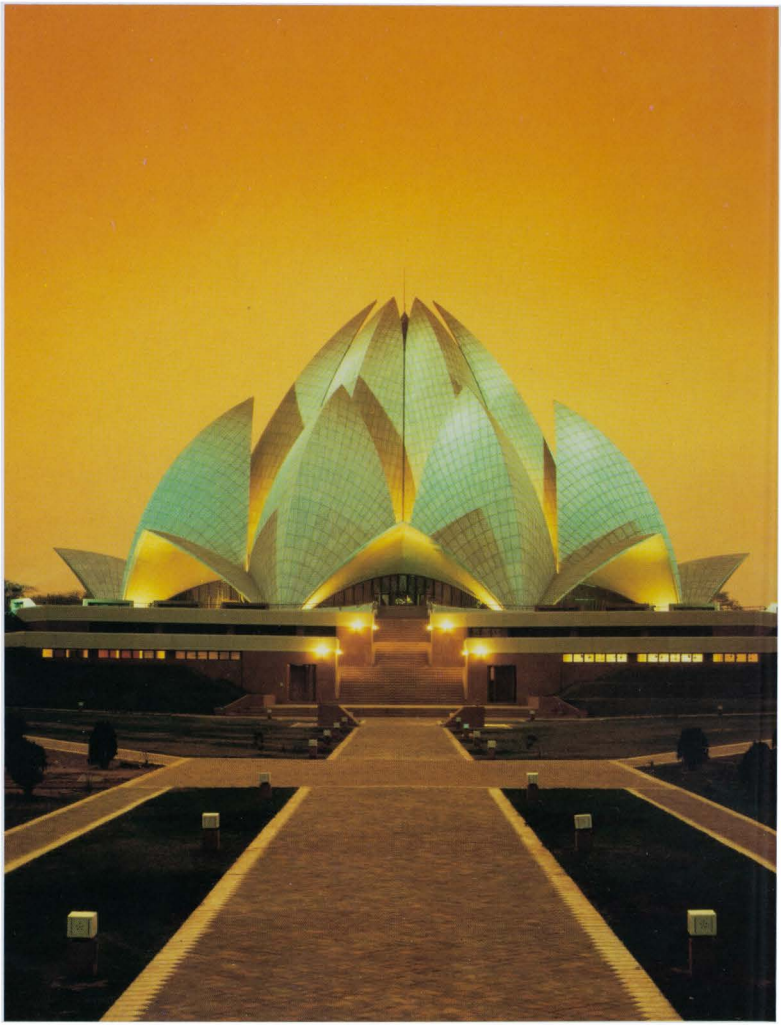
THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD
1986–1992

THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD
VOLUME XX

142–148 OF THE BAHÁ'Í ERA
21 APRIL 1986–20 APRIL 1992 A.D.



The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in New Delhi, India.



THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD

AN INTERNATIONAL RECORD

Prepared under the supervision
of the Universal House of Justice

VOLUME XX

142–148 OF THE BAHÁ'Í ERA
21 APRIL 1986–20 APRIL 1992 A.D.

BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE
HAIFA
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NOTE: The spelling of the Oriental words and proper names used in this volume of *The Bahá'í World* is according to the system of transliteration established at one of the International Oriental Congresses.

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PREFACE

THE successive volumes of *The Bahá'í World* have come to be anticipated by Bahá'ís as the record of their own collective endeavours on behalf of their Faith, of the establishment and development of its administrative order throughout the world and as the source of data, both historical and statistical, relating to the rise of the Faith during its formative age.

For librarians and students *The Bahá'í World* represents a source of authentic information about the aims, tenets, history, activities, organization and growth of a world religion that is attracting ever-increasing public interest. The editors therefore seek to preserve an even balance between the presentation of material of supreme interest to believers and of a fair and objective picture to enquirers. In this they are guided by the policy of Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, who directed the compilation of the successive volumes from I to XII covering the years 1925 to 1954. The first volume, known as *Bahá'í Year Book*, was in fact a one-year survey; the next seven volumes were biennial, terminating in 1940; volume IX recorded the four years from 1940 to 1944; volume X was again biennial and volumes XI and XII presented the periods 1946 to 1950 and 1950 to 1954 respectively.

All these volumes were published in the United States under the supervision of the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith and the aegis of the National Spiritual Assembly. Volume XIII, which recorded the passing of the Guardian and the course and completion of his Ten Year Crusade, covered the entire period from 1954 to 1963 and was produced under the guidance of the Universal House of Justice, which thenceforth assumed responsibility for publication.

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INTRODUCTION

AIMS AND PURPOSES OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

DAVID HOFMAN

RELIGION has two objectives, the regeneration of men and the advancement of mankind. *All men have been created to carry forward an ever advancing civilization* proclaims Bahá'u'lláh, and *The purpose of the one true God, exalted be His glory, in revealing Himself unto men is to lay bare those gems that lie hidden within the mine of their true and inmost selves.*

These aims of religion, universal and eternal, nevertheless have been conditioned to the capacities of each age or dispensation and the great religions of the past have developed their social orders within generally definable times and areas. Judaism, for instance, attained its peak under Solomon and was confined, before the dispersion, to the Near East; Zoroastrianism remained Persian until the Arab conquest and the settlement of a remnant in Western India; Christianity became the religion of European civilization; the building of the nation state undertaken by Islám remained a Muslim experiment until feudal Europe learned the lesson and its city states gave way to and adopted the more advanced order. It has remained for the Bahá'í religion to declare and promote the cause of world order—the *sine quo non* of its existence—and to disclose the concomitant unities of religion, of mankind and of historical purpose. 'Unity of family, of tribe, of city-state, and nation have been successively attempted and fully established. World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving. Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and establish once and for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life.'[1]

Religion sees the course of history as an organic process, moving towards the full realization of all the potentialities implanted in man. The vicissitudes, the great advances, the hiatuses it regards as the natural unfoldment of that process just as the succession of bud, leaf, flower and fruit is the natural unfoldment in the life of a tree; or infancy, childhood, youth and maturity in that of a man. Indeed, Bahá'í scripture explains, the process is the same. The sun is the effective agent in the organic life of the earth; religion in that of humanity. *The Sun of Truth is the Word of God upon which depends the education of those who are endowed with the power of understanding and of utterance.*[2] The creative Word, revealed in each stage of human progress by a Manifestation of God, and conditioned to the requirements of the time, is the effective agent in the long, single process of humanity's development from

1 Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, *The Unfoldment of World Civilization.*

2 Bahá'u'lláh, *Daryáy-i-Dánish.*

infancy to World Order. This truth is enshrined in all revealed religion although it needs the illumination of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation to enable men to perceive it.

'The first picture presented in the Bible is that of human unity in its simplest form; that of a single family. The last picture is that of a unity manifold and universal in which all kindreds and tongues and peoples and nations are gathered into one and unified in the enjoyment of a common worship, a common happiness, a common glory.

'The great problem which, according to the Bible, confronts the human race in its progress is that of advancing from the barest, baldest unity through a long experience of multiplying diversities till ultimately a balance between the two principles is struck, poise is gained and the two forces of variety and unity are blended in a multiple, highly developed world fellowship, the perfection of whose union was hardly suggested in the primitive simplicity of early man.'[1]

This spiritual view of evolution is the constant theme of religion. Each revelation refers to the past, looks forward to the future and concentrates upon the immediate need for spiritual regeneration and enlightenment. The Prophet evokes in human hearts a sacrificial love which transcends self-interest and causes the early believers to dedicate themselves entirely to the practice and diffusion of the new message. As it spreads it works like leaven in society, reforming its morals, uplifting its vision and promoting a greater diffusion of love in social action.

'World history at its core and in its essence is the story of the spiritual evolution of mankind. From this all other activities of man proceed and round it all other activities revolve.'[2]

Unlike the revelations of the past, the Bahá'í revelation releases not only the creative Word necessary to the renewal of spiritual vitality in the human spirit, but embodies that divine energy in an administrative order capable of bringing within its shade all the diversified ethnic groups and myriad types of the human race, who may find within its wide embrace a full, happy and purposeful life. Bahá'í activity therefore is directed not only, as in the past, to the spreading of the Word, but to the establishment of the fabric of that Order which, enshrined within the creative Word itself, becomes the chief instrument for the further diffusion and social application of the Divine Message. This World Order, which the Bahá'í Faith exists to establish, is none other than that long-promised Kingdom in which peace, justice and brotherhood shall prevail universally and 'the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea'.[3] The establishment of this World Order is dependent upon the regeneration of mankind which must turn again to God and recognize His purpose. The two aims of religion are, therefore, interacting and interdependent.

Such a world-shaking transformation cannot be brought about by any movement of reform, however disinterested, nor by any unaided human effort. Modern man has turned away from God, and bereft of his traditional sanctions, has inevitably wrecked his old order which, in truth, is lamentably inadequate to modern conditions and is not susceptible of repair. *Soon*, is Bahá'u'lláh's prophetic view of our day, *will the present-day order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead.* Likewise, *The signs of impending convulsions and chaos can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing order appears to be lamentably defective.*

The current aim of religion, embodied in the aims and purposes of the Bahá'í Faith, is the promotion of the next stage in the organic process of human evolution—the coming of age of the human race. The achievement of this maturity will be attested by the unification of mankind and the federation of the

1 George Townshend, *The Heart of the Gospel*, 1939.
2 ibid.
3 Habakkuk 2:14.

world in a single, all-embracing world society of human brotherhood. But great objectives are reached by dedicated pursuit of the preliminary and intermediate stages of the task, without ever losing sight of the ultimate goal, and this has been and is now the occupation of the Bahá'í world community—the completion within specified times of specified goals. These teaching plans to which the Bahá'ís eagerly devote their lives do far more than simply increase the size and consolidation of that world community. They are devised and launched by the head of the Faith—the Guardian and now the Universal House of Justice—and are therefore conceived from a global view, directed to the immediate needs of the great objective, conservative of the community's resources, world-wide in scale permitting the organic development of each part according to its stage of growth but with due regard for the needs of the whole, fostering intensively the unity, the international co-operation, the diversification of the ethnic, religious and social backgrounds of its increasing membership and developing new resources for the next step forward.

It should be noted that none of these plans is isolated in aim or conception but all are directed towards the implementation of three great charters, enshrined in Bahá'í sacred Writings, which authorize and guide the expansion of the Faith and the development of its institutions. In past Dispensations the command to 'spread the Gospel' has been general and unspecified. It was the inspired guidance of the beloved Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith which disclosed to a spiritually delighted and grateful community yet another of the unique features of this Dispensation in the specific guidance given in these three charters for the implementation of this eternal command.

Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of Carmel* is the charter for the development of the Bahá'í World Centre in the twin cities of 'Akká and Haifa, the site of its most sacred Shrines—the tombs of the twin Prophets and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Centre of the Covenant—its monuments and gardens, and of its 'world-shaking, world-embracing, world-directing administrative institutions'.[1]

The *Will and Testament* of 'Abdu'l-Bahá is the charter for the development of the administrative order of the Faith. In this majestic document, the child of 'that mystic intercourse between Him Who communicated the generating influence of His divine Purpose and the One Who was its vehicle and chosen recipient,'[2] are delineated the structure of the administrative order, its *modus operandi*, its main institutions, the chain of authority, the source of guidance and the position of every believer *vis-à-vis* the Covenant. It has been well called the 'Charter of the New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh'.

The *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, a series of fourteen letters written by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the believers of the United States and Canada, some addressed to the entire company of believers in the North American continent and others to those in named geographical areas of the continent, constitute the charter for teaching the Faith throughout the world. 'Abdu'l-Bahá names the places, the people to whom teachers must go, the conditions under which they must travel and settle and He reveals several prayers for those who undertake this all-important task.

All the international plans of the Faith launched so far have set specific goals aimed at implementing these three charters and it is incontrovertibly apparent that never in any preceding Dispensation has the command to spread the Word of God been given, in the sacred text, such explicit guidance and detailed objectives.

As the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh increases in size and influence other aims and objectives become apparent and possible of pursuit. The relationship with agencies, institutions and authorities of the non-Bahá'í world

1 Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to America*.
2 Shoghi Effendi, *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh*.

becomes an important consideration once the community emerges from obscurity, and has led to public relations programmes and the development of closer association with the United Nations. The Bahá'í International Community is accredited as a non-governmental agency with consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and in various ways to other agencies of the United Nations. The fostering of this relationship has been the goal of all international plans so far, and is visualized as a continuing process. There are other objectives related to the special characteristics of Bahá'í life which become more and more important as the Faith grows and engages greater and greater public attention. They affect Bahá'í individuals, communities and institutions alike. These objectives fall into two groups—those concerned specifically with standards of conduct and those which relate to special Bahá'í practices.

The standards of conduct enjoined by the Prophet are invariably different from and sometimes diametrically opposed to the generally accepted ones of His day. High standards of conduct are, throughout Bahá'í scripture, constantly upheld and urged upon the believers, but the Guardian of the Faith in an essay written in 1938 addressed to the believers in the United States and Canada laid great stress upon the 'spiritual prerequisites... which constitute the bedrock on which... all teaching plans... must ultimately rest...'[1] He writes of '... a high sense of moral rectitude in their social and administrative activities, absolute chastity in their individual lives, and complete freedom from prejudice in their dealings with peoples of a different race, class, creed or colour'.[2] In his expansion of this theme he declared that 'This rectitude of conduct, with its implications of justice, equity, truthfulness, honesty, fairmindedness, reliability, and trustworthiness, must distinguish every phase of the life of the Bahá'í community.'[3] 'A chaste and holy life must be made the controlling principle in the behaviour and conduct of all Bahá'ís, both in their social relationships with the members of their own community, and in their contacts with the world at large.'[4] 'It requires total abstinence from all alcoholic drinks, from opium, and from similar habit-forming drugs. It condemns the prostitution of art and of literature, the practices of nudism and of companionate marriage, infidelity in marital relationships, and all manner of promiscuity, of easy familiarity, and of sexual vices.'[5] 'As to racial prejudice, the corrosion of which, for well nigh a century, has bitten into the fibre, and attacked the whole social structure of American society, it should be regarded as constituting the most vital and challenging issue confronting the Bahá'í community [of that country] at the present stage of its evolution.'[6]

The regeneration of men—the first objective of religion mentioned in this essay—is therefore seen as the prime objective of the Bahá'í Faith. Membership in the Faith is drawn from that society which permits and indulges itself in all those corrupt, immoral and prejudiced activities which Bahá'ís are required to renounce, and since the Faith is steadily but persistently growing in numbers there is reason to hope that slowly but surely a regeneration will take place.

Further, these Bahá'í standards of conduct are not for individuals alone. They must be the hallmark of Bahá'í institutions and communities. 'Such a rectitude of conduct,' wrote the Guardian, 'must manifest itself, with ever-increasing potency, in every verdict which the elected representatives of the Bahá'í community, in whatever capacity they may find themselves, may be called upon to pronounce. It must be constantly reflected in the business dealings of all its

1 Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*.
2 ibid.
3 Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*.
4 ibid.
5 ibid.
6 ibid.

members, in their domestic lives, in all manner of employment, and in any service they may, in the future, render their government or people.'[1] 'It must be made the hallmark of that numerically small, yet intensely dynamic and highly responsible body of the elected national representatives of every Bahá'í community, which constitutes the sustaining pillar, and the sole instrument for the election in every community, of that Universal House whose very name and title, as ordained by Bahá'u'lláh, symbolizes the rectitude of conduct which is its highest mission to safeguard and enforce.'[2]

The attitudes deriving from such standards, and from all the varied teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, must pervade all Bahá'í communities and imbue them with distinctive characteristics which can be recognized, amid the welter of opposing or mutually uninterested groups and factions into which modern society is disintegrating, as easily as the features of an individual in a crowd.

Those special Bahá'í practices which will inevitably characterize the Bahá'í community, are the regular observances of its Holy Days and Festivals, the abstention from work on nine such days during the year, the observances by all members of the community of the annual fast, of the laws governing marriage and divorce, of daily prayer, of the invariable practice of consultation in all affairs of life, and particularly by the regular observance of the Nineteen Day Feast. The habitual practice of such laws and ordinances is an objective pursued by all Bahá'ís and Bahá'í families.

It is seen that the aims and purposes of the Bahá'í Faith may be stated as the raising up of a world-wide community recruited from every race, nation, colour, religious and social background known on the planet, inspired, united and regenerated by the spiritual teachings and love of Bahá'u'lláh, dedicated to the building of that New World Order which 'may well be regarded as the brightest emanation'[3] of His mind and is none other than the long hoped for, Christ-promised Kingdom of God on earth. To prepare men for the gifts of that Kingdom—peace, brotherhood, spirituality—and to raise its very fabric in the world, are the immediate and long-time objectives of the Bahá'í Faith.

The energies of the Bahá'ís therefore, in pursuance of these aims, flow in three major channels: individual spiritual development, conveying the message of Bahá'u'lláh to others, and developing the pattern of world society embodied in the Bahá'í administrative order. All these activities derive from the sacred text and it is the unique feature of the Bahá'í revelation that whereas the first two are common to all revealed religions it is only Bahá'u'lláh Who creates the institutions and reveals the laws, delineates the social order and establishes the principles of the civilization to which His revelation will give rise. Neither Moses nor Christ, Muḥammad, Buddha, Zoroaster or Krishna did this, although They all foretold that it would be done by Him Who would take the government upon His shoulders and establish the Kingdom in peace and righteousness.

None of the traditional motives operates to create the Bahá'í community, neither former associations, political or economic identity of interest, racial or patriotic grouping. Only the recognition and love of Bahá'u'lláh brings into close relatedness and co-operative action people from every human background, of all types of character and personality, divergent and diversified interest. Through their brotherhood in Bahá'u'lláh the old crystallized forms of human divisiveness to which they formerly belonged, whether of class, race, religion, occupation, temperament or degree of civilization lose their rigidity and eventually disintegrate. The growing Bahá'í community on the other hand is essentially based on

1 Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*.
2 ibid.
3 Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 213.

love, is a brotherhood, a family, each member delighting in the diversity of its membership, welcoming the former pariah or outcast as a new flower in the garden, each as proud of his humanity as was ever the former chauvinist of his country.

Within such a community the sun of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation can evoke new morals, new attitudes, new conventions, new hopes and visions, all enshrined within the text of the revelation itself and which provide the spiritual atmosphere and distinctive culture of the new day. Such a community, as it grows, becomes more and more a true social order, providing a soil to human life, a climate for its best development, an arena for the practice of its highest aspirations, and a beacon light to attract and guide the disillusioned, spiritually impoverished, frenetic and frustrated peoples of the earth.

The energies of this new culture, guided and conserved to the service of human welfare by the agencies of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order, will result in the proliferation of new arts and sciences, new social and economic relationships, new educational methods and a general accession of well-being and felicity. The vision of the Bahá'í Faith, though glorious, is a practical one, and the number of its dedicated promoters grows with increasing speed. It is summarized in the following words by the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, in his essay *The Unfoldment of World Civilization*:

'The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes are closely and permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them are definitely and completely safeguarded. This commonwealth must, as far as we can visualize it, consist of a world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all the component nations, and will enact such laws as shall be required to regulate the life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples. A world executive, backed by an international Force, will carry out the decisions arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth. A world tribunal will adjudicate and deliver its compulsory and final verdict in all and any disputes that may arise between the various elements constituting this universal system. A mechanism of world inter-communication will be devised, embracing the whole planet, freed from national hindrances and restrictions, and functioning with marvellous swiftness and perfect regularity. A world metropolis will act as the nerve centre of a world civilization, the focus towards which the unifying forces of life will converge and from which its energizing influence will radiate. A world language will either be invented or chosen from among the existing languages and will be taught in the schools of all the federated nations as an auxiliary to their mother tongue. A world script, a world literature, a uniform and universal system of currency, of weights and measures, will simplify and facilitate intercourse and understanding among the nations and races of mankind. In such a world society, science and religion, the two most potent forces in human life, will be reconciled, will co-operate, and will harmoniously develop. The press will, under such a system, while giving full scope to the expression of the diversified views and convictions of mankind, cease to be mischievously manipulated by vested interests, whether private or public, and will be liberated from the influence of contending governments and peoples. The economic resources of the world will be organized, its sources of raw materials will be tapped and fully utilized, its markets coordinated and developed, and the distribution of its products will be equitably regulated.

'National rivalries, hatred, and intrigues will cease, and racial animosity and prejudice will be replaced by racial amity, understanding and co-operation. The causes

of religious strife will be permanently removed, economic barriers and restrictions will be completely abolished, and the inordinate distinction between classes will be obliterated. Destitution on the one hand, and gross accumulation of ownership on the other, will disappear. The enormous energy dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human inventions and technical development, to the increase of the productivity of mankind, to the extermination of disease, to the extension of scientific research, to the raising of the standard of physical health, to the sharpening and refinement of the human brain, to the exploitation of the unused and unsuspected resources of the planet, to the prolongation any other agency that can stimulate the intellectual, the moral, and spiritual life of the human race.

'A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation—such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.'

PART ONE

THE BAHÁ'Í REVELATION



An ornamental eagle in front of an entrance to the courtyard of the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí.

I
EXCERPTS FROM THE BAHÁ'Í SACRED WRITINGS

1. BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

I
EXTRACTS FROM THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS

37 Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation direct from God, ere the expiration of a full thousand years, such a man is assuredly a lying impostor. We pray God that He may graciously assist him to retract and repudiate such claim. Should he repent, God will, no doubt, forgive him. If, however, he persisteth in his error, God will, assuredly, send down one who will deal mercilessly with him. Terrible, indeed, is God in punishing! Whosoever interpreteth this verse otherwise than its obvious meaning is deprived of the Spirit of God and of His mercy which encompasseth all created things. Fear God, and follow not your idle fancies. Nay, rather, follow the bidding of your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Wise. Erelong shall clamorous voices be raised in most lands. Shun them, O My people, and follow not the iniquitous and evil-hearted. This is that of which We gave you forewarning when We were dwelling in 'Iráq, then later while in the Land of Mystery, and now from this Resplendent Spot.

38 Be not dismayed, O peoples of the world, when the day-star of My beauty is set, and the heaven of My tabernacle is concealed from your eyes. Arise to further My Cause, and to exalt My Word amongst men. We are with you at all times, and shall strengthen you through the power of truth. We are truly almighty. Whoso hath recognized Me will arise and serve Me with such determination that the powers of earth and heaven shall be unable to defeat his purpose.

53 Should differences arise amongst you over any matter, refer it to God while the Sun still shineth above the horizon of this Heaven and, when it hath set, refer ye to whatsoever hath been sent down by Him. This, verily, is sufficient unto the peoples of the world. Say: Let not your hearts be perturbed, O people, when the glory of My Presence is withdrawn, and the ocean of My utterance is stilled. In My presence amongst you there is a wisdom, and in My absence there is yet another, inscrutable to all but God, the Incomparable, the All-Knowing. Verily, We behold you from Our realm of glory, and shall aid whosoever will arise for the triumph of Our Cause with the hosts of the Concourse on high and a company of Our favoured angels.

58 Beware lest the desires of the flesh and of a corrupt inclination provoke divisions among you. Be ye as the fingers of one hand, the members of one body. Thus counselleth you the Pen of Revelation, if ye be of them that believe.

105 Whoso interpreteth what hath been sent down from the heaven of Revelation, and altereth its evident meaning, he, verily, is of them that have perverted the Sublime Word of God, and is of the lost ones in the Lucid Book.

121 When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces toward Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.

132 O peoples of the world! Give ear unto the call of Him Who is the Lord of Names, Who proclaimeth unto you from His habitation in the Most Great Prison: "Verily, no God is there but Me, the Powerful, the Mighty, the All-Subduing, the Most Exalted, the Omniscient, the All-Wise." In truth, there is no God but Him, the Omnipotent Ruler of the worlds. Were it His Will, He would, through but a single word proceeding from His presence, lay hold on all mankind. Beware lest ye hesitate in your acceptance of this Cause—a Cause before which the Concourse on high and the dwellers of the Cities of Names have bowed down. Fear God, and be not of those who are shut out as by a veil. Burn ye away the veils with the fire of My love, and dispel ye the mists of vain imaginings by the power of this Name through which We have subdued the entire creation.

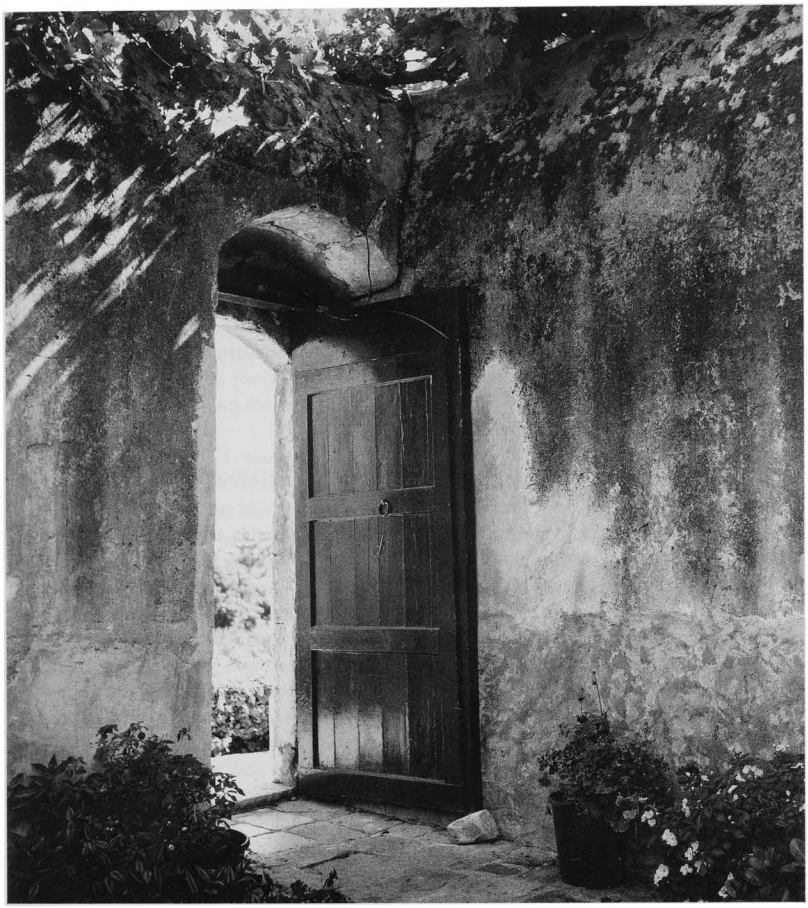
161 Blessed is the man that hath acknowledged his belief in God and in His signs, and recognized that "He shall not be asked of His doings". Such a recognition hath been made by God the ornament of every belief and its very foundation. Upon it must depend the acceptance of every goodly deed. Fasten your eyes upon it, that haply the whisperings of the rebellious may not cause you to slip.

162 Were He to decree as lawful the thing which from time immemorial had been forbidden, and forbid that which had, at all times, been regarded as lawful, to none is given the right to question His authority. Whoso will hesitate, though it be for less than a moment, should be regarded as a transgressor.

163 Whoso hath not recognized this sublime and fundamental verity, and hath failed to attain this most exalted station, the winds of doubt will agitate him, and the sayings of the infidels will distract his soul. He that hath acknowledged this principle will be endowed with the most perfect constancy. All honour to this all-glorious station, the remembrance of which adorneth every exalted Tablet. Such is the teaching which God bestoweth on you, a teaching that will deliver you from all manner of doubt and perplexity, and enable you to attain unto salvation in both this world and the next. He, verily, is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Bountiful. He it is Who hath sent forth the Messengers, and sent down the Books to proclaim "There is none other God but Me, the Almighty, the All-Wise".

174 O people of the world! When the Mystic Dove will have winged its flight from its Sanctuary of Praise and sought its far-off goal, its hidden habitation, refer ye whatsoever ye understand not in the Book to Him Who hath branched from this mighty Stock.

175 O Pen of the Most High! Move Thou upon the Tablet at the bidding of Thy Lord, the Creator of the Heavens, and tell of the time when He Who is the Dayspring of Divine Unity purposed to direct His steps towards the School of Transcendent Oneness; haply the pure in heart may gain thereby a glimpse, be it as small as a needle's eye, of the mysteries of Thy Lord, the Almighty, the Omniscient, that lie concealed behind the veils. Say: We, indeed, set foot within the School of inner meaning and explanation when all created things were unaware. We saw the words sent down by



The doorway into the courtyard of the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh at Mazra'ih.

Him Who is the All-Merciful, and We accepted the verses of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, which He[1] presented unto Us, and hearkened unto that which He had solemnly affirmed in the Tablet. This We assuredly did behold. And We assented to His wish through Our behest, for truly We are potent to command.

[1] The Báb.

176 O people of the Bayán! We, verily, set foot within the School of God when ye lay slumbering; and We perused the Tablet while ye were fast asleep. By the one true God! We read the Tablet ere it was revealed, while ye were unaware, and We had perfect knowledge of the Book when ye were yet unborn. These words are to your measure, not to God's. To this testifieth that which is enshrined within His knowledge, if ye be of

them that comprehend; and to this the tongue of the Almighty doth bear witness, if ye be of those who understand. I swear by God, were We to lift the veil, ye would be dumbfounded.

177 Take heed that ye dispute not idly concerning the Almighty and His Cause, for lo! He hath appeared amongst you invested with a Revelation so great as to encompass all things, whether of the past or of the future. Were We to address Our theme by speaking in the language of the inmates of the Kingdom, We would say: "In truth, God created that School ere He created heaven and earth, and We entered it before the letters B and E were joined and knit together." Such is the language of Our servants in Our Kingdom; consider what the tongue of the dwellers of Our exalted Dominion would utter, for We have taught them Our knowledge and have revealed to them whatever had lain hidden in God's wisdom. Imagine then what the Tongue of Might and Grandeur would utter in His All-Glorious Abode!

II

EXCERPT FROM THE LAWḤ-I-RA'ÍS, TRANSLATED FROM THE PERSIAN

WHEN I was still a child and had not yet attained the age of maturity, My father decided to make arrangements in Ṭihrán for the marriage of a grown-up brother of Mine; and as is customary in that city, the wedding festivities lasted for seven days and nights. On the last day it was announced that a special entertainment named after Sháh Sulṭán Salím would be presented on that same day. A large number of princes, dignitaries, and prominent people of the capital were present for the occasion, and I ascended to one of the upper rooms of the building where I sat down to observe the scene. Presently a tent was pitched in the courtyard, and before long some small figures in human form, each of which seemed no more than about a handspan in height, came out of the tent, and raised the call "The Sulṭán is coming! Set out the chairs!" Other figures then emerged, some of whom were seen to be engaged in sweeping, others in sprinkling water, and thereafter another character, who was pronounced to be the chief herald, raised up his voice and bade the people assemble for an audience with the king. Next, three groups of figures made their appearance and took their places, the first group attired in hats and cummerbunds after the Persian fashion, the second wielding battle-axes, and the third comprising a number of sergeants-at-arms and executioners bearing clubs and canes. Finally a splendid figure, arrayed in regal majesty, wearing a kingly diadem upon his head, and bearing himself with the utmost haughtiness and grandeur—now advancing, now pausing in his progress—came strutting onto the scene and, with unparalleled solemnity, gravity, and sedateness, proceeded to seat himself upon a throne, whereupon a volley of shots was fired, a fanfare of trumpets was sounded, and the king and tent were enveloped in a pall of smoke.

When the smoke had cleared, the king was seen to be ensconced upon his throne and surrounded by a suite of ministers, princes, and dignitaries of state who, having taken their places, were standing at attention in his presence. At this moment a captured thief was brought before the king, who gave the order that the offender should be beheaded. Without a moment's delay the chief executioner proceeded to execute upon him the royal sentence, whereupon a red-coloured liquid resembling blood came trickling from his headless torso. This done, the king fell

into conversation with those in attendance, and while he was thus engaged, intelligence arrived that rebellion had broken out on such and such a frontier. Thereupon the king reviewed his troops and despatched several regiments supported by units of artillery to quell the uprising. A few minutes later cannons were heard booming from behind the tent, and it was announced that the king's troops were at that moment engaged in battle with the insurgents.

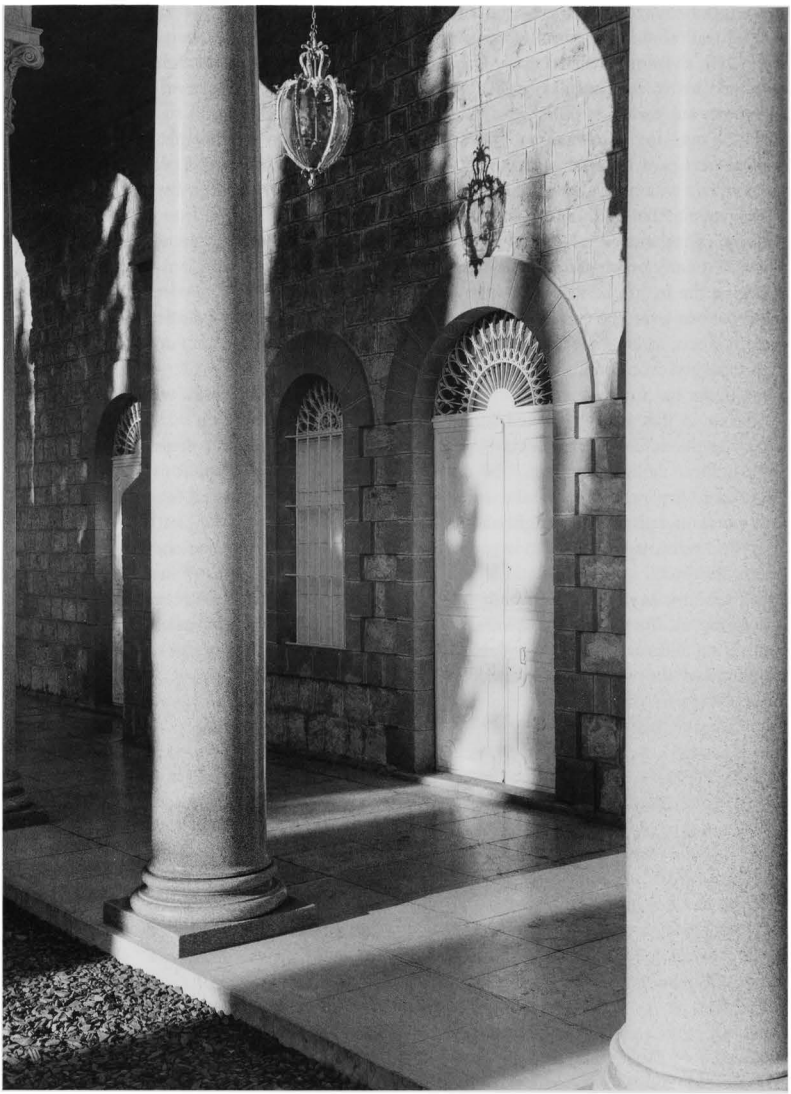
I was greatly perplexed and bewildered to conceive the nature of this spectacle. When the show was over, the curtain of the tent was drawn. Then, after some twenty minutes, a man emerged from behind the tent carrying a box under his arm.

"What is this box?" I asked him, "and what was the nature of this display?"

"All these lavish trappings," he replied, "the king, the princes, and the ministers, their pomp and glory, their might and power, everything you saw, are all now contained within this box."

I swear by My Lord Who hath brought into being all things through a single word from Him that, ever since that day, all the trappings of the world have seemed in the eyes of this Youth akin to that same spectacle. They have never been, nor will ever be, possessed of any weight, though it be to the extent of a grain of mustard seed. How greatly I used to marvel that men would pride themselves upon such vanities, whilst those possessed of insight, ere they witness any evidence of human glory, perceive with certainty the inevitability of its waning. "Never have I looked upon any thing save that I have seen extinction before it; and God, verily, is a sufficient witness."

It behoveth everyone to traverse this brief span of life with sincerity and fairness. Should one fail to attain unto the recognition of Him Who is the Eternal Truth, let him at least comport himself with reason and justice. Erelong these outward trappings, these heaped-up treasures, these earthly vanities, these amassed battalions, this gorgeous finery, these proud and overweening souls—all shall pass into the confines of the grave, as though into that box. In the eyes of those possessed of insight, all this conflict, dissension and vainglory hath been, and will ever be, like unto the sport of children. Take thou good heed, and be not of those who see and yet deny.



The western doorway into the Shrine of the Báb.

2. THE BÁB

I
EXCERPTS FROM THE QAYYÚMU'L-ASMÁ'
(SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF THE BÁB)

O PEOPLES of the world! Whatsoever ye have offered up in the way of the One True God, ye shall indeed find preserved by God, the Preserver, intact at God's Holy Gate. O peoples of the earth! Bear ye allegiance unto this resplendent light wherewith God hath graciously invested Me through the power of infallible Truth, and walk not in the footsteps of the Evil One.[1] inasmuch as he prompteth you to disbelieve in God, your Lord, and verily God will not forgive disbelief in Himself, though He will forgive other sins to whomsoever He pleaseth.[2] Indeed His knowledge embraceth all things... *(Chapter XVII.)*

O PEOPLES of the East and the West! Be ye fearful of God concerning the Cause of the true Joseph and barter Him not for a paltry price[3] established by yourselves, or for a trifle of your earthly possessions, that ye may, in very truth, be praised by Him as those who are reckoned among the pious who stand nigh unto this Gate. *(Chapter XXI.)*

O QURRATU'L-'AYN![4] We have, verily, dilated Thine heart in this Revelation, which stands truly unique from all created things, and have exalted Thy name through the manifestation of the Báb, so that men may become aware of Our transcendent power, and recognize that God is immeasurably sanctified above the praise of all men. He is verily independent of the whole of creation. *(Chapter XXIII.)*

ISSUE forth from your cities, O peoples of the West and aid God ere the Day when the Lord of mercy shall come down unto you in the shadow of the clouds with the angels circling around Him,[5] exalting His praise and seeking forgiveness for such as have truly believed in Our signs. Verily His decree hath been issued, and the command of God, as given in the Mother Book, hath indeed been revealed...

Become as true brethren in the one and indivisible religion of God, free from distinction, for verily God desireth that your hearts should become mirrors unto your brethren in the Faith, so that ye find yourselves reflected in them, and they in you. This is the true Path of God, the Almighty, and He is indeed watchful over your actions. *(Chapter XLVI.)*

BE Thou patient, O Qurratu'l-'Ayn, for God hath indeed pledged to establish Thy sovereignty throughout all countries and over the people that dwell therein. He is God and verily He is powerful over all things. *(Chapter LIII.)*

THIS divinely-inspired Book hath firmly established His Proof for all those who are in the East and in the West, hence beware lest ye utter aught but the truth regarding God, for I swear by your Lord that this supreme Proof of Mine beareth witness unto all things...

[1] cf. Qur'án 2:204.
[2] cf. ibid. 4:51.
[3] cf. ibid. 12:20.
[4] In these passages of the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá' the name Qurratu'l-'Ayn (Solace of the Eyes) refers to the Báb Himself.
[5] cf. Qur'án 2:206.

O servants of God! Be ye patient, for, God grant, He Who is the sovereign Truth will suddenly appear amongst you, invested with the power of the mighty Word, and ye shall then be confounded by the Truth itself, and ye shall have no power to ward it off,[1] and verily I am a witness over all mankind. *(Chapter LIX.)*

THE infidels of a truth, seek to separate God from His Remembrance,[2] but God hath determined to perfect His Light[3] through His Remembrance, and indeed He is potent over all things... *(Chapter LXI.)*

O PEOPLES of the earth! Verily the resplendent Light of God hath appeared in your midst, invested with this unerring Book, that ye may be guided aright to the ways of peace and, by the leave of God, step out of the darkness into the light and onto this far-extended Path of Truth[4]...

God hath, out of sheer nothingness and through the potency of His command, created the heavens and the earth and whatever lieth between them. He is single and peerless in His eternal unity with none to join partner with His holy Essence, nor is there any soul, except His Own Self, who can befittingly comprehend Him...

O peoples of the earth! Verily His Remembrance is come to you from God after an interval during which there were no Messengers,[5] that He may purge and purify you from uncleanliness in anticipation of the Day of the One true God; therefore seek ye whole-heartedly divine blessings from Him, inasmuch as We have, in truth, chosen Him to be the Witness and the Source of wisdom unto all that dwell on earth...

O Qurratu'l-'Ayn! Proclaim that which hath been sent down unto Thee as a token of the grace of the merciful Lord, for if Thou do it not, Our secret will never be made known to the people,[6] while the purpose of God in creating man is but for him to know Him. Indeed God hath knowledge of all things and is self-sufficient above the need of all mankind. *(Chapter LXII.)*

WHENEVER the faithful hear the verses of this Book being recited, their eyes will overflow with tears and their hearts will be deeply touched by Him Who is the Most Great Remembrance for the love they cherish for God, the All-Praised. He is God, the All-Knowing, the Eternal. They are indeed the inmates of the all-highest Paradise wherein they will abide for ever. Verily they will see naught therein save that which hath proceeded from God, nothing that will lie beyond the compass of their understanding. There they will meet the believers in Paradise, who will address them with the words 'Peace, Peace' lingering on their lips...

O concourse of the faithful! Incline your ears to My Voice, proclaimed by this Remembrance of God. Verily God hath revealed unto Me that the Path of the Remembrance which is set forth by Me is, in very truth, the straight Path of God, and that whoever professeth any religion other than this upright Faith, will, when called to account on the Day of Judgement, discover that as recorded in the Book no benefit hath he reaped out of God's Religion...

Fear ye God, O concourse of kings, lest ye remain afar from Him Who is His Remembrance [the Báb], after the Truth hath come unto you with a Book and signs from God, as spoken through the wondrous tongue of Him Who is His Remembrance. Seek ye grace from God, for God hath ordained for you, after ye have believed in Him, a Garden the vastness of which is as the vastness of the whole of Paradise. Therein ye shall find naught save the gifts and favours which the Almighty hath graciously bestowed by virtue of this momentous Cause, as decreed in the Mother Book. *(Chapter LXIII.)*

[1] cf. Qur'án 21:40.
[2] cf. ibid. 4:149.
[3] cf. ibid. 9:32.
[4] cf. ibid. 5:15-18.
[5] cf. ibid. 5:22.
[6] cf. ibid. 5:71.



Detail of one of the columns along the arcade of the Shrine of the Báb.

SAY, O peoples of the world! Do ye dispute with Me about God by virtue of the names which ye and your fathers have adopted for Him at the promptings of the Evil One?[1] God hath indeed sent down this Book unto Me with truth that ye may be enabled to recognize the true names of God, inasmuch as ye have strayed in error far from the Truth. Verily We have taken a covenant from every created thing upon its coming into being concerning the Remembrance of God, and there shall be none to avert the binding command of God for the purification of mankind, as ordained in the Book which is written by the hand of the Báb. *(Chapter LXVIII.)*

DOTH it seem strange to the people that We should have revealed the Book to a man from among themselves in order to purge them and give them the good tidings that they shall be rewarded with a sure stance in the presence of their Lord? He indeed beareth witness unto all things...

When the verses of this Book are recited to the infidels they say: 'Give us a book like the Qur'án and make changes in the verses.' Say: 'God hath not given Me that I should change them at My pleasure.' I follow only what is revealed unto Me. Verily, I shall fear My Lord on the Day of Separation, whose advent He hath, in very truth, irrevocably ordained.[2] *(Chapter LXXI.)*

O PEOPLES of the earth! Verily the true God calleth saying: He Who is the Remembrance is indeed the sovereign Truth from God, and naught remaineth beyond truth but error,[3] and naught is there beyond error save fire, irrevocably ordained...

[1] cf. Qur'án 7:69; 12:40.

[2] cf. Qur'án 10:16.

[3] cf. ibid. 10:33.

O Qurratu'l-'Ayn! Point to Thy truthful breast through the power of truth and exclaim: I swear by the One true God, herein lieth the vicegerency of God; I am indeed the One Who is regarded as the Best Reward[1] and I am indeed He Who is the Most Excellent Abode. *(Chapter LXXII.)*

O YE concourse of the believers! Utter not words of denial against Me once the Truth is made manifest, for indeed the mandate of the Báb hath befittingly been proclaimed unto you in the Qur'án aforetime. I swear by your Lord, this Book is verily the same Qur'án which was sent down in the past. *(Chapter LXXXI.)*

HAD it been Our wish, We would have brought all men into one fold round Our Remembrance, yet they will not cease to differ,[2] unless God accomplish what He willeth through the power of truth. In the estimation of the Remembrance this commandment hath, in very truth, been irrevocably ordained...

God hath indeed chosen Thee to warn the people, to guide the believers aright and to elucidate the secrets of the Book. *(Chapter LXXXV.)*

SHOULD it be Our wish, it is in Our power to compel, through the agency of but one letter of Our Revelation, the world and all that is therein to recognize, in less than the twinkling of an eye, the truth of Our Cause....

Truly other apostles have been laughed to scorn before Thee,[3] and Thou art none other but the Servant of God, sustained by the power of Truth. Ere long We shall prolong the days of such as have rejected the Truth by reason of that which their hands have wrought,[4] and verily God will not deal unjustly with anyone, even to the extent of a speck on a date-stone. *(Chapter LXXXVII.)*

O YE peoples of the earth! By the righteousness of God, the True One, the testimony shown forth by His Remembrance is like unto a sun which the hand of the merciful Lord hath raised high in the midmost heart of the heaven, wherefrom it shineth in the plenitude of its meridian splendour...

With each and every Prophet Whom We have sent down in the past, We have established a separate Covenant concerning the Remembrance of God and His Day. Manifest, in the realm of glory and through the power of truth, are the Remembrance of God and His Day before the eyes of the angels that circle His mercy-seat. *(Chapter XCI.)*

O HOUR of the Dawn! Ere the resplendent glory of the divine Luminary sheddeth its radiance from the Dayspring of this Gate, call thou to mind that the appointed Day of God will indeed be at hand in less than a twinkling of an eye. Thus hath the decree of God been issued in the Mother Book. *(Chapter XCIV.)*

GOD had, in truth, proposed Our Mission unto the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and were afraid thereof. However, Man, this 'Alí, Who is none other but the Great Remembrance of God, undertook to bear it. Hence God, the All-Encompassing, hath referred to Him in His Preserved Book as the 'Wronged One', and by reason of His being undistinguished before the eyes of men, He hath, according to the judgement of the Book, been entitled 'the Unknown'...[5]

Erelong We will, in very truth, torment such as waged war against Ḥusayn [Imám Ḥusayn], in the Land of the Euphrates, with the most afflictive torment, and the most dire and exemplary punishment....

God knoweth well the heart of Ḥusayn, the heat of His burning thirst and His long-suffering for the sake of God, the Incomparable, the Ancient of Days; and unto Him God is verily a witness. *(Chapter XII.)*

[1] cf. Qur'án 18:42.
[2] cf. ibid. 11:120.
[3] cf. ibid. 6:10.
[4] cf. ibid. 3:172.
[5] cf. Qur'án 33:72.

THIS Book which We have sent down is indeed abounding in blessings[1] and beareth witness to the Truth, so that the people may realize that the conclusive Proof of God in favour of His Remembrance is similar to the one wherewith Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets, was invested, and verily great is the Cause as ordained in the Mother Book. *(Chapter LXVI.)*

WE have in truth sent Thee forth unto all men, by the leave of God, invested with Our signs and reinforced by Our unsurpassed sovereignty. He is indeed the appointed Bearer of the Trust of God...

O Qurratu'l-'Ayn! Persevere steadfastly as Thou art bidden and let not the faithless amongst men nor their utterances grieve Thee, since Thy Lord shall, by the righteousness of God, the Most Great, pass judgement upon them on the Day of Resurrection, and surely God witnesseth all things. *(Chapter LXXXIV.)*

THIS Religion is indeed, in the sight of God, the essence of the Faith of Muḥammad; haste ye then to attain the celestial Paradise and the all-highest Garden of His good-pleasure in the presence of the One True God, could ye but be patient and thankful before the evidences of the signs of God. *(Chapter XLVIII.)*

O MY servants! This is God's appointed Day which the merciful Lord hath promised you in His Book; wherefore, in very truth, glorify ye abundantly the name of God while treading the Path of the Most Great Remembrance...

Verily God hath granted leave to His Remembrance to say whatsoever He willeth in whatever manner He pleaseth. Indeed whatsoever He chooseth is none other than what is chosen by Us. The Lord, in truth, witnesseth all things. *(Chapter LCCCVII.)*

INDEED We conversed with Moses by the leave of God from the midst of the Burning Bush in the Sinai and revealed an infinitesimal glimmer of Thy Light upon the Mystic Mount and its dwellers, whereupon the Mount shook to its foundations and was crushed into dust...

O peoples of the earth! I swear by your Lord! Ye shall act as former generations have acted. Warn ye, then, yourselves of the terrible, the most grievous vengeance of God. For God is, verily, potent over all things. *(Chapter LIII.)*

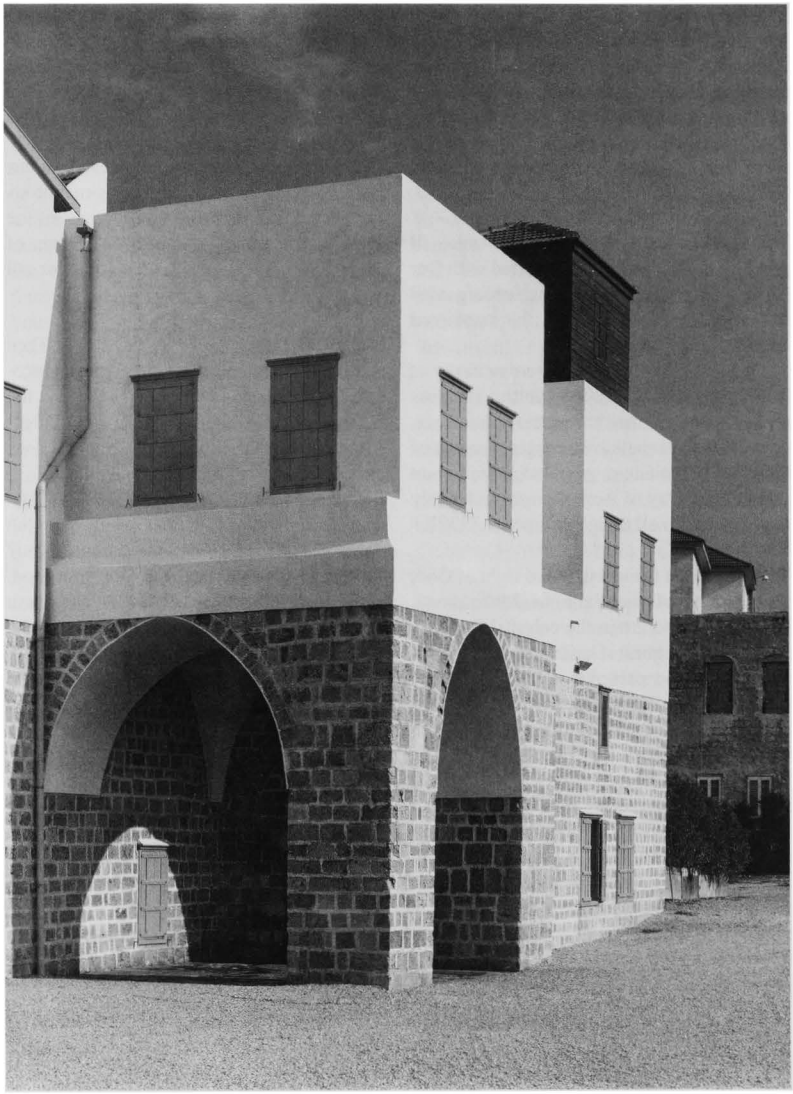
O QURRATU'L-'AYN! I recognize in Thee none other except the 'Great Announcement'—the Announcement voiced by the Concourse on high. By this name, I bear witness, they that circle the Throne of Glory have ever known Thee.

O concourse of the believers! Do ye harbour any doubt as to that whereunto the Remembrance of God doth summon you? By the righteousness of the One true God, He is none other than the sovereign Truth Who hath been made manifest through the power of Truth. Are ye in doubt concerning the Báb? Verily He is the One Who holdeth, by Our leave, the kingdoms of earth and heaven in His grasp, and the Lord is in truth fully aware of what ye are doing...

Indeed I am but a man like unto you. However, God bestoweth upon Me whatever favours He willeth as He pleaseth, and that which your Lord hath decreed in the Mother Book is unbounded. *(Chapter LXXXVIII.)*

O QURRATU'L-'AYN! Say: Verily I am the One Who is hailed in the Mother Book as the 'Great Announcement'. Say: The people have grievously differed over Me, whereas in truth there is no difference between Me and the Báb; and God, the Eternal Truth, is sufficient witness. *(Chapter LXXVII.)*

[1] cf. Qur'án 6:93.



The House of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 'Akká, known as the House of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá.

3. 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ

I

DEARLY loved friends of 'Abdu'l-Bahá,

Your letter bearing the happy news of the election of the Spiritual Assembly hath arrived, affording great pleasure in the knowledge that—praise be to God!—the friends in your area have conducted the election in a spirit of the utmost fellowship, concord and amity, and have been successful in electing consecrated souls and well-favoured servants of His heavenly Threshold whose firmness in the Covenant is acknowledged by the generality of the believers. Now, with all radiance, joy and heartfelt devotion, attracted by the fragrances of God and the confirmations of the Holy Spirit, the members of this newly elected Assembly must devote themselves to service; and, in their efforts to raise on high the Word of God, to shed abroad His holy fragrances, to educate the souls of men, and to promulgate the Most Great Peace, they must become standard-bearers of guidance, and ensigns of the Concourse on high. Truly, those who have been elected are blessed, holy souls. When I read their names, my heart was immediately filled with joy, joy at the tidings that—praise be unto God!—souls have been raised up in that land who are servants of the Kingdom, and who stand ready to lay down their lives in the way of the Peerless King.

From a Tablet dated 29 May 1907 to the Assembly of Chicago.

II

SOON will the Western regions become as radiant as the horizons of the East, and the Sun of Truth shine forth with a refulgence that will cause the darkness of error to fade away and vanish. Great is the multitude who will rise up to oppose you, who will oppress you, heap blame upon you, rejoice at your misfortunes, account you people to be shunned, and visit injury upon you; yet shall your heavenly Father confer upon you such spiritual illumination that ye shall become even as the rays of the sun which, as they chase away the sombre clouds, break forth to flood the surface of the earth with light. It is incumbent upon you, whensoever these tests may overtake you, to stand firm, and to be patient and enduring. Instead of repaying like with like, ye should requite opposition with the utmost benevolence and loving-kindness, and on no account attach importance to cruelties and injuries, but rather regard them as the wanton acts of children. For ultimately the radiance of the Kingdom will overwhelm the darkness of the world of being, and the holy, exalted character of your aims will become unmistakably apparent. Nothing shall remain concealed: the olive oil, though stored within the deepest vault, shall one day burn in brightness from the lamp atop the beacon. The small shall be made great, and the powerless shall be given strength; they that are of tender age shall become the children of the Kingdom, and those that have gone astray shall be guided to their heavenly home.

From a Tablet dated 14 November 1909 to an individual, published in *Crisis and Victory* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988), p. 24.

III

ERELONG the wicked-doers in that land will arise to heap denunciations upon the true believers, and vent their spite upon the company of the faithful. Each day they will inflict a galling wound, each hour a stunning blow. Rebuking the friends for the love they bear Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, they will consider justified their denunciations, their scorn and malice, and spare no effort to do the friends whatever injury it lieth within their power to inflict. Such conduct is at one with the modes and practices of the people aforetime: in bygone centuries, in the days of the appearance of the holy Manifestations, the people acted in just this manner; and now, in these days, it is inevitable that they will repeat such actions, nay, act with greater perversity than before... Hence it is certain that thou wilt be afflicted with adversities, tests and injuries for the sake of the Blessed Beauty; yet these afflictions shall be the purest bounties and bestowals, and a token of thy acceptance at the Divine Threshold.

From an undated Tablet to an individual, published in *Crisis and Victory* (London: 1988), p. 6.

IV

O THOU Pure and Omnipotent God! O Thou my kind Lord! Grant us such power as to enable us to withstand the perils of the entire world, and give us such might as to cause the waves of our endeavours, like unto the Pacific Ocean, to reach the shores of both East and West.

From a Tablet to an individual.

V

O YE denizens of the Kingdom!

How many are those who devote their lifetime to pious worship and to asceticism, cherishing the ardent desire for admission into the Kingdom. Yet they all failed. However, ye have achieved this goal and entered the Kingdom without any toil or hardship even as, in the days of Christ, the Pharisees and the priests were denied access to the Kingdom while Peter, John and Andrew attained thereto though they were neither fanatical worshippers nor ascetics. Therefore render ye thanks unto God, Who hath crowned you with this diadem of eternal glory and vouchsafed these endless favours unto you. It is high time that ye should, in recognition of these manifold bounties, set your hearts firmly upon Him, draw nearer unto His court and become so captivated and inflamed that the music of the hymns ye sing in praise of the Desired One may ascend unto the Celestial Concourse, that each one of you may, even as a nightingale, warble melodies in glorification of the Lord of Hosts and be enabled to foster the education of all mankind.

From a Tablet to the friends in Switzerland and Germany.



Detail of the House of 'Abdu'lláh Pásha, in 'Akká.

VI

...THOU shouldst initially adopt that course of prudence that the Faith enjoins. In the early stages, thou shouldst seek out the company of the eminent members of the populace and, turning thyself in utter lowliness to the unseen realm of Glory, thou shouldst pray for succour and protection so that the Holy Spirit may, through the outpourings of its grace, grant thee its assistance. When, by thy godly conduct and demeanour, thy fervour, thy chaste and lucid utterance, thou shalt have succeeded in winning the affection of one and all, then shall the portals of heavenly guidance be opened wide; then shall the bounteous cup be borne around and all the souls that drink therefrom be inebriated with the wine of holy mysteries and truths.

From a Tablet to an individual.

VII

YE should strive to widen the circle of those with whom ye enjoy friendly relations, and to establish the closest contact with those benevolent souls whose only thought is to do good, who are labouring in the cause of universal peace, and who cherish no desire but to witness the unification of the world of humanity. Ye should seek out the company of such people as these, that ye may imbue them with an awareness of the heavenly Kingdom, for albeit their motives are of the finest, yet they do not realize that all the powers of the earth are impotent either to establish universal peace or to promote the oneness of the human world. Nothing short of the power of the Word of God and the breaths of the Holy Spirit can ever succeed.

From a Tablet dated 13 July 1912 to the Assembly of New York.

VIII

O THOU who art turning unto theKingdom of God!

Thy letter hath been received and perused. It afforded us joy and pleasure, gave us good news and is a token of the wealth of thy love. This period of time is the Promised Age, the assembling of the human race to the Resurrection Day and now is the great Day of Judgement. Soon the whole world, as in springtime, will change its garb. The turning and falling of the autumn leaves is past; the bleakness of the wintertime is over. The new year hath appeared and the spiritual springtime is at hand. The black earth is becoming a verdant garden; the deserts and mountains are teeming with red flowers; from the borders of the wilderness the tall grasses are standing like advance guards before the cypress and jessamine trees; while the birds are singing among the rose branches like the angels in the highest heavens, announcing the glad-tidings of the approach of that spiritual spring, and the sweet music of their voices is causing the real essence of all things to move and quiver.

O my spiritual friend! Dost thou know from what airs emanate the notes sung by those birds? They are from the melodies of peace and reconciliation, of love and unity, of justice and security, of concord and harmony. In a short time this heavenly singing will intoxicate all humanity; the foundations of enmity shall be destroyed; unity and affection shall be witnessed in every assembly; and the splendours of the love of God will shine forth in these great festivals.

Therefore, contemplate what a spirit of life God hath given that the body of the whole earth may attain life everlasting! The Abhá Paradise will soon spread a pavilion in the midmost heart of the world, under whose shelter the beloved shall rejoice and the pure hearts shall repose in peace.

From a Tablet dated 1903 to an individual.

IX

O FRIENDS of God!

Do ye know in what cycle ye are created and in what age ye exist? This is the age of the Blessed Perfection and this is the time of the Greatest Name! This is the century of the Manifestation, the age of the Sun of all horizons and the beautiful springtime of the Eternal One!

The earth is in motion and growth; the mountains, hills and prairies are green and pleasant; bounty is overflowing; mercy universal; rain is descending from the clouds of compassion; the brilliant sun is shining; the full moon adorneth the ethereal horizon; the great ocean-tide is flooding every little stream; gifts and favours follow one upon the other and a refreshing breeze is blowing, wafting the fragrant perfume of the blossoms.

If we are not happy and joyous at this season, for what other season shall we wait and for what other time shall we look?

Boundless treasure is in the hand of the King of Kings! Lift the hem of thy garment to receive it.

This is the time for growing; the season for joyous gathering! Take the cup of the Testament in thy hand; leap and dance with ecstasy in the triumphal procession of the Covenant! Place your confidence in the everlasting bounty, turn to the presence of the generous God; ask assistance from the kingdom of Abhá; seek confirmation from the Supreme World; turn thy vision to the horizon of eternal wealth; and pray for help from the Source of Mercy!

Soon shall ye see the friends attaining their longed-for destination and pitching their tents, while we are but in the first day of our journey.

To the Assembly in Samarkand, Russia. New translation of a Tablet published earlier in *Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas*, p. 641.

X

O YE beloved friends of God and handmaids of the Merciful!

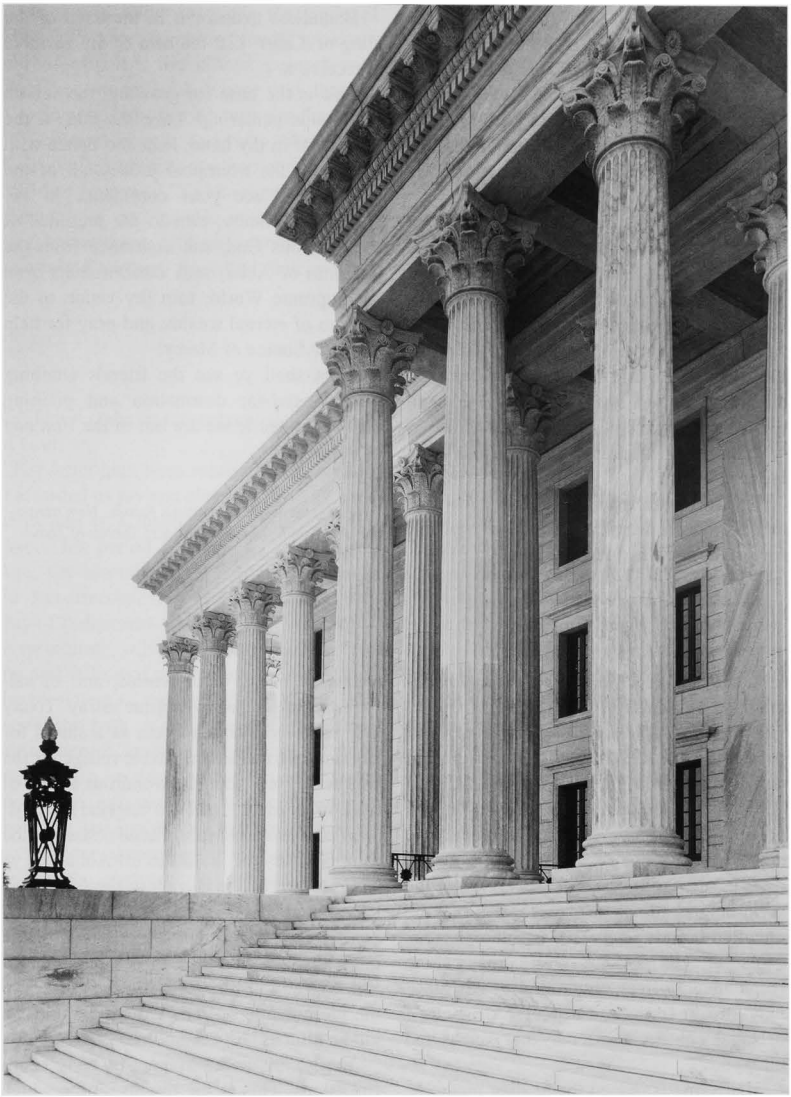
Call ye to mind the blessed Name of our peerless Beloved, the Abhá Beauty, in an uplifting spirit of unbounded ecstasy and delight, then unloose your tongues in His praise in such wise that the realm of the heart may be purged from the woes and sorrows of the world of water and clay, that the great heights of spiritual perception may be unveiled before your eyes, that the glorious signs of His Divine Unity may shine resplendent, a fresh outpouring of His grace may stream forth, and a liberal effusion of celestial confirmations may be vouchsafed unto you.

His Name is indeed the healing medicine for every illness, and imparteth warmth unto those starving with cold. It is the sovereign remedy and the supreme talisman. It is the source of life in both worlds, and of salvation unto such as have gone astray. Today this hallowed Name serveth as a shield for all mankind, and as a veritable refuge for the children of men. It is the wondrous accent of the Lord of Mercy, and His celestial melody.

Wherefore, O faithful friends, raise ye the triumphal cry of Yá-Bahá'u'l-Abhá! O ye who yearn after the Beauty of the Almighty! Lift up your faces toward the Supreme Horizon. Rest not, even for a moment. Breathe not a single breath save in remembrance of His love and in recognition of His grace, in the promulgation of His Utterances and the vindication of His Testimonies.

Verily, this is the Magnet of divine confirmations. This is the mighty Force which will surely attract heavenly assistance.

From a Tablet to a group of believers.



The Seat of the Universal House of Justice, on Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel.

II

EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF SHOGHI EFFENDI

FROM CALL TO THE NATIONS

I

HUMANITY, whether viewed in the light of man's individual conduct or in the existing relationships between organized communities and nations, has, alas, strayed too far and suffered too great a decline to be redeemed through the unaided efforts of the best among its recognized rulers and statesmen—however disinterested their motives, however concerted their action, however unsparing in their zeal and devotion to its cause. No scheme which the calculations of the highest statesmanship may yet devise; no doctrine which the most distinguished exponents of economic theory may hope to advance; no principle which the most ardent of moralists may strive to inculcate, can provide, in the last resort, adequate foundations upon which the future of a distracted world can be built.

No appeal for mutual tolerance which the worldly-wise might raise, however compelling and insistent, can calm its passions or help restore its vigour. Nor would any general scheme of mere organized international cooperation, in whatever sphere of human activity, however ingenious in conception, or extensive in scope, succeed in removing the root cause of the evil that has so rudely upset the equilibrium of present-day society. Not even, I venture to assert, would the very act of devising the machinery required for the political and economic unification of the world—a principle that has been increasingly advocated in recent times—provide in itself the antidote against the poison that is steadily undermining the vigour of organized peoples and nations.

What else, might we not confidently affirm, but the unreserved acceptance of the Divine Programme enunciated, with such simplicity and force as far back as sixty years ago,[1] by Bahá'u'lláh, embodying in its essentials God's divinely-appointed scheme for the unification of mankind in this age, coupled with an indomitable conviction in the unfailing efficacy of each and all of its provisions, is eventually capable of withstanding the forces of internal disintegration which, if unchecked, must needs continue to eat into the vitals of a despairing society. It is towards this goal—the goal of a new World Order, Divine in origin, all-embracing in scope, equitable in principle, challenging in its features—that a harassed humanity must strive.

To claim to have grasped all the implications of Bahá'u'lláh's prodigious scheme for world-wide human solidarity, or to have fathomed its import, would be presumptuous on the part of even the declared supporters

[1] Written in 1931.

of His Faith. To attempt to visualize it in all its possibilities, to estimate its future benefits, to picture its glory, would be premature at even so advanced a stage in the evolution of mankind.

All we can reasonably venture to attempt is to strive to obtain a glimpse of the first streaks of the promised Dawn that must, in the fullness of time, chase away the gloom that has encircled humanity. All we can do is to point out, in their broadest outlines, what appears to us to be the guiding principles underlying the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh....

That the unrest and suffering afflicting the mass of mankind are in no small measure the direct consequences of the World War[1] and are attributable to the unwisdom and short-sightedness of the framers of the Peace Treaties only a biased mind can refuse to admit.... It would be idle, however, to contend that the war, with all the losses it involved, the passions it aroused and the grievances it left behind, has solely been responsible for the unprecedented confusion into which almost every section of the civilized world is plunged at present. Is it not a fact—and this is the central idea I desire to emphasize—that the fundamental cause of this world unrest is attributable, not so much to the consequences of what must sooner or later come to be regarded as a transitory dislocation in the affairs of a continually changing world, but rather to the failure of those into whose hands the immediate destinies of peoples and nations have been committed, to adjust their systems of economic and political institutions to the imperative needs of a rapidly-evolving age? Are not these intermittent crises that convulse present-day society due primarily to the lamentable inability of the world's recognized leaders to read aright the signs of the times, to rid themselves once for all of their preconceived ideas and fettering creeds, and to reshape the machinery of their respective governments according to those standards that are implicit in Bahá'u'lláh's supreme declaration of the Oneness of Mankind—the chief and distinguishing feature of the Faith He proclaimed? For the principle of the Oneness of Mankind, the corner-stone of Bahá'u'lláh's world-embracing dominion, implies nothing more or less than the enforcement of His scheme for the unification of the world—the scheme to which we have already referred. "*In every Dispensation*," writes 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "*the light of Divine Guidance has been focused upon one central theme... In this wondrous Revelation, this glorious century, the foundation of the Faith of God and the distinguishing feature of His Law is the consciousness of the Oneness of Mankind.*"

How pathetic indeed are the efforts of those leaders of human institutions who, in utter disregard of the spirit of the age, are striving to adjust national processes, suited to the ancient days of self-contained nations, to an age which must either achieve the unity of the world, as adumbrated by Bahá'u'lláh, or perish. At so critical an hour in the history of civilization it behoves the leaders of all the nations of the world, great and small, whether in the East or in the West, whether victors or vanquished, to give heed to the clarion call of Bahá'u'lláh and, thoroughly imbued with a sense of world solidarity, the *sine qua non* of loyalty to His Cause, arise manfully to carry out in its entirety the one remedial scheme He, the Divine Physician, has prescribed for an ailing humanity. Let them discard, once for all, every preconceived idea, every national prejudice, and give heed to the sublime counsel of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the authorized Expounder of His teachings. "*You can best serve your country*", was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's rejoinder to a high official in the service of the federal government of the United States of America, who had questioned Him as to the best manner in which he could promote the interests of his government and people, "*if you strive, in your capacity as a citizen of the world, to assist in the eventual application of*

[1] Written in 1931 and refers to the first World War.

the principle of federalism underlying the government of your own country to the relationships now existing between the peoples and nations of the world."

In *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's outstanding contribution to the future reorganization of the world, we read the following:

"*True civilization will unfurl its banner in the midmost heart of the world whenever a certain number of its distinguished and high-minded sovereigns—the shining exemplars of devotion and determination—shall, for the good and happiness of all mankind, arise, with firm resolve and clear vision, to establish the Cause of Universal Peace. They must make the Cause of Peace the object of general consultation, and seek by every means in their power to establish a Union of the nations of the world. They must conclude a binding treaty and establish a covenant, the provisions of which shall be sound, inviolable and definite. They must proclaim it to all the world and obtain for it the sanction of all the human race. This supreme and noble undertaking—the real source of the peace and well-being of all the world—should be regarded as sacred by all that dwell on earth. All the forces of humanity must be mobilized to ensure the stability and permanence of this Most Great Covenant. In this all-embracing Pact the limits and frontiers of each and every nation should be clearly fixed, the principles underlying the relations of governments towards one another definitely laid down, and all international agreements and obligations ascertained. In like manner, the size of the armaments of every government should be strictly limited, for if the preparations for war and the military forces of any nation should be allowed to increase, they will arouse the suspicion of others. The fundamental principle underlying this solemn Pact should be so fixed that if any government later violate any one of its provisions, all the governments on earth should arise to reduce it to utter submission, nay the human race as a whole should resolve, with every power at its disposal, to destroy that government. Should this greatest of all remedies be applied to the sick body of the world, it will assuredly recover from its ills and will remain eternally safe and secure.*"

"*A few*," He further adds, "*unaware of the power latent in human endeavour, consider this matter as highly impracticable, nay even beyond the scope of man's utmost efforts. Such is not the case, however. On the contrary, thanks to the unfailing grace of God, the loving-kindness of His favoured ones, the unrivalled endeavours of wise and capable souls, and the thoughts and ideas of the peerless leaders of this age, nothing whatsoever can be regarded as unattainable. Endeavour, ceaseless endeavour, is required. Nothing short of an indomitable determination can possibly achieve it. Many a cause which past ages have regarded as purely visionary, yet in this day has become most easy and practicable. Why should this most great and lofty cause—the day-star of the firmament of true civilization and the cause of the glory, the advancement, the well-being and the success of all humanity—be regarded as impossible of achievement? Surely the day will come when its beauteous light shall shed illumination upon the assemblage of man.*"

In one of His Tablets 'Abdu'l-Bahá, elucidating further His noble theme, reveals the following:

"*In cycles gone by, though harmony was established, yet, owing to the absence of means, the unity of all mankind could not have been achieved. Continents remained widely divided, nay even among the peoples of one and the same continent association and interchange of thought were well-nigh impossible. Consequently intercourse, understanding and unity amongst all the peoples and kindreds of the earth were unattainable. In this day, however, means of communication have multiplied, and the five continents of the earth have virtually merged into one....*

In like manner all the members of the human family, whether peoples or governments, cities or villages, have become increasingly interdependent. For none is self-sufficiency any longer possible, inasmuch as political ties unite all peoples and nations, and the bonds of trade and industry, of agriculture and education, are being strengthened every day. Hence the unity of all mankind can in this day be achieved. Verily this is none other but one of the wonders of this wondrous age, this glorious century. Of this past ages have been deprived, for this century—the century of light—has been endowed with unique and unprecedented glory, power and illumination. Hence the miraculous unfolding of a fresh marvel every day. Eventually it will be seen how bright its candles will burn in the assemblage of man.

"Behold how its light is now dawning upon the world's darkened horizon. The first candle is unity in the political realm, the early glimmerings of which can now be discerned. The second candle is unity of thought in world undertakings, the consummation of which will ere long be witnessed. The third candle is unity in freedom which will surely come to pass. The fourth candle is unity in religion which is the corner-stone of the foundation itself, and which, by the power of God, will be revealed in all its splendour. The fifth candle is the unity of nations—a unity which in this century will be securely established, causing all the peoples of the world to regard themselves as citizens of one common fatherland. The sixth candle is unity of races, making of all that dwell on earth peoples and kindreds of one race. The seventh candle is unity of language, i.e. the choice of a universal tongue in which all peoples will be instructed and converse. Each and every one of these will inevitably come to pass, inasmuch as the power of the Kingdom of God will aid and assist in their realization."

Over sixty years ago,[1] in His Tablet to Queen Victoria, Bahá'u'lláh, addressing "the concourse of the rulers of the earth", revealed the following:

"Take ye counsel together, and let your concern be only for that which profiteth mankind and bettereth the condition thereof.... Regard the world as the human body, which, though created whole and perfect, has been afflicted, through divers causes, with grave ills and maladies. Not for one day did it rest, nay its sicknesses waxed more severe, as it fell under the treatment of unskilled physicians who have spurred on the steed of their worldly desires and have erred grievously. And if at one time, through the care of an able physician, a member of that body was healed, the rest remained afflicted as before."...

In a further passage Bahá'u'lláh adds these words:

"We see you adding every year unto your expenditures and laying the burden thereof on the people whom ye rule; this verily is naught but grievous injustice. Fear the sighs and tears of this Wronged One, and burden not your peoples beyond that which they can endure.... Be reconciled among yourselves, that ye may need armaments no more save in a measure to safeguard your territories and dominions. Be united, O concourse of the sovereigns of the world, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you and your peoples find rest.... Should any one among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice."

What else could these weighty words signify if they did not point to the inevitable curtailment of unfettered national sovereignty as an indispensable preliminary to the formation of the future Commonwealth of all the nations of the world? Some form of a world super-state must needs be evolved, in whose favour all the nations of the world will have willingly ceded every claim to make war, certain rights to impose taxation and all rights to maintain armaments, except for purposes of maintaining internal order within their respective dominions. Such a

[1] Now well over a century; the Tablet to Queen Victoria was written about 1870.

state will have to include within its orbit an International Executive adequate to enforce supreme and unchallengeable authority on every recalcitrant member of the commonwealth; a World Parliament whose members shall be elected by the people in their respective countries and whose election shall be confirmed by their respective governments; and a Supreme Tribunal whose judgement will have a binding effect even in such cases where the parties concerned did not voluntarily agree to submit their case to its consideration. A world community in which all economic barriers will have been permanently demolished and the interdependence of Capital and Labour definitely recognized; in which the clamour of religious fanaticism and strife will have been forever stilled; in which the flame of racial animosity will have been finally extinguished; in which a single code of international law—the product of the considered judgement of the world's federated representatives—shall have as its sanction the instant and coercive intervention of the combined forces of the federated units; and finally a world community in which the fury of a capricious and militant nationalism will have been transmuted into an abiding consciousness of world citizenship—such indeed appears, in its broadest outline, the Order anticipated by Bahá'u'lláh, an Order that shall come to be regarded as the fairest fruit of a slowly maturing age.

"*The Tabernacle of Unity*," Bahá'u'lláh proclaims in His message to all mankind, "*has been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers.... Of one tree are all ye the fruit and of one bough the leaves.... The world is but one country and mankind its citizens.... Let not a man glory in that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind.*"

Let there be no misgivings as to the animating purpose of the world-wide Law of Bahá'u'lláh. Far from aiming at the subversion of the existing foundations of society, it seeks to broaden its basis, to remould its institutions in a manner consonant with the needs of an ever-changing world. It can conflict with no legitimate allegiances, nor can it undermine essential loyalties. Its purpose is neither to stifle the flame of a sane and intelligent patriotism in men's hearts, nor to abolish the system of national autonomy so essential if the evils of excessive centralization are to be avoided. It does not ignore, nor does it attempt to suppress, the diversity of ethnical origins, of climate, of history, of language and tradition, of thought and habit, that differentiate the peoples and nations of the world. It calls for a wider loyalty, for a larger aspiration than any that has animated the human race. It insists upon the subordination of national impulses and interests to the imperative claims of a unified world. It repudiates excessive centralization on one hand, and disclaims all attempts at uniformity on the other. Its watchword is unity in diversity such as 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself has explained:

"*Consider the flowers of a garden. Though differing in kind, colour, form and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm and addeth unto their beauty. How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruit, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and colour! Diversity of hues, form and shape enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof. In like manner, when divers shades of thought, temperament and character, are brought together under the power and influence of one central agency, the beauty and glory of human perfection will be revealed and made manifest. Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas and convictions of the children of men.*"

The call of Bahá'u'lláh is primarily directed against all forms of provincialism,

all insularities and prejudices. If long-cherished ideals and time-honoured institutions, if certain social assumptions and religious formulae have ceased to promote the welfare of the generality of mankind, if they no longer minister to the needs of a continually evolving humanity, let them be swept away and relegated to the limbo of obsolescent and forgotten doctrines. Why should these, in a world subject to the immutable law of change and decay, be exempt from the deterioration that must needs overtake every human institution? For legal standards, political and economic theories are solely designed to safeguard the interests of humanity as a whole, and not humanity to be crucified for the preservation of the integrity of any particular law or doctrine.

Let there be no mistake. The principle of the Oneness of Mankind—the pivot round which all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh revolve—is no mere outburst of ignorant emotionalism or an expression of vague and pious hope. Its appeal is not to be merely identified with a reawakening of the spirit of brotherhood and good-will among men, nor does it aim solely at the fostering of harmonious co-operation among individual peoples and nations. Its implications are deeper, its claims greater than any which the Prophets of old were allowed to advance. Its message is applicable not only to the individual, but concerns itself primarily with the nature of those essential relationships that must bind all the states and nations as members of one human family. It does not constitute merely the enunciation of an ideal, but stands inseparably associated with an institution adequate to embody its truth, demonstrate its validity, and perpetuate its influence. It implies an organic change in the structure of present-day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced. It constitutes a challenge, at once bold and universal, to outworn shibboleths of national creeds—creeds that have had their day and which must, in the ordinary course of events as shaped and controlled by Providence, give way to a new gospel, fundamentally different from, and infinitely superior to, what the world has already conceived. It calls for no less than the reconstruction and the demilitarization of the whole civilized world—a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life, its political machinery, its spiritual aspiration, its trade and finance, its script and language, and yet infinite in the diversity of the national characteristics of its federated units.

It represents the consummation of human evolution—an evolution that has had its earliest beginnings in the birth of family life, its subsequent development in the achievement of tribal solidarity, leading in turn to the constitution of the city-state, and expanding later into the institution of independent and sovereign nations.

The principle of the Oneness of Mankind, as proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh, carries with it no more and no less than a solemn assertion that attainment to this final stage in this stupendous evolution is not only necessary but inevitable, that its realization is fast approaching, and that nothing short of a power that is born of God can succeed in establishing it....

Who knows that for so exalted a conception to take shape a suffering more intense than any it has yet experienced will have to be inflicted upon humanity? Could anything less than the fire of a civil war with all its violence and vicissitudes—a war that nearly rent the great American Republic—have welded the states, not only into a Union of independent units, but into a Nation, in spite of all the ethnic differences that characterized its component parts? That so fundamental a revolution, involving such far-reaching changes in the structure of society, can be achieved through the ordinary processes of diplomacy and education seems highly improbable. We have but to turn our gaze to humanity's blood-stained history to realize that nothing short of intense mental as well as physical agony has been able to precipitate those epoch-making changes that

constitute the greatest landmarks in the history of human civilization.

Great and far-reaching as have been those changes in the past, they cannot but appear, when viewed in their proper perspective, except as subsidiary adjustments preluding that transformation of unparalleled majesty and scope which humanity is in this age bound to undergo. That the forces of a world catastrophe can alone precipitate such a new phase of human thought is, alas, becoming increasingly apparent. That nothing short of the fire of a severe ordeal, unparalleled in its intensity, can fuse and weld the discordant entities that constitute the elements of present-day civilization, into the integral components of the world commonwealth of the future, is a truth which future events will increasingly demonstrate.

The prophetic voice of Bahá'u'lláh warning, in the concluding passages of *The Hidden Words*, the peoples of the world that an unforeseen calamity is following them and that grievous retribution awaiteth them throws indeed a lurid light upon the immediate fortunes of sorrowing humanity. Nothing but a fiery ordeal, out of which humanity will emerge, chastened and prepared, can succeed in implanting that sense of responsibility which the leaders of a new-born age must arise to shoulder.

I would again direct your attention to those ominous words of Bahá'u'lláh which I have already quoted: "*And when the appointed hour is come, there shall suddenly appear that which shall cause the limbs of mankind to quake.*"...

One word more in conclusion. The proclamation of the Oneness of Mankind—the head corner-stone of Bahá'u'lláh's all-embracing dominion—can under no circumstances be compared with such expressions of pious hope as have been uttered in the past. His is not merely a call which He raised, alone and unaided, in the face of the relentless and combined opposition of two of the most powerful Oriental potentates of His day—while Himself an exile and prisoner in their hands. It implies at once a warning and a promise—a warning that in it lies the sole means for the salvation of a greatly suffering world, a promise that its realization is at hand.

Uttered at a time when its possibility had not yet been seriously envisaged in any part of the world, it has, by virtue of that celestial potency which the Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh has breathed into it, come at last to be regarded, by an increasing number of thoughtful men, not only as an approaching possibility, but as the necessary outcome of the forces now operating in the world.

Surely the world, contracted and transformed into a single highly complex organism by the marvellous progress achieved in the realm of physical science, by the world-wide expansion of commerce and industry, and struggling, under the pressure of world economic forces, amidst the pitfalls of a materialistic civilization, stands in dire need of a restatement of the Truth underlying all the Revelations of the past in a language suited to its essential requirements. And what voice other than that of Bahá'u'lláh—the Mouthpiece of God for this age—is capable of effecting a transformation of society as radical as that which He has already accomplished in the hearts of those men and women, so diversified and seemingly irreconcilable, who constitute the body of His declared followers throughout the world?

That such a mighty conception is fast budding out in the minds of men, that voices are being raised in its support, that its salient features must fast crystallize in the consciousness of those who are in authority, few indeed can doubt. That its modest beginnings have already taken shape in the world-wide Administration with which the adherents of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh stand associated only those whose hearts are tainted by prejudice can fail to perceive....

Excerpts from *The Goal of a New World Order*, in *Call to the Nations* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1977). Chapter II.

II

FEW will fail to recognize that the Spirit breathed by Bahá'u'lláh upon the world, and which is manifesting itself with varying degrees of intensity through the efforts consciously displayed by His avowed supporters and indirectly through certain humanitarian organizations, can never permeate and exercise an abiding influence upon mankind unless and until it incarnates itself in a visible Order, which would bear His name, wholly identify itself with His principles, and function in conformity with His laws. That Bahá'u'lláh in His Book of *Aqdas*, and later 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will—a document which confirms, supplements, and correlates the provisions of the *Aqdas*—have set forth in their entirety those essential elements for the constitution of the world Bahá'í Commonwealth, no one who has read them will deny. According to these divinely-ordained administrative principles, the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh—the Ark of human salvation—must needs be modelled. From them, all future blessings must flow, and upon them its inviolable authority must ultimately rest.

For Bahá'u'lláh, we should readily recognize, has not only imbued mankind with a new and regenerating Spirit. He has not merely enunciated certain universal principles, or propounded a particular philosophy, however potent, sound and universal these may be. In addition to these He, as well as 'Abdu'l-Bahá after Him, has, unlike the Dispensations of the past, clearly and specifically laid down a set of Laws, established definite institutions, and provided for the essentials of a Divine Economy. These are destined to be a pattern for future society, a supreme instrument for the establishment of the Most Great Peace, and the one agency for the unification of the world, and the proclamation of the reign of righteousness and justice upon the earth....

Leaders of religion, exponents of political theories, governors of human institutions, who at present are witnessing with perplexity and dismay the bankruptcy of their ideas, and the disintegration of their handiwork, would do well to turn their gaze to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and to meditate upon the World Order which, lying enshrined in His teachings, is slowly and imperceptibly rising amid the welter and chaos of present-day civilization. They need have no doubt or anxiety regarding the nature, the origin, or validity of the institutions which the adherents of the Faith are building up throughout the world. For these lie embedded in the teachings themselves, unadulterated and unobscured by unwarrantable inferences, or unauthorized interpretations of His Word....

THE onrushing forces so miraculously released through the agency of two independent and swiftly successive Manifestations are now under our very eyes and through the care of the chosen stewards of a far-flung Faith being gradually mustered and disciplined. They are slowly crystallizing into institutions that will come to be regarded as the hallmark and glory of the age we are called upon to establish and by our deeds immortalize....

It would be utterly misleading to attempt a comparison between this unique, this divinely-conceived Order and any of the diverse systems which the minds of men, at various periods of their history, have contrived for the government of human institutions. Such an attempt would in itself betray a lack of complete appreciation of the excellence of the handiwork of its great Author. How could it be otherwise when we remember that this Order constitutes the very pattern of that divine civilization which the almighty Law of Bahá'u'lláh is designed to establish upon earth? The divers and ever-shifting systems of human polity, whether past or present, whether originating in the East or in the West, offer no adequate criterion wherewith to estimate the potency of its hidden virtues or to appraise the solidity of its foundations.



Details of the pillars and gardens surrounding the Seat of the Universal House of Justice.

The Bahá'í Commonwealth of the future, of which this vast Administrative Order is the sole framework, is, both in theory and practice, not only unique in the entire history of political institutions, but can find no parallel in the annals of any of the world's recognized religious systems. No form of democratic government; no system of autocracy or of dictatorship, whether monarchical or republican; no intermediary scheme of a purely aristocratic order; nor even any of the recognized types of theocracy, whether it be the Hebrew Commonwealth, or the various Christian ecclesiastical organizations, or the Imamate or the Caliphate in Islám—none of these can be identified or be said to conform with the Administrative Order which the master-hand of its perfect Architect has fashioned.

This new-born Administrative Order incorporates within its structure certain elements which are to be found in each of the three recognized forms of secular government, without being in any sense a mere replica of any one of them, and without introducing within its machinery any of the objectionable features which they inherently possess. It blends and harmonizes, as no government fashioned by mortal hands has as yet accomplished, the salutary truths which each of these systems undoubtedly contains without vitiating the integrity of those God-given verities on which it is ultimately founded.

The Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh must in no wise be regarded as purely democratic in character inasmuch as the basic assumption which requires all

democracies to depend fundamentally upon getting their mandate from the people is altogether lacking in this Dispensation. In the conduct of the administrative affairs of the Faith, in the enactment of the legislation necessary to supplement the laws of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, the members of the Universal House of Justice, it should be borne in mind, are not, as Bahá'u'lláh's utterances clearly imply, responsible to those whom they represent, nor are they allowed to be governed by the feelings, the general opinion, and even the convictions of the mass of the faithful, or of those who directly elect them. They are to follow, in a prayerful attitude, the dictates and promptings of their conscience. They may, indeed they must, acquaint themselves with the conditions prevailing among the community, must weigh dispassionately in their minds the merits of any case presented for their consideration, but must reserve for themselves the right of an unfettered decision. "*God will verily inspire them with whatsoever He willeth*," is Bahá'u'lláh's incontrovertible assurance. They, and not the body of those who either directly or indirectly elect them, have thus been made the recipients of the divine guidance which is at once the life-blood and ultimate safeguard of this Revelation....

Nor can the Bahá'í Administrative Order be dismissed as a hard and rigid system of unmitigated autocracy or as an idle imitation of any form of absolutistic ecclesiastical government, whether it be the Papacy, the Imamate or any other similar institution, for the obvious reason that upon the international elected representatives of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh has been conferred the exclusive right of legislating on matters not expressly revealed in the Bahá'í writings. Neither the Guardian of the Faith nor any institution apart from the International House of Justice can ever usurp this vital and essential power or encroach upon that sacred right. The abolition of professional priesthood with its accompanying sacraments of baptism, of communion and of confession of sins, the laws requiring the election by universal suffrage of all local, national, and international Houses of Justice, the total absence of episcopal authority with its attendant privileges, corruptions and bureaucratic tendencies, are further evidences of the non-autocratic character of the Bahá'í Administrative Order and of its inclination to democratic methods in the administration of its affairs.

Nor is this Order identified with the name of Bahá'u'lláh to be confused with any system of purely aristocratic government in view of the fact that it upholds, on the one hand, the hereditary principle and entrusts the Guardian of the Faith with the obligation of interpreting its teachings, and provides, on the other, for the free and direct election from among the mass of the faithful of the body that constitutes its highest legislative organ.

Whereas this Administrative Order cannot be said to have been modelled after any of these recognized systems of government, it nevertheless embodies, reconciles and assimilates within its framework such wholesome elements as are to be found in each one of them. The hereditary authority which the Guardian is called upon to exercise, the vital and essential functions which the Universal House of Justice discharges, the specific provisions requiring its democratic election by the representatives of the faithful—these combine to demonstrate the truth that this divinely revealed Order, which can never be identified with any of the standard types of government referred to by Aristotle in his works, embodies and blends with the spiritual verities on which it is based the beneficent elements which are to be found in each one of them. The admitted evils inherent in each of these systems being rigidly and permanently excluded, this unique Order, however long it may endure and however extensive its ramifications, cannot ever degenerate into any form of despotism, of oligarchy, or of demagogy which must sooner or later corrupt the machinery of all man-made and essentially defective political institutions....

Significant as are the origins of this mighty administrative structure, and however unique its features, the happenings that may be said to have heralded its birth and signalized the initial stage of its evolution seem no less remarkable. How striking, how edifying the contrast between the process of slow and steady consolidation that characterizes the growth of its infant strength and the devastating onrush of the forces of disintegration that are assailing the outworn institutions, both religious and secular, of present-day society!

The vitality which the organic institutions of this great, this ever-expanding Order so strongly exhibit; the obstacles which the high courage, the undaunted resolution of its administrators have already surmounted; the fire of an unquenchable enthusiasm that glows with undiminished fervour in the hearts of its itinerant teachers; the heights of self-sacrifice which its champion-builders are now attaining; the breadth of vision, the confident hope, the creative joy, the inward peace, the uncompromising integrity, the exemplary discipline, the unyielding unity and solidarity which its stalwart defenders manifest; the degree to which its moving Spirit hath shown itself capable of assimilating the diversified elements within its pale, of cleansing them of all forms of prejudice and of fusing them with its own structure—these are evidences of a power which a disillusioned and sadly shaken society can ill afford to ignore.

Compare these splendid manifestations of the spirit animating this vibrant body of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh with the cries and agony, the follies and vanities, the bitterness and prejudices, the wickedness and divisions of an ailing and chaotic world. Witness the fear that torments its leaders and paralyses the action of its blind and bewildered statesmen. How fierce the hatreds, how false the ambitions, how petty the pursuits, how deep-rooted the suspicions of its peoples! How disquieting the lawlessness, the corruption, the unbelief that are eating into the vitals of a tottering civilization!

Might not this process of steady deterioration which is insidiously invading so many departments of human activity and thought be regarded as a necessary accompaniment to the rise of this almighty Arm of Bahá'u'lláh? Might we not look upon the momentous happenings which . . . have so deeply agitated every continent of the earth as ominous signs simultaneously proclaiming the agonies of a disintegrating civilization and the birth-pangs of that World Order—that Ark of human salvation—that must needs arise upon its ruins?

Excerpts from *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Further Considerations* and *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh*, in *Call to the Nations*, Chapter III.

III

THE contrast between the accumulating evidences of steady consolidation that accompany the rise of the Administrative Order of the Faith of God, and the forces of disintegration which batter at the fabric of a travailing society, is as clear as it is arresting. Both within and outside the Bahá'í world the signs and tokens which, in a mysterious manner, are heralding the birth of that World Order, the establishment of which must signalize the Golden Age of the Cause of God, are growing and multiplying day by day. No fair-minded observer can any longer fail to discern them. He cannot be misled by the painful slowness characterizing the unfoldment of the civilization which the followers of Bahá'u'lláh are labouring to establish. Nor can he be deluded by the ephemeral manifestations of returning prosperity which at times appear to be capable of checking the disruptive influence of the chronic ills afflicting the institutions of a decaying age. The signs of the times are too numerous and compelling to allow him to mistake their character or to belittle their significance. He can, if he be fair in his judgement, recognize in the chain of events which proclaim on the one hand the irresistible march of the institutions directly associated with the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and foreshadow on the other the downfall of those powers and principalities that have either ignored or opposed it—he can recognize in them all evidences of the operation of God's all-pervasive Will, the shaping of His perfectly ordered and world-embracing Plan.

"*Soon*," Bahá'u'lláh's own words proclaim it, "*will the present-day Order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead. Verily, thy Lord speaketh the truth and is the Knower of things unseen.*" "*By Myself,*" He solemnly asserts, "*the day is approaching when We will have rolled up the world and all that is therein, and spread out a new Order in its stead. He, verily, is powerful over all things.*" "*The world's equilibrium*", He explains, "*hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this Most Great, this new World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System, the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed.*" "*The signs of impending convulsions and chaos*," He warns the peoples of the world, "*can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing Order appeareth to be lamentably defective.*"...

No machinery falling short of the standard inculcated by the Bahá'í Revelation, and at variance with the sublime pattern ordained in His teachings, which the collective efforts of mankind may yet devise can ever hope to achieve anything above or beyond that "*Lesser Peace*" to which the Author of our Faith has Himself alluded in His writings. "*Now that ye have refused the Most Great Peace*," He, admonishing the kings and rulers of the earth, has written, "*hold ye fast unto this the Lesser Peace, that haply ye may in some degree better your own condition and that of your dependents.*" Expatiating on this Lesser Peace, He thus addresses in that same Tablet the rulers of the earth: "*Be reconciled among yourselves, that ye may need no more armaments save in a measure to safeguard your territories and dominions... Be united, O kings of the earth, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you, and your peoples find rest, if ye be of them that comprehend. Should any one among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice.*"

The Most Great Peace, on the other hand, as conceived by Bahá'u'lláh—a peace that must inevitably follow as the practical consequence of the spiritualization of the world and the fusion of all its races, creeds, classes and nations—can rest on no other basis, and can be preserved through no other agency, except the divinely appointed ordinances that are implicit in the World Order that stands associated with His holy name. In His

Tablet, revealed almost seventy[1] years ago to Queen Victoria, Bahá'u'lláh, alluding to this Most Great Peace, has declared: "*That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician. This, verily, is the truth, and all else naught but error*" ... "*It beseemeth all men in this Day*", He, in another Tablet, asserts, "*to take firm hold on the Most Great Name, and to establish the unity of all mankind. There is no place to flee to, no refuge that any one can seek, except Him.*"

The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, whose supreme mission is none other but the achievement of this organic and spiritual unity of the whole body of nations, should, if we be faithful to its implications, be regarded as signalizing through its advent the *coming of age of the entire human race.* It should be viewed not merely as yet another spiritual revival in the ever-changing fortunes of mankind, not only as a further stage in a chain of progressive Revelations, nor even as the culmination of one of a series of recurrent prophetic cycles, but rather as marking the last and highest stage in the stupendous evolution of man's collective life on this planet. The emergence of a world community, the consciousness of world citizenship, the founding of a world civilization and culture—all of which must synchronize with the initial stages in the unfoldment of the Golden Age of the Bahá'í Era—should, by their very nature, be regarded, as far as this planetary life is concerned, as the furthermost limits in the organization of human society, though man, as an individual, will, nay must indeed as a result of such a consummation, continue indefinitely to progress and develop.

[1] Written in 1936. Now more than a hundred. (The Tablet to Queen Victoria was written about 1870.)

That mystic, all-pervasive, yet indefinable change, which we associate with the stage of maturity inevitable in the life of the individual and the development of the fruit, must, if we would correctly apprehend the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh, have its counterpart in the evolution of the organization of human society. A similar stage must sooner or later be attained in the collective life of mankind, producing an even more striking phenomenon in world relations, and endowing the whole human race with such potentialities of well-being as shall provide, throughout the succeeding ages, the chief incentive required for the eventual fulfilment of its high destiny....

Only those who are willing to associate the Revelation proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh with the consummation of so stupendous an evolution in the collective life of the whole human race can grasp the significance of the words which He, while alluding to the glories of this promised Day and to the duration of the Bahá'í Era, has deemed fit to utter. "*This is the King of Days*," He exclaims, "*the Day that hath seen the coming of the Best-Beloved, Him Who, through all eternity, hath been acclaimed the Desire of the World.*" "*The Scriptures of past Dispensations*," He further asserts, "*celebrate the great jubilee that must needs greet this most great Day of God. Well is it with him that hath lived to see this Day and hath recognized its station.*"...

Though the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh has been delivered, the World Order which such a Revelation must needs beget is as yet unborn. Though the Heroic Age of His Faith is passed, the creative energies which that Age has released have not as yet crystallized into that world society which, in the fullness of time, is to mirror forth the brightness of His glory. Though the framework of His Administrative Order has been erected, and the Formative Period of the Bahá'í Era has begun, yet the promised Kingdom into which the seed of His institutions must ripen remains as yet uninaugurated. Though His



Detail of a column and window of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice.

Voice has been raised, and the ensigns of His Faith have been lifted up in no less than forty countries[1] of both the East and the West, yet the wholeness of the human race is as yet unrecognized, its unity unproclaimed, and the standard of its Most Great Peace unhoisted....

For the revelation of so great a favour a period of intense turmoil and widespread suffering would seem to be indispensable. Resplendent as has been the Age that has witnessed the inception of the Mission with which Bahá'u'lláh has been entrusted, the interval which must elapse ere that Age yields its choicest fruit must, it is becoming increasingly apparent, be overshadowed by such moral and social gloom as can alone prepare an unrepented humanity for the prize she is destined to inherit.

Into such a period we are now steadily and irresistibly moving. Amidst the shadows which are increasingly gathering about us we can faintly discern the glimmerings of Bahá'u'lláh's unearthly sovereignty appearing fitfully on the horizon of history. To us, the "generation of the half-light", living at a time which may be designated as the period of the incubation of the World Commonwealth envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, has been assigned a task whose high privilege we can never sufficiently appreciate, and the arduousness of which we can as yet but dimly recognize. We may well believe, we who are called upon to experience the operation of the dark forces destined to unloose a flood

[1] Written in 1936, since when the number has increased to 235, comprising 190 independent countries and 45 dependent territories.

of agonizing afflictions, that the darkest hour that must precede the dawn of the Golden Age of our Faith has not yet struck. Deep as is the gloom that already encircles the world, the afflictive ordeals which that world is to suffer are still in preparation, nor can their blackness be as yet imagined. We stand on the threshold of an age whose convulsions proclaim alike the death-pangs of the old order and the birth-pangs of the new. Through the generating influence of the Faith announced by Bahá'u'lláh this New World Order may be said to have been conceived. We can, at the present moment, experience its stirrings in the womb of a travailing age—an age waiting for the appointed hour at which it can cast its burden and yield its fairest fruit.

"*The whole earth*," writes Bahá'u'lláh, "*is now in a state of pregnancy. The day is approaching when it will have yielded its noblest fruits, when from it will have sprung forth the loftiest trees, the most enchanting blossoms, the most heavenly blessings....*"

"*The Call of God*," 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written, "*when raised, breathed a new life into the body of mankind, and infused a new spirit into the whole creation. It is for this reason that the world hath been moved to its depths, and the hearts and consciences of men been quickened. Ere long the evidences of this regeneration will be revealed, and the fast asleep will be awakened.*"...

Unification of the whole of mankind is the hallmark of the stage which human society is now approaching. Unity of family, of tribe, of city-state and nation have been successively attempted and fully established. World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving. Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and establish once for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life.

"*A new life*," Bahá'u'lláh proclaims, "*is, in this age, stirring within all the peoples of the earth; and yet none hath discovered its cause, or perceived its motive.*" "*O ye children of men*," He thus addresses His generation, "*the fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race... This is the straight path, the fixed and immovable foundation. Whatsoever is raised on this foundation, the changes and chances of the world can never impair its strength, nor will the revolution of countless centuries undermine its structure.*" "*The well-being of mankind*," He declares, "*its peace and security are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established.*" "*So powerful is the light of unity*," is His further testimony, "*that it can illuminate the whole earth. The one true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself testifieth to the truth of these words... This goal excelleth every other goal, and this aspiration is the monarch of all aspirations.*" "*He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful*," He, moreover, has written, "*cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body. Haste ye to win your share of God's good grace and mercy in this Day that eclipseth all other created days.*"

The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes are closely and permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them are definitely and completely safeguarded. This commonwealth must, as far as we can visualize it, consist of a world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all the component nations, and will enact such laws as shall be required to regulate the life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples. A world executive, backed by an international Force, will carry

out the decisions arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth. A world tribunal will adjudicate and deliver its compulsory and final verdict in all and any disputes that may arise between the various elements constituting this universal system. A mechanism of world intercommunication will be devised, embracing the whole planet, freed from national hindrances and restrictions, and functioning with marvellous swiftness and perfect regularity. A world metropolis will act as the nerve centre of a world civilization, the focus towards which the unifying forces of life will converge and from which its energizing influences will radiate. A world language will either be invented or chosen from among the existing languages and will be taught in the schools of all the federated nations as an auxiliary to their mother tongues. A world script, a world literature, a uniform and universal system of currency, of weights and measures, will simplify and facilitate intercourse and understanding among the nations and races of mankind. In such a world society, science and religion, the two most potent forces in human life, will be reconciled, will cooperate, and will harmoniously develop. The press will, under such a system, while giving full scope to the expression of the diversified views and convictions of mankind, cease to be mischievously manipulated by vested interests, whether private or public, and will be liberated from the influence of contending governments and peoples. The economic resources of the world will be organized, its sources of raw materials will be tapped and fully utilized, its markets will be co-ordinated and developed, and the distribution of its products will be equitably regulated.

National rivalries, hatreds, and intrigues will cease, and racial animosity and prejudice will be replaced by racial amity, understanding and co-operation. The causes of religious strife will be permanently removed, economic barriers and restrictions will be completely abolished, and the inordinate distinction between classes will be obliterated. Destitution on the one hand, and gross accumulation of ownership on the other, will disappear. The enormous energy dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human inventions and technical development, to the increase of the productivity of mankind, to the extermination of disease, to the extension of scientific research, to the raising of the standard of physical health, to the sharpening and refinement of the human brain, to the exploitation of the unused and unsuspected resources of the planet, to the prolongation of human life, and to the furtherance of any other agency that can stimulate the intellectual, the moral, and spiritual life of the entire human race.

A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation—such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.

Excerpts from *The Unfoldment of World Civilization*, in *Call to the Nations*, Chapter IV.

IV

AS we gaze in retrospect beyond the immediate past, and survey, in however cursory a manner, the vicissitudes afflicting an increasingly tormented society, and recall the strains and stresses to which the fabric of a dying Order has been increasingly subjected, we cannot but marvel at the sharp contrast presented, on the one hand, by the accumulated evidences of the orderly unfoldment, and the uninterrupted multiplication of the agencies, of an Administrative Order designed to be the harbinger of a world civilization, and, on the other, by the ominous manifestations of acute political conflict, of social unrest, of racial animosity, of class antagonism, of immorality and of irreligion, proclaiming, in no uncertain terms, the corruption and obsolescence of the institutions of a bankrupt Order....

"*The winds of despair*," writes Bahá'u'lláh, as He surveys the immediate destinies of mankind, "*are, alas, blowing from every direction, and the strife that divides and afflicts the human race is daily increasing....*" "*Such shall be its plight*," He, in another connection, has declared, "*that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly.*" "*These fruitless strifes*," He, on the other hand, contemplating the future of mankind, has emphatically prophesied, in the course of His memorable interview with the Persian orientalist, Edward G. Browne, "*these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come.... These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family.*"...

"*All nations and kindreds*," 'Abdu'l-Bahá likewise has written, "...*will become a single nation. Religious and sectarian antagonism, the hostility of races and peoples, and differences among nations, will be eliminated. All men will adhere to one religion, will have one common faith, will be blended into one race, and become a single people. All will dwell in one common fatherland, which is the planet itself.*"

What we witness at the present time, during "this gravest crisis in the history of civilization," recalling such times in which "religions have perished and are born," is the adolescent stage in the slow and painful evolution of humanity, preparatory to the attainment of the stage of manhood, the stage of maturity, the promise of which is embedded in the teachings, and enshrined in the prophecies of Bahá'u'lláh. The tumult of this age of transition is characteristic of the impetuosity and irrational instincts of youth, its follies, its prodigality, its pride, its self-assurance, its rebelliousness, and contempt of discipline.

The ages of its infancy and childhood are past, never again to return, while the Great Age, the consummation of all ages, which must signalize the coming of age of the entire human race, is yet to come. The convulsions of this transitional and most turbulent period in the annals of humanity are the essential prerequisites, and herald of the inevitable approach, of that Age of Ages, "*the time of the end*," in which the folly and tumult of strife that has, since the dawn of history, blackened the annals of mankind, will have been finally transmuted into the wisdom and the tranquillity of an undisturbed, a universal, and lasting peace, in which the discord and separation of the children of men will have given way to the worldwide reconciliation, and the complete unification of the divers elements that constitute human society.

This will indeed be the fitting climax of that process of integration which, starting with the family, the smallest unit in the scale of human organization, must, after having called successively into being the tribe, the city-state, and the nation, continue to operate until it culminates in the unification of the whole world, the final object and the crowning glory of human evolution on this planet. It is this stage which humanity, willingly or

unwillingly, is resistlessly approaching. It is for this stage that this vast, this fiery ordeal which humanity is experiencing is mysteriously paving the way. It is with this stage that the fortunes and the purpose of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh are indissolubly linked. It is the creative energies which His Revelation has released... that have instilled into humanity the capacity to attain this final stage in its organic and collective evolution. It is with the Golden Age of His Dispensation that the consummation of this process will be forever associated. It is the structure of His New World Order, now stirring in the womb of the administrative institutions He Himself has created, that will serve both as a pattern and a nucleus of that world commonwealth which is the sure, the inevitable destiny of the peoples and nations of the earth.

Just as the organic evolution of mankind has been slow and gradual, and involved successively the unification of the family, the tribe, the city-state, and the nation, so has the light vouchsafed by the Revelation of God, at various stages in the evolution of religion, and reflected in the successive Dispensations of the past, been slow and progressive. Indeed the measure of Divine Revelation, in every age, has been adapted to, and commensurate with, the degree of social progress achieved in that age by a constantly-evolving humanity.

"*It hath been decreed by Us*," explains Bahá'u'lláh, "*that the Word of God, and all the potentialities thereof, shall be manifested unto men in strict conformity with such conditions as have been fore-ordained by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise... Should the Word be allowed to release suddenly all the energies latent within it, no man could sustain the weight of so mighty a Revelation.*" "*All created things*," 'Abdu'l-Bahá, elucidating this truth, has affirmed, "*have their degree or stage of maturity. The period of maturity in the life of a tree is the time of its fruit-bearing.... The animal attains a stage of full growth and completeness, and in the human kingdom man reaches his maturity when the light of his intelligence attains its greatest power and development.... Similarly there are periods and stages in the collective life of humanity. At one time it was passing through its stage of childhood, at another its period of youth, but now it has entered its long-predicted phase of maturity, the evidences of which are everywhere apparent.... That which was applicable to human needs during the early history of the race can neither meet nor satisfy the demands of this day, this period of newness and consummation. Humanity has emerged from its former state of limitation and preliminary training. Man must now become imbued with new virtues and powers, new moral standards, new capacities. New bounties, perfect bestowals, are awaiting and already descending upon him. The gifts and blessings of the period of youth, although timely and sufficient during the adolescence of mankind, are now incapable of meeting the requirements of its maturity.*"...

This is the stage which the world is now approaching, the stage of world unity, which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá assures us, will, in this century, be securely established. "*The Tongue of Grandeur*," Bahá'u'lláh Himself affirms, "*hath... in the Day of His Manifestation proclaimed: 'It is not his to boast who loveth his country, but it is his who loveth the world.'*" "*Through the power,*" He adds, "*released by these exalted words He hath lent a fresh impulse, and set a new direction, to the birds of men's hearts, and hath obliterated every trace of restriction and limitation from God's Holy Book.*"

A word of warning should, however, be uttered in this connection. The love of one's country, instilled and stressed by the teaching of Islám, as "*an element of the Faith of God*," has not, through this declaration, this clarion-call of Bahá'u'lláh, been either condemned or disparaged. It should not, indeed it cannot, be construed as a repudiation, or regarded in the light of a censure pronounced against a sane and intelligent patriotism, nor

does it seek to undermine the allegiance and loyalty of any individual to his country, nor does it conflict with the legitimate aspirations, rights, and duties of any individual state or nation. All it does imply and proclaim is the insufficiency of patriotism, in view of the fundamental changes effected in the economic life of society and the interdependence of the nations, and as the consequence of the contraction of the world, through the revolution in the means of transportation and communication—conditions that did not and could not exist either in the days of Jesus Christ or of Muḥammad. It calls for a wider loyalty, which should not, and indeed does not, conflict with lesser loyalties. It instills a love which, in view of its scope, must include and not exclude the love of one's own country. It lays, through this loyalty which it inspires, and this love which it infuses, the only foundation on which the concept of world citizenship can thrive, and the structure of world unification can rest. It does insist, however, on the subordination of national considerations and particularistic interests to the imperative and paramount claims of humanity as a whole, inasmuch as in a world of interdependent nations and peoples the advantage of the part is best to be reached by the advantage of the whole.

The world is, in truth, moving on towards its destiny. The interdependence of the peoples and nations of the earth, whatever the leaders of the divisive forces of the world may say or do, is already an accomplished fact. Its unity in the economic sphere is now understood and recognized. The welfare of the part means the welfare of the whole, and the distress of the part brings distress to the whole. The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh has, in His own words, "*lent a fresh impulse and set a new direction*" to this vast process now operating in the world. The fires lit by this great ordeal are the consequences of men's failure to recognize it. They are, moreover, hastening its consummation. Adversity, prolonged, world-wide, afflictive, allied to chaos and universal destruction, must needs convulse the nations, stir the conscience of the world, disillusion the masses, precipitate a radical change in the very conception of society, and coalesce ultimately the disjointed, the bleeding limbs of mankind into one body, single, organically united, and indivisible.

To the general character, the implications and features of this world commonwealth, destined to emerge, sooner or later, out of the carnage, agony, and havoc of this great world convulsion, I have already referred in my previous communications. Suffice it to say that this consummation will, by its very nature, be a gradual process, and must, as Bahá'u'lláh has Himself anticipated, lead at first to the establishment of that Lesser Peace which the nations of the earth, as yet unconscious of His Revelation and yet unwittingly enforcing the general principles which He has enunciated, will themselves establish. This momentous and historic step, involving the reconstruction of mankind, as the result of the universal recognition of its oneness and wholeness, will bring in its wake the spiritualization of the masses, consequent to the recognition of the character, and the acknowledgment of the claims, of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh—the essential condition to that ultimate fusion of all races, creeds, classes, and nations which must signalize the emergence of His New World Order.

Then will the coming of age of the entire human race be proclaimed and celebrated by all the peoples and nations of the earth. Then will the banner of the Most Great Peace be hoisted. Then will the worldwide sovereignty of Bahá'u'lláh—the Establisher of the Kingdom of the Father foretold by the Son, and anticipated by the Prophets of God before Him and after Him—be recognized, acclaimed, and firmly established. Then will a world civilization be born, flourish, and perpetuate itself, a civilization with a fullness of life such as the world has never seen nor can as yet conceive. Then will the Everlasting Covenant be fulfilled in its completeness.

Then will the promise enshrined in all the Books of God be redeemed, and all the prophecies uttered by the Prophets of old come to pass, and the vision of seers and poets be realized. Then will the planet, galvanized through the universal belief of its dwellers in one God, and their allegiance to one common Revelation, mirror, within the limitations imposed upon it, the effulgent glories of the sovereignty of Bahá'u'lláh, shining in the plenitude of its splendor in the Abhá Paradise, and be made the footstool of His Throne on high, and acclaimed as the earthly heaven, capable of fulfilling that ineffable destiny fixed for it, from time immemorial, by the love and wisdom of its Creator.

Not ours, puny mortals that we are, to attempt, at so critical a stage in the long and checkered history of mankind, to arrive at a precise and satisfactory understanding of the steps which must successively lead a bleeding humanity, wretchedly oblivious of its God, and careless of Bahá'u'lláh, from its calvary to its ultimate resurrection. Not ours, the living witnesses of the all-subduing potency of His Faith, to question, for a moment, and however dark the misery that enshrouds the world, the ability of Bahá'u'lláh to forge, with the hammer of His Will, and through the fire of tribulation, upon the anvil of this travailing age, and in the particular shape His mind has envisioned, these scattered and mutually destructive fragments into which a perverse world has fallen, into one single unit, solid and indivisible, able to execute His design for the children of men.

Ours rather the duty, however confused the scene, however dismal the present outlook, however circumscribed the resources we dispose of, to labour serenely, confidently, and unremittingly to lend our share of assistance, in whichever way circumstances may enable us, to the operation of the forces which, as marshalled and directed by Bahá'u'lláh, are leading humanity out of the valley of misery and shame to the loftiest summits of power and glory.

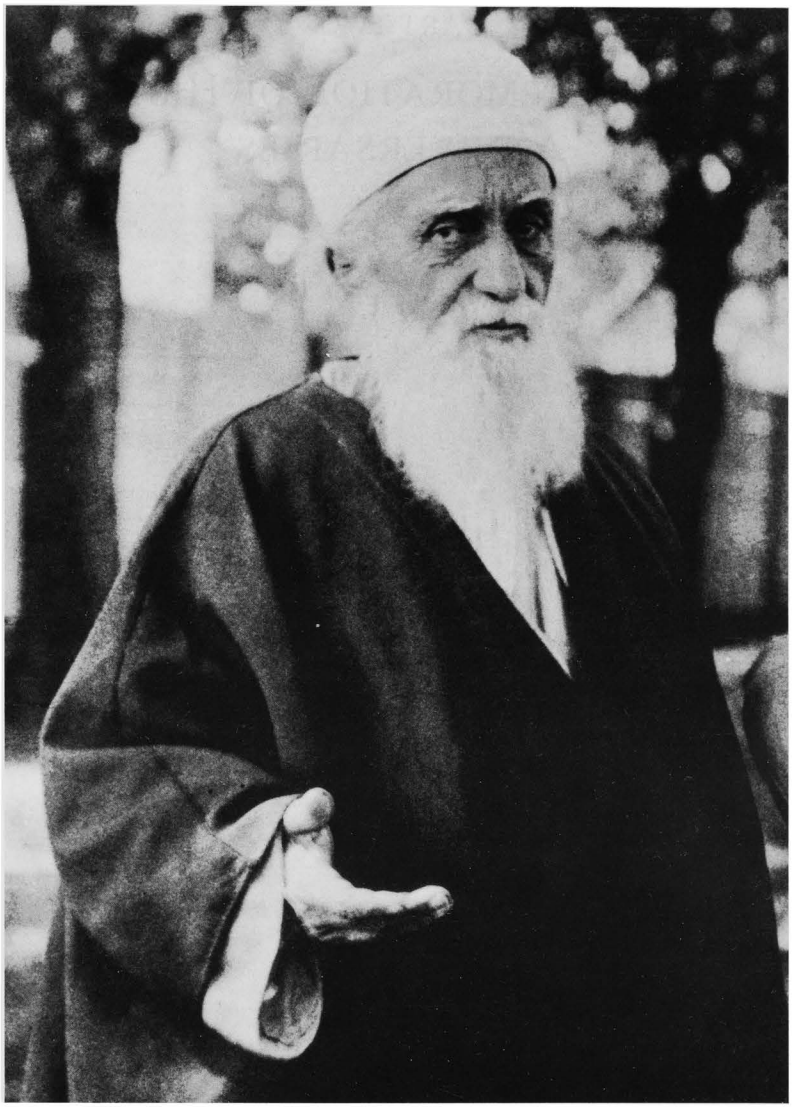
Excerpts from *Messages to the Bahá'í World* and *The Promised Day is Come* in *Call to the Nations*, Chapter V.



The Resting Place of Shoghi Effendi, in the Great Northern Cemetery, London, England.

PART TWO

THE COMMEMORATION OF HISTORIC ANNIVERSARIES



'Abdu'l-Bahá—the Master—in New York City; June 1912.

I

THE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S VISIT TO THE WEST

1. THE VISIT OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ TO THE WEST

SHERNA DEAMER

IN September 1910, 'Abdu'l-Bahá—the Head of the Bahá'í Faith—left His home in the Holy Land and traveled first to Egypt, and then to the West, visiting England and Scotland, France, Germany, Hungary, Austria and Switzerland, and the United States of America and Canada. His journey lasted for three years, and everywhere He went He proclaimed the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh through word and through deed.

"'Abdu'l-Bahá was at this time broken in health", His grandson, Shoghi Effendi, tells us.

> He suffered from several maladies brought on by the strains and stresses of a tragic life spent almost wholly in exile and imprisonment. He was on the threshold of three-score years and ten. Yet as soon as He was released from His forty-year long captivity... He arose with sublime courage, confidence and resolution to consecrate what little strength remained to Him, in the evening of His life, to a service of such heroic proportions that no parallel to it is to be found in the annals of the first Bahá'í century.[1]

He spent almost a year in Egypt, first in Port Said, and then in a residence in Ramleh, a suburb of Alexandria, later visiting Zaytún and Cairo. On 11 August 1911 He sailed with a party of four to Marseilles, and proceeded, after brief stays at Thonon-les-Bains and Geneva, to London, where He arrived on 4 September. A follower of Bahá'u'lláh —Sara Louisa, Lady Blomfield, whom 'Abdu'l-Bahá called Sitárih Khánum—put her apartment at 97 Cadogan Gardens at His disposal. "He arrived, and who shall picture Him?" she asks.

> A silence as of love and awe overcame us, as we looked at Him; the gracious figure, clothed in a simple white garment, over which was a light-coloured Persian 'abá; on His head He wore a low-crowned táj, round which was folded a small, fine-linen turban of purest white; His hair and short beard were of that snowy whiteness which had once been black; His eyes were large, blue-grey with long, black lashes and well-marked eyebrows; His face was a beautiful oval with warm, ivory-coloured skin, a straight, finely-modelled nose, and firm, kind mouth. These are merely outside details by which an attempt is made to convey an idea of His arresting personality. His figure was of such perfect symmetry, and so full of dignity and grace, that the first impression was that of considerable height. He seemed an incarnation of loving

[1] Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987), p. 279.

understanding, of compassion and power, of wisdom and authority, of strength, and of a buoyant youthfulness, which somehow defied the burden of His years; and such years! One saw, as in a clear vision, that He had so wrought all good and mercy that the inner grace of Him had grown greater than all outer sign, and the radiance of this inner glory shone in every glance, and word, and movement as He came with hands outstretched. 'I am very much pleased with you all. Your love has drawn me to London. I waited forty years in prison to bring the Message to you. Are you pleased to receive such a guest?'[1]

'Abdu'l-Bahá gave the Message of the Bahá'í Faith, in eloquent and unequivocal terms, in a number of public talks during His stay in England. The first was from the pulpit of the City Temple in Holborn on 10 September 1911, at the invitation of the Reverend R. J. Campbell. "Oh Noble friends; seekers after God!", He began:

Praise be to God! Today the light of Truth is shining upon the world in its abundance; the breezes of the heavenly garden are blowing throughout all regions; the call of the Kingdom is heard in all lands, and the breath of the Holy Spirit is felt in all hearts that are faithful... The sea of the unity of mankind is lifting up its waves with joy, for there is real communication between the hearts and minds of men. The banner of the Holy Spirit is uplifted, and men see it, and are assured with the knowledge that this is a new day. 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 the sons of men and of the drawing together of all races and all classes. You are loosed from ancient superstitions which have kept men ignorant, destroying the foundation of true humanity. The gift of God to this enlightened age is the knowledge of the oneness of mankind and of the fundamental oneness of religion. War shall cease between nations, and by the will of God the Most Great Peace shall come; the world will be seen as a new world, and all men will live as brothers.[2]

This was a powerful call to the West to recognize the new Light from the East and He expanded His theme when addressing the congregation of St. John the Divine, at Westminster, at the request of the Venerable Archdeacon Wilberforce. He spoke to the Theosophical Society at their headquarters, at the express request of their president, and also to a meeting at the Higher Thought Centre in London.

From the point of view of His hostess, however, "The history of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's stay in our house lies in the relating of various incidents, connected with individuals, who stand out from amongst the crowd of those persons who eagerly sought His Presence".

Oh, these pilgrims, these guests, these visitors! Remembering those days, our ears are filled with the sound of their footsteps—as they came from every country in the world! Every day, all day long, a constant stream. An interminable procession! Ministers and missionaries, Oriental scholars and occult students, practical men of affairs and mystics, Anglican-Catholics and Nonconformists, Theosophists and Hindus, Christian Scientists and doctors of medicine, Muslims, Buddhists, and Zoroastrians. There also called: politicians, Salvation Army soldiers, and other workers for human good, women suffragists, journalists, writers,

[1] Blomfield, Lady, *The Chosen Highway* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1967), pp. 149–150. For editorial consistency, the personal pronouns related to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in this and other old texts quoted in the article have all been capitalized.

[2] *'Abdu'l-Bahá in London; Addresses and Notes of Conversations* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), pp. 19–20.

poets and healers, dressmakers and great ladies, artists and artisans, poor workless people and prosperous merchants, members of the dramatic and musical world, these all came; and none were too lowly, nor too great, to receive the sympathetic consideration of this holy Messenger, who was ever giving His life for others' good.[1]

"He rose very early, chanted prayers, took tea, wrote Tablets, and dictated others," Lady Blomfield tells us. "He then received those who flocked to see Him, some arriving soon after dawn, patiently waiting on the doorsteps until the door would be opened for their entrance." These visitors were received individually, or by twos or threes. "Then, about nine o'clock, He would come into the dining room whilst we were at breakfast to greet us. 'Are you well? Did you sleep well?'"

Certain of those who thronged to see the Master, having travelled from far countries, were naturally anxious to spend every possible moment with Him... Therefore it came about that day after day, whilst the Master was teaching, the luncheon gong would sound, and those who remained would be invited to sit at food with Him. We grew to expect that there would be nineteen guests at table, so often did this number recur. These were much-prized times; 'Abdu'l-Bahá would continue the interrupted discourse, or tell some anecdote, often humorous, meanwhile frequently serving the guests with His own hands, offering sweets, or choosing various fruits to distribute to the friends.[2]

At the invitation of the Lord Mayor of London, 'Abdu'l-Bahá breakfasted with him at the Mansion House. On another occasion,

He sat in the bow window in the afternoon sunshine, His arm round a very ragged but very happy little boy who had come to ask for sixpence for his money box and for his invalid mother, whilst round Him in the room were gathered men and women discussing Education, Socialism, the first Reform Bill, and the relation of submarines and wireless telegraphy to the new era on which man is entering.[3]

One day after a meeting when, as usual, many people had crowded round Him, 'Abdu'l-Bahá arrived home very tired. We were sad at heart that He should be so fatigued, and bewailed the many steps to be ascended to the flat. Suddenly, to our amazement, the Master ran up the stairs to the top very quickly without stopping. He looked down at us as we walked up after Him, saying with a bright smile, from which all traces of fatigue had vanished: 'You are all very old! I am very young!' Seeing me full of wonder, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: 'Through the power of Bahá'u'lláh all things can be done. I have just used that power.' That was the only time we had ever seen Him use that power for Himself, and I feel that He did so then to cheer and comfort us, as we were really sad concerning His fatigue. Might it not also have been to show us an example of the great Reserve of Divine Force always available for those of us who are working in various ways in the 'Path of the Love of God and of Mankind.' A celestial strength which reinforces us when our human strength fails.[4]

Another lesson was given to the friends as they walked with 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Richmond Park "as the evening light was waning. Rows of shining lamps beneath the trees, stretching as far as our eyes could see into the distance, made that part of London into a glowing fairyland."

'I am very much pleased with this scene. Light is good, most good. There was much darkness in the prison at 'Akká,' said the Master.

Our hearts were sad as we thought on those sombre years within that dismal fortress... When we said 'We are glad... that

[1] *The Chosen Highway*, pp. 150–151.
[2] ibid. p. 161.
[3] *God Passes By*, p. 285.
[4] *The Chosen Highway*, p. 169.



'Abdu'l-Bahá in Passmore Edwards Settlement Hall, London, England; 29 September 1911.

you are free', He said: 'Freedom is not a matter of place, but of condition. I was happy in that prison, for those days were passed in the path of service. To me prison was freedom. Troubles are a rest to me. Death is life. To be despised is honour. Therefore was I full of happiness all through that prison time. When one is released from the prison of self, that is indeed freedom! For self is the greatest prison. When this release takes place, one can never be imprisoned. Unless one accepts dire vicissitudes, not with dull resignation, but with radiant acquiescence, one cannot attain this freedom.'[1]

Lady Blomfield recorded a number of stories such as these, but, she wrote, "There is a note in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's character that has not been emphasized, and without which no idea of Him is complete. The impressive dignity which distinguishes His presence and bearing is occasionally lighted by a delicate and tactful humour, which is as unaffected as it is infectious and delightful." She continued:

> On His last afternoon in London, a reporter called to ask Him of His future plans... When, in answer to this query, 'Abdu'l-Bahá told in perfect English of His intention to visit Paris and go from there to Alexandria, the press representative evinced surprise at His faultless pronunciation. Thereupon 'Abdu'l-Bahá proceeded to march with a free stride up and down the flower-scented drawing room, His Oriental garb contrasting strangely with His modern surroundings; and, to the amusement of the assembly, uttered a string of elaborate English words, [including 'hippopotamus', H.M. Balyuzi tells us on p.155 of his book about 'Abdu'l-Bahá[2]] laughingly ending, 'Very difficult English words I speak!'

[1] *The Chosen Highway*, p. 166.

On 3 October 'Abdu'l-Bahá was scheduled to leave for Paris. The secretaries and friends were ready to start for the train, but 'Abdu'l-Bahá sat calmly writing. When reminded that it was time to leave, He looked up, saying: "There are things of more importance than trains," and He continued to write.

> Suddenly in breathless haste a man came in, carrying in his hand a beautiful garland of fragrant white flowers. Bowing low before the Master, he said: 'In the name of the disciples of Zoroaster, The Pure One, I hail Thee as the "Promised Sháh Bahrám"!' Then the man, for a sign, garlanded 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and proceeded to anoint each and all of the amazed friends who were present with precious oil, which had the odour of fresh roses. This brief but impressive ceremony concluded, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, having carefully divested Himself of the garland, departed for the train. We had witnessed a solemn act in the Mysterious Sacred Drama of the World. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's sojourn in London was ended. We stood bereft of His presence.[1]

In Paris, an apartment was found for 'Abdu'l-Bahá by Hippolyte and Laura Dreyfus-Barney at 4 avenue de Camoëns, adjacent to the Trocadéro Gardens where the Master often took solitary, restful walks. As in London, every morning,

> the Master expounded the principles of the Teaching of Bahá'u'lláh to those who gathered round Him, the learned and the unlearned, eager and respectful. They were of all nationalities and creeds, from the East and from the West, including Theosophists, agnostics, materialists, spiritualists, Christian Scientists, social reformers, Hindus, Súfís, Muslims, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, and many others. Often came workers in various humanitarian societies, who were striving to reduce the miseries of the poor. These received special sympathy and blessing...
>
> The visit of one man made a profound impression upon us: 'O 'Abdu'l-Bahá, I have come from the French Congo, where I have been engaged in mitigating the hardships of some of the natives. For sixteen years I have worked in that country.' *'It was a great comfort to me in the darkness of my prison to know the work which you were doing.'*[2]

Horace Holley, who was an eyewitness, was quoted as saying that "As London emphasized the social and spiritual aspects of Bahaism, so Paris revealed its intellectual content and unparalleled power of definition."[3] One reality 'Abdu'l-Bahá clearly defined is that man—the true man—is soul, not body. For example, on 17 November 'Abdu'l-Bahá told the friends:

> There are in the world of humanity three degrees; those of the body, the soul, and spirit. The body is the physical or animal degree of man. From the bodily point of view man is a sharer of the animal kingdom....unlike the animal, man has a rational soul, the human intelligence. This intelligence of man is the intermediary between his body and his spirit....Illumined by the spirit through the instrumentality of the soul, man's radiant intelligence makes him the crowning-point of Creation. But on the other hand, when man does not open his mind and heart to the blessing of the spirit, but turns his soul towards the material side, towards the bodily part of his nature, then he is fallen from his high place and he becomes inferior to the inhabitants of the lower animal kingdom.[4]

As events brought closer the outbreak of the first World War, 'Abdu'l-Bahá also described the causes of war in no uncertain terms. For example, on 21 October, 'Abdu'l-Bahá told the friends that "The news of the Battle of Benghazi grieves my heart. I wonder

[2] Balyuzi, H.M., *'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1987), p. 155.

[1] *The Chosen Highway*, pp. 173–174.

[2] *The Chosen Highway*, p. 181.

[3] *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 159.

[4] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1972), pp. 96–97.

at the human savagery that still exists in the world!" He continued:

> How is it possible for men to fight from morning until evening, killing each other, shedding the blood of their fellowmen: And for what object? To gain possession of a part of the earth!... However great the conqueror, however many countries he may reduce to slavery, he is unable to retain any part of these devastated lands but one tiny portion—his tomb! ... But war is made for the satisfaction of men's ambition; for the sake of worldly gain to the few, terrible misery is brought to numberless homes, breaking the hearts of hundreds of men and women! How many widows mourn their husbands, how many stories of savage cruelty do we hear! How many little orphaned children are crying for their dead fathers, how many women are weeping for their slain sons! There is nothing so heart-breaking and terrible as an outburst of human savagery![1]

The Japanese Ambassador to Madrid, Viscount Arawaka, and his wife were in Paris at the same time as 'Abdu'l-Bahá and were told of His presence. They were anxious to meet Him, but the wife of the Ambassador had a severe cold and could not go out. Upon hearing this, 'Abdu'l-Bahá offered to call upon them. Accordingly, they met in the Tapestry Room of the Hotel d'Jéna.

> 'Abdu'l-Bahá talked with the Ambassador and his wife of conditions in Japan, of the great international importance of that country, of the vast service to mankind, of the work for the abolition of war, of the need for improving conditions of life for the worker, of the necessity of educating girls and boys equally. 'The religious ideal is the soul of all plans for the good of mankind. Religion must never be used as a tool by party politicians. God's politics are mighty, man's politics are feeble.' Speaking of religion and science, the two great wings with which the bird of humankind is able to soar, He said: 'Scientific discoveries have increased material civilization. There is in existence a stupendous force, as yet, happily, undiscovered by man. Let us supplicate God, the Beloved, that this force be not discovered by science until spiritual civilization shall dominate the human mind. In the hands of men of lower material nature, this power would be able to destroy the whole earth.'[2]

This is a very prescient and profound statement considering Japan's later experience in the second World War.

But 'Abdu'l-Bahá did not dwell on the ills of the world around Him. Rather, He focussed His audiences on the prescription for remedying those ills. "All true healing comes from God!" He told His audience on 19 October. "There are two causes for sickness, one is material, the other spiritual. If the sickness is of the body, a material remedy is needed, if of the soul, a spiritual remedy."[3] Bahá'u'lláh had come to bring the spiritual remedy that humanity needs for this Day.

During His last public talk in England, to the Theosophical Society, on 30 September, He had for the first time made a systematic presentation of some of the basic principles of the Faith of His Father; in Paris He presented them again and again. Shoghi Effendi summarized these as follows:

> The independent search after truth, unfettered by superstition or tradition; the oneness of the entire human race, the pivotal principle and fundamental doctrine of the Faith; the basic unity of all religions; the condemnation of all forms of prejudice, whether religious, racial, class or national; the harmony which must exist between religion and science; the equality of men and women, the two wings on

[1] ibid. pp. 28–29.

[2] *The Chosen Highway*, pp. 183–184.

[3] *Paris Talks*, p. 19.

which the bird of human kind is able to soar; the introduction of compulsory education; the adoption of a universal auxiliary language; the abolition of the extremes of wealth and poverty; the institution of a world tribunal for the adjudication of disputes between nations; the exaltation of work, performed in the spirit of service, to the rank of worship; the glorification of justice as the ruling principle in human society, and of religion as a bulwark for the protection of all peoples and nations; and the establishment of a permanent and universal peace as the supreme goal of all mankind...[1]

"The words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá can be put on to paper," Lady Blomfield wrote, "but how to describe the smile, the earnest pleading, the loving-kindness, the radiant vitality, and at times the awe-inspiring authority of His spoken words? The vibrations of His voice seemed to enfold the listeners in an atmosphere of the Spirit, and to penetrate to the very core of being. We were experiencing the transforming radiance of the Sun of Truth; henceforth, material aims and unworthy ambitions shrank away into their trivial, obscure retreats."[2]

In formal talks in Paris, 'Abdu'l-Bahá continued to use the "unparalleled power of definition" of the Bahá'í Faith to explain the human mind, body, spirit, and soul, the Holy Spirit, God, and the relationship between all of these. With individuals He went from the general to the specific, such as the evening an artist was presented to Him in the home of Monsieur and Madame Dreyfus-Barney:

'Thou art very welcome. I am happy to see thee. All true art is a gift of the Holy Spirit.' 'What is the Holy Spirit?' 'It is the Sun of Truth, O Artist.' 'Where, where, is the Sun of Truth?' 'The Sun of Truth is everywhere, It is shining on the whole world.' 'What of the dark night, when the Sun is not shining?' 'The darkness of night is past, the Sun has risen.' 'But, Master, how shall it be with the blinded eyes that cannot see the Sun's splendour? And what of the deaf ears that cannot hear those who praise its beauty?' 'I will pray that the blind eyes may be opened, that the deaf ears may be unstopped, and that the hearts may have grace to understand.' As 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke, the troubled mien of the artist gave place to a look of relief, satisfied understanding, joyous emotion.[3]

"It was of great interest", Lady Blomfield wrote, "to notice the effect the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá had upon some children. One little girl whispered, 'Look, that is Jesus when He was old.' Perhaps their unstained nature sensed the breath of holiness which was always with Him, and caused these little ones to liken Him to the most Holy One of Whom they were conscious."[4]

This effect was dramatically displayed two days before the close of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit in Paris, when a woman came hurriedly into the gathering at the avenue de Camoëns:

Oh, how glad I am to be in time! I must tell you the amazing reason of my hurried journey from America. One day, my little girl astonished me by saying: 'Mummy, if dear Lord Jesus was in the world now, what would you do?' ... 'I would feel like getting on to the first train and going to Him as fast as I could.' 'Well, Mummy, He *is* in the world.' ...'What do you mean, my precious? How do you know?' I said. 'He told me Himself, so of course He *is* in the world.' Full of wonder, I thought: Is this a sacred message which is being given to me out of the mouth of my babe? And I prayed that it might be made clear to me. The next day she said, insistently and as though she could not understand: 'Mummy, darlin', why isn't you gone to see Lord Jesus? He's told me

[1] *God Passes By*, pp. 281–282.
[2] *The Chosen Highway*, p. 181.
[3] ibid. p. 182.
[4] ibid. p. 186.



'Abdu'l-Bahá with Bahá'í friends in Lincoln Park, Chicago, Illinois, on 3 May 1912.

two times that He is really here, in the world.' 'Tiny love, Mummy doesn't know where He is, how could she find Him?' ... I was naturally perturbed. The same afternoon, being out for a walk with my child, she suddenly stood still and cried out, 'There He is! There He is!' She was trembling with excitement and pointing at the windows of a magazine store where there was a picture of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. I bought the paper, found this address, caught a boat that same night, and here I am.[1]

"The reader will understand that it is impossible to find fitting words for the thoughts and feelings which were with us in those Paris days", Lady Blomfield concludes.[2]

From France, 'Abdu'l-Bahá returned to Egypt in December 1911 where He again took up His residence in Ramleh.

In the course of His several visits to Egypt He had more than one interview with the Khedive, 'Abbas Ḥilmí Páshá II, was introduced to Lord Kitchener, met the Muftí, Shaykh Muḥammad Bakhít, as well as the Khedive's Imám, Shaykh Muḥammad Ráshid, and associated with several 'ulamás, páshás, Persian notables, members of the Turkish Parliament, editors of leading newspapers in Cairo and Alexandria, and other leaders and representatives of well-known institutions, both religious and secular.[3]

'Abdu'l-Bahá embarked on His second journey to the West on the steamship Cedric, setting out on 25 March 1912 and sailing via Naples direct to New York. He arrived in America on 11 April.

He comes on a mission of international peace, to attend and address the Peace Conference at Lake Mohonk the latter part of this month, and to address various

[1] ibid. pp. 185–186.
[2] ibid. p. 187.
[3] *God Passes By*, p. 283.

peace meetings, educational societies, religious organizations, etc.', wrote Wendell Phillips Dodge, a reporter for the New York City News Association, who boarded the Cedric at quarantine and interviewed 'Abdu'l-Bahá coming up the bay. The story was given to all of the New York newspapers and, through the Associated Press, was sent to newspapers throughout the world.[1]

Indeed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke of world peace during His first public address in America, given only three days after His arrival to the congregation of the Church of the Ascension in New York City.

> Today the world of humanity is in need of international unity and conciliation. To establish these great fundamental principles a propelling power is needed. It is self-evident that the unity of the human world and the Most Great Peace cannot be accomplished through material means. They cannot be established through political power, for the political interests of nations are various and the policies of peoples are divergent and conflicting. They cannot be founded through racial or patriotic power, for these are human powers, selfish and weak. The very nature of racial differences and patriotic prejudices prevents the realization of this unity and agreement. Therefore, it is evidenced that the promotion of the oneness of the kingdom of humanity, which is the essence of the teachings of all the Manifestations of God, is impossible except through the divine power and breaths of the Holy Spirit. Other powers are too weak and are incapable of accomplishing this.
>
> For man two wings are necessary. One wing is physical power and material civilization; the other is spiritual power and divine civilization. With one wing only, flight is impossible. Two wings are essential. Therefore, no matter how much material civilization advances, it cannot attain to perfection except through the uplift of spiritual civilization.[2]

'Abdu'l-Bahá proclaimed the message of universal peace from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast of North America and back again. For eight months He traveled, often having as His hostess Grace Robarts, a teacher of domestic science in a college in Canada. He would ask her to go ahead and secure an apartment for Him and prepare it for His arrival. Then she would serve as housekeeper and hostess. "She kept the home immaculate," we are told, "and always ready for the constant stream of guests from morning to night, Bahá'ís and enquirers and souls in difficulty to whom 'Abdu'l-Bahá was always the loving Father."[3]

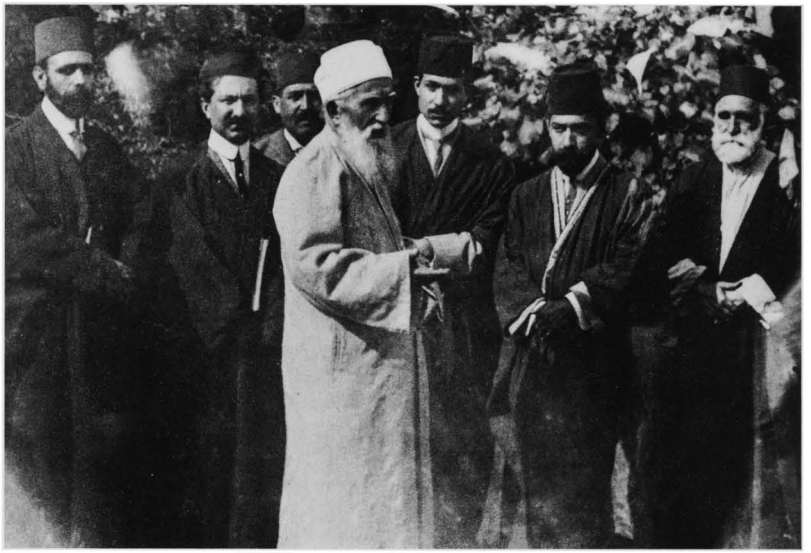
Volumes have and will continue to be written about the activities of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in America, but in *God Passes By* Shoghi Effendi selects seven which he states fully demonstrate the importance of that visit:

> The laying with His own hands, of the dedication stone of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, by the shore of Lake Michigan ... the dynamic affirmation by Him of the implications of the Covenant instituted by Bahá'u'lláh, following the reading of the newly translated Tablet of the Branch, in a general assembly of His followers in New York ... the moving ceremony in Inglewood, California, marking His special pilgrimage to the grave of Thornton Chase, the 'first American believer,' and indeed the first to embrace the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh in the Western world; the symbolic Feast He Himself offered to a large gathering of His disciples assembled in the open air ... at West Englewood, in New Jersey; the blessing He bestowed on the Open Forum at Green Acre, in Maine... which was to evolve into one of the first Bahá'í summer schools of the Western Hemisphere ... His address to an

[1] *Star of the West*, vol. III, no. 3, p. 1 (28 April 1912).

[2] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), pp. 11–12.

[3] *The Bahá'í World*, vol. VIII (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1942), p. 658.



'Abdu'l-Bahá in Brooklyn, New York, in June 1912 with His secretary, Mírzá Maḥmúd-i-Zarqání, His translators Aḥmad Sohráb and Amín'ulláh Faríd, and His companions 'Alí-Akbar Nakhjaváni, Valiyu'lláh Varqá and Siyyid Asadu'lláh Qumi.

audience of several hundred attending the last session of the newly-founded Bahá'í Temple Unity held in Chicago; and, last but not least, the exemplary act He performed by uniting in wedlock two of His followers of different nationalities, one of the white, the other of the Negro race.[1]

'Abdu'l-Bahá laid the cornerstone of the first Bahá'í House of Worship of the West on 1 May 1912, in Wilmette, Illinois.

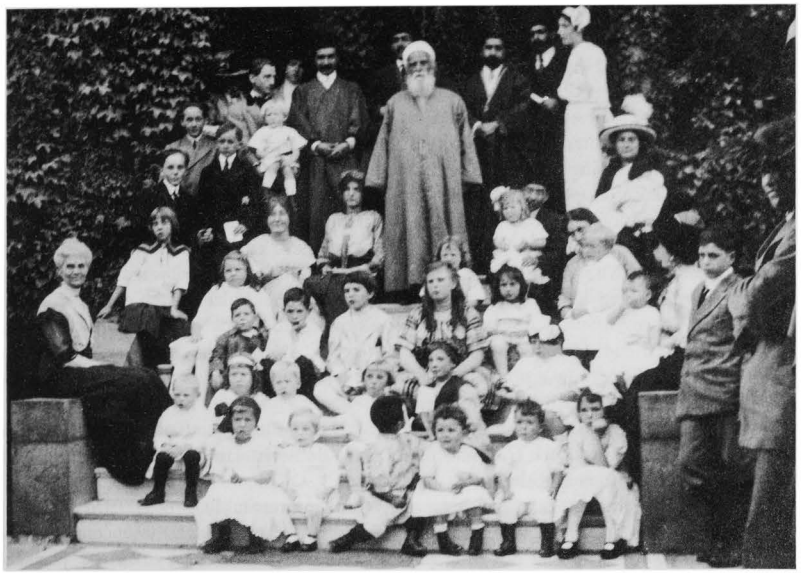
> For the doing of the first work a golden trowel was presented... 'Abdu'l-Bahá next called for the implements necessitated by the gravelly nature of the soil, and in response there was brought to Him first an axe and then a shovel. With these tools of the everyday life of the workers of the world 'Abdu'l-Bahá and friends from every race present, excavated a resting place for a stone which had been brought to the spot as a loving contribution... It was truly a symbolic seed sowing for countless of thousands of similar loving contributions...[2]

The second act highlighted by Shoghi Effendi—the affirmation by 'Abdu'l-Bahá of the implications of the Covenant instituted by Bahá'u'lláh—took place in New York City. The Tablet of the Branch revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople, had recently been translated, and read, in part:

> *There hath branched from the Sadratu'l-Muntahá this sacred and glorious Being, this Branch of Holiness; well is it with him that hath sought His shelter and abideth beneath His shadow. Verily the Limb of the Law of God hath sprung forth from this Root which God hath firmly implanted in the Ground of His Will, and Whose Branch hath been so uplifted as to encompass the whole of creation... Render thanks unto*

[1] *God Passes By*, p. 288.

[2] *Star of the West*, vol. III, no. 4, p. 6 (17 May 1912).



'Abdu'l-Bahá in Oakland, California, at a meeting with the friends at the home of Helen S. Goodall, 12 October 1912.

> *God, O people, for His appearance; for verily He is the most great Favor unto you, the most perfect bounty upon you; and through Him every mouldering bone is quickened. Whoso turneth towards Him hath turned towards God, and whoso turneth away from Him hath turned away from My Beauty, hath repudiated My Proof, and transgressed against Me. He is the Trust of God amongst you, His charge within you, His manifestation unto you and His appearance among His favored servants...*[1]

When this Tablet was read to the assemblage on 19 June, 'Abdu'l-Bahá declared His own station: the Center of the Covenant.

> In former cycles no distinct Covenant was made in writing by the Supreme Pen; no distinct personage was appointed to be the Standard differentiating falsehood from truth... But in this Dispensation of the Blessed Beauty among its distinctions is that He did not leave people in perplexity. He entered into a Covenant and Testament with the people. He appointed a CENTER OF THE COVENANT. He wrote with His own pen and revealed it in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, the Book of Laws, and *Kitáb-i-'Ahd*, the Book of the Covenant, appointing Him ('Abdu'l-Bahá) the Ex- pounder of the Book... This is an explicit text of the Blessed Beauty. So there is no excuse left for anybody.[2]

'Abdu'l-Bahá had already traveled to the West when He heard that Thornton Chase had passed away on 30 September. He journeyed from San Francisco to Los Angeles especially to visit the grave of the "first American believer", and on 19 October He, with about twenty-five of the friends, took the streetcar to the cemetery in Inglewood

[1] Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 135.

[2] *Star of the West*, vol. III, no. 14, p. 9 (23 November 1912).

where He scattered flowers over Chase's resting place.

> Then, still facing the grave, He turned in the direction of 'Akká and chanted the Tablet of Visitation—the Tablet which is read in the Shrines of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. Following that, He chanted a prayer for Thornton Chase and spoke of the services which that dedicated man had rendered to the Faith.... At the conclusion of His visit, 'Abdu'l-Bahá knelt on the ground and kissed the grave of Thornton Chase.[1]

He asked the friends to visit the site every year on His behalf.

'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a unity feast in West Englewood, New Jersey, on Saturday 29 June for the Bahá'ís of New York City and the vicinity. About three hundred attended.

> There in the fragrant pine grove, on a bright June day, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Himself the host, smiling joyously and radiating the spirit of good will, welcomed the happy friends....He talked to them from the center of a large circle around which the tables were arranged. He said [in part]:[2]
>
> 'This is a delightful gathering; you have come here with sincere intentions, and the purpose of all present is the attainment of the virtues of God. The motive is attraction to the divine Kingdom. Since the desire of all is unity and agreement, it is certain that this meeting will be productive of great results... Such gatherings as this have no equal or likeness in the world of mankind, where people are drawn together by physical motives or in furtherance of material interests, for this meeting is a prototype of that inner and complete spiritual association in the eternal world of being. True Bahá'í meetings are the mirrors of the Kingdom wherein images of the Supreme Concourse are reflected. In them the lights of the most great guidance are visible... Rejoice... How many blessed souls have longed for this radiant century, their utmost hopes and desires centered upon the happiness and joy of one such day as this...'[3]

On 16 August 1912 'Abdu'l-Bahá traveled to Green Acre, an estate of nearly two hundred acres on the banks of the Piscataqua River in Eliot, Maine. It was owned by Sarah Farmer, who had opened it in 1894 as a conference center for people of advanced and liberal views. Two years later she had embraced the Bahá'í Faith, and while on pilgrimage to 'Akká she had offered the facilities to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, thus making Green Acre one of the earliest Bahá'í endowments in America.

'Abdu'l-Bahá spent one week at Green Acre. Some of His efforts, Ḥasan Balyúzí wrote,

> ...were inevitably directed towards countering the effects of the eccentric ideas being disseminated by various pseudo-mystics and cranks who were attracted to the free platform provided there. On one occasion He was seen distributing sweets to a group of people, telling them that they ought to eat and enjoy their food... Spirituality, He said, had nothing to do with abstaining from food, with the mortification of the flesh. On another occasion He spoke about the rigorous disciplines of the ascetics, and the harm ensuing from them. He cited superstitions to be found in India. He also had to face fortune-tellers and palmists whom He treated with great kindliness.[4]

On 20 August Fred Mortensen arrived at Green Acre to see 'Abdu'l-Bahá. "In my youth", he wrote later, "my environment was not of the best and being around boys of hard character I guess I determined to be as tough as any, which I very easily did..." He had gotten into trouble with the law, and Albert Hall, a Bahá'í, had helped to get him out of prison and had told him about the

[1] *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 309-310.
[2] *Star of the West*, vol. III, no. 8, p. 16 (1 August 1912).
[3] *Promulgation*, pp. 213-214.
[4] *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 240-241.

Bahá'í Faith. Mr. Mortensen, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, wanted to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá. When he heard a rumor that He might not travel to the West he determined to go to see Him. "As my finances were low I of necessity [lay on the rods between the wheels of trains] to Green Acre." There, 'Abdu'l-Bahá greeted him warmly and asked if he had had a pleasant journey.

> I explained to Him how I rode on the trains, after which He kissed both my cheeks, gave me much fruit, and kissed the dirty hat I wore, which had become soiled on my trip to see Him.[1]

Shoghi Effendi included 'Abdu'l-Bahá's address to an audience attending the public session of the Bahá'í Temple Unity as having special significance. This took place on 30 April in the Masonic Temple in Chicago. The Bahá'í Temple Unity was a national organization created in March 1909 at a convention called under 'Abdu'l-Bahá's direction to carry out the construction of the first Bahá'í House of Worship in the West. It was incorporated in the State of Illinois and invested with full authority to hold title to the Temple property and to provide ways and means for its construction. The fourth annual convention of Bahá'í Temple Unity was being held while 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in Chicago.

> Among the institutes of the Holy Books is that of the foundation of places of worship. That is to say, an edifice or temple is to be built in order that humanity might find a place of meeting, and this is to be conducive to unity and fellowship among them. The real temple is the very Word of God; for to it all humanity must turn, and it is the center of unity for all mankind... Temples are the symbols of the divine uniting force so that when the people gather there in the House of God they may recall the fact that the law has been revealed for them and that the law is to unite them. They will realize that just as this temple was founded for the unification of mankind, the law preceding and creating it came forth in the manifest Word. ... That is why Bahá'u'lláh has commanded that a place of worship be built...[2]

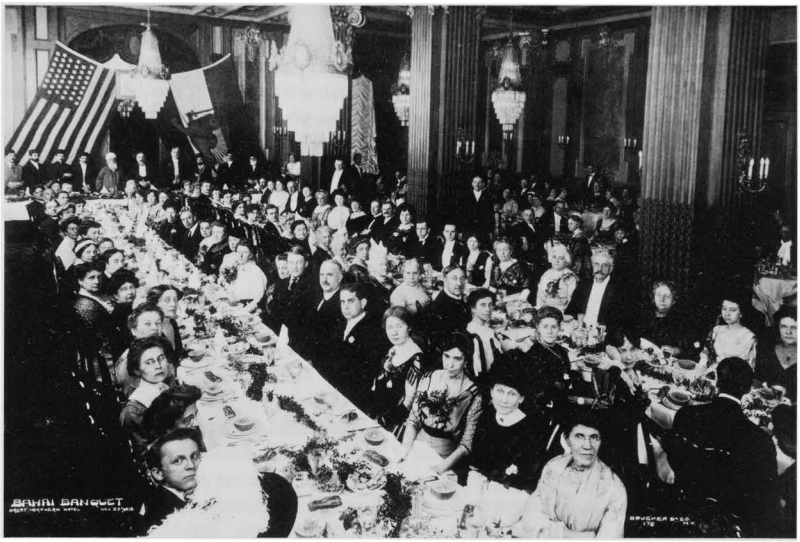
"...and, last but not least," Shoghi Effendi wrote of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's activities in America, was "the exemplary act He performed by uniting in wedlock two of His followers of different nationalities, one of the white, the other of the Negro race..." The two Bahá'ís were Louisa Mathew and Louis Gregory, and their union apparently came about in the following way.

Miss Mathew and Mr. Gregory had met each other as Bahá'í pilgrims visiting 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Ramleh, and in the Holy Land, "...and although greatly attracted to each other not even dimly realized its future bearing." In America, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave Miss Mathew a white rose to give to Mr. Gregory, and in other ways conveyed that He wished her to marry Mr. Gregory.

> Curiously enough after this love began to grow in my heart & the desire for the marriage whereas before I only liked Mr. Gregory as a friend. Later 'Abdu'l-Bahá said before Dr. Getsinger, Fareed & others in the train to Chicago to me, 'How are you & Mr. Gregory getting along?' Startled I answered, 'What do you mean, we are good friends?' To which He replied emphatically & with His face wreathed in mischievous smiles, 'You must be very good friends... Later... He told Louis it would give Him much pleasure if he & I would marry, which came as an utter surprise to Louis who had no thoughts of marriage. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, 'What is the matter? Don't you love her?' 'Yes as a friend' Louis said. 'Well think of it' said 'Abdu'l-Bahá, '& let me know; ...marriage is not an ordinance & need not be obeyed, but it would give me much pleasure if you & Miss Mathew were to marry.'

[1] *Star of the West*, vol. XIV, no. 12, p. 367 (March 1924).

[2] *Promulgation*, p. 65.



'Abdu'l-Bahá at a banquet held in His honor at the Great Northern Hotel in New York on 23 November 1912.

The wedding took place at noon on 27 September 1912 in the parsonage of an Episcopal church in New York City. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was on a train headed westward from Denver at the time, but His encouragement 'contributed to the Bahá'í atmosphere of the wedding'.[1]

'Abdu'l-Bahá's activities with the American Bahá'ís were designed to "...pave the way for the erection of their central House of Worship, to fortify them against the tests they were soon to endure, to cement their unity, and to bless the beginnings of that Administrative Order which they were soon to initiate and champion", wrote Shoghi Effendi.

No less remarkable were 'Abdu'l-Bahá's public activities in the course of His association with the multitude of people with whom He came in contact during His tour across a continent. A full account of these diversified activities which crowded His days during no less than eight months, would be beyond the scope of this survey. Suffice it to say that in the city of New York alone He delivered public addresses in, and made formal visits to, no less than fifty-five different places....

Secretaries of State, Ambassadors, Congressmen, distinguished rabbis and churchmen, and other people of eminence attained His presence, among whom were such figures as Dr. D.S. Jordan, President of Leland Stanford University, Prof. Jackson of Columbia University, Prof. Jack of Oxford University, Rabbi Stephen Wise of New York... Alexander Graham Bell, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Hon. Franklin K. Lane, Mrs. William Jennings Bryan, Andrew Carnegie, Hon. Franklin MacVeagh, Secretary of the United States Treasury, Lee McClung, Mr. Roosevelt, Admiral Wain Wright, Admiral Peary, the British, Dutch and Swiss Ministers in Washington...[2]

[1] Morrison, Gayle. *To Move the World* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), pp. 66-68.

[2] *God Passes By*, pp. 288-290.

> ... pictures from the tragic past ...must have many a time overpowered Him with feelings of mingled gratitude and sorrow, as He witnessed the many marks of respect, of esteem, and honor now shown Him and the Faith which He represented. *"O Bahá'u'lláh! What hast Thou done?"* He, as reported by the chronicler of His travels, was heard to exclaim one evening as He was being swiftly driven to fulfil His third engagement of the day in Washington, *"O Bahá'u'lláh! May my life be sacrificed for Thee! O Bahá'u'lláh! May my soul be offered up for Thy sake! How full were Thy days with trials and tribulations! How severe the ordeals Thou didst endure! How solid the foundation Thou hast finally laid, and how glorious the banner Thou didst hoist!"*[1]

'Abdu'l-Bahá bade farewell to the American Bahá'ís and sailed for Europe on board the S.S. Celtic on 5 December, arriving at Liverpool on 13 December 1912. He stayed in that port city for two days, speaking to the Theosophical Society on 14 December, and at Pembroke Chapel, a Baptist Church, on 15 December. "When I was in America, I had many opportunities of addressing the Theosophical Society there", He began His first talk.

> The Theosophists are very dear to me, for they have abandoned all prejudice....
>
> All the religions of the world are submerged in prejudice. A Jew is a Jew because his father was before him. A Christian is such for the same reason, and it is the same with a Musselman. All follow the precepts of their fathers, refusing to go forth and seek for themselves...
>
> All the different religions of God that have risen on the face of the earth have one purpose: to educate man and to inform him of the spiritual, the luminous, the divine, so that he may partake of heavenly spirit and find eternal life, show forth the virtues of mankind, and from a world of darkness enter a world of light. There is no other reality of meaning to the different religions. Their purpose is one, the teaching is one.[2]

'Abdu'l-Bahá moved on to London on 16 December. Lady Blomfield again put her residence in Cadogan Gardens at the disposal of the Master, and it seemed that His first visit to the British capital was being reenacted. There was, as before, a stream of visitors from every walk of life at all hours of the day and into the night.

> One day a woman asked to be permitted to see the Master. 'Have you an appointment?' 'Alas! No.' 'I am sorry,' answered the over-zealous friend who met her in the hall, 'but He is occupied now with most important people, and cannot be disturbed.' The woman turned away, feeling too humble to persist in her appeal, but, oh! so bitterly disappointed. Before she had reached the foot of the stairway, she was overtaken by a breathless messenger from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. 'He wishes to see you, come back! He has told me to bring you to Him.' We had heard His voice from the door of His audience room speaking with authority: 'A heart has been hurt. Hasten, hasten, bring her to me!'
>
> Another day, whilst several personages were talking with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a man's voice was heard at the hall door. 'Is the lady of this house within?'... After a while the poor fellow began his pitiful story: 'I was not always as you see me now, a disreputable, hopeless object. My father is a country rector, and I had the advantage of being at a public school. Of the various causes which led to my arrival at the Thames embankment as my only home, I need not speak to you. Last evening I had decided to put an end to my futile, hateful life, useless to God and man! Whilst taking what I had intended should be my last walk, I saw "a Face" in the window of a newspaper shop. I stood looking at the face as if rooted to the spot. He seemed to

[1] ibid. p. 293.

[2] *Star of the West*, vol. III, no. 17, p. 3 (19 January 1913).

speak to me, and call me to Him! 'Let me see that paper, please,' I asked. It was the face of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. I read that He is here, in this house. I said to myself, 'If there is in existence on earth that personage, I shall take up again the burden of my life. I set off on my quest. I have come here to find Him. Tell me, is He here? Will He see me? Even me?' Of course He will see you. Come to Him. In answer to the knock, 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself opened the door, extending His hands, as though to a dear friend, *whom He was expecting.* 'Welcome! Most welcome! I am very much pleased that thou hast come. Be seated.'

The pathetic man trembled and sank on to a low chair by the Master's feet, as though unable to utter a word. The other guests, meanwhile, looked on wonderingly to see the attention transferred to the strange-looking new arrival, who seemed to be so overburdened with hopeless misery. 'Be happy! Be happy!' said 'Abdu'l-Bahá, holding one of the poor hands, stroking tenderly the dishevelled, bowed head. Smiling that wonderful smile of loving compassion, the Master continued: 'Do not be filled with grief when humiliation overtaketh thee. The bounty and power of God is without limit for each and every soul in the world. Seek for spiritual joy and knowledge, then, though thou walk upon this earth, thou wilt be dwelling within the divine realm. Though thou be poor, thou mayest be rich in the Kingdom of God.' These and other words of comfort, of strength, and of healing were spoken to the man, whose cloud of misery seemed to melt away in the warmth of the Master's loving presence. As the strange visitor rose to leave Him Whom he had sought and found, a new look was upon his face, a new erectness in his carriage, a firm purpose in his steps. 'Please write down for me His words. I have attained all I expected, and even more.' 'And now what are you going to do?' I asked. 'I'm going to work in the fields. I can earn what I need for my simple wants. When I have saved enough I shall take a little bit of land, build a tiny hut upon it in which to live, then I shall grow violets for the market. As He says 'Poverty is unimportant, work is worship.' I need not say "thank you," need I? Farewell.' The man had gone.[1]

During 'Abdu'l-Bahá's first visit to Britain the only city He had stayed in beside London was Bristol. During the nearly six weeks of His second visit He not only revisited Bristol, but also traveled to Edinburgh and Oxford. Every place He went He was welcomed by distinguished leaders of thought. However, when it was suggested that a meeting might be arranged between King George V and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'Abdu'l-Bahá advised against it. He had come to the West to meet the poor, He said, not monarchs and noblemen. He would meet any seeker with affection, but had no particular wish to meet the rulers. Moreover, He noted, such moves could be misunderstood and misconstrued, and might create alarm.[2]

On 22 December 'Abdu'l-Bahá attended a performance of Eager Heart, a play presented at Church House, Westminster.

> This was a memorable occasion, as it was the first time He had ever witnessed a dramatic performance. The Master wept during the scene in which the Holy Child and His parents, overcome with fatigue, and suffering from hunger, were met by the hesitation of Eager Heart to admit them to the haven of rest which she had prepared, she, of course, failing to recognize the sacred visitors. The Master afterwards joined the group of players. It was an arresting scene. In the Eastern setting the Messenger, in His Eastern robes, speaking to them in beautiful Eastern words of the Divine significance of the events which had been portrayed.[3]

[1] *The Chosen Highway*, pp. 159-161.
[2] *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 370.

On Christmas night, 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited the poor of the Salvation Army Shelter, Westminster, where each year a Christmas dinner is provided for those who have no homes and no friends, and but for the shelter would have no lodgings. There were about 1,000 present on this occasion. It was a most impressive scene—the dinner for the homeless and the Master from the East delivering Christ's message to the poor. As a true test of attention, many of the hungry men forgot to eat and listened intently...

'I feel tonight great joy and happiness to be in this place, because my meetings and callings have ever been mostly with the poor, and I call myself one of them. My lot has ever been with those who have not the goods of this world. When we look at the poor of humanity, we behold a world of brothers. All are sheep of God; God is the real shepherd... Consider His Holiness Christ: He appeared in the world as one of the poor. He was born of a lowly family; all the apostles of Christ were of humble birth and His followers were of the very poorest of the community. This is what Christ states in the Gospels. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God."... Sorrow not, grieve not. Be not unhappy because you are not wealthy. You are the brothers of Jesus Christ. Christ was poor; Bahá'u'lláh was poor. For forty years He was imprisoned in poverty. ...Be ever happy... Trust in God...'[1]

At the close of His talk, 'Abdu'l-Bahá made a contribution to the Shelter so that the poor might have a similar dinner on New Year's night. He was shown all around the hostel, and at the door he said to the attendant in charge, "May God prosper you. May you all be under the protection of the Almighty!" When He reached Cadogan Gardens that night, it was apparent that the condition of the unfortunate had distressed Him.

As always, He did not dwell on the problem. True help for the poor in this Day could only be found in His Father's Teachings, and the most useful immediate action that one could take would be to spread the Message. During a discussion of Spiritual Assemblies held on 16 January He said:

> All the deliberations, all consultation, all the talks and addresses must revolve around one focal center and that is: TEACH THE CAUSE! TEACH! TEACH! Convey the Message! Awaken the souls! Now is the time of laying the foundation. Now must we gather brick, stone, wood, iron, and other building materials! Now is not the time of decoration. We must strive day and night and think and work. What can I say that may become effective? What can I do that may bring results? What can I write that may bring forth fruits? Nothing else will be useful, today. The interests of such a Glorious Cause will not advance without undivided attention. While we are carrying this load we cannot carry any other load![2]

On 21 January 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá left London for Paris, where He stayed at 30 rue St. Didier. This second visit to the French capital, which lasted two months,

> assumed certain characteristics of its own... numbers of Bahá'ís had arrived from the East for the specific purpose of attaining His presence... Moreover, vicissitudes of fortune had brought to Paris a multitude of émigrés from Írán and the Ottoman Empire. These men were from the ranks both of reactionaries—supporters of the old régime—and of liberals and constitutionalists. Many of them sought 'Abdu'l-Bahá and requested to meet Him. To them, too, He gave of His time impartially.[3]

[1] *Star of the West*, vol. III, no. 18, pp. 8-9 (7 February 1913).

[2] *Star of the West*, vol. IV, no. 1, p. 16 (21 March 1913).

[3] *The Chosen Highway*, pp. 154-155.

[3] *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 372.

Ḥájí Amín, who was the trustee of the Ḥuqúq, had brought seven hundred pounds to present to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In a humorous mood, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said that the Ḥájí had brought seven hundred pounds, but had already obtained a thousand pounds from Him for this and that. Zarqání comments that one indeed marvelled at the way 'Abdu'l-Bahá administered His finances. He spent freely to uphold the dignity of the Faith, and gave generously to relieve distress and poverty, and to aid the sick. But He Himself did not possess a good winter coat. His attendants had to beg again and again to obtain His permission to order a new coat to be made for Him.[1]

Lady Blomfield wrote:

One striking fact was that 'Abdu'l-Bahá never asked for donations, and even refused to accept money or any costly gifts that were offered to Him. One day in my presence a lady said to Him: 'I have here a cheque from a friend, who begs its acceptance to buy a good motor-car for your work in England and Europe.' The Master replied: 'I accept with grateful thanks the gift of your friend.' He took the cheque into both His hands, as though blessing it, and said 'I return it to be used for gifts to the poor.' 'We have never seen the like before. Surely such deeds are very rare', it was whispered amongst the friends.[2]

A number of Iranian students visited 'Abdu'l-Bahá on January 31st. He spoke to them about agriculture and industry and commerce and told them that Írán needed iron-smelting plants, because industry and agriculture alike depended on foundries. In the evening of that day a meeting was held at the home of Monsieur and Mme Dreyfus-Barney. These weekly meetings of the Bahá'ís, to which seekers and enquirers came as well, were a regular feature of the life of the Paris community. Other homes, M. and Mme Scott's and Miss Edith Sanderson's, were also venues for these gatherings which 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed from time to time.[3]

On 17 February, 'Abdu'l-Bahá accepted an invitation to speak at Pasteur Monnier's Theological Seminary in Paris. The audience was composed of professors, clergy, and theological students, and they had prepared a list of questions: "Who was Christ, and what was He? What is your belief about Him"; "What is the similarity between the Cause of Christ and that of Bahá'u'lláh? And what relation do they hold towards each other?"; "What is the relation of Christ and Bahá'u'lláh with God?"; and, "Is the unification of religion possible? If so, when and how and through what channel will it be realized?"

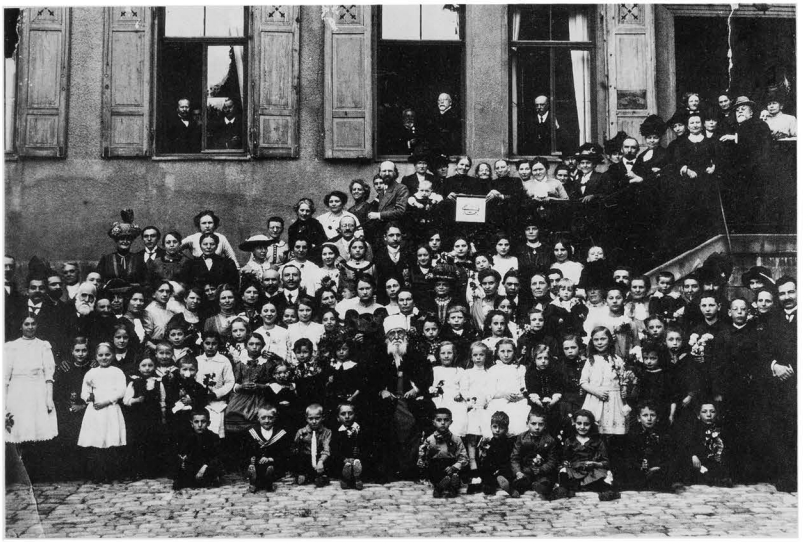
'Abdu'l-Bahá answered each question clearly and reasonably, explaining the Faith's teachings on progressive revelation as He had to audiences all during His travels—Christian, Jew, and Muslim. "In short", He concluded,

> ...misunderstanding between the religions is conducive to differences. When these misunderstandings and blind imitations are forgotten then the unification of the religions will become a reality.
>
> ...there have been wars and rumors of war amongst the people of the world for many thousand years; much innocent blood has been shed, many kingdoms and empires have been laid waste. Now it is enough! Religion must be the means of good fellowship and love. It must upraise the standard of harmony and solidarity. If religion is conducive to hatred and enmity, irreligion is better, because such pseudo-religion gives no result, nay rather its existence is harmful to the welfare of the body-politic.

Pasteur Monnier asked, "Is your aim to found a new religion?"

'Abdu'l-Bahá answered: "Our aim is to free the foundations of the religion of God from dogmas, for the Sun of Reality

[1] *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 373-374.
[2] *The Chosen Highway*, p. 157.
[3] *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 376.



'Abdu'l-Bahá with Bahá'í friends in Esslingen, Germany, on 4 April 1913.

> is prevented from shining forth by black impenetrable clouds. We desire to dispel these clouds, so that the regions of the world may be flooded and illumined with its luminous rays, so that these foul clouds may never return. The rays of the Sun of Reality may encircle all countries, for this Sun has no beginning and no ending."[1]

The strain of His continual travels began to trouble 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Paris. He did not sleep well and occasionally had a fever. The food at His hotel did not agree with Him, and by 26 February He had succumbed to a severe cold. Meanwhile, the Bahá'ís of Germany were pleading with Him to visit their country, and He received a letter from Mr. and Mrs. Stark inviting Him to visit Hungary. During the first week of March, a group of Bahá'ís from Germany arrived with their pioneer teacher, Miss Alma Knobloch. They once again begged for the bounty of receiving Him.[2]

By the end of March 'Abdu'l-Bahá felt strong enough to make another journey, so took the train from Paris to Stuttgart, arriving during the evening of 1 April. He stayed in the Hotel Marquardt and soon established His routine of meeting with the friends in His hotel in the mornings, and going out to meetings at their homes or elsewhere in the afternoons and evenings. One day He "remarked that the hotelier might leave his hotel and seek refuge elsewhere, because of such numbers pouring in. Indeed the staff of the hotel were shaken and astonished to see so many of their countrymen pay such attention and respect to an Easterner who, as it seemed, had come from nowhere."[3]

On 2 April He went to the home of Herr Wilhelm and Frau Marie Herrigel, where a great number of people had gathered. "How are you all?", He asked, and addressed them in Persian which was translated into English by Mírzá Aḥmad Sohráb, and then rendered into German by Herr Herrigel.

[1] *Star of the West*, vol. IV, no. 3, pp. 54-5 (28 April 1913).
[2] *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 379.
[3] ibid. p. 380.



'Abdu'l-Bahá visited Budapest and Vienna after His travels in North America. This photograph was taken in April 1913, during His one-month stay in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Praise be to God! because your faces are radiant with the light of the Glory of God; your hearts are attracted to the Kingdom of Abhá....Your hearts are illuminated, your inner vision clear. ...You must live in accordance with the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Be loving to all mankind. Consort with all religions in amity and fragrance. You must be the cause of the education of the world of humanity. At present the world is still very dark. From one side there threatens the darkness of ignorance; from another side black enmity is visible; from the other side we hear of war and rumors of war. We must, like a candle, shine with the light of Bahá'u'lláh, in order that through your efforts this darkness may be dispelled.[1]

[1] *Star of the West*, vol. IV, no. 4, p. 67 (17 May 1913).

Meetings were held in the homes of other Bahá'ís including Herr Eckstein, Consul Albert and Frau Alice Schwarz, and Herr Friedrich and Frau Annemarie Schweizer. During the evening of 3 April, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed a large audience in the upper hall of the City (Burger) Museum, on 5 April spoke to the Esperanto Society, and on 6 April gave a well-attended public talk at the Obere Museum. "We have had some wonderful meetings", Alma Knoblock wrote to her sister Pauline (Mrs. Joseph Hannen), but "the one in Esslingen surpassed them all."

It was the children's meeting, last Friday, April 4th, 1913, in the afternoon. They had secured a very pretty hall, which was most beautifully decorated with greens, plants and flowers, with large and small tables near the walls and round tables in the center. About fifty children

and eighty adults were present. In a smaller room adjoining the hall the children had been assembled holding flowers in their hands, forming two lines for 'Abdu'l-Bahá to pass through. It looked most beautiful as 'Abdu'l-Bahá came upstairs. He passed through a short hall and looked so pleased and delighted to see the dear children.[1]

'Abdu'l-Bahá intended to leave for Budapest on April 7th, but was persuaded by Consul Schwarz to visit Bad Mergentheim, approximately sixty miles distant from Stuttgart, where the Consul owned the hotel and the mineral bath. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said at Bad Mergentheim that since He had left Persia He had never until then heard so many nightingales singing in such beautiful surroundings. However, He would not stay for more than one night.[2]

On 8 April, 'Abdu'l-Bahá returned to Stuttgart and then caught the 8:00 p.m. train for Budapest which He visited "at the invitation of the Hungarian Peace, Esperanto and Feminist societies, and of the Oriental Commercial Academy... He spoke to a great public gathering arranged by these institutions and besides, on three evenings, to the Theosophical Society, to the Star of the East members and the Túránian Society. About 800 people listened to His address....

During 'Abdu'l-Bahá's sojourn in Budapest He received many distinguished visitors, among others the celebrated Hungarian Orientalists, Prof. Vambéry and Prof. Goldzieher. Prof. Robert Nadler, a Hungarian painter of great renown, made a portrait sketch of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

More important than the outward honors given to Him is that His words and personality gave a new start to the Bahá'í Cause in Hungary, which is on the border of the East and the West... 'Abdu'l-Bahá honored Mr. Leopold Stark, whose address is II Nyulucta 5, by charging him to unite all those in Budapest who are likely to form the first nucleus. Bahá'í friends all over the world are requested to help by sending good advice and propaganda literature.[3]

From Budapest, 'Abdu'l-Bahá went to Vienna on 19 April, where He took residence in the Grand Hotel. His first courtesy call in that city was to the Turkish Ambassador in Vienna, who was so impressed by this visit that he insisted on keeping 'Abdu'l-Bahá for luncheon. The Master spoke to the Theosophists of Vienna on three occasions, was visited by Iranian residents of the Austrian capital, and was the guest of the Persian Minister. Before 'Abdu'l-Bahá left Vienna Frau Tyler called to express her newly-found devotion, and He also received among others Baroness von Suttner, a well-known worker for the cause of peace.

"As you may know," Wilhelm Herrigel wrote to the Star of the West at a later date, "I was invited by our dear Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, to accompany Him from Stuttgart to Budapest and Vienna. While in Vienna He permitted a sculptor to model Him, and this sculptor asked me to spread copies of this statuette in all Bahá'í centers of the world. Therefore, I am sending one to you for reproduction in the Star of the West. This statuette can be ordered through me..."[4]

'Abdu'l-Bahá left Vienna and traveled back to Stuttgart, where He arrived on 25 April and took rooms again in the Hotel Marquardt. During this second visit to Stuttgart, which also lasted a week, He was not well. A cold contracted in Budapest had persisted and was now affecting His chest.

The Bahá'ís of Stuttgart had arranged and advertised a meeting for the evening of the 25th at the Burger Museum. In the afternoon the condition of His chest worsened, causing great concern. Physicians told Him that He should not go out... His health was for the purpose of serving the Faith ['Abdu'l-Bahá said]. While Wilhelm

[1] *Star of the West*, vol. IV, no. 9, p. 155 (20 August 1913).
[2] *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 383.
[3] *Star of the West*, vol. IV, no. 5, p. 86 (5 June 1913).
[4] *Star of the West*, vol. IV, no. 9, p. 158 (20 August 1913).

Herrigel was giving a talk in His stead, He walked into the hall, to the utmost delight and surprise of the audience, and using His full voice delivered a discourse on the need of world peace and the power that guarantees it.[1]

On the morning of May 1st 'Abdu'l-Bahá met the Bahá'ís of Stuttgart in groups. He spoke very tenderly to them. To one group He said that He wished to converse with them, but His chest was not helpful; He would always anticipate their good news. To another, He spoke of the two ways in which people say farewell; for some, memories gradually fade away, but others keep their memories ever fresh... To a third group He said that, although His time in Stuttgart was limited, He hoped that the harvest would prove limitless. Then He left for Paris.

On this third visit to Paris, 'Abdu'l-Bahá resided at Hôtel Baltimore, in avenue Kléber... His physical strength had suffered greatly and He was unable, on several occasions, to go to the meetings held in the homes of the Bahá'ís. But He was always receiving visitors at the hotel, giving a talk whenever they gathered in numbers. He also kept, as far as possible, His daily habit of a walk out of doors.

[On 10 May] He spoke of the Covenant, that its purpose was to safeguard the strength and the power of the Cause; without it the circle of Bahá'ís would have broken up completely. 'Some people have imagined,' He said, 'that the Blessed Perfection had taken relations between father and son into account. They do not know that He has instituted the power of the Covenant for the propagation of the Cause of God and for the victory of His Word.'[2]

On May 23rd, Bahá'ís came with bouquets of flowers throughout the day, as it was the anniversary of the birth of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but He told them that the day should be considered and celebrated only as the anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb. That was why it was a blessed Day. It was incidental that He had been born on the same date. The Feast was celebrated in the evening at the home of Laura and Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney...

May 30th witnessed a noteworthy gathering at the home of the Dreyfus-Barneys, when diverse nationalities were represented. Consul Schwarz had come from Germany and spoke at the meeting. In His talk, 'Abdu'l-Bahá underlined the true import of that harmonious and loving association of people of so many origins, brought about by the power of Bahá'u'lláh....

On June 12th at 8 a.m. 'Abdu'l-Bahá left His hotel for the station. There He spoke with the Bahá'ís who had come to say farewell, urging them to be united at all times. At noon His train left for Marseilles, which it reached twelve hours later. He stayed the night at a hotel next to the station, and boarded the P. & O. steamer, *Himalaya*, at 9 a.m. the next morning.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's historic tour of the West was over.[3]

Shoghi Effendi puts the journey into this perspective:

> A most significant scene in a century-old drama had been enacted. A glorious chapter in the history of the first Bahá'í century had been written. Seeds of undreamt-of potentialities had, with the hand of the Center of the Covenant Himself, been sown in some of the fertile fields of the Western world. Never in the entire range of religious history had any Figure of comparable stature arisen to perform a labor of such magnitude and imperishable worth.[4]

[1] *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 389.
[2] ibid., pp. 390-392.
[3] *ibid.*, pp. 394-395.
[4] *God Passes By*, p. 294.

2. COMMEMORATIONS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S VISIT TO THE WEST

FROM August 1911 to December 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá traveled through North America and Europe writing, what Shoghi Effendi calls in *God Passes By*, a "glorious chapter in the history of the first Bahá'í century." "Never in the entire range of religious history had any Figure of comparable stature arisen to perform a labor of such magnitude and imperishable worth," he continued. Celebrations of the seventy-fifth anniversary of those travels were held by Bahá'ís in those countries which 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited.

THE UNITED STATES

A moving event was held in the Bahá'í Temple in Wilmette, Illinois, on 1 May 1987, where friends gathered to commemorate the laying of its foundation stone by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Twelve believers who had met the Center of the Covenant shared some of their recollections of Him. On the following day, a formal commemorative program in the House of Worship was attended by a number of civic leaders.

Meetings held in Chicago between 1 and 5 May included commemorations of the Master's talk in All Souls Church, and His address to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Near Boston, Massachusetts, Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh spoke about 'Abdu'l-Bahá's life, and the significance of His visit to America, during a meeting held on 5 June at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge. The following day, Boston's Bahá'í community held a ceremony to honor the couple who founded Freedom House, an organization dedicated to bettering the lives of minority youth by enabling many to go to college. Following the presentation, Bahá'ís and their friends walked along the path taken by the Master during His visit to Boston.

During the weekend of 26 and 27 June 1987, approximately 1,500 picnics were held across the United States to celebrate the Unity Feast 'Abdu'l-Bahá had hosted in West Englewood, New Jersey, on 29 June 1912. The Hand of the Cause of God William Sears, Counsellors Wilma Brady and Robert Harris, and members of the National Spiritual Assembly attended the special picnic held on the site in New Jersey hallowed by the presence of the Master.

In New York City, on 8 July 1987, a copy of *The Promise of World Peace* was presented to William F. Gibson, the chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The presentation was made by the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, whose remarks included statements made by 'Abdu'l-Bahá when He addressed the fourth annual convention of the NAACP in Chicago on 30 April 1912. The presentation was made during the annual convention of the NAACP, and was given an enthusiastic reception by the audience.

CANADA

The Hand of the Cause of God William Sears visited all ten provinces of Canada and two territories from 30 August to 9 September 1987—the period corresponding to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's sojourn in that country. Bahá'ís all over the country held special teaching projects during the same period, both in support of Mr. Sears' efforts and to supplement them.

In Montreal, firesides were held in French and English, during which Mr. Sears shook the hand of each child present and gave each one a souvenir. Nightly firesides were held by the friends for the eleven days in Halifax

and throughout Nova Scotia. In Winnipeg, a new Bahá'í Center was opened and, in Calgary, a Bahá'í meeting was attended by more than 1,000 friends. During a meeting in Vancouver, the friends were urged to become more heroic, more saintly, and to appreciate their station as Bahá'ís. In Whitehorse, Bahá'í children presented the Hand of the Cause with their impressions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in prose and poetry. In the Northwest Territories, a two-day conference was held for the friends. In Toronto, two people embraced the Faith during Mr. Sears' visit.

A Peace Train paralleling 'Abdu'l-Bahá's journey from Montreal to Niagara Falls via Toronto carried 127 Bahá'ís on 6 and 7 September 1987. Five hundred other friends greeted the travellers at stops along the route. Hundreds of copies of *The Promise of World Peace* were delivered by the train travellers, and the Bahá'í message was given to scores of people, including the Mayor of Niagara who expressed interest in learning about the Faith.

France and Switzerland

The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, accompanied by Mrs. Violette Nakhjavání, traveled to Europe to participate in some of the activities held to commemorate the Master's visits on that continent.

In France, the Hand of the Cause took part in a National Teaching Conference held in Paris on 28 and 29 November 1987 which was attended by about 500 friends. In addition to talks given by Amatu'l-Bahá, Counsellor Agnes Ghaznavi and members of the French National Spiritual Assembly addressed the gathering, stressing the needs of the Six Year Plan.

Following the Conference, the Local Spiritual Assembly of Paris entertained Rúḥíyyih Khánum at lunch, then commemorated her visit by going to the Eiffel Tower to have a photograph taken in the same place where the beloved Master had been photographed seventy-five years earlier.

At the end of 1987, 210 Bahá'ís from France and Switzerland met for a winter school held at Sevrier. The high point of the school was the evening commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the West through lectures and audio-visual aides.

United Kingdom

In late February or early March 1988, members of the Bristol Bahá'í community celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Bristol in 1913. The event was held in the Holiday Inn with about 260 people attending, including 50 guests of Bahá'ís. One special guest was the resident at 17 Royal York Crescent, where 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stayed while in Bristol. The program included music, a slide show of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to England presented by Counsellor Adam Thorne, and a reading of "The Seven Candles of Unity" by some of the Bahá'í children.

Germany

The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum joined approximately 1,200 friends gathered in Stuttgart on 9 April 1988 for a conference held during the festivities related to the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Master's visit to that country. Also present at the conference were member of the International Teaching Center Anneliese Bopp, Counsellor Ursula Mühlschlegel, and members of the National Spiritual Assembly. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum addressed the conference in the German language.

On 10 April, the Hand of the Cause was the special guest at a festive event held in the historic Kurhaus in Bad Cannstatt, Stuttgart, to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Germany. The Mayor of Stuttgart, Dr. Manfred Rommel, gave the welcoming address to the nearly 900 friends and guests who had gathered for the event. In her ceremonial address, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum fondly recalled her time in Germany in 1936

and 1937, and spoke of the early followers of Bahá'u'lláh in that land. Counsellor Anneliese Bopp, Dr. Massoud Berdjis and Werner Gollmer spoke of the life, teachings and travels of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and selections from His Writings were read. Press conferences were attended by representatives of major newspapers and broadcast services.

HUNGARY

On 9, 10 and 17 April 1988 the Bahá'ís of Budapest held celebrations to mark the anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to that city, with the Austrian musical group The Dawn-Breakers participating. The main event took place in the home of Barbara Maennig, with about twenty friends from Hungary and Austria attending. The program consisted of a spiritual portion with music, and a social portion with refreshments.

AUSTRIA

On 16 April 1988, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥiyyih Khánum joined the Bahá'í community in celebrating the anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Vienna. The event was held in the Ingenieur und Architektenverein, and people of capacity in Austrian society had been sent special letters of invitation. Counsellors Ursula Mühlschlegel and Leo Niederreiter also attended the ceremony, as did friends from many parts of Europe. In honor of the occasion, the Local Spiritual Assembly produced a German publication entitled, *'Abdu'l-Bahá im Wien,* and a committee of the National Spiritual Assembly published a booklet, also in German, entitled, *'Abdu'l-Bahá im Budapest.*

UNITED KINGDOM

On 30 June 1988, the first Human Rights Award presentations in the United Kingdom were made at St. John's Church, Westminster, London, commemorating the Master's visit to London in 1911. The six recipients were: Dr. Edward Carpenter, awarded for his work in the field of religious unity; the Right Reverend Bishop Trevor Huddleston, honored for his work to promote racial unity; the late Richard St. Barbe Baker, whose award was received on his behalf by the Chairman of the Men of the Trees; the late Bernard Leach, whose award was received on his behalf by his wife, Janet Leach; Bob Geldof, for his work to aid the famine victims in Ethiopia, the award being received on his behalf by Dr. Gessess, Director of Band Aid; and Bertha Bradby, for her work for women's rights. An article about the ceremony was published in the *Church Times*, the official newspaper of the Church of England.

FRANCE

Activities celebrating 'Abdu'l-Bahá's journey through Marseilles led to extensive proclamation of the Faith in March 1989. After an official ceremony held in the Palais du Faro, a public meeting was held in the Odeon Theatre. Announcements of the event were broadcast on radio and television, printed in newspapers, and distributed throughout the city on 11,000 posters of different sizes. The theme of the program was peace, and about 160 people attended. A variety of music and a slide show were presented, followed by a concert by an American Bahá'í pianist, Marc Ochu, who accompanied his performance with comments on the Peace Statement.

II
THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST SEVEN YEAR PLAN IN THE AMERICAS

1. THE FIRST SEVEN YEAR PLAN OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

SHERNA DEAMER

"*TRAVEL ye to the East and to the West of the world and summon the people to the Kingdom of God*," 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote to the Bahá'ís in the United States and Canada only three-and-a-half years after His historic visit to America in 1912. In a series of Tablets that have come to be known collectively as the Tablets of the Divine Plan, 'Abdu'l-Bahá exhorted the American Bahá'ís to spread the Faith. "... *do ye not think it permissible to leave [any] region deprived of the breezes of the Morn of Guidance.*"

In a Tablet revealed on 8 April 1916 in the garden outside the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá specifically told the North American friends to carry the Faith throughout the Hemisphere:

> *Alaska is a vast country... yet the call of the Kingdom of God is not yet raised through that spacious territory.*
>
> *Likewise the Republic of Mexico is very important...*
>
> *Similarly, the six Central American Republics, situated south of Mexico—Guatemala, Honduras, Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and the seventh country Belize or British Honduras...*
>
> *You must attach great importance to the Indians, the original inhabitants of America. For these souls may be likened unto the ancient inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula, who, prior to the Revelation of Muḥammad, were like savages. When the Muḥammadan Light shone forth in their midst, they became so enkindled that they shed illumination upon the world. Likewise, should these Indians be educated and properly guided, there can be no doubt that through the Divine teachings they will become so enlightened that the whole earth will be illumined.*
>
> *All the above countries have importance, but especially the Republic of Panama, wherein the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans come together through the Panama Canal. It is a center for travel and passage from America to other continents of the world, and in the future it will gain most great importance.*
>
> *Likewise the islands of the West Indies, such as Cuba, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, the islands of the Lesser Antilles, Bahama Islands, even the small Watlings Island, have great importance; especially the two black republics, Haiti and Santo Domingo, situated in the cluster of the Greater Antilles. Likewise the cluster of the islands of Bermuda in the Atlantic Ocean have importance.*



Mrs. Vivian Lismore, seated second from left, pioneered to Havana, Cuba, during the Seven Year Plan. She is shown in her home in 1943, surrounded by Cuban Bahá'ís.

In a similar way, the republics of the continent of South America—Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, British Guiana, Dutch Guiana, French Guiana, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Venezuela; also the islands to the north, east and west of South America, such as Falkland Islands, the Galapagos, Juan Fernandez, Tobago and Trinidad. Likewise the city of Bahia, situated on the eastern shore of Brazil. Because it is some time that it has become known by this name, its efficacy will be most potent.

...send to those parts fluent speakers, who are detached from aught else save God, attracted with the fragrances of God, and sanctified and purified from all desires and temptations. Their sustenance and food must consist of the teachings of God. First they must themselves live in accordance with those principles, then guide the people... Should you be aided to render such a service, rest ye assured that your heads shall be crowned with the diadem of everlasting sovereignty, and at the threshold of oneness you will become the favored and accepted servants.[1]

A few individuals and local communities responded immediately to the Master's call. Martha Root took her first journey around South America in 1919, and in February 1921 Leonora Holsapple became the first Bahá'í to live in Latin America when she moved from the United States to Bahia, Brazil, to teach the Faith. But in the main, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's mission went unfulfilled because no institutions existed capable of arousing unified action.

It was left to Shoghi Effendi, after the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, to slowly, painstakingly, raise up the Administrative Order, first in the United States and Canada, and then elsewhere around the world. Nor was

[1] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Tablets of the Divine Plan* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1977), pp. 31–34.

this undertaking only a matter of establishing Assemblies and committees. The Guardian had to help the community to move beyond the subjective and personal elements of faith to a world of action. There needed to be a transition from the idea of teaching as an individual achievement to an understanding that the greatest results for the Faith came when these separate efforts were guided and coordinated.

In a letter written to the North American Bahá'ís dated 21 April 1933, the Guardian helped the friends understand the development of the Faith during its first forty years in America:

> The first of these four decades (1893–1903), characterized by a process of slow and steady fermentation, may be said to have culminated in the historic pilgrimages undertaken by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's American disciples to the shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. The ten years which followed (1903–1913), so full of the tests and trials which agitated, cleansed and energized the body of the earliest pioneers of the Faith in that land, had as their happy climax 'Abdu'l-Bahá's memorable visit to America. The third period (1913–1923), a period of quiet and uninterrupted consolidation, had as its inevitable result the birth of that divinely-appointed Administration, the foundations of which the Will of a departed Master had unmistakably established. The remaining ten years (1923–1933), distinguished throughout by further internal development, as well as by a notable expansion of the international activities of a growing community, witnessed the completion of the superstructure of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár—the Administration's mighty bulwark, the symbol of its strength and the sign of its future glory.[1]

The first stage of the formative period came to end in 1935, Shoghi Effendi announced, and in a letter to the North American believers dated 10 January 1936, he directed the friends towards a more active teaching program.

> This new stage in the gradual unfoldment of the Formative Period of our Faith into which we have just entered—the phase of concentrated teaching activity—synchronizes with a period of deepening gloom, of universal impotence, of ever-increasing destitution and widespread disillusionment in the fortunes of a declining age. This is truly providential and its significance and the opportunities it offers us should be fully apprehended and utilized.[2]

In his message to the 1936 Convention of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, the Guardian moved from the general to the specific in terms of teaching goals:

> WOULD TO GOD EVERY STATE WITHIN AMERICAN REPUBLIC AND EVERY REPUBLIC IN AMERICAN CONTINENT MIGHT ERE TERMINATION THIS GLORIOUS [FIRST BAHÁ'Í] CENTURY EMBRACE LIGHT FAITH BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND ESTABLISH STRUCTURAL BASIS HIS WORLD ORDER.[3]

"The Convention was electrified", wrote Garreta Busey in an article entitled "Uniting the Americas". "Tardily aware of the instructions given so long ago by the Master, only half comprehending their implications, slow to believe in their own ability to pursue a teaching program so much more extensive than that of the present time, the American Bahá'ís were at first dazed and then galvanized into action by the sweeping demands of the message."[4]

Between Riḍván 1936 and 1937 Bahá'í groups or individual believers were established in five of the twelve unopened States or Provinces—Nebraska, Wyoming, Oklahoma, North Dakota, and North Carolina—and the Faith had been carried to forty-two

[1] Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 80.

[2] Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to America* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1947), p. 6.

[3] ibid. p. 6.

[4] *The Bahá'í World*, vol. IX (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1945), p. 187.

new cities in North America. But the work in Latin America was largely untouched. Garreta Busey stated:

> To most of the people in the United States, the countries in South and Central America, thus opened up before us, were unknown, romantic lands much more distant than the continent of Europe soon to be closed to us completely. Teaching in the United States and Canada seemed already to tax to the utmost our spiritual energies. How then could we succeed in establishing the Cause in every republic of the southern continent? The time for the unfoldment of that particular phase of the Divine Plan had, however, come, and on May 19 the Guardian cabled his call for pioneers permanently to reside in Central and South America, and gave £300 as the nucleus of a fund for the new teaching work. The action of the National Spiritual Assembly in response to these messages was the establishment of a special teaching fund of $30,000 in the national budget and the appointment of the first Inter-American Committee.[1]

Shoghi Effendi was pleased with the initial response, but on 30 May 1936 he wrote to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada:

> A systematic, carefully conceived, and well-established plan should be devised, rigorously pursued and continuously extended. Initiated by the National representatives of the American believers, the vanguard and standard-bearers of the radiant army of Bahá'u'lláh, this plan should receive the whole-hearted, the sustained and ever-increasing support, both moral and financial, of the entire body of His followers in that continent... The field is immense, the task gigantic, the privilege immeasurably precious. Time is short, and the obligation sacred, paramount and urgent. The American community must muster all its force, concentrate its resources, summon to its aid all the faith, the determination and energies of which it is capable, and set out, single-minded and undaunted, to attain still greater heights in its mighty exertions for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.[2]

In his message to the Convention of 1937, Shoghi Effendi first called the teaching initiative the Seven Year Plan, adding to the goals before the American believers that of completing the exterior ornamentation on the House of Worship in Wilmette:

> DUAL GIFT PROVIDENTIALLY CONFERRED AMERICAN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY INVESTS RECIPIENTS WITH DUAL RESPONSIBILITY FULFIL HISTORIC MISSION. FIRST PROSECUTE UNINTERRUPTEDLY TEACHING CAMPAIGN INAUGURATED LAST CONVENTION IN ACCORDANCE DIVINE PLAN. SECOND RESUME WITH INFLEXIBLE DETERMINATION EXTERIOR ORNAMENTATION ENTIRE STRUCTURE TEMPLE.... ADVISE PROLONGATION CONVENTION SESSIONS ENABLE DELEGATES CONSULT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO FORMULATE FEASIBLE SEVEN YEAR PLAN TO ASSURE SUCCESS... NO SACRIFICE TOO GREAT FOR COMMUNITY SO ABUNDANTLY BLESSED REPEATEDLY HONORED.[3]

"At the beginning of the Seven Year Plan," Leroy Ioas reported in an article entitled "Teaching in North America", "after the Faith had existed in this country for 43 years, there were 72 Spiritual Assemblies in 26 States and Provinces, with 24 Bahá'í Groups and 246 Isolated Believers with the Faith established in 303 cities. In the remaining seven years of the first Bahá'í century, the American Bahá'ís were called upon to establish the Faith in 34 new States and Provinces, 10 of which did not have even one Bahá'í. Furthermore, these areas were found to be among the most backward, not only from the standpoint of religious intolerance, but also in the way of educational development, cultural achievements, and economic welfare."[4]

[1] ibid. p. 187.

[2] *Messages to America*, p. 7.

[3] ibid. p. 9.

[4] *The Bahá'í World*, vol. IX, p. 202.



The first Local Spiritual Assembly of San José, Costa Rica, organized on 21 April 1941, was also the first Local Assembly in Central America. Pioneer Gayle Woolson stands back center.

The challenge of bringing the Faith to Latin America was even more daunting as in that vast area there was only Leonora Holsapple, still at her post in Bahia, Brazil; Isabel Dodge, who had gone with her geologist husband to his job site in Chupaca, Peru; and one or two other resident Bahá'ís. The task would have been insurmountable without the constant love, encouragement, and vision offered by the Guardian. For example, on 25 November 1937 he wrote:

> ...As I lift up my gaze beyond the strains and stresses which a struggling Faith must necessarily experience, and view the wider scene which the indomitable will of the American Bahá'í community is steadily unfolding, I can not but marvel at the range which the driving force of their ceaseless labors has acquired and the heights which the sublimity of their faith has attained. The outposts of a Faith, already persecuted in both Europe and Asia, are in the American continent steadily advancing, the visible symbols of its undoubted sovereignty, are receiving fresh luster every day and its manifold institutions are driving their roots deeper and deeper into its soil. Blest and honored as none among its sister communities has been in recent years, preserved through the inscrutable dispensations of Divine Providence for a destiny which no mind can as yet imagine, such a community cannot for a moment afford to be content with or rest on the laurels it has so deservedly won. It must go on, continually go on, exploring fresh fields, scaling nobler heights, laying firmer foundations, shedding added splendor and achieving added renown in the service and for the glory of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. The seven year plan which it has sponsored and with which its destiny is so closely interwoven, must at all costs be prosecuted with increasing force and added consecration. All should arise and participate. Upon the measure of such a participation will no doubt depend the welfare and progress of



Pioneer Louise Caswell visits some Bahá'í friends in the Parque La Concordia in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, in October 1941.

those distant communities which are now battling for their emancipation. To such a priceless privilege the inheritors of the shining grace of Bahá'u'lláh cannot surely be indifferent. The American believers must gird up the loins of endeavor and step into the arena of service with such heroism as shall astound the entire Bahá'í world. Let them be assured that my prayers will continue to be offered on their behalf.[1]

And on 10 September 1938:

I feel truly exhilarated as I witness the ever-recurrent manifestations of unbroken solidarity and unquenchable enthusiasm that distinguish every stage in the progressive development of the nation-wide enterprise which is being so unflinchingly pursued by the whole American Bahá'í community. The marked deterioration in world affairs, the steadily deepening gloom that envelops the storm-tossed peoples and nations of the Old World, invest the Seven Year Plan, now operating in both the northern and southern American continents, with a significance and urgency that cannot be overestimated.[2]

The Seven Year Plan can be divided into four periods: (1) from Riḍván 1937 to 1939; (2) from Riḍván 1939 to mid-point in the Plan; (3) from October 1940 to Riḍván 1942; and (4) the final two years.

The first phase was characterized by friends traveling to teach. Mr. and Mrs. Louis Gregory spent several months in Haiti, and left a number of serious students of the teachings. Mrs. Nellie French sailed by ship around South America and had particular success in Bahia, where she met up with Leonora Holsapple, and in Lima, where she worked with Isabel Dodge. Mrs. Frances Stewart attended the People's Conference at Buenos Aires in November 1937, and found interest among the Latin American delegates.

[1] *Messages to America*, pp. 10–11.

[2] ibid. p. 14.

Beatrice Irwin devoted some six months to teaching in Mexico City and other Mexican towns during 1937, lecturing, holding study groups and supplying literature to people of influence and capacity. Mrs. Stewart also went to Mexico City and found it possible to instruct a group who, on 21 April 1938, proceeded to establish the first Local Spiritual Assembly in the Americas outside of the United States and Canada.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada invited a representative of the new Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Mexico City to participate in the National Convention held in April 1939. Four Mexican Bahá'ís accepted the hospitality, including Sra. Maria del Refugio Ochoa, recorded as the first Mexican Bahá'í. "The occasion was one of great rejoicing," we are told by Garreta Busey, "inspiring both to the older community and to the new believers, who on their return to Mexico City, incorporated their assembly, began issuing a News Letter, and plunged into the work of translating the Writings into Spanish."[1]

The Guardian sent a cable to the Convention, praising the American Bahá'ís on the victories they had won, and setting out the new work to be accomplished:

> BRILLIANT CONCLUSION SECOND YEAR SEVEN YEAR PLAN EVOKES UNIVERSAL ADMIRATION BAHÁ'Í WORLD, DEEPENS SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS MITIGATES HARDSHIPS ITS INCREASINGLY HARASSED COMMUNITIES. CLOSING PHASE TEMPLE ORNAMENTATION ALREADY ENTERED. INITIAL STAGE INTERCONTINENTAL TEACHING CAMPAIGN SUCCESSFULLY TERMINATED. FIRM ANCHORAGE INSTITUTIONS ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER PERMANENTLY ESTABLISHED EVERY STATE PROVINCE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT. MEXICO, LYING FOREFRONT SOUTHWARD MARCHING ARMY, RECENTLY ENLISTED. PEDRO ESPINOSA'S AUSPICIOUS ATTENDANCE CONVENTION WELCOME EVIDENCE. SETTLEMENT CENTRAL AMERICAN REPUBLICS NEXT STEP PROGRESSIVE, SYSTEMATIC PENETRATION LATIN AMERICA. UPSURGE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S IMPELLING SPIRIT CAN NOT, WILL NOT, BE STEMMED IMPEDED. METHODICAL ADVANCE ALONG LINE TRACED PEN 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ IRRESISTIBLE. GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, SALVADOR, NICARAGUA, COSTA RICA, PANAMA, CUBA, DOMINICA, HAITI IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES. THOUGH POLITICALLY UNSETTLED, RELIGIOUSLY INTOLERANT, SOCIALLY BACKWARD CLIMATICALLY INHOSPITABLE, THESE UNEXPLORED TERRITORIES HOLD FORTH INESTIMABLE PRIZES AUDACIOUS ADVENTURES PATH BAHÁ'Í SERVICE.[2]

That same year, the Guardian's inspiring and challenging message "To the beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the United States and Canada", *The Advent of Divine Justice*, was published.

"Be unrestrained as the wind," is Bahá'u'lláh's counsel to every would-be teacher of His Cause, *"while carrying the Message of Him Who hath caused the dawn of Divine Guidance to break. Consider how the wind, faithful to that which God hath ordained, bloweth upon all regions of the earth, be they inhabited or desolate. Neither the sight of desolation, nor the evidences of prosperity, can either pain or please it. It bloweth in every direction, as bidden by its Creator."*

"And when he determineth to leave his home, for the sake of the Cause of his Lord," Bahá'u'lláh, in another passage, referring to such a teacher, has revealed, *"let him put his whole trust in God, as the best provision for his journey, and array himself with the robe of virtue. ...If he be kindled with the fire of His love, if he forgoeth all created things, the words he uttereth shall set on fire them that hear him."*[3]

The community of the organized promoters of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in the American continent—the spiritual

[1] *The Bahá'í World*, vol. IX, p. 190.

[2] *Messages to America*, p. 20.

[3] Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, rev. ed. 1984), p. 50.

descenants of the dawn-breakers of an heroic Age, who by their death proclaimed the birth of that Faith—must, in turn, usher in, not by their death but through living sacrifice, that promised World Order, the shell ordained to enshrine that priceless jewel, the world civilization, of which the Faith itself is the sole begetter.[1]

By now the response was too great to chronicle with individual's names, specific locations, and exact dates. But at least two North American dawn-breakers did sacrifice their very lives to spread the Faith during the Seven Year Plan.

"Departure South America by wish of beloved Guardian!" May Ellis Maxwell had cabled before departing from New York on 24 January 1940 on the steamship *Brazil.* "She was able to teach 'one lovely woman on the boat, the wife of a distinguished army man'", Marion Holley wrote about the trip.

In Rio de Janeiro, with the aid of Leonora Holsapple who had come from Bahia, she arranged two teas at her hotel, the Gloria, one for nineteen guests, while a third meeting was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lee Worley. She spoke also to the president of the Homeopathic College. Yet despite these two weeks of exhilarating success, she was eager to reach Buenos Aires...

They arrived [May Maxwell and her niece, Jeanne Bolles] on February 27th, after one-day stops in Santos and Montevideo... On the night of February 29th they dined alone in her room at City Hotel ... her mood was radiant. But the next morning a terrible pain came high in her breast, and though the doctor reassured them both, by afternoon 'the Will of God took her from our midst'.

"Priceless honor (of a) martyr's death!" Shoghi Effendi included in his tribute to May Maxwell.[2]

Another North American Bahá'í who gave his life to spread the Faith was Mathew Kaszab, who had been a student at the University of New York when he met Mrs. Louise Talbot and learned about Bahá'u'lláh. "From that moment, Mathew's real life began", wrote Loulie Mathews. "The heroic age of the Báb and the martyrs absorbed his mind and *The Dawn-Breakers* became his constant companion..."

"When Shoghi Effendi's *Advent of Divine Justice* was published in February, 1939... [its] dynamic utterances carried Mathew away, and without delay he set out for Panama." The Inter-America Committee asked him to go on to Nicaragua, and, "the good soldier of Bahá'u'lláh that he was, he accepted our suggestion..."[3]

He went to work in the gold mines of Blue Fields. He described the deplorable conditions of poverty and vice and was so appalled by the ignorance of the miners' children, that he took a night shift and taught school in the day time. When I remonstrated with him because he was giving himself no time for sleep, he replied that his time was so short he could not afford to sleep! All his efforts at betterment in Blue Fields having failed, he returned to Managua.

Suddenly, while walking on the street, he was arrested. The reason given was that he uttered words in criticism of the Nicaraguan government. This may have been the reason or not—the cause is very obscure. He remained in prison from March 1st to 23rd. As suddenly as he was interned, he was liberated.

He determined to leave Nicaragua, sensing danger, and began to make preparations for his departure. When they were complete, he came to say goodbye to our first native believer, who was teaching school nearby. He was loved by the

[1] ibid. p. 7.

[2] *The Bahá'í World,* vol. VIII (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1942), pp. 631–642.

[3] *The Bahá'í World,* vol. IX, pp. 614–615.



Pioneers Gladys Stuart and Cora Oliver, sitting on the left side of the stairs, visit a group of believers in Belize, British Honduras, during the Seven Year Plan.

children of the school, who gathered around him and sang their songs for him...

When he reached the airport, an officer stepped forward and presented a warrant for his arrest. The day was September 28th of 1942. It was some time before his friends learned the sad news. On November first Mathew was attacked by an illness the nature of which was never learned, his condition was so grave that he was moved from the dungeon to the guard's hospital....

At that time death seemed imminent but his strength slowly returned and he was sent back to the prison. On December 28 the authorities announced that he was free, but must leave the country. Silently and alone, he took a plane to Mexico City and there reembarked for Brownsville, Texas, where he died January 13th, 1943.[1]

By mid-point in the Seven Year Plan, in October 1940, assemblies had been established in Mexico City, Bahia, and Buenos Aires, and groups in Havana, Tegucigalpa, Guatemala, Montevideo, and Panama. As early as April, Shoghi Effendi cabled to the Convention his joy that the believers had outstripped the goal set for 1939–1940. By April 1942 the number of assemblies was nine: Mexico City, Puebla, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Tegucigalpa, San Salvador, San José, Puntarenos, and Havana.

In his message to the National Convention of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada sent on 26 April 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote:

> ...FIRST BAHÁ'Í CENTURY FAST RUNNING OUT. AGONIES TRAVAILING AGE INEXORABLY CULMINATING. BÁB'S STIRRING UNIQUE INJUNCTION DIRECTING PEOPLES WEST LEAVE THEIR CITIES ENSURE TRIUMPH DIVINE CAUSE RECORDED CENTURY AGO QAYYÚMU'L-ASMÁ'. BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S SIGNIFICANT SUMMONS CALLING UPON ALL PRESIDENTS REPUBLICS WESTERN HEMISPHERE CHAMPION CAUSE JUSTICE ISSUED SEVENTY YEARS AGO IN HIS MOST HOLY BOOK. BROAD OUTLINES

[1] *The Bahá'í World,* vol. IX, pp. 615–616.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S MATCHLESS DESIGN CONCEIVED TWENTYFIVE YEARS AGO BENEFIT NORTH AMERICAN BELIEVERS TRANSMITTED POSTERITY TABLETS DIVINE PLAN. SEVEN YEAR ENTERPRISE REGARDED INITIAL STAGE EXECUTION WORLD MISSION ALREADY LAUNCHED. GIGANTIC TEMPLE UNDERTAKING CONSTITUTING MAJOR OBLIGATION THIS ENTERPRISE, VIRTUALLY CONSUMMATED. VAST INTERCONTINENTAL TEACHING CAMPAIGN VISIBLY YIELDING FIRST FRUITS EVERY REPUBLIC LATIN AMERICA. UPON CRUCIAL YEAR AHEAD HINGE FORTUNES HISTORIC CRUSADE... MYSELF DEPRIVED PERSONAL PARTICIPATION TASK ALLOTTED PROSECUTORS EPOCH MAKING PLAN IMPELLED DEPUTIZE FIVE MEMBERS AMERICAN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY HELP FULFILL MY BEHALF WHATEVER PIONEER FIELD MOST VITAL ITS URGENT REQUIREMENTS. PLEDGING FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS ACCOMPLISHMENT THIS PURPOSE.[1]

In "Uniting the Americas", Garreta Busey reported:

> ...the most noticeable characteristic of this last period of the Seven Year Plan was the work undertaken by the local believers. Many of them were engaged in translating Bahá'í literature. The Mexican believers... had begun that great task. It was continued by the Bahá'ís of Buenos Aires, and in Uruguay three believers, having finished the "Thirty-Six Lessons", embarked upon the gigantic task of translating "The Dawn-Breakers"...
>
> Latin American teachers arose. Sr. Tormo went, with Wilfred Barton, to Paraguay. Sr. Ulloa went from Costa Rica to Panama to assist the pioneers there. Study groups in three cities of Argentina were taught by believers from Buenos Aires. The Bahá'ís of Santiago were carrying the Faith into other parts of Chile. As time went on the visits between communities were more frequent until in 1941 the Inter America Committees wrote: 'Thus the Divine Plan continually evolves. Threads of friendly human contacts weave back and forth, bringing out in ever elaborated beauty the Divine Plan of World Unity.' As individuals became more active, the communities as units began also to take on more responsibilities, demonstrating their growing maturity under the Administrative Order. One sign of their development was the recognition of the Costa Rican assemblies and that of Montevideo by their respective governments. The Assembly of Buenos Aires now accepted the responsibility of publishing and disseminating Bahá'í books in Latin America. The Mexican assemblies were carrying on extension work in various parts of their country. San Salvador had begun teaching in Santa Ana, the second largest city of El Salvador. Youth groups and children's classes were organized...[2]

Nor was the work in North America neglected. "...on March 28, 1944, we find 136 Spiritual Assemblies, 197 Bahá'í Groups, and the Faith vigorously functioning in over 1,300 cities on the North American continent;—the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh shining in resplendent glory from the vast expanses of Alaska to the Keys of Florida; from the isolation of Prince Edward Island to the sunny shores of California."[3]

In addition, the exterior ornamentation of the Bahá'í House of Worship was completed in 1943.

Shoghi Effendi cabled to the friends gathered for the All-American Centennial Convention on 13 April 1944:

> The greatest collective enterprise ever launched by the Western followers of Bahá'u'lláh and indeed ever undertaken by any Bahá'í community in the course of an entire century, has been gloriously consummated. A victory of undying fame has marked the culmination of the fifty year long labors of the American Bahá'í community in the service of Bahá'u'lláh

[1] *Messages to America*, p. 55.

[2]. *The Bahá'í World*, vol. IX, pp. 197–198.

[3] ibid. p. 202.



Pioneers Honor Kempton, Helen Robenson and Dagmar Dole shown in Anchorage, Alaska, in January 1944.

and has shed imperishable lustre on the immortal records of His Faith during the first hundred years of its existence. The exploits that have marked the progress of this prodigious, this three-fold enterprise, covering a field stretching from Alaska in the North to the extremity of Chile in the south, affecting the destinies of so great a variety of peoples and nations, involving such a tremendous expenditure of treasure and effort, calling forth so remarkable a spirit of heroism and self-sacrifice, and undertaken notwithstanding the vicious assaults and incessant machinations of the breakers of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Covenant, and despite the perils, the trials and restrictions of a desolating war of unexampled severity, augur well for the successful prosecution, and indeed assure the ultimate victory, of the remaining stages of the Plan conceived, a quarter of a century ago, by 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the North American continent.

To the band of pioneers, whether settlers or itinerant teachers, who have forsaken their homes, who have scattered far and wide, who have willingly sacrificed their comfort, their health and even their lives for the prosecution of this Plan; to the several committees and their auxiliary agencies that have been entrusted with special and direct responsibility for its efficient and orderly development and who have discharged their high responsibilities with exemplary vigor, courage and fidelity; to the national representatives of the community itself, who have vigilantly and tirelessly supervised, directed and coordinated the unfolding processes of this vast undertaking ever since its inception; to all those who, though not in the forefront of battle, have through their financial assistance and through the instrumentality of their deputies, contributed to the expansion and consolidation of the Plan, I myself, as well as the entire Bahá'í world, owe a debt of gratitude that no one

can measure or describe. To the sacrifices they have made, to the courage they have so consistently shown, to the fidelity they have so remarkably displayed, to the resourcefulness, the discipline, the constancy and devotion they have so abundantly demonstrated, future generations viewing the magnitude of their labors in their proper perspective, will no doubt pay adequate tribute—a tribute no less ardent and well-deserved than the recognition extended by the present-day builders of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh to the Dawn-Breakers, whose shining deeds have signalized the birth of the Heroic Age of His Faith.

...to all the privileged attendants of such an epoch-making Convention, I, on my own behalf, as well as in the name of all Bahá'í communities sharing with them, at this great turning-point in the history of our Faith, the joys and triumphs of this solemn hour, feel moved to convey the expression of our loving admiration, our joy and our gratitude for the brilliant conclusion of what posterity will no doubt acclaim as one of the most stirring episodes in the history of the Formative Age of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, as well as one of the most momentous enterprises undertaken during the entire course of the first Century of the Bahá'í Era.[1]

[1] *Messages to America*, pp. 69–71.



Celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil—the oldest Assembly in South America.
Mrs. Margot Worley, seated center, served on the first Local Assembly.

2. Fiftieth Anniversary of the Faith in Latin America Celebrated

From Riḍván 1937 to Riḍván 1944, the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada engaged in the first Seven Year Plan in response to the call from the Guardian:

> WOULD TO GOD EVERY STATE WITHIN AMERICAN REPUBLIC AND EVERY REPUBLIC IN AMERICAN CONTINENT MIGHT ERE TERMINATION THIS GLORIOUS [1ST BAHÁ'Í] CENTURY EMBRACE LIGHT FAITH BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND ESTABLISH STRUCTURAL BASIS HIS WORLD ORDER.

By the end of the Plan, the Faith had been established from Alaska to Chile. No state in the United States, province in Canada, or country in Latin America was without a group of believers. Celebrations of the 50th anniversaries of these victories were held throughout Latin America.

Argentina

The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum attended the "Uniting the Americas" conference held in Buenos Aires from 27 February to 1 March 1990 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Faith in Argentina.

The conference also honored the memory of May Bolles Maxwell, the mother of Rúḥíyyih Khánum, whose flame-like love for the Cause led her, at the age of seventy and in ill health, to voyage to Buenos Aires and, in the words of Shoghi Effendi, "lay down her life in such a spirit of consecration and self-sacrifice as to merit the crown of martyrdom".

About 1,250 attended the conference including Counsellors Eloy Anello, Isabel de Calderón, and Shapoor Monadjem. As many as 400 of the participants were not Bahá'ís and, during the course of the three days, twelve people enrolled in the Faith.

While in Argentina, Amatu'l-Bahá, accompanied by Mr. Monadjem and a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, had an interview with the President of Argentina, Carlos Menem, and two Cabinet members. The Hand of the Cause also called on the Mayor of Buenos Aires and presented him with a copy of the pamphlet "A Pattern for Future Society", which consists of an extract from the writings of Shoghi Effendi on the coming world civilization.

Media coverage of the conference was excellent. There were items on both radio and television, and articles in several newspapers including one with two full pages, one of which was in color.

Bolivia

About 150 Bahá'ís and their friends attended a public meeting held in the salon of the National Library in Bogota on 12 December 1991 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Faith in Bolivia. Rosario de Moazes presented a short summary of the Bahá'í activities during the Faith's half-century in the country, and Roberto Nothaft gave a talk on the Bahá'í Faith and the new World Order.

A story about the celebration was broadcast on the television news that evening.

Brazil

The Local Spiritual Assembly of Salvador, in the state of Bahia, Brazil, is the oldest Assembly on the Continent. Established in 1940, it is the "Mother Assembly" of South America.

On 16 October 1990, the Local Spiritual Assembly held a reception to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. About two hundred people attended, including Margot Worley,

one of the first Bahá'ís of South America and a member of the first Local Spiritual Assembly. Also attending was Rolf von Czékus, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in the Americas.

The Assembly received messages of congratulations from the Governor-elect, Antonio Carlos Magalhães, the commanding officer of the consular corps of Bahia, and many other non-Bahá'ís. Commendations were also received from the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, and a large number of Local Spiritual Assemblies in Brazil.

As part of the anniversary events, two special prayer sessions were held at the graveside of Leonora Stirling Armstrong, "the spiritual mother of the Bahá'ís of Brazil", with many local Bahá'ís attending.

A photographic exhibit of the first fifty years of Bahá'í activities in Bahia was assembled and displayed, and a video documentary of the history of the Cause in Bahia was launched. An article about the development of the Faith in Bahia was published in *A Tarde*, the widest circulated newspaper in the state.

COSTA RICA

The fiftieth anniversary of the election of the first Local Spiritual Assembly of San José, Costa Rica, was held on 21 April 1991 in the auditorium of the Federal College of Engineers and Architects in San José. The event was attended by the head of the national Social Security system, a representative of the Governor of the Province of San José, the President of the San José City Council, and the Rector of the University of Costa Rica.

Special guest for the celebration was Mrs. Gayle Woolson, one of the first two pioneers to Costa Rica and a member of the first Local Assembly. The other special guest was also a member of the first Assembly, Mrs. Consuelo Miranda Vda. de Araya. The beautiful commemorative program was enriched by the music performed by a choir called "Heredia Canta."

CUBA

On 2 December 1989, the Bahá'ís of Cuba filled the National Center in Havana to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Faith in their country. Songs and dances were performed and, following a lavish luncheon, a commemorative cake was served.

Perfecto Rérez Toledo, the first Cuban to recognize Bahá'u'lláh, spoke to the Bahá'ís and their guests. Evoking those early days of 1939, he paid tribute to the Bahá'ís who helped to found and develop the Cuban Bahá'í community: Philip and Laily Marangella, Josephine Kruka, Jean Silver, William de Forge, Emogene Hoagg, Gayle Woolson, and Ruth Moffett. He also mentioned the Hands of the Cause of God Zikrullah Khadem [Dhikru'lláh Khádim], Dr. Ugo Giachery, and "the unforgettable Dorothy Baker."

EL SALVADOR

On 12 November 1989, the Bahá'í community of El Salvador celebrated the Anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh and the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the Faith's first pioneer to their country, John Eichenauer. Mr. Eichenauer was able to be present for the occasion.

The program was held in the Instituto Bahá'í Jamaliyyih, about 35 kilometres from the capital, with more than 200 people attending. One of the friends talked about the year 1920, when the Hand of the Cause of God Amelia Collins had walked the streets of old San Salvador saying the Greatest Name, and Mr. Eichenauer told of how, hearing of this, he was inspired to go to El Salvador to pioneer.

The Faith enjoyed extensive television exposure during the weeks preceding the celebration. During one interview, the Bahá'ís were able to speak for two hours on the Bahá'í approach to peace in response to



The first pioneer to El Salvador, Mr. John Eichenauer (seated center with the Greatest Name plaque), returned to celebrate the Bahá'í community's fiftieth anniversary. The event was held at Jamaliyyih Bahá'í Institute on 12 November 1989.

generally helpful and friendly questions from the moderator and the television audience.

PARAGUAY

A memorial service for the first Bahá'í of Paraguay, Sr. Roque Centurion Miranda, was held on 30 January 1990 to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of his passing on that date. A floral offering was carried to the Bahá'í Cemetery in Lambare, and under the pine trees by his gravesite prayers were read and Sr. Centurion Miranda's two daughters shared anecdotes about their father.

During the evening of 30 January, a program was held at the National Bahá'í Center in Asunción to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Bahá'í Faith in Paraguay. The Director of the Performing Art School of the Municipality of Asunción participated, as did Mercedes Janet, a noted actress. A young student gave a reading of the biography of Sr. Roque Centurion Miranda as a Paraguayan citizen, and as a lover of the national theater. A local newspaper published an article about the commemoration.

URUGUAY

A series of events called "Days of Peace on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Bahá'í Faith in Uruguay", organized by the Maldonado community and held from 18 to 20 November 1988, was given extensive media coverage in the area.

Activities began with a slide show of the Bahá'í Holy Places and a presentation of statistical information about the Faith in Uruguay. On the second day members of the Bahá'í community visited a home for the aged and the Children's Council, and held a youth gathering. On the third day, a program for children was held with clowns and acting. The final activity was a presentation about women and peace.

A display of books and photographs about the Bahá'í Faith was exhibited at the Bahá'í Centre for the three "Days of Peace".

III
THE TEN YEAR CRUSADE AND THE KNIGHTS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Adapted from a talk given by
MR. 'ALÍ NAKHJAVÁNÍ
to the Bahá'í World Centre staff in April 1992

MANY of us are working here and abroad to prepare for the events of the coming Holy Year—the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh. Among the events which will be held in the Holy Land will be a reception for the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh. These precious souls had a unique part to play in an extremely important period of Bahá'í history, the Ten Year Crusade. As we look back over the development of the Faith during the one hundred years since the passing of the Blessed Beauty, it is appropriate to take the time to review a subject which engaged the entire Bahá'í world during the latter years of the ministry of Shoghi Effendi.

The significance of the Ten Year Crusade was described by Shoghi Effendi in a message he sent to the Intercontinental Conference in America on 4 May 1953. It was a long message, read to the assembly by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, towards the end of which he reviewed the entire spiritual evolution of humanity. He said that this process—this stupendous vast process—consists of ten parts. Part one consisted of all of the Prophets of God before the Báb. Part two began with the Báb, and then followed five parts representing major phases of the Faith up to 1921. The eighth part was his own ministry up to 1953.

Then he wrote:

> The ninth part of this process—the stage we are now entering—is the further diffusion of that same light over one hundred and thirty-one additional territories and islands in both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, through the operation of a decade-long world spiritual crusade whose termination will, God willing, coincide with the Most Great Jubilee commemorating the centenary of the declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdád.[1]

The tenth part is everything we will be doing till the end of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh. Shoghi Effendi continues:

> And finally the tenth part of this mighty process must be the penetration of that light, in the course of numerous crusades and of successive epochs of both the Formative and Golden Ages of the Faith, into all the remaining territories of the globe through the erection of the entire machinery of Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order in all territories, both East and West, the stage at which the light of God's triumphant Faith shining in all its power and glory will have suffused and enveloped the entire planet.[2]

Of the entire range of the Bahá'í Dispensation, we are in the tenth part. The ninth part—only ten years—was the Ten Year

[1] *Messages to the Bahá'í World,* A compilation of letters from Shoghi Effendi (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1958), pp. 154–155.

[2] ibid. p. 155.

Crusade. And in the entire range of the universal process of spiritual evolution of humanity this stage stands out. This is an indication of the importance of the topic.

Teaching Plans

From 1844 to 1937 there were no Bahá'í Teaching Plans. The friends knew about teaching, about traveling to teach, and about martyrdom. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had encouraged the friends to form local assemblies and to set up funds and associations, and He had given the American believers the Tablets of the Divine Plan but there was no Administrative Order to prosecute this vision.

During the first years of his ministry, Shoghi Effendi began to create the structures that we know today. He named the United States as the cradle of the Administrative Order as there was one National Spiritual Assembly there as well as for Canada, and they had been the recipients of the Tablets of the Divine Plan. Everything in terms of the formal inauguration of the Administrative Order began with the North American Bahá'í community. For 16 years, from 1921 to 1937, he said he built up the Administrative Order in the United States and Canada. Then, at Riḍván 1937, he gave them the first Seven Year Plan. Although it was a national plan, the messages were shared with the Bahá'í world collectively.

At the end of the first Seven Year Plan, in 1944, the Guardian gave the American friends a two-year respite. Then he gave them the second Seven Year Plan, from Riḍván 1946 to 1953. During the second Seven Year Plan of the United States, he urged the other ten National Spiritual Assemblies to have Plans, too. Consequently, the second Plan was paralleled by other Plans in Asia, Africa, Europe and Australasia.

In letters from the Guardian, there was reference to a third Seven Year Plan to take place after three years of respite. However, he changed his mind and decided that immediately upon the completion of the second Seven Year Plan there would be a Ten Year Plan, not only for the United States and Canada, but for the entire Bahá'í world. Therefore, that third Seven Year Plan was cancelled, and was superseded by the Ten Year Plan. The first Plan with world-wide international collaboration was the Ten Year Crusade.

At the mid-way point of the Ten Year Plan, Shoghi Effendi passed away. The Hands of the Cause of God took over custodianship of the Faith and the Spiritual Crusade was completed. The Universal House of Justice came into existence and it took one year to review the situation before it developed, after consultation with the Hands of the Cause, the Nine Year Plan, from 1964 to 1973. Following Shoghi Effendi's style, the House of Justice gave a year of respite from Riḍván 1973 to 1974, then gave the friends the Five Year Plan to carry out from 1974 to 1979, followed by the Seven Year Plan, 1979 to 1986, and the Six Year Plan, 1986 to 1992. Now we have the Holy Year, Riḍván 1992 to 1993, then we are to have the Three Year Plan, 1993 to 1996. What will happen after that, only Bahá'u'lláh knows.

Messages Leading Up to the Ten Year Crusade

The Guardian used the word "Crusade" as far back as 1939. Of course, this word has historical connotations in connection with the military expeditions of the European Christians who went to the Holy Land to liberate Jerusalem from Muslim rule. In 1939, two years after the inauguration of the first Seven Year Plan of the American believers, he began to use the term "Crusade" instead of "Plan." In his Persian writings he used the word "Jihád," which is "Holy War." He subsequently used "Crusade" for the second Seven Year Plan, and then for the Ten Year Plan so that the latter became known as the Ten Year Crusade, even more than the Ten Year Plan. He sometimes referred to the pioneers as "crusaders."

Shoghi Effendi did not give the Bahá'í world any indication of this Crusade in the earlier years of his Guardianship. However, in 1951, six years before he passed away, when he began to build up the World Centre by inviting outstanding believers to come to the Holy Land to serve on the International Bahá'í Council or to come as Hands of the Cause of God, he started referring to something very great that was going to happen.

For example, on 25 February 1951, in a letter to the British National Spiritual Assembly (and almost on the same date he sent a cable to the American National Spiritual Assembly repeating virtually word for word what he had told the British Bahá'ís), he instructed the British Bahá'í community to have a Two Year Plan, beginning in 1951 and ending in 1953, to recruit pioneers to Africa.

> On the success of this enterprise, [the Two Year Plan] unprecedented in its scope, unique in its character and immense in its spiritual potentialities, must depend the initiation, at a later period in the Formative Age of the Faith, of undertakings embracing within their range all National Assemblies functioning throughout the Bahá'í World, undertakings constituting in themselves a prelude to the launching of world-wide enterprises destined to be embarked upon, in future epochs of that same Age [the Formative Age], by the Universal House of Justice, that will symbolise the unity and coordinate and unify the activities of these National Assemblies.[1]

This was the first hint Shoghi Effendi gave of the Ten Year Crusade. Under the Two Year Plan, he had instructed only five National Assemblies to work together to open Africa south of the Sahara and he put these National Assemblies under the auspices and coordination of the British National Assembly. In this letter he stated that at the end of the Two Year Plan, the Bahá'í world was to have undertakings which would involve and engage all National Assemblies, and there were eleven at that time.

In this letter he also gave the Bahá'í world a foreshadowing of two stages: one period with undertakings involving all National Spiritual Assemblies, that is, the Ten Year Crusade; to be followed throughout the Epochs of the Formative Age by enterprises which would be launched by the Universal House of Justice. I remember the discussions in Ṭihrán by the scholars of the Faith about why Shoghi Effendi had said that those enterprises would be embarked upon by the Universal House of Justice. Why didn't he say under the aegis of the Guardianship?

In this one short paragraph, Shoghi Effendi told the friends about the future in two ways. First something great was going to happen, then major enterprises were to occur under the aegis of the Universal House of Justice.

Nine months later, on 30 November 1951, the Guardian sent a message in which he said that the Bahá'í World would hold intercontinental conferences for the first time. There had always been local and national conferences. Now, he said, the Faith was entering a new phase.

> Forthcoming celebrations must be signalized through inauguration long anticipated intercontinental stage in administrative evolution of Faith marking its gradual development through successive phases of local, regional, national, international Bahá'í activity. Initiation this highly significant measure further cementing Bahá'í National Assemblies in five continents of globe will be acclaimed by posterity as counterpart to consolidation Faith at its World Centre through recent formation International Bahá'í Council in Holy Land.[2]

[1] *Unfolding Destiny: The Messages from the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith to the Bahá'í Community of the British Isles* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1981), p. 261.

[2] *Messages*, p. 17.

This was another hint that the Bahá'ís were to engage in collaboration involving all National Spiritual Assemblies very soon.

At Naw-Rúz 1952, Shoghi Effendi announced that the eleven National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'í world were to be joined by a twelfth, the Italo-Swiss National Assembly. He praised the work of Dr. Ugo Giachery in that cable, and said how important it was that at the beginning of this new international phase we had a new National Spiritual Assembly.

> Anticipate entrusting to the youngest among the twelve National Assemblies of the Bahá'í World a specific plan enabling it, in conjunction with its sister National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'í World, to promote in the course of the ten years separating the second from the Most Great Jubilee the Global Crusade designed to hoist the standard of Bahá'u'lláh in the remaining states, dependencies and islands of the whole planet.[1]

Here it was: the first intimation of the Ten Year Crusade.

The next message I want to quote was written in June 1952 and was heartrending:

> No matter how long the period that separates them from ultimate victory; however arduous the task; however formidable the exertions demanded of them;... however grievous the ordeal of temporary separation from the heart and nerve-center of their Faith which future unforeseeable disturbances may impose upon them, I adjure them, by the precious blood that flowed in such great profusion, by the lives of the unnumbered saints and heroes who were immolated, by the supreme, the glorious sacrifice of the Prophet-Herald of our Faith, by the tribulations which its Founder, Himself, willingly underwent, so that His Cause might live, His Order might redeem a shattered world and its glory might suffuse the entire planet—I adjure them, as this solemn hour draws nigh, to resolve never to flinch, never to hesitate, never to relax, until each and every objective in the Plans to be proclaimed, at a later date, has been fully consummated.[2]

That shook the Bahá'í world. The friends realized that while there was a wonderful thing happening—there would also be national Plans; each of these twelve National Spiritual Assemblies was going to have its own Plan, just as the Italo-Swiss was to have its own Plan—and that there would be some rough times ahead.

Then came the auspicious moment, on 8 October 1952, when Shoghi Effendi announced the summary of the Ten Year Crusade. He gave the Bahá'í world the Crusades's objectives, and the preamble of the message read as follows:

> Feel hour propitious to proclaim to the entire Bahá'í world the projected launching on the occasion of the convocation of the approaching Intercontinental Conferences on the four continents of the globe the fate-laden, soul-stirring, decade-long, world-embracing Spiritual Crusade involving the simultaneous initiation of twelve national Ten Year Plans and the concerted participation of all National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'í world aiming at the immediate extension of Bahá'u'lláh's spiritual dominion as well as the eventual establishment of the structure of His administrative order in all remaining Sovereign States, Principal Dependencies comprising Principalities, Sultanates, Emirates Shaykhdoms, Protectorates, Trust Territories, and Crown Colonies scattered over the surface of the entire planet. The entire body of the avowed supporters of Bahá'u'lláh's all-conquering Faith are now summoned to achieve in a single decade feats eclipsing in totality the achievements which in the course of the eleven preceding decades illuminated the annals of Bahá'í pioneering.[3]

[1] *Messages*, p. 23.

[2] ibid., pp. 38–39.

[3] ibid., p. 41.

He went on giving a summary of these goals. This message had an electrifying effect on the friends.

By May 1953, Shoghi Effendi had already announced not only the summary but the details of the Ten Year Plan. Intercontinental conferences were held. To each one he sent a special message enumerating all the goals pertaining to that continent. He sent Hands of the Cause to be present at the Conferences, with a designated Hand representing him personally. All of this happened during that Holy Year.

HOLY YEARS

The Guardian first used the term "Holy Year" in a letter written on his behalf by his secretary to the American Bahá'í community in November 1951. He explained in that letter that the Holy Year was to mark the Year Nine, a reference to the Báb's prophecy that in the Year Nine—that is nine years after 1844, His own Declaration—the Promised One would come and the new Revelation would be born.

The Year Nine began from the time when Bahá'u'lláh received the intimation of His Revelation in the Síyáh-Chál in Ṭihrán. He entered the Síyáh-Chál in August of 1852, and stayed in that Black Pit for four months. Shoghi Effendi explained that this intimation—this dream or mystic experience that Bahá'u'lláh wrote about—occurred at the mid-way point of this period of four months. Bahá'u'lláh entered the Síyáh-Chál approximately on 15 August, so Shoghi Effendi took 15 October as the beginning of the Holy Year.

To better understand the Holy Years, I refer you to this passage from *God Passes By*:

> The first dawnings of that Light of peerless splendor had... broken in the city of Shíráz. The rim of that Orb had now appeared above the horizon of the Síyáh-Chál of Ṭihrán. Its rays were to burst forth, a decade later, in Baghdád, piercing the clouds which immediately after its rise in those somber surroundings obscured its splendor. It was destined to mount to its zenith in the far-away city of Adrianople, and ultimately to set in the immediate vicinity of the fortress-town of 'Akká.[1]

In these three short sentences, Shoghi Effendi described the process of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. What happened during the period of the Báb should be considered as the period of the dawn. As the rim of the orb of the Sun appeared—sunrise—that moment was the birth of the Bahá'í Revelation in the Síyáh-Chál in Ṭihrán. That began the first Holy Year. The Morning Sun was seen in Baghdád, the Declaration by Bahá'u'lláh of His Mission. The process reached its zenith in Adrianople, when Bahá'u'lláh wrote His letters to the Kings, the Proclamation of His Faith. That "Sun" proceeded on its predestined path and then set in the city of 'Akká, at Bahjí, in 1892. As to the second Holy Year: sunrise fixed the time for the first Holy Year, and sunset will fix the time for the second Holy Year.

The first Holy Year, announced by Shoghi Effendi, stretched from 15 October 1952 to 15 October 1953, and during this time the first four Intercontinental Conferences were held. The second Holy Year, announced by the Universal House of Justice, is to begin at Riḍván 1992 and end at Riḍván 1993 with commemorative events to be held in the Holy Land in May 1992, and the second Bahá'í World Congress in New York in November 1992.

CENTENARIES

Another subject which might be helpful as background is the centenaries we have had so far during the Formative Age. The first was the Centenary of the Declaration of the Báb, the First Jubilee, in May 1944, the

[1] Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 2nd ed., 1987), pp. 102–103.



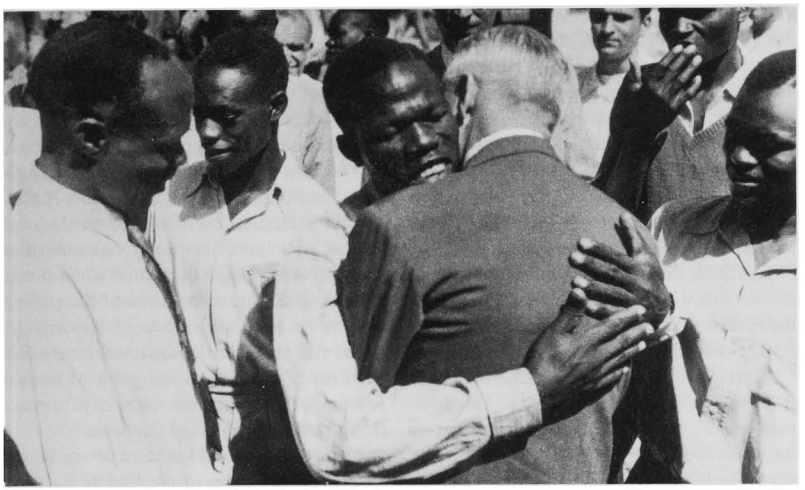
Friends from Australia and New Zealand gathered in Sydney for the Dedication of the National Ḥaẓírat'ul-Quds and the Commemoration of the Centenary of the Declaration of the Báb, 20 May 1944.

highlights of which were celebrations held all over the Bahá'í world. The second was the Centenary of the Martyrdom of the Báb in July 1950, for which Shoghi Effendi called on the entire Bahá'í world to hold commemorative events. Next was the Birth of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, the intimation of His Mission, referred to by the Guardian as the Second Jubilee, or sometimes the Great Jubilee. This was the beginning of the first Holy Year, as described above, and its highlights were the first four Intercontinental Conferences.

The fourth centenary was the Centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's Declaration in April 1963. This was the Third Jubilee, or, as Shoghi Effendi called it in other writings, the Most Great Jubilee. The highlights were worldwide celebrations, particularly culminating in the first Bahá'í World Congress held in London. Next was the Centenary of the Revelation of the *Súriy-i-Mulúk* in Adrianople where, Shoghi Effendi said, the Sun "had reached its zenith." This was in September 1967, and the highlights were the six Intercontinental Conferences convened by the Universal House of Justice. Hands of the Cause of God went to all of these Intercontinental Conferences. Six of the Hands first visited the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople before scattering, carrying with them a copy of the portrait of Bahá'u'lláh taken in Adrianople, which the friends at these conferences were privileged to view. The Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh is ahead of us, and the beginning of the Holy Year, Riḍván 1992 to Riḍván 1993. The highlights will be the events here and in New York.

The Ten Year Crusade

Shoghi Effendi sent his manuscript of the Ten Year Plan to two National Spiritual Assemblies, the United States and the British Isles, asking each of them to publish it. It is called, *The Bahá'í Faith 1844 to 1952, Information Statistical and Comparative*, and it is in two parts. The first part consists of statistics of the Bahá'í world as of 1953. The second part is called, "Supplement: Ten



The Hand of the Cause of God Leroy Ioas greeting the friends on behalf of the Guardian during the first Bahá'í Intercontinental Conference, held in Kampala, Uganda, from 12 to 18 February 1953.

Year International Bahá'í Teaching and Consolidation Plan 1953–1963." The bottom of the cover reads: "Compiled by Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith." From pages 50 to 74 are the details of the Ten Year Crusade as laid out by the Guardian in full detail and in full splendor.

The first goal was, "Adoption of preliminary measures for the construction of Bahá'u'lláh's Sepulchre in the Holy Land." Some of the friends asked if Shoghi Effendi was planning to build a superstructure for the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. He answered that what he had in mind was to cleanse the surroundings of the Shrine and to create the Ḥaram-i-Aqdas. This was accomplished.

The second goal was the opening of one hundred and thirty-one virgin territories, whose names he specified. At that time roughly the same number of territories had already been opened, so opening one hundred and thirty-one new territories was equal to doubling the number of "countries within the pale of the Faith." There were forty-one countries in Asia, thirty-three countries in Africa, thirty countries in Europe, twenty-seven countries in the Americas. However, during the evolution of the Plan, one new territory was added raising the total to one hundred and thirty-two, as will be explained later.

The next goal was the translation and publication of Bahá'í literature into ninety-one additional languages, the names of which Shoghi Effendi specified. There were to be forty in Asia, thirty-one in Africa, ten in Europe, ten in the Americas, and he assigned responsibility for translating and publishing these books and publications to designated National Spiritual Assemblies.

The fourth goal concerned the construction of two Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs, one in Ṭihrán and one in Frankfurt. Circumstances in Írán did not permit the construction of the Temple in Ṭihrán so, at a later date, he announced that the Kampala Temple in Uganda would replace the Temple in Ṭihrán as a goal. A few months later he added Sydney, Australia, so two Houses of Worship were erected instead of the one in Ṭihrán.

Next was the acquisition of a site for the Temple on Mount Carmel. Mrs. Amelia Collins provided the funds, and Shoghi Effendi was able to purchase that very precious and important property which had been blessed by the footsteps of Bahá'u'lláh Himself at the time He revealed the Tablet of Carmel.

Another goal completed was the erection of the first dependency of the Temple in Wilmette, the Home for the Aged.

Next was the purchase of Temple sites in eleven countries, which he named—three on the American continent, three in Africa, two in Asia, two in Europe and one in Australasia.

The eighth goal was, "Development of the functions of the institution of the Hands of the Cause". That became very important as the years went by. During the years that he was alive after launching the Ten Year Plan, Shoghi Effendi added more Hands to the number he had already appointed, then called on them all to appoint Auxiliary Boards of nine for each continent. Later he said that there should be two Auxiliary Boards instead of one—one for protection and one for teaching the Faith. Towards the end of his life he added more Hands of the Cause, and described them as the Chief Stewards of the Embryonic World Commonwealth. As can be seen, the institution of the Hands developed very rapidly during those four-and-one-half years.

The ninth goal was the establishment of a Bahá'í Court in the Holy Land. Shoghi Effendi did not intend for there to be a court which would supervise and oversee the judicial decisions of National Spiritual Assemblies, since the Head of the Faith was supervising and coordinating the work of the National Assemblies. The intention was something different. Just as other religions in Israel had certain rights according to the civil and religious laws of the land and had the right to have religious courts, so too should the Bahá'í Faith have a right to a religious court in Israel. But that court never materialized because there occurred a trend in Israel towards referral to secular instead of religious courts, and indeed a reduction of the power and authority of religious courts. This was studied very carefully by the Hands of the Cause, who produced documents explaining why this goal was not feasible under current circumstances.

The next goal was the codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Shoghi Effendi himself worked on this, and a large package of his notes was passed to the Universal House of Justice when it was elected. These form the basis of the present *Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* that was published, almost ninety-five per cent of which was the work of Shoghi Effendi. The Universal House of Justice completed and published the book.

Next was the establishment of six Bahá'í courts in chief cities of the Middle East. He named them: Ṭihrán, Cairo, Baghdád, New Delhi, Karáchí, Kábul. None of these were possible, some for the same reason that a court could not be established in Israel, and others because in those countries they were ultra-orthodox in their attitudes. The friends tried and were able, for example in Pakistan, to have the Bahá'í marriage certificate recognised, which is part of the work of a Bahá'í court, so some aspects of the goal were achieved. Likewise in New Delhi it was possible to obtain official recognition of the Bahá'í marriage certificate.

The twelfth goal was the extension of the international Bahá'í endowments in the Holy Land. Shoghi Effendi acquired many parcels of property both in Bahjí and in Haifa during the four years he was alive at the beginning of the Plan. Had he not acquired these properties on Mount Carmel we would not be able to work on the Arc and Terraces as we are now.

Construction of the International Bahá'í Archives Building was a goal which caused tremendous problems. Shoghi Effendi had the design made by Mason Remey, under his own supervision, and had it erected but could not complete it. During the last few years of the Plan, after the passing of Shoghi Effendi,

the building was completed under the direction of the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land and all the archives that had been kept in the three rooms to the south of the Shrine of the Báb were transferred to the new location.

It was a goal to construct a Tomb for the Wife of the Báb in Shíráz. The National Spiritual Assembly of Írán did its best, but until today it has not been possible to achieve this important goal of the Ten Year Plan.

The next goal was the transfer of the remains of the Father of Bahá'u'lláh and the Mother and the Cousin of the Báb to the Bahá'í cemetery in Baghdád. The remains of the Father of Bahá'u'lláh were actually transferred and they are now in the Bahá'í cemetery. But the remains of the Mother and the Cousin of the Báb have still not been identified. These are among the last wishes of Shoghi Effendi that will have to be carried out in future years.

The sixteenth goal was the acquisition of four Bahá'í Holy Places in Írán and 'Iráq. Circumstances did not permit any progress in realizing the goal in 'Iráq. In Írán, however, although it was possible to acquire two of the properties, these were subsequently confiscated by the authorities after the Revolution.

The seventeenth goal was the establishment of forty-eight new National Spiritual Assemblies. All of these were established during the Ten Year Crusade.

The next goal was met with the acquisition of forty-nine new Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds.

The acquisition of forty-nine national endowments and the framing of national Bahá'í constitutions for each of the new National Spiritual Assemblies was the next goal. Unfortunately in some countries, such as Írán, it was not possible to incorporate the National Assembly. However, national constitutions were drawn up and the National Assemblies operated within the terms of these documents.

Next was the incorporation of fifty-one National Spiritual Assemblies, which is related to the goal above. As was explained, some of these National Assemblies could not be incorporated.

The twenty-first goal was the establishment of six national Publishing Trusts. All of these were established—two in the Americas, two in Asia, one in Africa and one in Europe.

Next, "Participation by the women of Persia in the membership of National and Local Assemblies," was accomplished with flying colors. The first year that this permission was made effective two Bahá'í women were elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Írán. (Incidentally, Shoghi Effendi gave the same instruction to the National Spiritual Assembly of Egypt and Súdán, one year after Persia.)

The next goal was the establishment of seven Israeli branches of National Spiritual Assemblies. This was very interesting. Shoghi Effendi established under Israeli law what are today called "friendly societies." Instead of calling them, let us say, "Bahá'í Holding Societies," he had each one named after a National Assembly operating at that time: for example, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States—Israel Branch. One of the wonderful things that he did was to incorporate one of these "friendly societies" in the name of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Írán—Israel branch. Shoghi Effendi used to say that in Írán the authorities did not recognize us but in Israel the National Spiritual Assembly of Írán had been incorporated. He transferred property in the names of these various legal entities. On Panorama Road, above the Shrine of the Báb, there is still a piece of land recorded in the land registry in the name of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Írán—Israel branch.

The twenty-fourth goal was the establishment of a national Bahá'í Printing Press in Ṭihrán. This was with the understanding that the National Assembly of Írán would be incorporated and have its own printing press. This was not possible. However, the National Assembly of Írán succeeded in establishing

an informal publishing house which published Bahá'í books without actually owning a printing press. The books were typed, mimeographed, bound and distributed. Many books in our Bahá'í library today are those published during that period of the Ten Year Crusade. It was not official, but it was on the path to the fulfilment of this goal formulated by the Guardian.

Bahá'ís had ties with the United Nations, but Shoghi Effendi made it a goal to reinforce them. Two years before he passed away, the persecutions in Írán allowed the friends to develop much closer connections with various UN agencies such as the Security Council, the Human Rights Commission and other agencies in New York. The Guardian seemed to have anticipated this development, and urged the friends to build on those relationships. This process has continued, and now we have an efficient office in New York, another in Geneva, yet another in the Pacific, and so on.

For the purposes of the Ten Year Crusade Shoghi Effendi treated the Soviet Union as two parts, the European section which he counted as part of Europe, and the Asian republics which he regarded as part of Asia. According to his reports, there were thirteen unopened republics in the Soviet Union and he named them. It was subsequently learned that there were Bahá'ís in some of these areas, whose presence had not been reported to him. A few territories were opened by traveling teachers. We will discuss these matters later.



Charles Dunning, the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Orkney Islands, with Brigitte Hasselblatt, the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Shetland Islands, c. 1954.

The last goal, the twenty-seventh goal, was the convocation of the Bahá'í World Congress in 1963 in Baghdád. As events unfolded, it was not possible to have the Congress in Baghdád and it was held in London. In retrospect it seems so appropriate that it was held in London because that was where Shoghi Effendi had passed away. Many Bahá'ís went to that first Congress, on the one hand to pay their respects to their Guardian who had passed away while labouring for the Cause at the mid-way point of his Spiritual Crusade, and on the other to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh.

After giving the friends the objectives of the Ten Year Crusade, Shoghi Effendi explained that it was to have four phases. The first phase was the opening of the virgin territories, to occur over the first year. During the year he named the Knights as they arrived at their pioneer posts. Second was the acquisition of national Ḥaẓíratu'l-Qudses and endowments, over a period of two years. There was a tremendous effort by the Bahá'ís all over the world to win these goals. Third, the multiplication of Bahá'í localities and the formation of sixteen new National Spiritual Assemblies over a period of two years. This was done. And then, just before his passing, he said the fourth phase was to witness a vast increase in the number of believers and localities and the erection of the Temples of Africa, Australasia and Europe. The Hands of the Cause of God continued working on this fourth phase for the rest of the ten years.

THE KNIGHTS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

The word translated as "knights" was used by Bahá'u'lláh in His Writings. 'Abdu'l-Bahá also used the word, as well as the word "horsemen." By knights they meant heroes:



Knights of Bahá'u'lláh Alvin and Gertrude Blum at their post in the Solomon Islands with their daughter, Keithie (front), John Mills (left) and the Head of the Bamu Tribe in 1954.

they used the word as translated by Shoghi Effendi with a lower case "k." Shoghi Effendi took this word and used it as an accolade. It became a title, with a capital "K." After announcing the goals of the Ten Year Crusade, Shoghi Effendi made this announcement on 28 May 1953:

> Planning inscribe, chronological order, names spiritual conquerors illuminated Roll of Honor, to be deposited entrance door inner Sanctuary Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh, as permanent memorial contribution champions His Faith victorious conclusion opening campaign Global Crusade...[1]

This was the first time he had used the words "Roll of Honor." It was a new term for the Bahá'ís, as were "Holy Year" and "Crusade," and of course, "Knights" as a title. As we just saw, Shoghi Effendi wanted one hundred and thirty-one countries and territories of the world opened to the Faith during one year. To encourage the friends to arise, he said he would open a list upon which he would inscribe the names of those pioneers who would go to these unconquered regions. This caught the imagination of Bahá'ís all over the world.

About a month later, Shoghi Effendi explained what he had in mind. In letters written on his behalf, he gave many explanations, two of which I will quote from:

> There are no objections to more than one pioneer settling in these areas [meaning these virgin areas]. If the original one to whom the territory has been assigned [meaning the NSA] cannot proceed at this moment, they will still be reaching their goal even though someone else might reach that point sooner than they. All who proceed to these points at this time will be designated as Knights of Bahá'u'lláh and their names be carried on the Roll of Honor to be deposited permanently in the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh.
>
> All pioneers reaching virgin areas at this time are carried on the honor roll as Knights of Bahá'u'lláh. In other words, there may be four or five Knights of Bahá'u'lláh for one country. The Guardian has been considering how long this period of settlement by the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh should continue, but has not yet set the date. Up until that time, every individual settling in a virgin area will be carried on the honor roll.



Feroza Yaganegi (left), one of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh for Goa, with Gulnar Aftabi, wife of the other Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Goa in 1953.

[1] *Messages*, p. 49.



The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh for French Togoland, David Tanyi (second from left) and Vivian Wesson (second from right), with new believers in Accra in 1956.

Friends started rushing: they longed to be on the Roll of Honor and among the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh. When you examine the Roll of Honor today you will see that some of the difficult countries only have one solitary Knight, and some of the easier countries have five, six, seven Knights.

Then, in May 1954, came this ominous announcement:

> The Roll of Honor, after the lapse of one year since the launching of the World Crusade, is now closed, with the exception of pioneers who have already left for their destination, as well as those first arriving in the few remaining virgin territories...[1]

When Mr. Abbas and Mrs. Rezvanieh Katirai went to the Sakhalin Islands in 1990, they became Knights since it was the last unopened territory left from the Ten Year Crusade. They set the seal on the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh.

The total number of territories opened by Knights was 122, with a footnote which reads, "Including the Gulf Islands, supplementing the Anticosti Islands, both in Canada." The story of this footnote is as follows.

Shoghi Effendi had named 131 territories to be opened, including Anticosti Island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Canada. The National Assembly wrote to Shoghi Effendi to state that no pioneer could go to Anticosti as it was owned and entirely controlled by a paper company. Only people employed by that company could go there, and Bahá'ís had been unsuccessful in obtaining jobs. Two further possibilities were for hunters or for people related to the islanders to go there, but neither of these were opened to Bahá'ís. Shoghi Effendi wrote back to tell them to choose another island. They consulted and chose the Gulf Islands, which Shoghi Effendi approved.

In the end, the National Assembly was able to open Anticosti Island, as originally envisaged. Shoghi Effendi named a Knight for Anticosti and it is on the Roll of Honor. Because the Gulf Islands had already won the honor of being a virgin territory which produced a Knight, the Bahá'í world ended with 132 virgin territories instead of the original 131.

One may note that 122 territories opened by Knights of Bahá'u'lláh do not equal the 132 virgin territories named by Shoghi



Edythe MacArthur, who moved to the Queen Charlotte Islands of Canada in 1953 and was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh.

[1] *Messages*, p. 69.

Effendi. This is because 10 were opened by other means. There were some countries where there were Bahá'ís about whom Shoghi Effendi had never received reports. When he learned of these he announced in one of his Riḍván messages that he now considered these countries already opened. As the Bahá'ís there had gone before the opening of the Ten Year Crusade they could not be named Knights. In other cases, countries were opened by traveling teachers who could not reside there—Bahá'ís who went back and forth—and through them people enrolled in the Faith. Usually it was not just one person, but a whole group of people who went at different times. Together there were 10 territories in these categories which explains the 122.

The total number of Knights was 257: 131 men; 126 women. The total number of Knights still alive is 159. The total number still living at pioneering posts is 14. The number settled during the lifetime of Shoghi Effendi and still at their post is 10—God bless them. The number of Knights intending to be present at the Centenary events in the Holy Land is 108.

The Roll of Honor

The Roll of Honor is on a parchment that Shoghi Effendi himself ordered. He also found the artist who would put the names on the Roll. It has spaces, like cartouches, for each country, in four columns. If there was more than one Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for a country their names were written in smaller letters, and if there was just one name, that name enjoyed the full space of the cartouche.

This Roll of Honor will be displayed when the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh come to the World Centre. The next day, it will be placed in a special sealed box and then laid by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum at the entrance to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. We know where Shoghi Effendi had planned to deposit it because when he sent a picture of the new door to the Shrine (the present door to the Shrine) to the American National Assembly he asked them to publish the picture and describe it and to add that immediately behind this door the Roll of Honor would be deposited.

A map has also been made. It is in the style of the maps of Shoghi Effendi, and shows the 132 territories. From each country there is a line on which the name of each Knight is written, and like an arrow the line pierces the country. It is in color, and will also be displayed. A copy will, of course, be made available to the friends.



The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh to the Canary Islands, Gertrude Eisenberg (right) and George and Marguerite True, with the True's son Barry in 1953.

[Reprints of the Roll of Honor as well as the map showing the 132 territories drawn by Shoghi Effendi, are enclosed in the cover pockets of this volume of *The Bahá'í World.*]

THE KNIGHTS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

LISTED BY VIRGIN TERRITORIES AND DATES OF SETTLEMENT 1953–1990

ADMIRALTY ISLANDS
Violet Hoehnke VII 1954

ALBANIA
Found to be already open

ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
Elaine Caldwell VIII 1953
Jenabe Caldwell VIII 1953
Elinore Putney V 1954

ANDAMAN ISLANDS
Khodadad M. Fozdar XI 1953

ANDORRA
William Danjon X 1953

ANTICOSTI ISLAND
Mary Zabolotny IV 1956

Supplemented by:
GULF ISLANDS
Catherine Huxtable IX 1959
Clifford Huxtable IX 1959

ASHANTI PROTECTORATE
Benedict Eballa IV 1954

AZORES
Lois Nolen X 1953
Richard Nolen X 1953

BAHAMA ISLANDS
V. Gail Curwin X 1953
Gerald Curwin X 1953
Ethel Holmes X 1953
Maurice Holmes X 1953
Andrew Matthisen I 1954
Nina Matthisen I 1954

BALEARIC ISLANDS
Virginia Orbison VIII 1953
Jean Deleuran XII 1953
Tove Deleuran XII 1953
Charles Ioas I 1954

BARANOF ISLAND
Grace Bahovec
Helen Robinson IX 1953
Gail Avery II 1954

BASUTOLAND
Elizabeth Laws X 1953
Frederick Laws X 1953

BECHUANALAND
Audrey Robarts II 1954
John Robarts II 1954
Patrick Robarts II 1954

BHUTAN
Ardeshir Faroodi VI 1954
Shapoor Rowhani VI 1954

BRITISH CAMEROONS
Enoch Olinga X 1953

BRITISH GUIANA
Malcolm King X 1953

BRITISH HONDURAS
Cora Oliver IX 1953
Shirley Warde X 1953

BRITISH TOGOLAND
Albert Buapiah IV 1954
Edward Tabe IV 1954

BRUNEI
Harry Clark II 1954
Charles Duncan II 1954
John Fozdar IV 1954

CANARY ISLANDS
Gertrude Eisenberg X 1953
George True X 1953
Marguerite True X 1953
Shoghi Riaz Ruhany VI 1954

CAPE BRETON ISLAND
Frederick Allen X 1953
Jean Allen X 1953
Grace Geary X 1953
Irving Geary X 1953

CAPE VERDE ISLANDS
Howard Menking I 1954
Joanne Menking I 1954

CAROLINE ISLANDS
Virginia Breaks XI 1953

CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO
Puva Murday V 1957

CHANNEL ISLANDS
Ziaoullah Asgarzadeh IX 1953
Evelyn Baxter IX 1953

CHILOÉ ISLAND
Zunilda de Palacios X 1953
Louise Groger VI 1954

COCOS ISLANDS
Frank Wyss VI 1955

COMORO ISLANDS
Mehraban Sohaili VIII 1954

COOK ISLANDS
Edith Danielsen X 1953
Dulcie Dive I 1954

CRETE
Rolf Haug X 1953

CYPRUS
Abbas Vakil VIII 1953
R. Hugh McKinley IX 1953
Violet McKinley XI 1953
Samira Vakil XI 1953

DAMAN
Ghulam Ali Kurlawala VI 1953

DIU
Gulnar Aftabi XII 1953
Kaykhusraw Dehmobedi XII 1953
Bahiya Rowhani XII 1953

DUTCH GUIANA
Elinor Wolff X 1953
Robert Wolff X 1953

DUTCH NEW GUINEA
Elly Becking X 1953
Lex Meerburg IV 1954

DUTCH WEST INDIES
Matthew Bullock XI 1953
John Kellberg IV 1954
Marjorie Kellberg IV 1954

ESTONIA
Opened by traveling teachers

FALKLAND ISLANDS
John Leonard II 1954

FAROE ISLANDS
Eskil Ljungberg VIII 1953

FINNO-KARELIA
Opened by traveling teachers

FRANKLIN
K. Gale Bond IX 1953
J. Jameson Bond IX 1953

FRENCH CAMEROONS
Meherangiz Munsiff IV 1954
Samuel Njiki IV 1954

FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA
Max Kanyerezi IX 1953

FRENCH GUIANA
Eberhard Friedland X 1953

FRENCH SOMALILAND
Fred Schechter VIII 1953
Fahimah Elias V 1954
Sabri Elias V 1954

FRENCH TOGOLAND
David Tanyi IV 1954
Mavis Nymon V 1954
Vivian Wesson V 1954

FRENCH WEST AFRICA
Labíb Iṣfahání XI 1953
Habíb Iṣfahání IV 1954

FRISIAN ISLANDS
Elsa Grossmann IX 1953
Geertrui Ankersmit X 1953
Ursula Von Brunn X 1953

GALAPAGOS ISLANDS
Gayle Woolson IV 1954
Haik Kevorkian V 1954

GAMBIA
Feriborze Roozbehyan II 1954

GILBERT & ELLICE ISLANDS
Elena Fernie III 1954
Roy Fernie III 1954

GOA
Roshan Aftabi VII 1953
Feroza Yaganegi VII 1953

GRAND MANAN ISLAND
Doris Richardson IX 1953

GREECE
Amin Banani VIII 1953
Sheila Banani VIII 1953
Carole Allen IX 1953
Dwight Allen IX 1953

HADHRAMAUT
Adib Baghdadi XII 1953
Wahida Baghdadi XII 1953
Ḥusayn Ḥalabí II 1954

HAINAN
John Z.T. Chang VIII 1959

HEBRIDES
Geraldine Craney X 1953

ITALIAN SOMALILAND
Soheil Samandari III 1953
Mehdi Samandari XI 1953
Ursula Samandari XI 1953

JUAN FERNANDEZ ISLAND
Adela I. de Tormo X 1953
Salvador Tormo X 1953

KARIKAL
Salisa Kermani VIII 1953
Shirin Noorani VIII 1953

KEEWATIN
Dick Stanton IX 1953

KEY WEST
Arthur Crane VII 1953
Ethel Crane VII 1953
Howard J. Snider IX 1953

KAZAKHSTAN
Found to be already open

KIRGIZIA
Found to be already open

KODIAK ISLAND
Jack Huffman VI 1953
Rose Perkal VII 1953
Bernard Guhrke II 1954

KURIA-MURIA ISLANDS
Munir Vakil I 1954

LABRADOR
Howard Gilliland IV 1954
Bruce Matthew IV 1954

LATVIA
Found to be already open

LEEWARD ISLANDS
Earle Render X 1953
Ben Weeden X 1953
Gladys Weeden X 1953
Charles Dayton II 1954
Mary Dayton II 1954
David Schreiber II 1954

LIECHTENSTEIN
Amir Huschmand
Manutschehri VIII 1953

LITHUANIA
Opened by traveling teachers

LOFOTEN ISLANDS
Mildred Clark VIII 1953
Loyce Lawrence VIII 1953

LOYALTY ISLANDS
Daniel Haumont X 1955

MACAO
Frances Heller X 1953
Carl Scherer XII 1953
Loretta Scherer XII 1953

MADEIRA
Ella Duffield IX 1953
Elizabeth Hopper IX 1953
Sara Kenny IX 1953
Adah Schott IX 1953

MAGDALEN ISLANDS
Kathleen Weston IX 1953
Kay Zinky IV 1954

MAHÉ
Lionel Peraji X 1953
Khodarahm Mojgani III 1954
Qudratollah Rowhani III 1954

MALTA
Una Townshend X 1953
Olga Mills XI 1953
John Mitchell VII 1954

MARGARITA ISLAND
R. Katharine Meyer X 1953

MARIANA ISLANDS
Robert Powers Jr. V 1953
Cynthia Olson V 1954

MARQUESAS ISLANDS
Gretta Jankko III 1954

MARSHALL ISLANDS
Marcia Atwater VIII 1954

MAURITIUS
Ottilie Rhein XI 1953

MENTAWAI ISLANDS
Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir II 1954
Írán Muhájir II 1954

ST. PIERRE AND MIQUELON
Ola Pawlowska X 1953

MOLDAVIA
Annemarie Krüger

MONACO
Nellie French IX 1953
Azizullah Navidi II 1954
Shamsi Navidi II 1954
Olivia Kelsey III 1954
Florence Ullrich III 1954

MONGOLIA
Sean Hinton XII 1988

MOROCCO
(INTERNATIONAL ZONE)
Manoutchehr Hezari IX 1953
Hormoz Zendeh IX 1953
Elsie Austin X 1953
Mohammed Ali Jalali X 1953
Hossein Rowhani Ardekani XI 1953
Nosrat Rowhani Ardekani XI 1953
Ali Akbar Hassanzadeh Rafii-Rafsandjani XI 1953
Shayesteh Rafii-Rafsandjani XI 1953
Abbas Rafii Rafsandjani XI 1953
Mary L. Suhm IV 1954
Richard Suhm IV 1954
Evelyn Walters IV 1954
Richard Walters IV 1954

NEW HEBRIDES
Bertha Dobbins X 1953

NICOBAR ISLANDS
Margaret Bates VII 1957
Jeanne Frankel VII 1957

NORTHERN TERRITORIES PROTECTORATE
Julius Edwards IX 1953
Martin Manga IV 1954

ORKNEY ISLANDS
Charles Dunning X 1953

PONDICHERRY
Saeed Nahvi VII 1953
Shyam Behari Lal VIII 1953
Shokat Nahvi XI 1953

PORTUGUESE GUINEA
Hilda Rodrigues IX 1953
Jose Xavier Rodrigues IX 1953

PORTUGUESE TIMOR
Florence Fitzner VI 1954
Harold Fitzner VI 1954
Jose Marques VII 1954

QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS
Edythe MacArthur VIII 1953

REUNION
Opal Jensen X 1953
Leland Jensen III 1954

RHODES
Elizabeth Bevan I 1954

RIO DE ORO
Amín Baṭṭah X 1953

ROMANIA
Fereidun Khazrai XI 1968

RUANDA-URUNDI
Dunduzu Chisiza VI 1953
Mary Collison VI 1953
Rex Collison VI 1953

ST. HELENA
Elizabeth Stamp V 1954

ST. THOMAS ISLAND
Elise Schreiber II 1954

SAKHALIN
Abbas Katirai III 1990
Rezvanieh Katirai III 1990

SAMOA ISLANDS
Lilian Wyss I 1954

SAN MARINO
Tabandeh Payman IX 1953
Sohrab Payman IV 1954

SARDINIA
Marie Ciocca XI 1953

SEYCHELLES ISLANDS
Kamil Abbas XI 1953
Abdul Rahman Zarqani I 1954

SHETLAND ISLANDS
Brigitte Hasselblatt IX 1953

SICILY
Carol Bagley X 1953
Florence Bagley X 1953
Gerrold Bagley X 1953
Stanley Bagley X 1953
Susan Bagley X 1953
Emma Rice X 1953

SIKKIM
Udai Narain Singh VIII 1953

SOCIETY ISLANDS
Gretta Lamprill X 1953
Gladys Parke X 1953

SOCOTRA ISLAND
Mírzá Áqá Khán Kamálí-Sarvistání III 1955

SOLOMON ISLANDS
Alvin Blum III 1954
Gertrude Blum III 1954

SOUTH WEST AFRICA
Ted Cardell X 1953

SOUTHERN RHODESIA
'Izzatu'lláh Zahrá'í VI 1953
Claire Gung X 1953
Eyneddin Alai XII 1953
Tahereh Alai XII 1953
Kenneth Christian I 1954
Roberta Christian I 1954

SPANISH GUINEA
Elise Schreiber V 1954

SPANISH MOROCCO
Earleta Fleming X 1953
John Fleming X 1953
Alyce Janssen X 1953

SPANISH MOROCCO
(continued)
Luella McKay X 1953
Bahia Zeinol-Abedin X 1953
Fawzi Zeinol-Abedin X 1953

SPANISH SAHARA
Muḥammad Muṣṭafá X 1953

SPITSBERGEN
Paul Adams VI 1958

SWAZILAND
John Allen IV 1954
Valera Allen IV 1954
Bula Mott Stewart IV 1954

TADZHIKISTAN
Found to be already open

TIBET
Udai Narain Singh IX 1955

TONGA ISLANDS
Stanley Bolton Jr. I 1954
Dudley Blakely VII 1954
Elsa Blakely VII 1954

TUAMOTU ARCHIPELAGO
Jean Sevin I 1954

UKRAINE
Found to be already open

UZBEKISTAN
Found to be already open

WHITE RUSSIA
Helmut Winkelbach XII 1978

WINDWARD ISLANDS
Esther Evans X 1953
Lillian Middlemast X 1953

YUKON
Joan Anderson IX 1953
R. Ted Anderson IX 1953

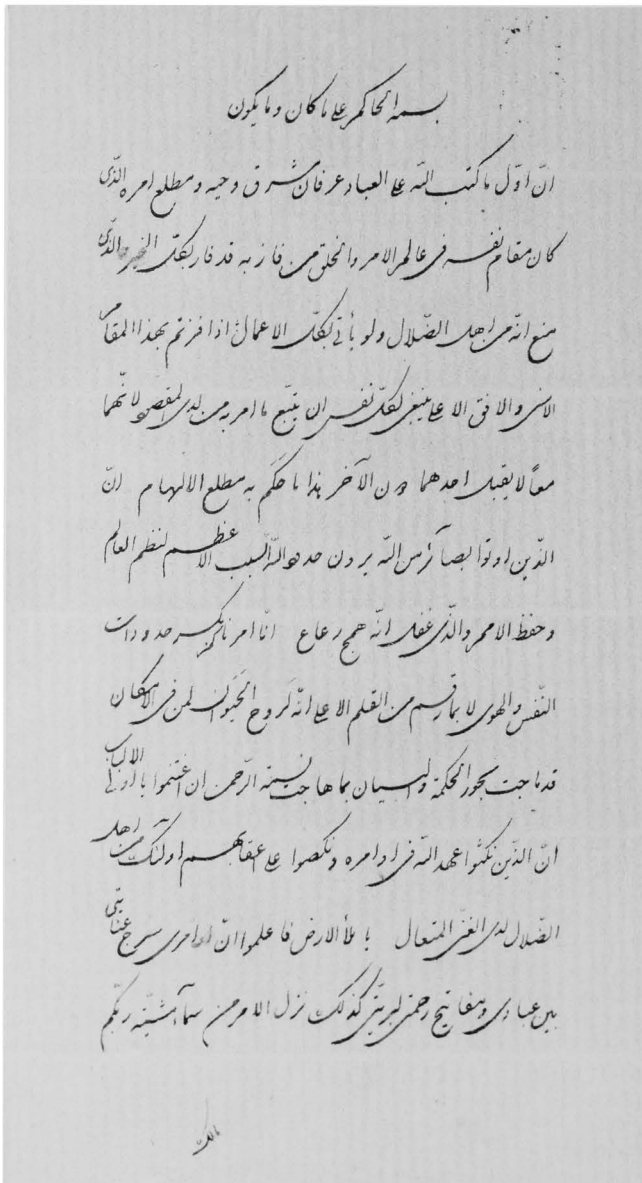


View of the interior of the Royal Albert Hall in London, England, as it looked when thousands of Bahá'ís gathered for the first Bahá'í World Congress, held from 28 April-2 May 1963.

PART THREE

INTERNATIONAL SURVEY OF CURRENT BAHÁ'Í ACTIVITIES

142–148 OF THE BAHÁ'Í ERA
21 APRIL 1986–20 APRIL 1992



First page of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in the handwriting of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This Tablet belonged to Bahá'u'lláh Himself.

I

THE SIX YEAR INTERNATIONAL TEACHING PLAN 1986–1992

1. THE COMPLETION OF THE SIX YEAR INTERNATIONAL TEACHING PLAN

A. THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE

a. Publication of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in English

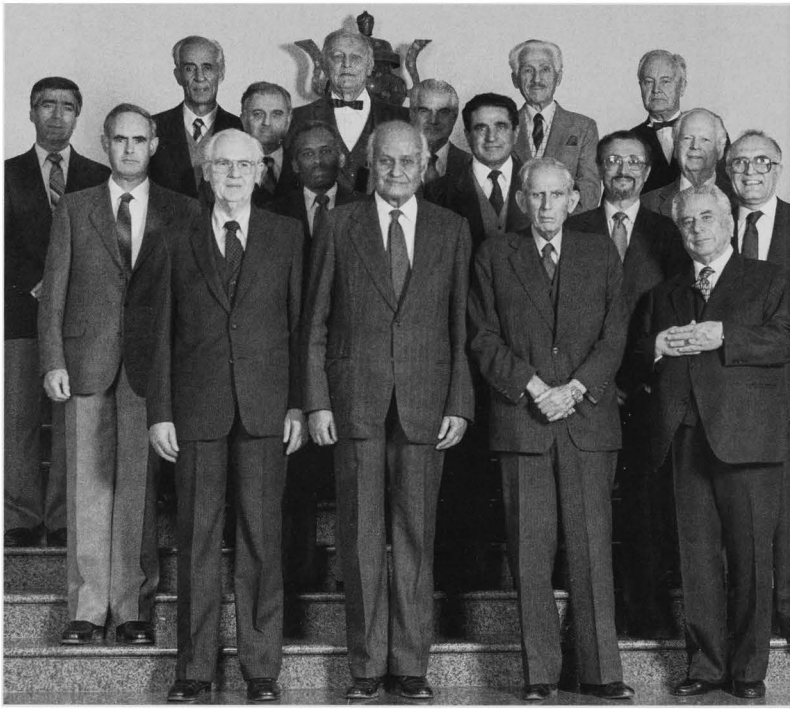
In its Riḍván message of 1986, the Universal House of Justice announced that the time had come for the preparation of a copiously annotated English translation of the complete text of the Most Holy Book. The accomplishment of this project was specified as a major goal of the Six Year Plan for the World Centre. Its publication was scheduled during the Holy Year.

Shoghi Effendi himself had already translated just over one-third of the text of the Aqdas. The basic task, then, was to provide suitable renderings of the remaining passages of the Book. This was initially assigned to a committee of translators at the World Centre. Their work was subsequently reviewed and revised a number of times until an acceptable version was approved. The standards adopted to guide the translation were accuracy of meaning, beauty of language, and conformity of style with that employed by Shoghi Effendi.

During the course of the work, a well-advanced draft was shared with a number of knowledgeable Bahá'ís around the world who were asked for their comments and suggestions. The points they submitted were then considered by the review committee and the draft was amended as needed. During the same period a companion work, Questions and Answers, was also translated from the Persian for inclusion in the volume; this work consists of questions put to Bahá'u'lláh regarding certain laws of the Aqdas, and His responses.

Parallel with this process, researchers began collecting pertinent passages from the Bahá'í Sacred Writings, the Holy Books of the past, the interpretations of Shoghi Effendi and other materials needed in the preparation of the extensive annotations that were to accompany the text. A list of the items requiring notes was first prepared and approved. In composing the notes, the focus of concentration was on those points about which the reader would need elucidation. The notes are not intended to be a comprehensive commentary on the text, which would be a task beyond the capacity of present resources.

The volume also includes a preface, an introduction, Shoghi Effendi's description of the contents of the Book, supplementary passages, a synopsis and codification of the laws and ordinances of the Aqdas, a glossary and an extensive index.



Attendees of the Ḥuqúqu'lláh Conference held at the Bahá'í World Centre in January 1987 From left to right, front row: Mr. Hugh Chance, Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá, Mr. Salim Nounou, Mr. Hádí Raḥmání. Middle row: Mr. Ian Semple, Mr. 'Alí Nakhjavání, Mr. Glenford Mitchell, Mr. Mas'úd Khamsí, Mr. Hushmand Fatheazam, Dr. Amín Banání, Mr. Charles Wolcott, Dr. Daryush Haghighi. Back row: Mr. Parviz Hatami, Mr. Khudárahm Paymán, Dr. David Ruhe, Mr. Borrah Kavelin, and Mr. David Hofman.

b. Education of the Bahá'í World in the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh

The Universal House of Justice decided to initiate a program of education about the law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh for Bahá'ís throughout the world to explain the details and, above all, the spiritual significance of this law, and had a compilation of texts on Ḥuqúqu'lláh prepared and sent to all national communities in 1985. With these materials in hand, education of the body of believers became a goal of the Six Year Plan.

The first compilation was supplemented in due course by a study guide comprising a simple codification of the law, a brief history of the development of the institution of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, and the text of an informative address given at the International Bahá'í Convention in 1988 by the Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá. These materials were translated into many languages and were further supplemented by the production of many other educational items in different

parts of the world. To prepare for the worldwide application of the law, the Universal House of Justice called the first Ḥuqúqu'lláh Conference in the Holy Land in 1987, attended by the Trustee, five of his deputies, representatives of the International Teaching Centre and the World Centre's Department of Finance.

Of the many meetings and conferences subsequently held on Ḥuqúqu'lláh during the Plan, the gathering called by Dr. Varqá in conjunction with the 1988 International Convention and attended by over fifty deputies and representatives, including seven Continental Counsellors, deserves mention. This conference promoted increased cooperation among the institutions of the Faith in the implementation of the goal and gave a renewed impetus to the education of the believers.

One of the steps taken by the Trustee in preparation for the worldwide application of the law was to greatly increase the number of deputy trustees on all continents as well as the number of representatives selected by these deputies to assist them in their work. Numerous activities for the education of the friends were also undertaken by the Continental Boards of Counsellors and the National Spiritual Assemblies.

Perhaps the best indicator of the success of these efforts was the increase in the number of believers observing this law. During the Six Year Plan the amount received by the Ḥuqúqu'lláh fund greatly increased. One of the most gratifying aspects of this increase was the number of payments received from Western believers who, although not then obligated to fulfill the law, paid the Ḥuqúqu'lláh eagerly because of their love for Bahá'u'lláh and their increased awareness of its importance.

In 1991 the Universal House of Justice announced in its Riḍván message that the law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh would become, as of the following Riḍván, universally applicable:

> Such an exceptional confluence of imminent achievements—the publication of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the progress of the building projects on Mount Carmel, the conclusion of the Six Year plan, the inception of the Holy Year—animates the expectations of the Bahá'í world, sets the stage for mightier endeavours than have already been attempted, and points us all to the opening of a new phase of history. It seems fitting, then, that the sacred law which enables each one to express his or her personal sense of devotion to God in a profoundly private act of conscience that promotes the common good, which directly connects the individual believer with the Central Institution of the Faith, and which, above all, ensures to the obedient and the sincere the ineffable grace and abundant blessings of Providence, should, at this favourable juncture, be embraced by all who profess their belief in the Supreme Manifestation of God. With humility before our sovereign Lord, we now announce that as of Riḍván 1992, the beginning of the Holy Year, the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, the Right of God, will become universally applicable. All are lovingly called to observe it.

In response to this announcement Hand of the Cause of God Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá called another International Ḥuqúqu'lláh Conference to prepare for the universal application of the law. This was held at Landegg Academy in Switzerland in August 1991, and was attended by twenty-three deputy trustees from all over the world.

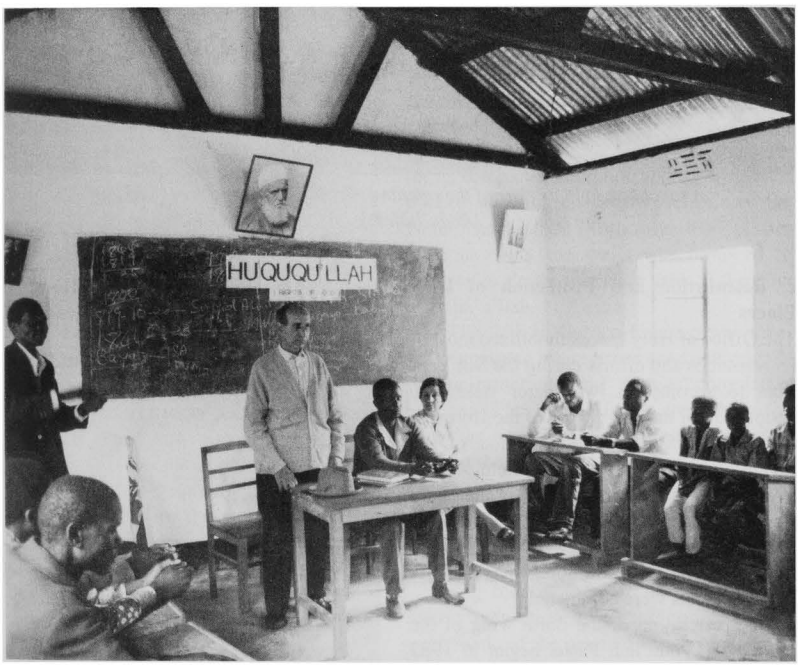
In November 1991, following consultation with the Trustee, the Universal House of Justice announced the establishment of a central office for Ḥuqúqu'lláh in the Holy Land. One of the fruits of this new development was the publication in January 1992 of the first edition of a Ḥuqúqu'lláh newsletter designed to link the greatly increased number of deputy trustees and representatives around the world by exchanging news of their activities and providing them with helpful material for their rapidly expanding functions.

List of Compilations and Codifications of Ḥuqúqu'lláh (By Language) Held in the Bahá'í World Centre Library

The Research Department of the Universal House of Justice prepared: *Compilation of Ḥuqúqu'lláh* (July 1985); *Codification of Ḥuqúqu'lláh* (June 1986); and, *Development of Ḥuqúqu'lláh* (March 1987). These have been translated into the following languages:

Language	Title	Publisher	Year
Afrikaans	Huqúqu'lláh, die reg van God - Abridged Compilation and Codification	NSA of South Africa	1988
Amharic	Ye Huqúqu'lláh hig ater yale trazi - Abridged Compilation	NSA of Ethiopia	1991
	Beye ariestu sir ye takafafeluye Huqúqu'lláh hig Codification	NSA of Ethiopia	1991
Arabic	Huqúqu'lláh - Compilation	Editora Bahá'í, Brasil	1986
	Huqúqu'lláh - Compilation	NSA of Pakistan	1986?
Chinese	"Hú kù gu la" qù gui	BPT of Malaysia	1987
Danish	Huqúqu'lláh, Guds ret - Compilation	NSA of Denmark	1989
Dutch	Huqúqu'lláh, het recht van God - Compilation	NSA of the Netherlands	1988
English	Huqúqu'lláh - Compilation	NSA of New Zealand	1985
	Huqúqu'lláh, the Right of God - Compilation	BPT of United Kingdom	1986
	Huqúqu'lláh - Development and Codification and Abridged Compilation	BPT of Malaysia	1987
	Huqúqu'lláh - Compilation	NSA of Malaysia	1985
	The Law of Huqúqu'lláh - Codification and Development and Abridged Compilation	NSA of Transkei	1987
	Huqúqu'lláh - Compilation	BPT of India	1986
	Huqúqu'lláh, a Study Guide - Codification and Development, and The Right of God (by Dr. Varqá)	BPT of United Kingdom	1989
	Huqúqu'lláh, the Right of God - Compilation	BPT of United Kingdom	1989
	Huqúqu'lláh - Compilation	Bahá'í Canada Publications	1989
Finnish	Huqúqu'lláh, Kokoelma - Abridged Compilation	NSA of Finland	1991
French	Huqúqu'lláh ou le droit de Dieu - Compilation	MEB of Belgium	1987
	Huqúqu'lláh, historique et codification	MEB of Belgium	1987
German	Huqúqu'lláh - Compilation	NSA of Germany	1987
	Systematische Darstellung des Huqúqu'lláh-Gesetzes - Codification	NSA of Germany	1987
Iban	Huqúqu'lláh - Compilation	State Bahá'í Council of Sarawak, Malaysia	1992
Icelandic	Lögin um Huqúqu'lláh - Abridged Compilation	Iceland	1992

Language	Title	Publisher	Year
Italian	Huqúqu'lláh - Compilation	Casa Editrice Bahá'í	1987
Korean	Huqúqu'lláh - Compilation	Seoul	1992
Norwegian	Lovem om Huqúqu'lláh - Compilation	Bahá'í Forlag	1990
Persian	Huqúqu'lláh - Compilation	Dr. Varqá, Canada	1984
Spanish	El Huqúqu'lláh y los Fondos Bahá'ís	Editorial Bahá'í de España	1991
Swedish	Huqúqu'lláh - Compilation	Baha'i förlaget	1988
Tamil	Hukukulla - Abridged Compilation	BPT Committee of Malaysia	1987
Urdu	Huqúqu'lláh	BPT of Pakistan	1986



A deepening in the law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh at Menu Bahá'í Institute, Western Province of Kenya, November 1990.



A luncheon held as part of the opening ceremonies of the north wing of the House of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá, 28 April 1990.

c. Restoration and Protection of Holy Places

The Office of Holy Places mobilized most of its resources and efforts during the Six Year Plan to accomplish two major tasks: the restoration of the north wing of the House of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá; and completion of the urgently needed architectural, photographic, and inventory documentation of the Holy Places—sacred and priceless legacies that must be protected from environmental and political perils. In addition, several other major projects were completed.

The restoration of the north wing of the House of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá began in 1987 and took three years to complete. The project—phase two of an overall plan for the building—followed restoration of the south wing, which had been completed in 1983. The restoration was based on the design work of architect Mr. Saeed Samadi, with the work supervised and managed by architect Mr. Faríburz Ṣahbá.

On 19 June 1990, the Universal House of Justice sent the following messages to all National Spiritual Assemblies:

> REJOICE ANNOUNCE COMPLETION RESTORATION NORTH WING OF HOUSE OF 'ABDU'LLÁH PÁSHÁ IN 'AKKÁ PERMITTING FIRST VISIT ADDITIONAL AREA THIS HOLY PLACE BY CURRENT GROUP PILGRIMS ON SEVENTEENTH JUNE. WING CONTAINS HALL IN WHICH 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ HELD FEASTS AND OTHER GATHERINGS AND ALSO ROOM OCCUPIED BY SHOGHI EFFENDI DURING BOYHOOD, BOTH ROOMS BEFITTINGLY FURNISHED BY AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚḤÍYYIH KHÁNUM.

During this time, Rúḥíyyih Khánum also personally undertook the furnishing of two additional rooms in the south section which were then opened to pilgrims, namely the *biruni* of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and a room that was used for teaching children.

Several properties encroaching on the courtyard of the House or bordering the walls were also acquired, ensuring the future

protection of the perimeter. The vaults and underground sections were surveyed.

In addition to the work on the House of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá, architectural, as built, drawings of most of the Holy Places were completed, together with photo-documentation of the buildings and their contents. Identification and description of items according to museum standards neared completion. The following major tasks were also accomplished during the Plan:

– The coordinates, both latitude and longitude on the Israeli Grid, of the resting place of Bahá'u'lláh were finally established accurately, enabling the direction of the Qiblih to be ascertained from any point on the earth's surface.



Restoration of the stencilled artwork on the balcony of the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí, October 1987.

– The ceiling of the colonnade of the Shrine of the Báb was plastered and refinished and the specially designed brass ornamental light fixtures were affixed, completing the design of the Hand of the Cause of God William Sutherland Maxwell for this part of the superstructure.

The superstructure of the Shrine was carefully washed, and the dome was repainted and protected against rain water seeping into the interior. A new scaffolding system for accessing the interior and exterior of the dome was erected.

– The Room in which Bahá'u'lláh passed away in the Mansion of Bahjí was completely restored. Particular care was taken to replicate the beautiful pattern of the stencilled artwork both in this room and in the balcony area.

– Detailed research on the Prison Cell of Bahá'u'lláh was undertaken in preparation for its complete restoration. This was accomplished with the cooperative efforts of the Israeli Antiquities Authority. The plaster layer covering the walls was removed to expose the stones that were there at the time of Bahá'u'lláh.

– The Riḍván Garden fountain was carefully excavated after serious cracks developed in the structure, and it was completely restored. The Pump House erected by the Guardian over the older structure that was in place at the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and which had collapsed, was also restored. Extensive restoration work also took place on the pebbled paths and the exterior of the building housing the Room of Bahá'u'lláh.

Using old photographs and photogrammetric measurement techniques, drawings were made of the original bench of Bahá'u'lláh and the other benches used by pilgrims. This was done in preparation for completely rebuilding the benches.

A property within the Firdaws Garden that was sometimes used by the Master was re-acquired.

– The property of the Junein Garden, which Bahá'u'lláh used at one time, was

acquired and restoration begun. It is located in Nahariyyih, close to Mazra'ih.

– Tiles on the roof of the International Archives Building were removed and protective layers placed. The roof was completely re-tiled.

– The Monuments of the Greatest Holy Leaf, the Purest Branch, Navváb and Munírih Khánum were carefully cleaned and restored.

– At the Haifa Cemetery, following the establishment of the Qiblih coordinates and the demolition of old structures that were illegally occupied, work began to align graves and paths, erect new retaining walls, and complete landscaping.

– All remains of Bahá'ís still in the Muslim cemetery in Tiberias were transferred to the Bahá'í cemetery in En Gev which houses the remains of Bahá'u'lláh's faithful brother Mírzá Muḥammad Qulí and his family.

– The land for a Bahá'í cemetery in Jerusalem was acquired, the Qiblih coordinates established, and the perimeters for the cemetery secured and built.

– The property of Khan-i-'Avámíd, which does not belong to the Faith but which is visited by pilgrims during the pilgrimage program, was surveyed and documented for future purposes.



The ceiling of the colonnade of the Shrine of the Báb was plastered and refinished, and the specially designed brass ornamental light fixtures were affixed. 1991.

d. Signing of the Status Agreement

Adapted from a letter from the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the world dated 30 April 1987.

On 22 April 1987, in a ceremony at Israel's Foreign Ministry, an Agreement comprising an exchange of letters was signed by Mr. Shimon Peres, Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister, on behalf of the Government of Israel and Mr. Donald Barrett, Secretary-General of the Bahá'í International Community, on behalf of the Bahá'í World Centre. Among the contents of this Agreement are the following statements of recognition:

> The Government of Israel recognizes the members of the Bahá'í Faith as a recognized religious community in Israel in accordance with Article 2 of the Palestine Order in Council, 1922–1947, and confirms that the Bahá'í World Centre is the world spiritual and administrative centre of the Bahá'í world community and that the Universal House of Justice in Haifa is the Head of the Bahá'í Faith and its Supreme Institution in accordance with its Constitution.
>
> The Government of Israel recognizes that the holiest places of the Bahá'í Faith, in accordance with the Bahá'í Sacred Scriptures, are located in Israel, and confirms that the Universal House of Justice is the Trustee of the Bahá'í International Community over the Holy Places of the Bahá'í Faith in Israel and over the Bahá'í endowments in Israel.

These friendly relations trace their foundation to the inspired initiatives of 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself, particularly during the period following the Revolution of the Young Turks in 1908 when a general amnesty was effected for religious and political prisoners held under the old regime. The prestige acquired by the Faith through the dynamic force of the Master's unique spirit was demonstrated after his release from imprisonment in the actions He took to establish His residence in Haifa at the foot of Mount Carmel, to inter



A Status Agreement was signed by His Excellency Shimon Peres, Vice-Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs (center), and by Mr. Donald Barrett, Secretary-General of the Bahá'í International Community (right), on 22 April 1987. Minister Moshe Shahal (left) looks on.

the sacred remains of the Báb in the mausoleum which had been erected by Him on the spot designated by Bahá'u'lláh Himself, and to travel extensively in the West. Subsequent to these travels, it was more conspicuously illustrated through the excellent relations He forged with high and low alike, the social impact of His liberal ministrations to the needs of the people in the Holy Land, and the conferring of a knighthood upon Him by the British Crown.

This legacy of prestige was evident in the recognition accorded Shoghi Effendi as Head of the Faith by the authorities of the British Mandate. The extent of the Guardian's energetic exertions to achieve recognition of the independent status of the Faith, whose permanent spiritual and administrative centres in the Holy Land, is beyond the scope of this letter and must, in due time be afforded full treatment in the work of future historians. Let it suffice to reaffirm here that what he was able to accomplish during the years of the Mandate, in securing custody of Bahá'í properties in obtaining official protection of the Holy Places, recognition of the Bahá'í marriage certificate and of the Bahá'í Holy Days, and relief from certain taxes, combined to reflect a status for the Faith which was accepted by the new Government when the State of Israel was established in 1948.

Dear Friends, the Status Agreement now achieved makes an indelible mark on the Formative Age of our Faith, assuming a special place among the swiftly accumulating evidences of the divine confirmations which have thus far distinguished the opening period of the fourth epoch of that Age.

One practical and spiritually confirming effect of the signing of the Status Agreement is that it brings us within reach of the realization of the beloved Guardian's vision for the Arc on God's Holy Mountain. For with the Agreement in hand formidable obstacles to the execution of the Arc Project have been removed. The conjunction of the completion of the architect's design and the favourable action of the Government thus signals the ripeness of the time to pursue the obligation acutely felt by the entire Bahá'í world to bring to fruition, as soon as possible, the work begun by Shoghi Effendi in the erection of the Archives Building and carried forward in the completion four years ago of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice. The plans to be made and the material requirements for so extraordinary an undertaking will, of course, be communicated to the friends in due course.

e. The Arc and Terraces on Mount Carmel

In His soul-stirring Tablet of Carmel, Bahá'u'lláh glorified Mount Carmel and declared that God had made it "the dawning-place of His signs and the dayspring of the evidences of His Revelation." He also communicated to 'Abdu'l-Bahá His majestic vision for the holy mountain.

'Abdu'l-Bahá undertook the great work of erecting a suitable resting place for the Sacred Remains of the Báb. He Himself constructed the original mausoleum, and in 1909 interred in it the Blessed Dust of the Báb. Soon after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, Shoghi Effendi added three additional rooms, and in 1953 completed the splendid superstructure of the Holy Shrine, designed by Mr. Sutherland Maxwell. He also beautified the holy spot with magnificent gardens, and took the first steps to shape the lower nine terraces.

With the Tablet of Carmel as his guide, the Guardian initiated construction of a series of buildings upon an arc on Mount Carmel that would constitute the administrative center of the Bahá'í world. Shortly before his death in 1957 he oversaw the completion of the Archives building, the first of five buildings to rise in the immediate vicinity of the sacred resting places of four members of the Holy Family. After the passing of the beloved Guardian, the challenging task of erecting the remaining four buildings of the Arc and of completing the terraces became



Members of the Universal House of Justice with architects Husayn Amánat and Faríburz Ṣahbá on the construction site, March 1988. From left to right: Dr. Peter Khan, Mr. Glenford Mitchell, Dr. David Ruhe, Mr. David Hofman, Mr. 'Alí Nakhjavání, Mr. Hugh Chance, Mr. Amánat, Mr. Ṣahbá, and Mr. Borrah Kavelin.

the responsibility of the Universal House of Justice.

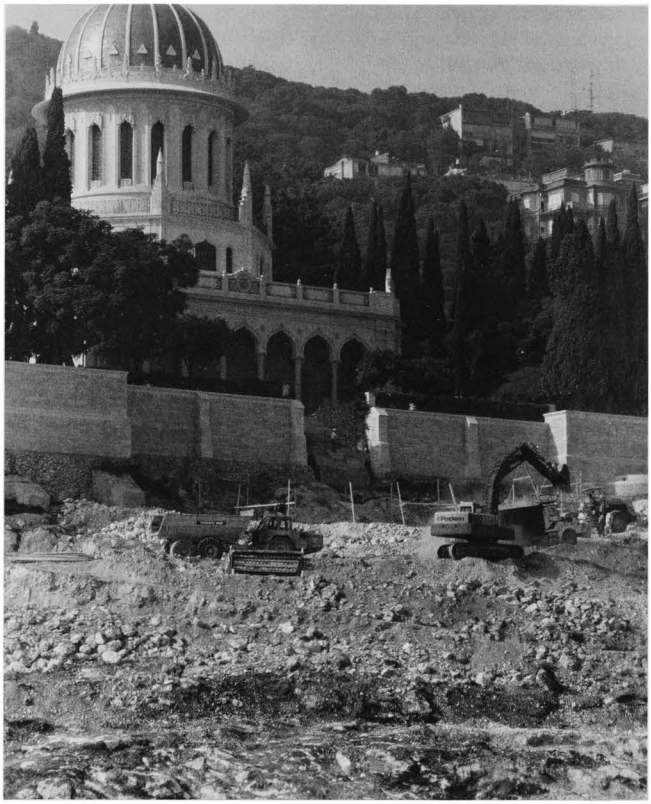
In 1983, the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, designed by Mr. Hossein Amánat, was completed at the apex of the Arc. Then in 1986, as the Six Year Plan opened, the House of Justice announced its plan to commence rearing the remaining buildings on the Arc, employing designs by the same architect. It also appointed Mr. Faríburz Ṣahbá, the architect of the Indian House of Worship, to design the terraces above and below the Shrine of the Báb, and to function as Project Manager for construction of the additional buildings envisaged in the plan.

In a letter to the followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the world, dated 31 August 1987, the Universal House of Justice wrote, in part:

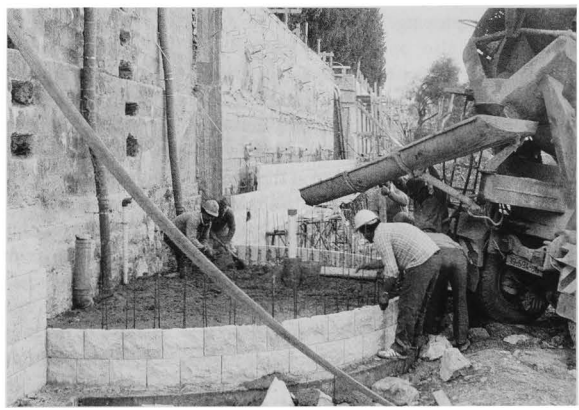
> Five closely related projects demand our attention: the erection of the three remaining buildings on the Arc and, added now to these, the construction of the terraces of the Shrine of the Báb and the extension of the International Archives Building. A brief description of each of these will convey an impression of their significance for the Faith.

The Terraces of the Shrine of the Báb. In His plans for the development of Mount Carmel, 'Abdu'l-Bahá envisaged nineteen monumental terraces from the foot of the mountain to its crest, nine leading to the terrace on which the Shrine of the Báb itself stands, and nine above it. These plans were often referred to by Shoghi Effendi, and he completed in preliminary form the nine terraces constituting the approach to the Shrine from the central avenue of the former German Templer Colony.

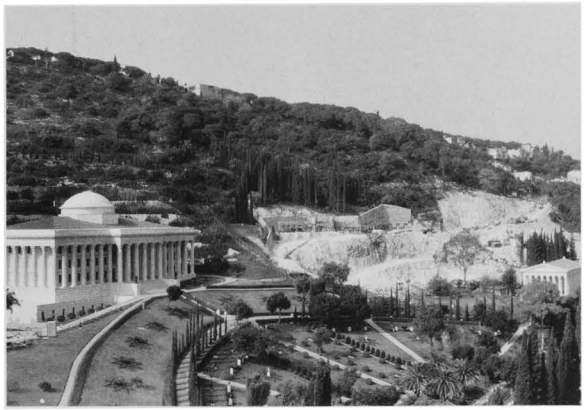
The International Teaching Centre will be the seat of that institution which is specifically invested with the twin functions of the protection and propagation of the Cause of God. The institution itself, referred to by the beloved Guardian in his



Earthwork on the terraces below the Shrine of the Báb in October 1991.



Some historic features of the terraces, such as the water cistern and pool built during the Ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, have been retained and incorporated into the new terrace design. Ninety percent of work on the main terrace had been completed by 15 February 1991.



Excavation of the site of the Centre for the Study of the Sacred Texts, between the Seat of the Universal House of Justice and the International Archives Building, in February 1992.

writings, was established in June 1973, bringing to fruition the work of the Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land and providing for the extension into the future of functions with which that body has been endowed.

The Centre for the Study of the Texts. This building will be the seat of an institution of Bahá'í scholars, the efflorescence of the present Research Department of the World Centre, which will assist the Universal House of Justice in consulting the Sacred Writings, and will prepare translations of and commentaries on the authoritative texts of the Faith.

The International Archives Building. We have decided to construct, westwards, an extension to the basement of the present Archives Building to provide accommodation for the central office of the ever-growing Archives at the World Centre. This institution is charged with responsibility for the preservation of the Sacred Texts and Relics and the historic documents of the Cause of God.

The International Bahá'í Library. This Library is the central depository of all literature published on the Faith, and is an essential source of information for the institutions of the World Centre on all subjects relating to the Cause of God and the conditions of mankind. In future decades its functions must grow, it will serve as an active centre for knowledge in all fields, and it will become the kernel of great institutions of scientific investigation and discovery.

In August 1988, the Mount Carmel Projects Office was established in Haifa to design the terraces of the Shrine of the Báb, to take charge of the project management and construction administration of all the projects, and to represent the Bahá'í World Centre in all matters related to the projects and act as liaison between the Universal House of Justice and consultants, contractors, and the different departments and offices of the Bahá'í World Centre as eventual users of the buildings and facilities to be constructed. From its establishment to Riḍván 1992 the office grew to include structural, mechanical, irrigation, and electronic engineers, architects, and experts in the area of management, design and supervision.

Throughout the Six Year Plan many challenges were met in pursuing the vision of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi. The House of Justice advised the Bahá'í world that it must accumulate a fifty million dollar reserve before any construction could begin, a goal achieved by February 1991. Other challenges included meeting legal and procedural requirements of the national and municipal governments and their agencies.

With the problems came unexpected bounties. The City of Haifa announced its hopes to renovate the harbor and to begin to restore the nineteenth-century German Templer Colony which lines Ben Gurion Avenue northward from the foot of the terraces. Plans were made for a promenade at the crest of the mountain above the projected nineteenth terrace. Through the efforts of the Mount Carmel Projects Office, these external, independent plans are being integrated to the extent possible with the grand design for the World Centre properties.

The official approval of the Town Planning Scheme, essential for the initiation of the Projects, was given by the Local Town Planning Committee and Haifa City Council on 11 October 1989. District Commission approval to the proposed Scheme was given on 23 July 1990. In the course of arranging for the Town Planning Scheme and the various building permits, much time was devoted to identifying and documenting the properties making up the Bahá'í World Centre holdings on Mount Carmel.

On 24 May 1990, the Universal House of Justice sent the following message to all National Spiritual Assemblies:

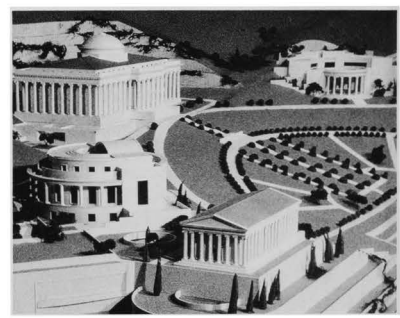
> With feeling of profound joy announce to followers of Bahá'u'lláh in every land that on morning of twenty-third May, one hundred forty-six years after the Declaration of the Báb, work on extension terraces commenced. This historic occasion marked by visit His Shrine and Shrine of 'Abdu'l-Bahá by Hands of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum and 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, the members of the Universal House of Justice and Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre with Faríburz Ṣahbá, architect of the Terraces and manager of the Arc Project to pray for Divine confirmations enable uninterrupted prosecution this majestic enterprise.

The first phase of the Terraces Project was the lengthening and reinforcement of the main terrace on which stands the Shrine of the Báb, the facing of its wall with stone and reinforcement of its base, and the extension of the terrace gardens eastward over a new building that will house workshop service areas for the gardens, thereby making the terrace symmetrical on both sides of the Shrine.

In June 1991 phase two commenced: excavation for the Centre for the Study of the Texts and for the extension of the Archives building, an unusually massive excavation for the nine levels of the new buildings, six of which will be below ground. The excess rock from the construction site was transported down the mountain to raise and shape the lower terraces, while a thirty-meter-high retaining wall, anchored by deep-seated metal bars, stabilized the mountain behind the future buildings.

The Universal House of Justice wrote to the followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the world on 31 August 1987:

> The great work of constructing the terraces, landscaping their surroundings, and erecting the remaining buildings of the Arc will bring into being a vastly augmented World Centre structure which will be capable of meeting the challenges of coming centuries and of the tremendous growth of the Bahá'í community which the beloved Guardian has told us to expect.... This is the time for which we must now prepare ourselves; this is the hour whose coming it is our task to hasten.



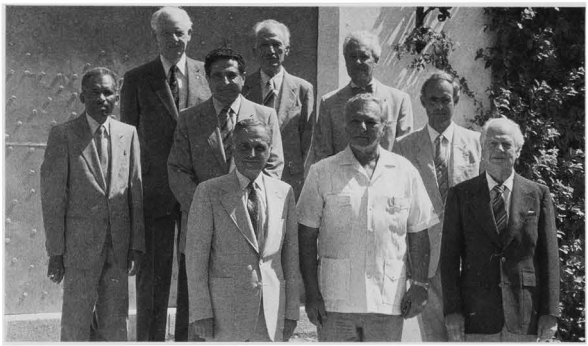
Model of buildings on the Arc as seen from the northeast.



The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum greets the President of the Marshall Islands, Amata Kabua, during his visit to the Bahá'í World Centre, 23 June 1990.



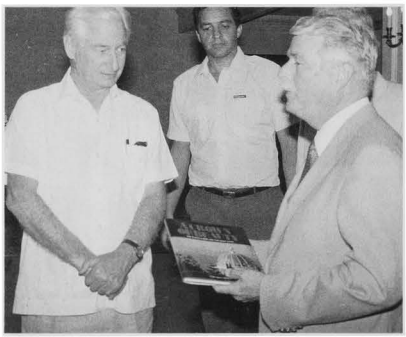
The Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Akbar Furútan greets well-known musician and Bahá'í Dizzy Gillespie during Mr. Gillespie's visit to the Bahá'í World Centre on 17 July 1991.



Members of the Universal House of Justice at the Mansion of Bahjí with the Honourable Sir Thomas Davis, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands (second from right, front), who visited the Bahá'í World Centre in August 1986.



The Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Akbar Furútan accompaning the President of Israel, Chaim Herzog (centre) during his visit to the Bahá'í World Centre on 25 May 1989.



Above: The President of Honduras, His Excellency José Azcona-Hoyo, visiting the Bahá'í World Centre on 30 May 1987.



Right: The British Ambassador to Israel, His Excellency Mark Elliot, and Mrs.Elliot (centre), visiting the Bahá'í World Centre 28 June 1989.

f. Broadening the Basis of International Relations of the Faith

As Islamic religious leaders increasingly assumed control of the Revolutionary Republic of Írán in the years following 1979, the country's government began to lend official support to a systematic, organized campaign to destroy every trace of the Bahá'í Faith in the land of its birth. "It is absolutely certain that in the Islamic Republic of Írán there is no place whatsoever for Bahá'ís and Bahá'ísm," the President of the Revolutionary Court in Shíráz announced.

Bahá'ís of the world rushed to the defence of their co-religionists. Guided by the Universal House of Justice, the Bahá'í International Community sought intervention by the United Nations Secretary-General and by United Nations specialists in human rights; National Spiritual Assemblies sought swift and clear condemnation of the persecution from their governments and from other national leaders; and Local Spiritual Assemblies sought support for the Bahá'ís of Írán through the media and through their local government representatives.

These actions coincided with a new stage in the unfoldment of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh—the introduction of social and economic development projects, an integral part of Bahá'í activity. After decades of energy concentrated on the establishment of groups at the local level across the entire planet, some critical mass had been reached which gave Bahá'ís the human and material resources needed to apply the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh to solve the most practical of problems. Health, education, appropriate technology, environmental studies... individual Bahá'ís had always worked to help the community at large, but all Bahá'ís were enjoined to work toward "the ordering of human affairs in such a way as to bring into being a world unified in all the essential aspects of its life." (*Letter from the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, dated 20 October 1983*)

In 1985, the Universal House of Justice addressed all of humanity about the central issue facing the human race—global peace. In a letter "To the Peoples of the World" entitled *The Promise of World Peace*, the Statement charts the one course that can lead humanity into the next century, and offers countless evidences that global peace is within our grasp. "If the Bahá'í experience can contribute in whatever measure to reinforcing hope in the unity of the human race," the House of Justice stated in the concluding section, "we are happy to offer it as a model for study."

As soon as the Statement had received the signature of the Universal House of Justice, presentation copies were sent by courier to the waiting National Assemblies throughout the world who had already been asked to seek audiences with the Heads of State of their respective nations and territories. This formal approach to the leaders of the world was the first stage in a program of distribution designed eventually to enlist the participation of every follower of Bahá'u'lláh and to reach millions of human beings with the message of peace.

The combined efforts of the Bahá'ís on behalf of their co-religionists in Írán, in support of social and economic development, and pursuant of world peace resulted in the emergence of the Faith from obscurity. All over the world at all levels of society people became aware of Bahá'u'lláh and the followers of His Faith. Awareness brought curiosity; Bahá'ís were asked for more information, and they strove to provide it.

It became clear that coordination was needed to best channel these efforts in external affairs and public relations. The Universal House of Justice created an Office of Public Information in 1985 as a specialized agency of the Bahá'í International Community to systematize the handling of information on the Cause at the international level. The report of its activities during the Six Year Plan can be found starting on page 537 of this volume.

The House of Justice also convened a planning meeting for all senior staff members of Bahá'í International Community offices in Haifa, New York and Geneva who worked in external affairs and public relations. Held in New York City from 31 October to 7 November 1986, the meeting marked "a new, potent stage in the development of the external affairs of the worldwide Bahá'í community," the House of Justice wrote to those gathered. "This stage... is characterized by the new, inescapable challenges immediately to be met as a direct result of the operation of the onrushing processes through which are evolving the reconstructive influences of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order."

Representatives of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Canada and the United States were also asked to join in the deliberations to "pave the way for closer collaboration in fields United Nations and public information activities" and "further reinforce divinely ordained ties two leading Bahá'í communities North America."

One year later, the Universal House of Justice called an International Conference on External Affairs, held from 27 to 29 November 1987 at Langenhain, Germany. Specifically, the Supreme Body invited the National Spiritual Assemblies of Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Republic of Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States to send representatives to meet with a member of the Universal House of Justice and with representatives of the United Nations Office and the Office of Public Information of the Bahá'í International Community.

Presentations were made by National Spiritual Assembly representatives on the relationships they had established with their national governments. Next, the possibilities and dynamics were explored of the cross-national sharing of human resources as a means of supporting the diplomatic or public information work. Reports were presented about the activities of the Bahá'í International Community's United Nations Offices in New York and Geneva, the Office of Public Information in Haifa and New York. Then, consultation was held on communication and coordination concerning external affairs between the Bahá'í World Centre and National Spiritual Assemblies.

It was a "ground-breaking event," the member of the Universal House of Justice stated. "Foundations have been laid upon which we can build more 'stately mansions' for the Cause of God." A proposal was put forward for follow-up meetings: a Pan-European Conference; and a meeting for representatives of five National Assemblies (Canada, France, Germany, the United King dom, and the United States). This recommendation was sent to the House of Justice.



Participants in the External Affairs Conference held in Langenhain, Germany, from 27 to 29 November 1987.

The Universal House of Justice called for a Pan-European Meeting in 1988. It was held from 25 to 28 December at Langenhain, Germany, and was attended by thirty-eight representatives from nineteen countries. Again reports were given of relevant activities, insights were shared from experience gained, and consultation was held on proposals made. One such proposal was that perhaps a Bahá'í International Community office for European Affairs could be established to contribute to the ongoing growth and unified actions of external affairs work and to help mobilize the energy of the European communities for the development of the Cause.

A meeting of senior officers of Bahá'í International Community offices in Haifa, New York, and Geneva, and representatives of five National Spiritual Assemblies (Canada, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States) took place at the Bahá'í World Centre from 30 December to 1 January 1989. "FAR-REACHING DELIBERATIONS CENTRED ON INCREASED EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES FAITH", the Universal House of Justice wrote to all National Spiritual Assemblies on 5 January 1989. "MUCH ENCOURAGED EVIDENCES EVER CLOSER TIES COLLABORATION WITH UNITED NATIONS, ITS AGENCIES AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS MANY LANDS, RESULTING EXPANDED SPHERE INFLUENCE FAITH FIELD INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES. HEARTENED BY REVIEW INDICATING INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES SHARE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S WORLD-REDEEMING MESSAGE VAST REGIONS... SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE. REJOICE IN MOUNTING PRESTIGE CAUSE GOD WORLDWIDE. INVITE ALL FRIENDS JOIN IN OFFERING PRAYERS THANKSGIVING BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOR HIS SUSTAINED ABUNDANT BLESSINGS."

g. Turmoil in the Middle East Enveloped the Holy Land

On 2 August 1990, the Government of Iraq invaded Kuwait. The international reaction which quickly followed suggested the probability of a concerted military effort to reverse the invasion. One feature of the mounting crisis was a threat by Iraq that if it were attacked by any nation it would attack Israel in retaliation. Consequently, the Israeli government began a series of civil defence measures, and the Universal House of Justice began to review actions that could be taken to protect the Bahá'í Holy Places and the staff of the Bahá'í World Centre.

On 29 August, the Universal House of Justice appointed an Emergency Preparedness Task Force to act as liaison with the Israel Civil Defence officials and provide the World Centre with information as needed. On 30 September the World Centre staff was advised that emergency supplies of food would be distributed the following week, and that 20-litre jerrycans of water should be filled, battery-operated radios and flashlights checked, and plastic tape for sealing windows should be stored in a readily



Participants in the External Affairs Conference held at the Bahá'í World Centre, Haifa, Israel 30 December 1988 to 1 January 1989.

accessible place. The staff received training in use of the protective kits distributed by the Israeli Government, and gas masks and kits were handed out on 5 November.

In each principal work place at the World Centre, an emergency team was appointed and a "safe room" assigned. The rooms were stocked with supplies of food, water, and protective materials, and several air raid drills were held for emergency preparedness.

On 8 October 1990, a letter to National Spiritual Assemblies was written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice which read:

> The Universal House of Justice has been following with close attention the development of the situation in the Middle East, and has decided to postpone all pilgrimages which have been scheduled between the beginning of the pilgrimage season on 29 October and 31 December 1990. Messages to this effect are being sent to all those who have been invited for that period.
>
> The Bahá'í World Centre itself will continue to function as usual, as it has during all the previous disturbances which have threatened or shaken the Holy Land. Whatever transpires, we can be confident that it will be but one more step in the mysterious unfoldment of God's Major Plan for the unification of the world and the establishment of His Kingdom on earth.

On 3 December 1990, the following letter to National Spiritual Assemblies was sent on behalf of the Universal House of Justice:

> Further to our letter of 8 October 1990, in view of the continued unsettled conditions in the Middle East, the Universal House of Justice has decided that pilgrimages to the Holy Land up to the end of March 1991 should be cancelled. The individual pilgrims scheduled for this period are also being informed.
>
> For the same reason, the conference for the Counsellors which was scheduled to be held in the Holy Land from 28 December 1990 through 3 January 1991 has also been cancelled. The House of Justice hopes it will be possible to convene such a conference at a later date.
>
> The friends should not allow their concern about the situation in these regions to deter them from their efforts to promote the vital interests of the infinitely precious Faith of God.

On 7 January 1991, the Universal House of Justice wrote to all National Assemblies:

> We are conscious that the friends around the world are concerned by the unsettled conditions in the Middle East, so we are writing to assure you that we have taken all steps that are necessary to safeguard the essential requirements of the Cause of God.
>
> In January 1981 we addressed a message to all Continental Boards of Counsellors through the International Teaching Centre, and a copy of that message was shared at that time with all National Spiritual Assemblies. It confirmed that if at any time communication with the World Centre would be cut off, the Counsellors would, both collectively and individually, assist National Spiritual Assemblies to ensure the uninterrupted continuation of the normal administration of the Faith by these Assemblies until communications could be restored.
>
> We rely now, as then, on the Continental Boards of Counsellors and the National Spiritual Assemblies to ensure that the all-important work of teaching the Faith and consolidating its institutions will continue with unabated zeal in every part of the world.
>
> On a number of occasions in the history of the Faith the World Centre has been threatened by dangers of various kinds, and the knowledge of how the Almighty has preserved the vital interests of His Faith in the past will reinforce the certainty of all the believers that whatever occurs will but serve to carry forward the realization of His immutable purpose for mankind.

> We shall remember you all at the Sacred Threshold and shall pray for the bounties of Bahá'u'lláh to guide and sustain you in the execution of your vital responsibilities in the promotion of His Cause.

Meanwhile, World Centre staff had been organized into "Neighborhood Groups," with "telephone trees" so that information could be distributed systematically during non-office hours. Additionally, a number of staff members had been trained in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

On 15 January 1991, the Universal House of Justice wrote to the friends at the Bahá'í World Centre:

> We have noted with warm appreciation the devoted spirit in which, despite the increasingly tense situation in the Middle East, the friends are going about their usual business; and we wish to assure you of our continued prayers that the Blessed Beauty will surround the World Centre with His protection now as in the past.
>
> Every practical step is being taken to attend to the needs of the World Centre as circumstances require.
>
> The Emergency Preparedness Task Force will keep you informed and advised as necessary. The Task Force has our full confidence, and we urge you to follow its instructions in case of a real emergency arising from the situation in the Gulf.
>
> Our hearts are now turned to the dear, steadfast friends in Iraq, Kuwait and adjacent countries. We invite you to join us in praying on their behalf at this time when great danger hangs over them.

At midnight on 15 January 1991 Eastern Standard Time in the United States (0700 on 16 January in Israel), the United Nations' deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait passed. That day the World Centre staff members were advised to start carrying their gas masks with them at all times.

At approximately 0530 on 17 January, the staff was advised by way of the Neighborhood Group "telephone trees" that a coalition of governments had launched a massive aerial attack against Iraq, and that work was suspended for the day.

At about 0315 on 18 January staff members were awakened by the sounds of explosions, air raid sirens going off, and telephone calls from neighbors announcing that Iraq had started its retaliatory raids against Israel. Once again work was suspended for the day.

The Bahá'í World Centre stayed on "emergency footing" for the duration of the War—from 17 January to 28 February 1991. Work was suspended for four days, and hours were shortened for eight days.

During the "100 hours" of the Gulf War, a total of thirty-nine missiles were reported to have been fired at Israel during 18 separate attacks. Of these, six landed in the Haifa/Akka area causing extensive property damage but no injuries. There was no damage to any of the Bahá'í properties.

On 28 February 1991, the President of the United States, George Bush, announced that the multinational force was stopping all offensive action. At noon the Israeli Civil Defence authorities said the emergency was over, and that people could pack their gas masks in their original boxes and unseal their "safe" rooms. The Bahá'í World Centre went off "emergency footing". The Gulf War was over.



World Centre staff help each other learn how to use gas masks in case of an attack.



Bahá'í youth of Antsirabé, Madagascar, walking to a village five kilometers away to teach the Faith on 21 April 1988.

B. World-wide Objectives

a. Carrying the Healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the Generality of Mankind

The Six Year Plan witnessed a further emergence of the Faith from obscurity as the followers of Bahá'u'lláh spread His message in new and creative ways to an increasingly diverse audience throughout the world. The Universal House of Justice, in its message of Riḍván 1992, declared that the proclamation of the Faith "attained an entirely new stage" during this period. The enrollment of at least one and a half million new Bahá'ís was one consequence.

Large-scale Enrollment

In its Riḍván 1987 message the Universal House of Justice announced that "the stage is set for universal, rapid and massive growth of the Cause of God." One year later it shared the news that "more and more national communities witness the beginnings of that entry by troops promised by the beloved Master and which Shoghi Effendi said would lead on to mass conversion." In a summary report of the Plan the National Assembly of Brazil made a comment which could be echoed by many sister communities: "The preoccupation with teaching on a wide scale was a tonic in this Six Year Plan, and efforts were made to help the diverse regions to turn examples of successful projects into fountains of enthusiasm to stimulate the whole country."

Although some form of large-scale enrollment occurred on every continent, the most dramatic numbers of new believers entered the Faith in Asia. India launched approximately 300 teaching projects, more than doubling the number of Bahá'ís from fewer than 1 million to more than 2.2 million.

The Bahá'í population in Bangladesh increased from 9,000 to nearly 63,000 believers, almost a sevenfold gain; during a single three-month period in 1988 alone, some 5,000 new souls embraced the Cause and 108 new Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed. By the end of the Plan the populations of nearly one hundred villages in Bangladesh were won over to the Faith. Two major projects in Taiwan resulted in a sevenfold increase in the community from fewer than 2,000 to more than 14,000 believers; during the early months of its Muhájir Project the National Assembly of Taiwan reported an average of ten to fifteen individuals enrolling per day. National communities doubled in Hong Kong, trebled in Pakistan, and, with at least twelve full-time mass teachers in the field each year, the Philippines witnessed an increase of some 37,000 believers.

India's Muhájir Project, which alone was responsible for bringing more than 14,000 souls into the Cause, demonstrated how systematic efforts could bring about large-scale enrollment. Spanning a little over one year, the project consisted of three "movements": an initial teaching conference and call for volunteers followed immediately by a week-long teaching campaign; the creation of a local task force to organize permanent teaching and community activities; and appointment of assistants to Auxiliary Board members to help the task force create strong Local Spiritual Assemblies.

The powerful effects of applying organized and concentrated teaching efforts to a particularly receptive area were also witnessed on the other side of the world in Guyana, where a three-year pilot project launched in 1989 was instrumental in achieving the Plan's final success of almost 36,000 new believers. The Resident Teacher Project began with thirteen overseas believers and sixteen local believers teaching full-time; within six months, 12,000 people had declared their faith in Bahá'u'lláh. During this pilot project, forty-two local teachers and eighteen international participants volunteered their services, and fifteen local youth spent six months to one year each serving full-time on the teams.

In Brazil entry by troops was also pursued systematically, with the establishment of a national Department for Teaching on a Wide Scale. Special materials were prepared and seminars regularly held, leading to such successes as 1,500 enrollments in Pau da Lima and nine hundred in the southern community of Alvarado, where many of the new believers had been made aware of the Faith through a Bahá'í school in the town.

A year of teaching in Ecuador dedicated to the Hand of the Cause Dr. Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir brought some 2,300 people into the Faith during its first eight months by targeting five goal areas and offering four week-long teacher-training institutes. The work of full-time teams from within Ecuador was supplemented by visiting teachers from seven countries, and forty-six new Bahá'ís joined the more experienced teachers to make the campaign a success.

Short-term mass teaching projects also achieved impressive results. A month-long project in Venezuela, spearheaded by an international travelling teacher, welcomed 400 believers into the Cause and formed twenty-six new Local Assemblies; another series of projects in that country, dedicated to the Bahá'ís of Írán and called We Cannot Fail Them, resulted in more than 1,000 enrollments. A total of 548 Bolivians joined the Faith in one week when ten teams of Bahá'ís, inspired by a two-day conference in Sucre on the theme of entry by troops, set out for ten different places to proclaim Bahá'u'lláh's message. In total nearly 2,000 new souls embraced the Faith in the most receptive areas.

Although ongoing campaigns spanning several years and involving numerous teachers contributed significantly to large-scale enrollment, focus and dedication were more important characteristics of teaching teams than size. When a team of twelve teachers from five different countries spent nine

weeks among the Garifuna people of Belize, more than 1,000 embraced the Faith. One of the most dramatic teaching victories occurred in Peru where 1,764 people became Bahá'ís during five days of teaching following a two-day mass teaching workshop in the Lake Titicaca region; at one high school in the area, the principal, all teachers and students enrolled.

In Trinidad and Tobago teaching projects with a few full-time, self-supporting teachers and one homefront pioneer who arose for about nine months increased the number of Bahá'ís by more than 5,000.

Although Asia and Latin America proved the most receptive to entry by troops, focused teaching efforts achieved a fair measure of success on all continents. In Kenya a variety of short-term projects led to the enrollment of 17,950 people, and in Nigeria 802 members of the Yoruba tribe were brought into the Cause by six youth who spent one week visiting five villages. In the Mariana Islands a full-time teaching team serving on Saipan for three months in 1990 enrolled more than 1,000 believers. In Fiji the Olinga Project, carried out between August 1989 and July 1991, brought into the Cause some 1,500 individuals, with almost equal proportions from each of the islands' major ethnic groups.

Even in Europe, where growth in numbers remained relatively slow until the former Eastern Bloc dramatically opened to the Faith, the effects of pointed and consistent efforts were fully demonstrated. "The whole Italian Bahá'í community has been galvanized by a new spiritual atmosphere," reported that country's National Assembly after between sixty and seventy people began attending each fireside in the goal town of Portici. One of the main features of this project was the immediate involvement of the newly enrolled Bahá'ís in the consultative process and their assumption of responsibility for specific activities. Within a year approximately 100 people had embraced the Faith and enrollments continued at a fairly steady pace.

Reaching People of All Backgrounds

When two pioneers settled in Sakhalin in 1990, the last remaining territorial goal named by Shoghi Effendi in his Ten Year Global Plan was fulfilled. After the miraculous opening to the Faith of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the successful prosecution of the subsidiary Two Year Teaching Plan in those areas, the Universal House of Justice was able to state in its Riḍván 1992 message that "the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is represented in every country on earth."

In 1988, the Bahá'í community's success in the wide diffusion of Bahá'u'lláh's message and settlement of its adherents was publicly recognized when the Encyclopaedia Britannica, in its *Britannica Book of the Year*, termed the Faith the second most widely spread religion after Christianity.

The numerical enrollment victories of the Six Year Plan were possibly exceeded by achievements in increasing both the diversity of the populations with whom the message was shared and, more importantly, the diversity of the Bahá'í community itself. Ongoing efforts to spread the Faith to all corners of the globe were expanded by campaigns to share its teachings with a greater number of ethnic groups and to reach individuals from all social strata.

Within national borders the dissemination of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to all areas continued. Thus in South America Bahá'ís established themselves in all the states of Brazil; in Chile they created a "virtual chain of communities reaching from the far north and extending to the far south"; and in Paraguay Local Assemblies were elected in almost every part of the country. Japan's goal of having Bahá'ís in all the country's prefectures was accomplished during the Plan. In Taiwan 145 new localities, including three previously unopened islands, claimed new adherents. In the Philippines 1,800 new localities were opened. Nations as diverse as Norway and Malawi were similar in their fulfillment of geographic distribution goals:

Norway reached its aim of opening all counties to the Faith, in the process bringing the message to seven different islands, while Malawi achieved its objective of 1,500 localities.

In addition numerous minority groups were reached for the first time, from the Dhimal and Sherpa of Nepal to the Gypsies of Thailand and the Travelling People of Ireland. In the Philippines thirty-eight new tribal areas were opened to the Faith. Mali reported that all ethnic groups in the country could count at least one Bahá'í. In Taiwan three entirely tribal Local Assemblies were formed.

Just as geographic representation was often widened by focused teaching in particular areas, so was greater ethnic diversity attained by concentrated efforts. In Spain an international conference to analyze the process of teaching and deepening Gypsies, followed by three national consultative meetings and a compilation on the subject issued by the National Assembly, resulted in a considerable increase in Gypsy enrollments. In Australia formation of the Aboriginal and Islander Working Group in 1988 was followed by a surge in conversions among those populations. Austria experienced group declarations among Turkish workers when it "concentrated on making their participation in our community life possible" through language courses, special unity feasts and folk music during gatherings. A substantial increase in declarations of faith among Carolinians and Chuukese on Saipan in the Mariana Islands occurred when, at the Bahá'í Center, Chuukese believers shared Bahá'í songs, along with island dance and food, with their relatives.

The Guaymi Cultural Center in Panama, inaugurated in 1987, provides an outstanding example of the Bahá'í community's efforts to help an indigenous people preserve its cultural heritage and simultaneously strengthen the Faith. The Center became the focus of a Guaymi tutorial school network and cultural, health and agricultural activities, all supported by the broadcasts of Radio Bahá'í Panama.

Efforts were made in many countries to reach people from all social strata with an emphasis on people of capacity. Courtesy calls on government officials were made, interfaith prayer gatherings sponsored and attended, and receptions held to introduce Bahá'í professionals to their colleagues. Many government and religious leaders, professionals and academics who were made aware of the Faith's central teachings responded favorably.

In several countries consistent efforts to inform government officials about the Faith were rewarded when they began attending and even addressing Bahá'í-sponsored events. Cabinet ministers and chiefs in Botswana often attended Bahá'í events, and the



In India, a bicycle for two was made to facilitate travel teaching in Uttar Pradesh. 1991. Since women cannot travel alone in this area, the cycle made it possible for two women or husband and wife teams to participate in the teaching work.

country's Minister of External Affairs addressed a reception held in honour of the African Board of Counsellors. Five ministers in Bangladesh attended functions at the National Center, and in Hong Kong the Director of Environmental Protection and the Consuls-General of Israel, Panama and Chile participated in a celebration of the Birthday of Bahá'u'lláh.

Two of the most significant signs of growing government awareness of the Faith occurred at the end of the Plan. Brazil's Federal Chamber of Deputies announced its intention to commemorate the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh with a special solemn session; and the Prime Minister of Guyana, the Honorable Hamilton Green, addressed the United States' National Convention at Riḍván 1992.

One activity which contributed very significantly to the Faith's emergence from obscurity was the continuing distribution of *The Promise of World Peace*. By Riḍván 1987 the statement had been presented to heads of state, a large number of the members of national governments, diplomats, teachers, trade unionists, leaders of religion, eminent members of the judiciary, the police, legal, medical and other professions, members of local governments, clubs and associations, and thousands of individuals. While initial presentations had concentrated on national government leaders and people of prominence, during the Plan it was carried to peoples everywhere from all walks of life. Such were the accomplishments in bringing Bahá'u'lláh's healing message to people of all national, ethnic, economic and educational backgrounds that the Universal House of Justice affirmed at Riḍván 1990 that: "a significant milestone in the fourth epoch" had been reached, and "the Administrative Order now embraces a community of wider diversity than ever before."

Chinese Teaching

The House of Justice has repeatedly emphasized the importance of teaching the Chinese people around the world. The establishment in March 1989 of the Bahá'í International Community's Office of Public Information in Hong Kong, and the launching of the Chinese edition of *One Country* in mid-1990, were two major steps taken to attract the interest of the world's Chinese population. Additionally, the appointment of the Bahá'í Committee for China by the House of Justice in June 1989 signalled the importance of careful planning and coordination of various efforts in this area.

Between 1988 and 1990, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, accompanied by Mrs. Violette Nakhjavání, visited mainland China four times. She met with numerous prominent



In the Solomon Islands, Auxiliary Board members have overcome the problem of transport between the many islands by using a motorized canoe to serve as a Maritime Bahá'í Teaching Institute. 1991.

people, particularly in Beijing and Dalian, showed slides of her trip to the Amazon entitled the *Green Light Expedition* to various distinguished guests, and addressed students and staff at Nankai University in Tianjin, where both Martha Root and Agnes Alexander had also spoken during their visits to China. Her four visits included a one-month trip, in the summer of 1988, to Guangzhou (Canton), Urumqi, Beijing, Shanghai, Suzhou and Guilin, as well as a one-week trip to Tibet in 1990.

In the fall of 1989 she made a five-week trip to Taiwan, travelling over 2,000 kilometers and visiting some mass-teaching areas, as well as major cities. During this visit she presented a special copy of the Peace Statement in Chinese to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Taiwan, was received by the Minister of the Interior and the Secretary-General of the National House of Representatives, and had interviews with several major newspapers.

While in the Far East Amatu'l-Bahá also attended a large formal banquet organized by the Spiritual Assembly of Hong Kong in honor of the passage, by the Legislative Council, of "the Bahá'í Ordinance" Act, and visited Ulaan-Baatar in Mongolia for one week, in 1989.

The Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone and Mrs. Madge Featherstone travelled to China for the first time in September 1988. They visited Guangzhou, Lanzhou and Beijing before departing at the beginning of October. During a tour of Zhongshan University (Sun Yat-sen University) in Guangzhou, Mr. Featherstone was invited unexpectedly to speak to the students of the Department of Philosophy about the Faith. Two days later he presented a lecture on "The Bahá'í Faith: Its History, Teachings and World-wide Development." The subjects covered included the oneness of mankind, the oneness of the Prophets, the relation of Bahá'u'lláh to the Founders of the previous religions and the importance of eliminating prejudices.

The *Green Light Expedition* videotape was broadcast in five segments in Guangzhou in November 1989, reaching approximately five million people. The same month a camera crew from China National Television in Beijing visited Bahapur, India, to include the House of Worship in a documentary film about India.

The videotape *Jewel in the Lotus* about the Temple in India was aired in Tianjin in two segments in January 1992, reaching more than 3.5 million viewers each time. The narration was dubbed in Mandarin, and Bahá'ís in the area reported encountering people who were deeply moved by the film.

A series of ten-minute radio programs produced by the Bahá'í Office of the Environment of Taiwan, an agency of the National Spiritual Assembly of Taiwan, reached approximately three million primary school students. These weekly programs, which contained Bahá'í spiritual principles and which mentioned the name of the Faith, were broadcast to primary schools throughout Taiwan for a ten-week period beginning in March 1992. The Ministry of Education sponsored and partially funded these education programs.

The Chief of the Beinan Tribe in Taiwan, Chen Wen-Sheng, adopted the Faith in August 1990. He was the first tribal chief of Taiwan (and greater China) to become a Bahá'í. His son, Chen Chien-Hong, the next hereditary chief, also enrolled at the same time. The Beinan Tribe (also known as the Puyuma Tribe) is the fifth most populous of the nine major aboriginal tribes in Taiwan. Taiwan's Ministry of the Interior reported the total population of the Beinan to be over 8,500 at the end of 1988.

Efforts were made to share ideas about Chinese teaching among national communities. The International Chinese Teaching Committee sponsored six highly successful international teaching conferences around the globe between 1988 and 1991. In order to exchange ideas and strengthen their teaching program, members of the Taiwanese



Members of a teaching team enrolling a new believer in Macau in May 1989.

community visited twenty-one countries which had established Chinese Teaching Committees.

In some countries association with Chinese community organizations facilitated Chinese teaching, as in Hawaii, where interaction with the Worldwide Farmers' Association opened the door to sponsorship of a China Peace and Friendship Tour in 1992. More than one hundred Chinese community leaders in Hawaii were presented with the Peace Statement.

The quantity of Bahá'í literature in Chinese languages was greatly increased during the Plan. The Bahá'í committee for China and the International Chinese Teaching Committee jointly worked on translating selections from *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* under the auspices of the Bahá'í World Centre. Other translations were made of selected compilations produced at the World Centre. A group of Bahá'ís in China translated a compilation of various Writings and prayers which was subsequently published by the Spiritual Assembly of Macau.

Mass Media

When the Six Year Plan began, the press was aware of the Bahá'í Faith largely because of the persecutions in Írán. Wide distribution of the peace statement provided opportunities to broaden that image. Increasingly, members of the media sought out Bahá'ís for stories on their peace-related activities, and even the press which had been resistant to the Faith in some areas became more receptive. The shift in press interest from the persecutions in Írán to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh was exemplified in the United States, where the number of significant articles about the Bahá'í Cause increased from approximately 2,000 to 3,800 per year. This greater publicity provided the necessary incentive for Bahá'ís to develop more sophistication in dealing with the media, and encouraged them to produce more acceptable material for use in radio, television and newspapers.

Radio was widely used for proclamation, and Bahá'í radio operations became increasingly involved in teaching efforts. In addition to the programming on newly launched

Bahá'í-owned radio stations in Chile and Liberia, and the continuing broadcasts of Bahá'í stations in the United States, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, and Bolivia, Bahá'í programs were aired on non-Bahá'í stations in very many countries, including such places as Guyana, Belize, Grenada, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Malaysia, Thailand, Spain, Chad and Lesotho. In Rwanda, broadcast of a weekly ten-minute radio program began in 1989 and quickly attracted a large audience. The following year, when civil disturbances made travelling extremely difficult, the program became one of the few means still available for teaching. The listeners were invited to send questions, and the subsequent correspondence led to an average of ten declarations per day.

In El Salvador public service announcements about peace were broadcast twenty times per day for one month, and in the Republic of Ireland feature subjects on the Faith were transmitted on all but one of the newly legalized local stations. Radio stations throughout the length of Chile aired selections from The Hidden Words on an hourly basis for over a month as a public service project; and Bahá'í stations repeatedly presented the Writings.

The International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Centre (IBAVC), through its offices and representatives in several lands, continued to support Bahá'í spot use of radio and television by providing materials and advice. Over fifty workshops and training seminars in the production and use of audio-visual media were conducted by IBAVC in thirty-seven countries and in all continents of the globe. Ten different monographs were produced during the Plan, ranging from relating spirituality to media subjects to highly specific 'how-to' papers, such as how to prepare radio spot announcements. IBAVC distributed radio scripts and tapes in various languages to countries throughout the world, and adapted many films and videotapes, including the *Green Light Expedition*, to the various television standards used in the world market. Large-scale distribution of videotapes and audio-tapes has been steadily expanded by IBAVC from its bases in the United States and Venezuela, and the new Music Clearinghouse began a library of music tapes by Bahá'í composers and performers developed for radio, Nineteen Day Feasts and other uses.

A number of regular television programs about the Faith were also aired. The Canadian-produced *Bahá'í Perspective* was broadcast a total of sixty-six hours; Bahá'ís in El Salvador produced fifty-four episodes of a weekly program; a thirty-minute program was shown twice monthly in Dominica; twelve shows on the Faith were screened in Kenya; and Alaska produced four award-winning, sixty-second public service announcements called Peace Talks.

Numerous single-episode programs were produced, such as half-hour shows screened throughout the United Kingdom and Portugal, a panel discussion on peace with representatives of various religions in Lesotho, and the broadcast of a Bahá'í children's program on Transkei television. In many countries television news coverage of Bahá'í events included interviews with local Bahá'ís, travelling teachers and Counsellors. Further significant programs included: the broadcast of the International Convention video in Bolivia, Saint Lucia, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Thailand; references made to the Faith on C-SPAN and CNN in the United States; and a seven-minute story on the Faith which aired nationwide in prime time in Australia.

Proclamation in newspapers increasingly included regular publication of selected Writings, press releases about Bahá'í events, and feature articles prepared about the Faith and its followers.

By the end of the Plan most National Assemblies had a public relations office or committee to prepare and review information about the Faith. In most cases, the officer chiefly concerned with the work also served as the national representative for the

global network created by the Bahá'í International Community's Office of Public Information, receiving news from this source.

Many Local Assemblies also appointed individuals or committees to monitor the public relations activities of the community. The Office of Public Information created a manual to guide the work of these agencies, distributing it through its worldwide network. Some national communities also held training sessions, such as Brazil's "Latin American Bahá'í Seminar on Public Relations and External Affairs" in early 1992, and Canada's public affairs training conferences held across the country. Training was also held locally in Bangladesh, Ecuador, Mauritius, Norway, Thailand, Taiwan, Trinidad and Tobago, and Zimbabwe.

The majority of training in public relations occurred through practical experience, as the media increased their attention to Bahá'í activities during the Plan. One prominent example of this was in Hawaii where specific issues such as the status of women and the state of the environment were identified from the Peace Statement, and an external affairs officer was made responsible for developing a portfolio on each issue. At the end of the Plan, Hawaii called its external affairs program an indispensable part of its teaching work.

The Role of the Arts

That day will the Cause spread like wildfire when its spirit and teachings are presented on the stage or in art and literature as a whole. Art can better awaken such noble sentiments...especially among the mass of the people.

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi dated 10 October 1932, *Bahá'í News*, 73 [May 1933] p. 7.)

The truth of these words was increasingly demonstrated as a growing number of music, drama and dance performances proclaimed both the content and spirit of the Bahá'í teachings to ever-wider audiences. Most of the performing arts groups were composed of youth.

El Viento Canta (The Wind Sings), a group which formed while its members were serving at the Bahá'í World Centre, shared Latin American folk music as well as the principles of the Faith with audiences throughout Europe, Africa, the former Soviet



El Viento Canta performing in Botswana in December 1989 during the Bahá'í International Music Festival held in Gaborone.

Union, Mongolia and China. The group played to substantial audiences (for example, 3,000 attended one concert in Spain) and received extensive radio and television coverage which often included long interviews and led to many enrollments.

Another Latin American youth group, Planeta Paz (Planet Peace), began performing in Brazil in August 1991 and spearheaded a national proclamation effort in Argentina in December. Each show combined music with Bahá'í themes, folk music and slide shows, opening with a tribute to Bahá'u'lláh and ending with invitations to embrace the Cause. The National Assembly of Brazil attributes at least three hundred declarations of faith to their concerts in that country.

Other musical groups formed by youth included Let It Be This Generation which completed a 150-concert tour of Canada; Light in the Darkness, a European group which attracted eighty new believers during one concert in Romania; and the Carmel Minstrels, six young Guyanese musicians who shared the Bahá'í message throughout the Caribbean in 1987. Travelling to other continents to perform was not unusual: Malawi's Kwayera Mbee was invited to tour Europe; the Thailand performances of a group from New Zealand and Australia called Wildfire led to hundreds of enrollments; and New Zealand's Youth for One World taught the Faith in Hong Kong.

Music played a particularly important role in Africa, where numerous local choirs were formed and Bahá'í songs composed. The International Music Festival in Botswana was described by the nation's Assembly as "one of the most significant achievements" of its Plan, and Kenya's Assembly reported that "many of our Bahá'í communities have been kept alive because of music and thousands have become Bahá'ís because of it."

The history and principles of the Faith were also widely shared through drama. The Sacred Writings were combined with music and dance to tell the story of the Báb when *Badasht* was performed at the International Theatre Festival in Canada. *Peace Child*, a musical drama produced by a committee of the National Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands, was performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and a documentary was made of it by a major television network. In Australia an Aboriginal theater group called The Storytellers was formed.

The power of dance to transcend language barriers and connect hearts was demonstrated by the enthusiastic responses of audiences to various performing groups. For example, dance groups called Youth Workshops formed throughout the United States and at Canada's Maxwell School; Youthquake toured in the United Kingdom; and a well-known Lakota Sioux Indian believer performed a traditional hoop dance in numerous communities in Canada, the United States, Europe and elsewhere.

Bahá'ís also used other fine arts to spread the message. In Denmark an exhibit of artwork based on Bahá'í quotations and accompanied by Bahá'í books was displayed three times. Excerpts from the Peace Statement formed the basis of an art exhibit in Belize. The organizers of a peace festival in Japan invited the Bahá'ís to contribute a display that blended photographs, traditional floral arrangements, artwork on peace themes by local children, and Bahá'í books.

Consultation on the use of arts in teaching was facilitated by the founding, in August 1986, of the International Bahá'í Association for Arts, by several forums held at Landegg Academy in Switzerland, and by the development of the Bahá'í Youth Institute in Costa Rica as a center for training youth to use arts in service to mankind. Consultation was followed by teaching projects having an explicitly artistic emphasis. The European Bahá'í Youth Council organized a project called Peace Through Artistic Expression in Yugoslavia in 1990 during which hundreds attended special open-air concerts. In Belize a 1988 project which centered around the arts was reported to result in at least seventy-nine enrollments.

In 1991 the Music, Arts and Drama Committee of Czechoslovakia organized a one-week Art Forum in collaboration with the Bahá'í Association For Arts chapter in Bratislava; Bahá'í artists and musicians from more than fifteen countries, including republics of the former Soviet Union, shared ideas for proclaiming the Name of Bahá'u'lláh, and public performances were held daily. In 1988 approximately 1,000 people participated in Canada's first Festival of the Human Spirit, a four-day series of workshops, exhibits and performances on using the arts in teaching.

Expanding the Teaching Force

Efforts to encourage and support individual teaching, provide teacher training and establish permanent teaching teams all helped stimulate an increase in the number of dedicated souls actively spreading Bahá'u'lláh's Message. The Universal House of Justice reiterated the crucial importance of personal teaching in its Riḍván 1988 message, saying: "Every individual believer—man, woman, youth and child—is summoned to this field of action; for it is on the initiative, the resolute will of the individual to teach and to serve, that the success of the entire community depends."

National Assemblies encouraged individual initiative in a variety of ways. A series of Vision to Victory conferences in the United States ended with participants submitting personal pledges of teaching service. The National Assembly of the Eastern Caroline Islands sent a booklet called *A Personal Teaching Campaign* to all Local Assemblies to be shared with their communities. Numerous National Assemblies sent circular letters to Local Assemblies and held local seminars on the topic.

While evidence of increased individual personal teaching is not easily monitored, National Assemblies on all continents made observations such as "a greater commitment to individual teaching"; "more involvement and efforts in the field of teaching"; and "many Bahá'ís have concrete personal goals." In Brazil a Campaign of Individual Teaching from Heart to Heart had 500 regular participants over a two-year period. Zimbabwe reported that a corps of travelling teachers, averaging between six and ten individuals, was in the field at any given time. The National Assembly of Switzerland estimated that some 2,000 teaching activities were carried out by 230 believers. India reported that the number of friends taking part in teaching activities increased tenfold.

Teacher training took a variety of forms, from orientation sessions for travelling teachers and pioneers to seminars and institutes open to all believers. Several permanent institutes provided ongoing training, such as the 'Ilmí Teaching Institute in Lahore, Pakistan, which in 1991 began to offer ten days of classes per month, and the Jamálíyyih Institute in El Salvador which trained approximately 100 teachers. Annual national and regional teaching conferences were held on all continents.

One particular innovation which expanded the teaching force was the Universal House of Justice's call for short-term pioneers. In September 1989 National Assemblies were assigned a number of short-term pioneering goals measured by months of service. Because the believers filling these goals did not intend to stay permanently (some stayed only three months) they were freed from the need to find employment, and thus more of the friends were able to participate.

The teaching work was also carried out by permanent teams in a number of countries. For example, the permanent teams of Guyana's Resident Teacher Project inspired similar teams in Belize, Brazil, El Salvador and Honduras; and full-time teams were formed in four states of the United States near the end of the Plan. Also in the United States, approximately 1,000 teaching institutes were formed, with members committing themselves to teach a particular segment of the population over a period of at least five years. Teaching institutes were also tried in

five pilot areas of Turkey and then spread all over the country.

A highlight of the teaching work was the growing involvement and initiative of indigenous peoples. Following a seminar in Bolivia in July 1989 on the development of the Faith among the Indian peoples of Latin America, a one-week teaching project was held during which some 500 people enrolled. The seminar had been attended by seventy Bahá'ís representing nine distinct indigenous groups from eight countries. In 1986 a gathering of all the sacred societies of the Peigan Reserve in Alberta, Canada, was called by Elder Joe Crowshoe, a Bahá'í, to explain the teachings and plan for further intersocietal gatherings.

Indigenous believers increasingly volunteered travel teaching services. Four Garifuna teachers from Belize and Honduras formed a team called Trail of Light and shared the Faith with the Carib descendants of their ancestors in Dominica. Mayan believers played a significant role in a 1989 project in Mexico which led to the enrollment of 220 people in the first week. Teams of Bri Bri from Costa Rica joined the teaching programs in Honduras.

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

With strong encouragement from the Universal House of Justice, many steps were taken to win the goals of international collaboration in the teaching field. Conferences on border teaching were held in Europe and Central America, and successful exchanges of teachers took place when the Thai-Cambodian border opened for trade in 1991. Major international collaboration among institutions was achieved when the Promise of World Peace Tour was organized: sixty-two Bahá'ís from eight nations travelled to the Soviet Union in 1989 to disseminate the Peace Statement.

Probably the most dramatic examples of international collaboration occurred when the countries bordering Eastern Europe were given responsibility for quickly organizing teaching plans and sending teachers when the Eastern Bloc opened to the Faith. Myriad other international teaching projects were carried out collaboratively during the Plan.



Irish Bahá'í youth walked from Cork to Limerick, a distance of 64 miles, on behalf of World Peace in October 1987.

YOUTH

The Six Year Plan witnessed a widespread acceptance by Bahá'í youth in many parts of the world of the concept of a period of service, undertaken generally as a temporary interruption to their formal educational program and devoted fully to the promotion of the teaching work. Youth in all continents were reported to be in the forefront of teaching activity. In its Riḍván 1992 message the Universal House of Justice affirmed that

> Youth activities took on a special character shaped by the idea of a youth year of service. The involvement of the youth in the Six Year Plan as short-term pioneers, travelling teachers and projecteers had a profound effect on the teaching work overall...

Youth dominated the teaching work in Eastern Europe. Other examples of significant youth activity include the four STAR teaching projects carried out between 1987 and 1990 in Botswana with international participation, and the ongoing Sparks of Peace project which brought youth together every summer for an intensive campaign throughout the English-speaking Caribbean. The United States reported that youth participated in nearly every ongoing project and comprised most of the full-time teaching teams. The initiative taken by youth to form music, dance and drama groups to proclaim the Faith is yet another aspect of the prominent role they played in the teaching work.

The level of initiative and organization demonstrated by youth also rose, as exemplified by the establishment by the House of Justice in October 1989 of a European Bahá'í Youth Council charged with coordinating the various activities of the European Bahá'í youth and representing them in dealings with other youth groups and agencies. In Malawi a strong National Youth Committee planned and carried out the Collis Featherstone Project with a focus on reaching refugees from Mozambique. In the Netherlands the Youth Committee composed its own plan and invited each youth to choose a personal goal toward its fulfillment.

HOUSES OF WORSHIP

Since the Mother Temple of the Indian subcontinent was dedicated to public worship in December 1986, more than thirteen million people have crossed its threshold, one day alone registering 143,635 visitors; it is now one of the most visited religious edifices in India. As the Temple's fame spread, its visitors' log became a roster of dignitaries from around the globe: heads of state, government ministers, ambassadors, scholars and religious leaders wrote of their admiration for the unique structure, and for the principles that inspired its singular and enthralling beauty.

The Houses of Worship on each of the other continents continued to act as silent teachers of the Cause. The national communities in Australia and Samoa took particular advantage of their Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs to introduce prominent people to the Faith; special services held in commemoration of United Nations Days were well attended by people of capacity from many professions. Refurbishment of the Temple in Uganda began, to make it once again East Africa's jewel. In Panama the national secretariat was moved to the Temple grounds and a large auditorium constructed for visitors. At the Mother Temple of the West in Wilmette, U.S.A., a long process of rehabilitating the architectural concrete components began. In 1991 Germany's House of Worship was classified as a Cultural Monument under the provisions of the Historical Monument Preservation Law. In all of the Houses of Worship, many teaching programs complemented the regular worship services.

b. Greater Involvement of the Faith in the Life of Human Society

When the Six Year Plan began, the Universal House of Justice had just offered, in *The Promise of World Peace*, the experience of the Bahá'í community as a model for the peoples of the world to study. Throughout the six years the believers increasingly shared that experience through association with individuals and organizations working to solve the problems addressed by Bahá'u'lláh. By Riḍván 1992 Bahá'í views and participation were actively sought by individuals and governments alike.

CONTACT WITH PROMINENT PEOPLE AND AUTHORITIES

The Promise of World Peace, which introduced people from all walks of life to the Bahá'í Faith, led to unprecedented contacts with prominent people and government authorities. By the end of the Plan Bahá'í views on peace had been shared with government authorities in nearly every nation of the world.

A sample of the prominent people who were presented with the Peace Statement includes: all 559 senators and congressmen undertaking to write Brazil's new constitution; delegates to the Chuuk State Constitutional Convention and the Federated States of Micronesia National Constitutional Convention, both in the Eastern Caroline Islands; and the presidents of seven South American nations attending an intergovernmental meeting in Uruguay. Presentations of the statement to government and media officials in Cuba were reported to have been warmly received.

After the Bahá'ís of Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A., presented *The Promise of World Peace* to their city council, the council unanimously passed a resolution encouraging citizens to read and study the document and paid tribute to the Bahá'ís for their leadership in a range of peace-related issues. In 1987 the Kansas State House of Representatives in the United States also encouraged study of the peace statement.

As government officials became increasingly aware of Bahá'í teachings and activities related to peace and world order, Bahá'í communities took bolder steps to assert to those in authority the indispensability of Bahá'u'lláh's principles. In countries undergoing constitutional revisions such as Brazil, Haiti, Paraguay, South Africa and Thailand, National Assemblies submitted to their governments documents offering suggestions for new national constitutions. The President of the South African Law Commission, the judge acting on behalf of the government, commented that the Bahá'ís were the one group whose ideas had provided a "spiritual and moral foundation" for a constitution.

Bahá'í views were also made known to various governmental organizations concerned with solving social problems. In May 1991 the National Assembly of Barbados submitted *The West Indies in the 90's and Beyond—A Bahá'í Perspective* to the West Indian Commission Preparing the West Indies for the Future, a body established to study the future of the Caribbean community and regional unification. A number of presentations were also made to that Commission on behalf of other National Assemblies. In Taiwan the Ministry of the Interior arranged a special seminar called "Resolving Social Ills through the Teachings of the Bahá'í Faith."

Significant connections were also made with professionals of many specialties. Seminars were held to share Bahá'í ideas with experts in various fields, receptions for prominent Bahá'í professionals brought them together with colleagues who were not Bahá'ís, and monographs providing a Bahá'í perspective in special fields such as education and the environment were distributed. Bahá'ís also helped form professional associations related to peace, such as the Association of Physicians for Peace and the Association of Educators for Peace, both in



Counsellor Beatrice Asare presents a copy of the Peace Statement to the Asantahene of the Asante State of Ghana at his palace in Kumasi in September 1988.



Counsellor Violette Haake presents a copy of the Peace Statement to the Deputy Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Mr. Inatio Akaruru, in October 1990.



Bahá'í representatives present a copy of the Peace Statement to NATO Base personnel in Keflavik, Iceland, in October 1988.

Brazil. Bahá'í involvement with social and economic development projects also brought the Faith to the attention of professionals in development-related fields, such as education and health care.

The presentation of awards sponsored by Bahá'í communities to honor individuals for their service to humanity created many opportunities to meet and encourage community leaders. In Alaska the Honor Kempton Award for Service to Humanity, which is named after the woman known to Bahá'ís as the spiritual mother of Alaska and Luxembourg, continued to be presented annually; each year more than 100 guests, including prominent figures, attended the awards banquet. Presentation of the National Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands' annual Agnes Baldwin Alexander Award for Service to Humanity received substantial press coverage. In 1988 the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom presented their first Human Rights Awards as part of their commemoration of the 75th anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to London.

LIKE-MINDED ORGANIZATIONS

Bahá'ís contributed their knowledge of Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings and their time to many of the organizations which promote Bahá'í ideals. Numerous individuals volunteered with local and international groups, such as commissions working to prevent drug abuse. In addition, Bahá'í communities increased their support of United Nations' activities and their involvement in interfaith associations.

Some of the most substantial collaboration with United Nations initiatives took place in the United States where the National Assembly, through its office at the United Nations, worked throughout all six years toward the ratification of various UN human rights Conventions, helped to commemorate the International Year of Peace and the International Year of Literacy, and became more actively involved in UN Association activities.

In 1988, Bahá'ís in Burkina Faso were the only members of a religious community in the country to take part in a commemoration of the UN's International Peace Day and Children's Day; and for the first time in that country, Bahá'ís were invited to participate in an official UN Day reception.

The National Assembly of Venezuela participated in a meeting of the UN Economic and Social Council for Latin America which led to the Assembly's hosting a meeting of non-governmental organization representatives; Bahá'ís subsequently helped to form the Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in Venezuela.

Bahá'ís demonstrated their belief in religious unity through closer association with other religions. The Inter-Religious Understanding Association was formed by fifteen groups in India including Bahá'ís; a significant relationship was reported to have developed between the Bahá'ís of Nepal and the Asian Conference on Religion and Peace; an "active and thriving link" was established between Bahá'ís and the Interfaith Group which represents most religions in Fiji; and Guatemalan Bahá'ís participated in a Congress for Peace with representatives of all the country's religious denominations. In 1990 the Bahá'í International Community formally associated itself with the World Conference on Religion and Peace.

The interfaith groups occasionally addressed a pressing social need. In Zimbabwe members of an association of religious groups collaborated with UNICEF to help alleviate the physical sufferings of children in southern Africa. In Hawaii the Council of Churches co-sponsored the first Institute for the Healing of Racism in that state. The institute was formed by the Bahá'ís, modelled after similar institutes in North America.

Bahá'ís often addressed environmental issues by co-sponsoring forums, seminars and exhibits in conjunction with other groups. For example, the National Assembly of the United States became a member of the Global Tomorrow Coalition, an organization

of 150 groups involved in issues related to resources, the environment and sustainable development. That Assembly also became a member of the Advisory/Planning Board of the North American Environmental Sabbath Committee; a Bahá'í symbol now appears on the newsletter masthead and Bahá'í quotations were included in 10,000 kits distributed for a special event.

Community Activities

Increasingly, Bahá'ís not only participated in activities with like-minded organizations, but also initiated their own events and organized groups dedicated to addressing problems facing society.

Numerous Bahá'í seminars, conferences and public meetings were augmented by unique events such as Brazil's International Exposition on Education for Peace, carried out with the collaboration of twenty-three embassies and educational institutions, and Singapore's Arts for Nature exhibit which earned favorable recognition from the Ministry of the Environment and the Council of Women's Organizations.

Several events initiated by Bahá'ís have gradually become a part of life in the greater community. Annual Race Unity celebrations are held in hundreds of United States cities. Observances of World Religion Day have become annual national events in Suriname. The Bahá'í commemorations of UN Human Rights Day have evolved into a government event in Bermuda. Essay contests on peace, sponsored in a number of lands, draw the attention of youth to the teachings of the Faith.

Bahá'í organizations were formed to promote Bahá'í principles among specific audiences including the Bahá'í Medical Association in France and Health for Humanity in the United States.

When renewed incidents of interracial violence erupted in the United States, the Bahá'í community was already offering its healing perspective on the problem through distribution of the statement *The Vision of Race Unity: America's Most Challenging Issue*, and through the holding of a series of Institutes for the Healing of Racism.

Signs of Recognition

A growing number of prominent individuals and groups sought the support of Bahá'ís during the Plan. Invitations to participate in peace-related activities, public mention of Bahá'í views by prominent people, and requests for advice all pointed to increasing recognition that the Faith offers solutions to the crises facing humanity.

Milestone changes occurred in recognition of the Faith by public officials. The Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Sir Thomas Davis, accompanied by Lady Davis, visited the World Centre in August 1986 to



In Lesotho, Bahá'ís were invited to the Royal Banquet Hall on 15 September 1987 to receive the United Nations' "Peace Messenger Award" for the community's involvement in peace activities.

consult with the Universal House of Justice about world peace. Later that year the President of Dominica quoted from *The Promise of World Peace* during a radio broadcast on the International Day of Peace. In April 1990 President Amata Kabua of the Marshall Islands, while officially visiting Israel, came to Haifa with his secretary and his ambassador to confer informally with members of the Universal House of Justice on the role of the Marshall Islands in establishing world peace.

Bahá'í views on issues related to social justice were sought by the Central American Institute for Business Administration during its seminar on "Post-War National Reconstruction in El Salvador"; the Vice-President of Guyana requested a meeting with the National Assembly of that country to discuss Bahá'í participation in the "Social Impact Amelioration Program"; and the Macau Basic Law Consultative Committee asked the Macau Spiritual Assembly to send three representatives to a joint meeting with the Basic Law Drafting Committee from China and various religious groups, after which the Bahá'ís were asked to submit their views in a formal paper.

In the United States Mrs. Coretta Scott King, wife of the late civil rights leader, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., invited Bahá'ís to co-chair the National Religious Involvement Committee of the Martin Luther King Federal Holiday Commission. In 1992 the Bahá'í representative to the King Center in Atlanta, Georgia, was invited to a gathering of 500 religious leaders convened by former President Jimmy Carter to explore religious involvement in "Project Atlanta," a social and economic development project. The Bahá'í representative was then elected to the project's six-member Advisory Council.

Intensive Bahá'í involvement in ecology-related activities led to requests for Bahá'ís to take greater leadership roles. Two members of Hawaii's National Assembly were the only religious representatives among sixty-two groups invited to participate in the Governor's statewide Earth Day planning session in 1990. A member of the United States National Assembly's Washington, D.C., staff became part of a working group to draft suggestions for the United States government's Earth Summit position paper in 1992.

Awareness of the Bahá'í teachings on religious unity were demonstrated when a Bahá'í became the only non-Buddhist speaker invited to address a public meeting held in conjunction with the "Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace" in Mongolia. In Guyana Bahá'ís were appointed to the President's Advisory Committee on Religious Affairs. Bahá'ís were included in panel discussions on "Action Through Faith" and "East Meets



Mr. Dexter King (right), son of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was the keynote speaker at a Bahá'í Peace Conference held in Oslo, Norway, on 23 October 1986. Here he is being interviewed by the press.

West" at the International People's College in Denmark.

Bahá'ís in Hawaii were asked to serve in a significant number of advisory groups: the Governor's Permanent Commission for the Commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Week; the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women; and the Governor's Task Force on AIDS. Also in Hawaii, the chairman of a government task force chose the Bahá'í submission on education reform for broadcast on the radio.

Academic Circles

In 1990 in the United States the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace was established at the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management. Proposed by a non-Bahá'í professor in response to the Peace Statement, the Chair was created to conduct and publish research, design courses and lead seminars in the field of Bahá'í studies and world peace within an interdisciplinary context; to initiate public forums for discussing the issues proposed in *The Promise of World Peace*; and to establish academic links with, and provide technical assistance to, Bahá'í institutions in the fields of peace education and international development. The creation of the Chair marked the first initiative by a prestigious institution of higher learning to formulate a serious program of Bahá'í studies. Later that year Indore University and the National Assembly of India signed a document establishing another Chair for Bahá'í Studies with a similar range of functions to be developed.

Recognition of the Faith's principles as legitimate and important subjects of study was cultivated when Bahá'ís delivered papers and lectures relating the teachings to current issues. A Bahá'í scholar presented his analysis of the Third World debt at the prestigious World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland; papers on refugee mental health and a case study on a Bahá'í refugee settlement program were received with considerable interest at the World Conference on Refugee Mental Health in New Zealand; and the director of Ghana's Institute of Renewable Natural Resources spoke to a group from Cameroon's International Relations Institute on "Religion in a World in Search of Peace —A Bahá'í Approach" and on agroforestry, noting that the Faith offers solutions to global environmental problems.

The Faith was also directly presented to the world of academia during meetings with professors, presentations of *The Promise of World Peace* to university faculties, and conferences related to religious studies. A visiting professor at Belgium's University of Antwerp taught a course on the Faith to the faculty of the Comparative Religion Department; a member of Portugal's National Assembly spoke at the Congress on Religious Studies held at the New University of Lisbon; and the National Assembly of Guyana sent an overview of Bahá'í community programs to 240 faculty members of the University of Guyana.

Awareness of the Bahá'í Faith among scholars increasingly led to its inclusion in university courses. In some cases Bahá'í approaches were incorporated into the study of other issues, such as at the University of California, Santa Cruz, U.S.A., where the Bahá'í Club helped to design a course called "The Economics of a World Commonwealth." In Guatemala 300 student teachers studied the booklet *Education for Peace* over a period of twenty sessions. In other cases the Faith itself became the subject of study: lectures were given in comparative religion courses at Bermuda College, Malawi's Chancellor College and the University of Zimbabwe; the Faith was part of an extension course on religious studies at Fiji's University of the South Pacific; and entire courses on the Faith were offered at Brazil's Federal University of Santa Catarina and the University of Hawaii's Hilo Campus. An office of the United States National Assembly drafted *A Curriculum Guide to the Bahá'í Faith* to help college professors include the Faith in their courses.

Two institutions which contributed to the increasing respect afforded the Faith in scholarly circles were the Associations for Bahá'í Studies, with their international co-ordinating centre in Canada, and Landegg Academy, founded in Switzerland in 1988.

Bahá'ís also influenced the curriculum of public schools at the primary and secondary levels. In Australia, after a retired Bahá'í teacher offered a multifaith religious education course to Queensland school officials, the Queensland Department of Education invited a Bahá'í representative to be present at Curriculum Development Committee meetings, and the State Religious Education Advisory Committee voted to offer committee membership to officers of the Faith. In Peru high school teachers assigned research concerning the Faith as homework, referring to Radio Bahá'í as a resource. British Columbia's Ministry of Education in Canada accepted The Hidden Words and The Seven Valleys as literature which could be studied in high schools.

Advocating Consultation

As Bahá'ís worked to improve the level of consultation within their communities (see also "Higher Levels of Consultation," p. 167), they simultaneously increased efforts to share this dynamic concept with the rest of the world.

Education about consultation took various forms. In Guyana members of the Women's Affairs Task Force presented the principle to sixteen representatives of women's groups; the Bahá'í model was demonstrated in a graduate course at the University of Hawaii to overwhelmingly positive response; and Tonga's National Women's Greater Involvement in the Life of Human Society Committee sponsored a highly successful conference on consultation.

In different ways, Bahá'ís seized opportunities to educate decision-making bodies about the importance of consultation. When the government of Singapore invited groups to submit their views on the core values that should guide the nation, the Assembly of that country offered its Statement on the National Ideology, which recommended that consultation be applied to the whole decision-making process. Two pioneers at the University of Benin conducted a research project in which they used consultation with local farmers to demonstrate its value in rural development.

Increasingly, a variety of organizations recognized the value of this important Bahá'í principle, and requested advice and training. In 1986, following a three-hour session on consultation led by Bahá'ís, the Social and Ethics Committee of the Canadian Nuclear Association requested that the Bahá'ís facilitate discussion between the various factions in the nuclear energy debate. A mayor in New Zealand called the Local Assembly on behalf of his city council to request a meeting on consultation; the council met with three Bahá'ís who explained and demonstrated the concept.

Promoting Equality of the Sexes

The believers initiated and supported numerous activities to promote the equality of men and women. In most cases this took the form of enhancing the status of women. Bahá'ís sponsored hundreds of conferences open to the public; formed Bahá'í women's groups which associated with other organizations pursuing similar aims; and participated in various commissions and projects dedicated to equality of the sexes. (See also "Women's Activities", p. 409.)

Local, regional and national conferences were hosted by Bahá'ís to address this issue in such diverse locations as Cape Verde, Chad, Grenada, Korea, Paraguay and Spain. The most noteworthy of these gatherings were: a 1988 international women's conference in the United States which provided a forum for more than 1,000 women from sixty-five countries to discuss their role in the global peace-making process; the Pacific Women's Conference spearheaded by Hawaii's South Hilo Local Assembly in 1991 and attended by seventy people from

seventeen nations; and a Caribbean Women's Conference held in the Leeward Islands in 1988 with participants from twelve countries.

Bahá'í groups forged links with non-Bahá'í associations working toward similar goals by registering with umbrella organizations, co-sponsoring events and speaking at meetings. The Bahá'í Women's Committee of Singapore collaborated with the Singapore Council of Women's Organizations, which is composed of thirty-four groups; two Bahá'ís served as Executive Board members for a combined total of four years. In Nigeria the Bahá'í Women's Development Board registered with the National Council of Women's Societies. Ireland's Bahá'í National Committee for Fostering the Equality of the Sexes formed strong ties with other community groups.

Since 1988 a representative of the Faith has served as convenor of "Advocates for African Food Security: Lessening the Burden of Women," a coalition of United Nations agencies with non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations. Participants educate policymakers about women's vital contributions to food production in Africa and the importance of their involvement in all levels of decision-making.

A number of related projects and commissions benefited from the involvement of individual believers and Bahá'í communities. The Faith was represented by both women and men at meetings called by the UN Commission on the Status of Women, including global and regional conferences, seminars and workshops. During the Plan fifteen statements were presented to the Commission on such topics as social and economic development, education and the status of girls. One direct result of this involvement was a joint project supported by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) called "Traditional Media As Change Agent." In cooperation with various consultants Bahá'í agencies, National Assemblies, and UNIFEM, Bahá'ís created a project using traditional means, such as music and dance, to stimulate discussions about women's and men's roles in society. The project commenced in localities in Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, Malaysia and Nigeria.



The President of France, His Excellency François Mitterand, with Mrs. Peggy Maichoo, pioneer to Réunion (right), at a reception at the Élysée Palace in Paris, in commemoration of International Womens' Day, 8 March 1990.

c. Increasing the Worldwide Availability and Use of Bahá'í Literature

A worldwide increase in the translation, production, distribution and use of Bahá'í literature was designated as a priority during the Six Year Plan with a view to proclaiming the Faith and its principles to all sections of society and broadening the Bahá'í community's understanding of Bahá'u'lláh and His Message. This objective was energetically addressed throughout the Bahá'í world in a number of ways.

AVAILABILITY

Efforts to present Bahá'í literature to both the general public and the Bahá'í community were intensified, taking many forms. The most widespread were the participation of Bahá'ís in book fairs and exhibitions, the distribution of Bahá'í literature to public libraries, and the establishment of book depots and lending libraries. It is not possible to enumerate the achievements of every community in this sphere of activity, but to focus on the accomplishments of a few is revealing.

In India the Bahá'ís participated in some thirty-eight book fairs, held nearly two hundred book exhibitions and established as many as 110 book depots and 865 lending libraries. In one Indian state the Bahá'ís received a request from the Director of Public Libraries for 3,000 copies of Bahá'í books to be distributed among the 1,500 public libraries throughout the state. In Argentina the Bahá'ís took part in the annual Buenos Aires Book Fair, one of the most important in Latin America, drawing nearly a million people each year. At the International Book Fair held in Yugoslavia and attended by nearly 400,000 people, the Bahá'í Book Distribution Service of Austria gave out some 2,800 items. Bahá'í publishers attended three annual International Book Fairs in Beijing, China. In Chad the Olinga Bookstore-Library was opened in Moissala in the presence of religious, civil and military leaders; the library, open to the public daily, has a permanent collection of 1,000 volumes and also sells Bahá'í books. In addition, the Local Spiritual Assembly of Moissala, noting the paucity of educational facilities available to villagers, started a mobile library in collaboration with the Local Spiritual Assembly of Munich, Germany; it contains both Bahá'í and general reference materials and travels between villages, spending one day in each place.

PRODUCTION AND TRANSLATION

Translations of Bahá'í literature were significantly increased in a number of languages, covering a greater range of subject matter. Spiritual Assemblies strove to enrich Bahá'í literature in national and local languages. Many such efforts were acclaimed for their contribution towards the preservation of culture and heritage. In Dominica, for example, the first translation of The Hidden Words into Creole was received with appreciation by a high-ranking government official and was seen as advancing the culture of the island.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland published a booklet in Ladin, a main dialect of Romansch, the fourth language of Switzerland; the booklet was distributed to the media and to agencies engaged in preserving the language. In the Netherlands a national teaching conference was organized by a Local Assembly to celebrate the publication and to develop plans for the use of a compilation of the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Frisian, a language of the Frisian Islands and the northern Netherlands.

In Togo and Benin, where selected Writings were translated into the native tongues of villagers, a powerful effect on Bahá'í communities was achieved. To encourage application of Bahá'í teachings certain tribal chiefs also made recordings of the obligatory prayers so that illiterate villagers could listen to the Words of Bahá'u'lláh; other audio recordings of the Writings amplified this mode of learning prayers and studying the Creative Word.

In Papua New Guinea a booklet of prayers from several of the world's major religions was translated into Nalik, one of the local languages, the first book ever printed in that language; a written form of Nalik had to be created by Bahá'ís before this could occur. The booklet, entitled *Saaule Nakmai*, a traditional Nalik call for assistance from God, was part of the Bahá'í community's contribution to the United Nations International Literacy Year.

A clear trend emerged and gained momentum during the Plan to produce more Bahá'í literature on a broader range of subjects. New Bahá'í publications appeared on themes such as health and healing, marriage and family, decision-making and consultation, implications and applications of peace, and a range of social and economic development issues. Prior to the Plan only a handful of Bahá'í publications existed on the subject of literacy. By its close, the number of Bahá'í publications related to literacy easily reached forty. Among the languages in which Bahá'í literacy materials can now be found are: Hindi and Marathi for India; French and Creole for Haiti; Lunda for Zambia; Guaymi for Panama; and Spanish, Portuguese and Quechua for Latin America.

It is also interesting to note the marked upsurge in the publication of Bahá'í reference materials. The Six Year Plan witnessed the publication of a number of bibliographies of Bahá'í works and an English-language Bahá'í dictionary. Two more concordances were added to the seven already available, and the Sacred Writings in an electronic format became accessible for the first time through the publication of two software programs.

With the overall enrichment of Bahá'í literature throughout the world, it became necessary to ensure that the desire to create variety did not overshadow the need to make basic Bahá'í literature available to the masses of humanity. Cognizant of this need, the International Teaching Centre fostered a program that is now known as the "core literature" program. Core literature refers to a selection of titles comprised of Holy Writings, works on the Life and Mission of Bahá'u'lláh, and introductory and deepening materials, which are printed in large numbers and made available to the friends at affordable prices. The list of titles chosen as core literature for a given language not only is unique to that language, but grows and changes as the community develops and as the general enrichment of literature progresses.

Nowhere did this approach prove more useful than in the former Eastern Bloc, where the sudden opening of the countries of the region to the rest of the world in late



An estimated 1,000,000 people visited the International Book Fair held in Buenos Aires in April 1989. This was the sixth year the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Argentina participated in the Fair and its booth attracted much attention.

1989, and the large-scale teaching efforts that followed, created an unprecedented demand for Bahá'í literature. In languages spoken in those countries experiencing large-scale expansion, namely Albanian, Bulgarian, Romanian and Russian, a packet of basic core literature was printed in large quantities to put essential items into the hands of the people. While the production and distribution of core literature was vigorously pursued, parallel plans were developed to create a broad spectrum of Bahá'í literature in these languages. Both processes gradually gathered momentum during the last two years of the Plan and will continue for many years to come.

However, it was not only in the former Eastern Bloc where this approach proved useful. Core literature programs were also developed for languages spoken in other regions of the world where large-scale expansion is taking place, including Hindi, Khmer, Lao, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Portuguese and several vernacular languages of Africa, such as Bemba, Igbo, Yoruba and Sara.

COLLABORATION

Greater collaboration among Publishing Trusts and Bahá'í publishers was brought about by technological advances in the field of printing and the increase in organizational capacity throughout the Bahá'í world. On an operational level, closer collaboration was witnessed in the increasing number of Publishing Trusts sharing computer discs and/or films of manuscripts to facilitate the printing of the same book in different locations, thus avoiding the cost, difficulties and delays of transporting books over long distances and across borders.

On an organizational level, this collaboration was reflected in the number of international gatherings and consultative meetings about literature which took place during the Plan. In 1987, for example, Argentina held the first Bahá'í conference on the production of literature in Spanish to coordinate and systematize efforts in translation, publication and distribution on the various continents. Likewise, the first International Chinese Bahá'í Writers' Seminar was held in Malaysia in June 1991, which explored the need for suitable Bahá'í materials in Chinese. In order to enhance the range of Bahá'í literature available in Arabic, a committee known as the "Reviewing Board of Bahá'í Literature in Arabic" was appointed by the House of Justice in September 1991, with its base in London. A Bahá'í publishers' conference, held in England in February 1992, was attended by forty-four representatives of twenty-two publishers from seventeen countries. As an outgrowth of that conference, the International Association of Bahá'í Publishers was formed with its base in the Netherlands.

DISSEMINATION

The capacity of the Bahá'í world to disseminate literature on specific issues to thousands of people increased enormously. The release of *The Promise of World Peace* provided the impetus for the development of this capacity.

Since the appearance of the Peace Statement, some National Spiritual Assemblies have published items focusing on issues relevant to their own countries and have called upon their national communities to use these publications extensively in their proclamation and teaching efforts. The most outstanding example is the statement prepared by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States in 1991 entitled *The Vision of Race Unity: America's Most Challenging Issue.*

There is every indication that this newly acquired capacity will be fully utilized in the dissemination of the Statement on Bahá'u'lláh. Issued in April 1991, the Statement had already been translated into at least forty-eight languages by the close of the Plan, and reports were received at the World Centre of its presentation to many prominent figures in various lands.

d. Further Acceleration in the Process of the Maturation of Bahá'í Communities

The Six Year Plan itself, its goals and the method used to formulate them, reflected a new level of community maturity. In its letter of 2 January 1986 the Universal House of Justice stated: "This new process...signalizes the inauguration of a new stage in the unfoldment of the Administrative Order."

STRENGTHENING LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

In some areas of the world, most notably Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and East Asia, the number of Local Assemblies significantly increased, reaching and sometimes surpassing national goals. A milestone in Local Assembly formation occurred when the central authorities in Moscow approved the Bahá'ís' application to restore the long-lost Assembly of Ashkhabad ('Ishqábád) in 1989. Yet the primary emphasis during the Plan was on encouraging existing Local Assemblies to manifest their full potential.

National Assemblies created innovative and effective deepening programs for members of Local Assemblies, and Auxiliary Board members and their assistants worked tirelessly to nurture these vital institutions. Local Assemblies took greater initiative in holding regular meetings, carrying out their administrative functions, reforming themselves without outside assistance, and conducting extension teaching projects.

A number of National Assemblies produced deepening materials for their local institutions. In Brazil a set of nine booklets called *Forming Conscientious Local Spiritual Assemblies* was shared with more than 200 Local Assemblies. Standards for organizing and conducting secretariat and treasury tasks were formulated by the National Assembly of the Eastern Caroline Islands and sent to all Local Assemblies. The National Assembly of Fiji taped and distributed materials related to Assembly development in Fijian, Hindi and English. An illustrated booklet outlining the major tasks of a Local Assembly was distributed at a national convention in Togo.

Seminars, workshops and regular visits provided the other major form of education. In the United States, Auxiliary Board members, assistants, Counsellors and National Assembly representatives conducted a series of eighteen local conferences as part of the "Local Spiritual Assembly Development Program" launched in 1989. The sessions were based on training modules and on a new compilation prepared at the National Center called *Developing Distinctive Bahá'í Communities: Guidelines for Local Spiritual Assemblies.*

Members of the various institutions working together in Spain established the "Consolidation Project for Local Spiritual Assemblies." A similar National Committee for the Support of Local Spiritual Assemblies was created in the Netherlands.

In the Philippines a simplified Local Assembly manual translated into Tagalog was distributed during seminars run by the Area Teaching Committees' "Local Spiritual Assembly Development Project." A "Travel Deepeners' Program," created in Tanzania, worked with twenty Assemblies during the Plan, and the National Assembly of Ethiopia conducted mini-deepenings for members of its urban Assemblies.

The Assembly of Chad reported that individual Bahá'ís travelled thousands of kilometers per year by bicycle to regularly visit, encourage, deepen and deliver mail to Local Assemblies, greatly contributing to their development. Similarly, in the Central African Republic, the assistant secretary of the National Assembly rode some 1,200 kilometers by bicycle to hold institutes for thirteen Local Spiritual Assemblies in five locations, reaching nearly 300 individuals. The effects of such efforts could be seen as local institutions began demonstrating more responsibility and initiative.

Local Assemblies increasingly handled their basic duties without undue reliance on



Counsellor Edith Senoga (second from left) visits Bahá'í communities in the remote western region of Uganda, near the Ruwenzori Mountains; February 1990.

National Assemblies. For example, by the end of the Plan, incorporated Assemblies in Singapore and Hawaii were handling their own administrative work to maintain incorporation, and eight Assemblies in Taiwan had assumed responsibility for their own local centers. The minutes of Norway's Local Assemblies showed these institutions to be increasingly advising individuals on their personal problems and on avenues for service to the Cause. Hawaii reported that the number of personal cases reaching the National Assembly radically decreased after the Auxiliary Board members held deepenings with Local Assemblies on how they might handle this aspect of Assembly responsibility themselves.

Many Assemblies went beyond basic functioning and fully developed local activity plans. All Local Assemblies in the Netherlands composed their own annual plans which were then confirmed by the National Assembly. Thailand reported that four Assemblies created their own plans, became financially self-sufficient and supported surrounding communities. Italy's National Assembly dissolved its National Committee for the Assistance of Local Assemblies because of the level of maturity that had been achieved.

Finally, more Assemblies developed sufficiently to begin initiating activities of benefit to the wider community. Several Local Assemblies in Bolivia organized and locally financed regional conferences with between 200 and 600 participants each. Fifty Canadian Assemblies initiated their own deepening programs and fourteen were overseeing the functioning of bookstores and information centers at the end of the Plan. Eleven Local Assemblies in Transkei adopted and pursued twenty-four extension teaching goals.

Developing Local Bahá'í Communities

"It is not enough to expand the rolls of Bahá'í membership, vital as that is," the Universal House of Justice reminded the believers of the world in its message of Riḍván 1989. "Souls must be transformed, communities thereby consolidated, new models of life thus attained."

It is difficult to measure the development of local communities, because no numbers can be applied to the spirit at a Holy Day celebration, to the level of cooperation among the friends on a daily basis, or to the creativity poured into preparation for a Nineteen Day Feast. However, as the National Assembly of the Cook Islands reported, "...if the spirit of enthusiasm and loving unity among the members of our community has anything to do with the maturity of the community, then we have made great strides over the past six years in this area." The National Assembly of Nepal

similarly reported, "no doubt the greatest progress during the Six Year Plan has been registered in the area of the maturation of local communities."

The successes of large-scale enrollment in various parts of the world created an immediate and pressing need for community consolidation. India's "Muhajír Project" combined deepening with mass teaching, using a mobile deepening institute to help newly formed communities to hold Nineteen Day Feasts, Holy Day celebrations and to perform administrative functions. Also in India, the Bahá'í Academy in Panchgani significantly contributed to the process of consolidation through well-designed courses which were attended by Bahá'ís from both India and abroad, and conferences and seminars for Auxiliary Board members and assistants.

In the Khulna area of Bangladesh, where the populations of approximately 100 villages came close to becoming 100 percent Bahá'í, the Regional Teaching Committee designated a few as "model Bahá'í villages" and focused efforts on making the difference between Bahá'í and other villages readily apparent.

One outstanding sign of community growth was the greater participation of native believers in activities and institutions. As cultural expressions of indigenous people were better incorporated into Bahá'í community life and as Bahá'ís sought to preserve the most positive aspects of native cultures, local people took greater responsibility for their Bahá'í communities. Zimbabwe, for example, reported that one of the highlights of the Six Year Plan was the transformation of pioneer-dominated activities into collective efforts supported by local believers.

The increased number of native believers elected to institutions reflected this greater participation. At the end of the Plan the majority of the members of twenty-two Local Assemblies in Guatemala were indigenous people. The first indigenous Local Assembly in the Amazonas State in Brazil, composed of members of the Mura Tribe, was elected at Riḍván 1990. The number of native Senegalese on the National Assembly of that country reached eight in the last year of the Plan; as the number of pioneers decreased, the Senegalese have "taken over, in the administration as in the teaching, and in so doing, have developed a greater sense of belonging to the Faith". The Pygmies of the Central African Republic formed their first Local Assembly in 1987.

Another sign of maturation was the attention given to achieving greater equality between men and women within the Bahá'í community. Women's issues and the topic of equality were studied at numerous Baha'i schools, conferences, mini-courses and seminars, and entire conferences focusing on women were held in countries as diverse as Puerto Rico, Korea, Austria, Mauritius and Cape Verde.

Bahá'í groups were formed to provide support for women and to encourage communities to address the issue of equality. The Women's Association for Development of Peace and Unity in France consisted of ninety members in four regional groups and held deepenings at various Bahá'í gatherings. In Spain the National Committee for Women was created to provide articles, lectures and deepenings. A committee in the Eastern Caroline Islands, which was formed to foster equality, developed a participatory workshop on the topic.

Women from rural areas and indigenous tribes also exhibited greater participation in community life. In Costa Rica in 1992, three indigenous communities were represented by women at the National Convention for the first time. In India large numbers of women were reported to be taking responsibility for the affairs of the Faith in Rajasthan, and in November 1988 sixty-two Indian women from thirteen villages attended a deepening conference at the Malhousi Bahá'í Center in Uttar Pradesh, a reported "miracle" for women to leave their homes to share their views with others.

STRENGTHENING NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

Between 1986 and 1992, new National Spiritual Assemblies were formed or re-formed in Angola, the Congo Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Greenland, Macau, Niger, the West Leeward Islands, Zaire and throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The twelve National Assemblies formed at Riœván 1992 alone equalled the total number in the world of forty years ago.

Overall, National Assemblies functioned more effectively as secretariats improved; elections more closely reflected the Bahá'í idea; Assemblies delegated more tasks to strong committees or councils; and members generally developed greater understanding of their roles.

Record-keeping and organization of the administrative work of Assemblies improved with greater access to office technology. Membership records were computerized in numerous places, including Dominica, Taiwan, Sri Lanka, the Eastern Caroline Islands and Zimbabwe; and many secretariats throughout the Bahá'í world acquired word processors and fax machines to facilitate their correspondence work. In Canada comprehensive information on localities was entered into a database and a history of Local Assembly establishment was compiled.

The emphasis in some areas on educating convention delegates in the unique nature of Bahá'í elections, often carried out by the Counsellors, contributed to greater Assembly maturity and improved the quality of elections, so that they reflected an increasingly spiritual atmosphere. One recurring deepening program, which was developed in Hawaii for delegates, evolved into a national educational program on the electoral process.

Higher levels of cooperation and greater understanding of how to apply Bahá'í principles were reported by Assembly members. Kenya reported growth in planning, consultation and organization, stating "members are more committed, more loving, more vigorous, and they have been trying to play their rightful role as 'servants'." Togo's Assembly reported becoming more understanding of the importance of administering with justice the affairs and property of the Faith. The National Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands declared that its degree of growth "is reflected in the fundamental unity among its members, the increased reliance on the power of divine assistance in decision-making, and the constant attempt to make decisions based on principle and to arrive at consensus and unanimity..."

In several communications to National Assemblies, the Universal House of Justice recognized greater Assembly maturity by delegating more responsibility to these institutions. In 1986 Assemblies were urged to develop their own national archives, and in



The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of French Guiana, with two Auxiliary Board members, in April 1987.

1990 the House of Justice encouraged National Assemblies to begin selecting pioneers to be deputized and to match them with sponsors, thereby complementing the efforts of the International Deputization Fund.

Some National Assemblies, in turn, moved to decentralize their activities as their communities and workloads grew. Malaysia's first State Bahá'í Councils were established, and several of India's Councils, created in 1986, developed sufficiently to include their own secretariats, committees, Feast newsletters and journals. Encouraged by the Counsellors to appoint stronger committees, Hawaii held its first two-day National Committee Training Institute, focused on making committees into effective arms of the Assembly, with authority to act without further approval except in cases involving a principle, policy or major funding.

Collaboration Among Institutions

As Bahá'í institutions at all levels matured, greater efforts were made toward sharing ideas and encouraging collaboration in common goals among Local Assemblies, National Assemblies, and between the elected and appointed institutions.

At least twenty collaborative endeavors involving 105 Local Assemblies took place in Canada; forty-one Assemblies in Guyana participated in regional conferences in 1991; and Assemblies in the Netherlands worked together to provide deepenings and children's classes. In some cases Local Assembly collaboration was international: seventy believers from twenty-five localities in Belgium, France and the United Kingdom met in 1988 to consult on ways they could join efforts to better teach in their local communities.

Regional consultations among National Assemblies provided additional opportunities for exchange. In October 1990 the Continental Board of Counsellors in the Americas organized a meeting in Guatemala for seven Central American National Assemblies. Thirty-seven representatives of the twelve National Assemblies of the Eastern Caribbean met in Saint Lucia in 1987 to foster collaboration among the participating communities. That same year representatives of the Assemblies of Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan began what became annual joint meetings; they were joined by the new Assembly of Macau in 1990. Representatives of the Assemblies of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sikkim and Sri Lanka met in India in 1989. Several joint meetings and institutes have been held between the Assemblies of Thailand and Laos.

In Africa members from the National Spiritual Assemblies of Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi met with Counsellors in 1988 to



Participants in the National Convention of the Bahá'ís in Ciskei, April 1987.



Members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Jamaica at the International Convention in Haifa, Israel, 1988.



Counsellor Violette Haake (right) meeting with Auxiliary Board members in New Caledonia in November 1991.

discuss the goal of entry by troops on that continent. In Europe that year members of the National Assemblies of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland met in Belfast with some 150 Bahá'ís from both countries to consult on winning border-teaching goals. The Netherlands reported greater collaboration among the National Assemblies of Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom, including the regular exchange of teachers.

In June 1987 the Universal House of Justice assigned international collaboration goals to National Assemblies. National communities were encouraged to aid each other with teaching, contribute toward properties and needed equipment, share course materials and collaborate on literature translation projects. (See also "Increasing ... Bahá'í Literature", p. 157.)

In May 1986 the House of Justice announced an expansion of the Boards of Counsellors and the Auxiliary Boards, and throughout the Plan these institutions forged ever-stronger relationships with National and Local Assemblies. A few examples of efforts to increase consultation between Counsellors and Assemblies include joint regional and national conferences of the elected and appointed institutions held in Pakistan; annual meetings between the Assembly of Chad and its Auxiliary Board members; and annual weekend meetings with representatives of both institutions in Belgium. Several National Assemblies made observations similar to Hawaii's: "Trust and confidence between the institutions and the collaborative spirit of learning from each other, growing and working together have characterized the two arms of the administrative order...."

This spirit of cooperation manifested itself in gatherings of representatives of all the institutions. One conference held in Moscow in 1990 was sponsored by the National Assembly of Germany and attended by members of three Continental Boards of Counsellors and all Assemblies involved in teaching in the Soviet Union.

A national Six Year Plan conference in Canada brought together representatives from every institution, which then was followed by five meetings for large groupings of Local Assemblies and, finally, six smaller regional gatherings. Togo's National Assembly reported that a "big step forward in the process of maturity" took place when members of both institutions held two consecutive meetings to discuss divergent points of view on the best time in the teaching process to elect Local Assemblies. The frank consultation "brought the participants to turn to the directives and advice of the Guardian and of the Universal House of Justice. This effort... has released an energy which has spurred our efforts during the last three months of the Plan."



Participants in a conference for Auxiliary Board members' assistants held at Swakopmund, Namibia in July 1988.



Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre Magdalene Carney met NSAs of Senegal and Gambia, May 1990.

Communication and Dissemination of News

Bahá'í news and ideas continued to be shared among the believers primarily through publications and radio, but communication was enhanced by increasing access to television, fax and electronic mail. When the Office of Public Information at the Bahá'í World Centre announced the creation of a Bahá'í International Information Network to better coordinate efforts to proclaim the Cause and defend its interests, another step was taken toward increasing unity through improving communication among Bahá'ís.

Newsletters for assistants to Auxiliary Board members and regional bulletins published by Teaching Committees complemented national newsletters and Feast letters to form the backbone of information exchange. Bahá'í radio stations, which by the end of the Plan were broadcasting an average of thirteen hours per day each, seven days a week, year-round, also served to unite believers in their listening areas. Particularly in Africa, radio was used to announce Feasts, Holy Days and teaching campaign events; in India national public radio was available for announcements. Radio has served as a primary vehicle for communication in rural areas of South America, where a considerable amount of programming is done in native languages such as Guaymi, Quechua, Mapuche and Aymara.

Advanced technology—including fax machines, conference calls and electronic mail—enabled a worldwide network of Bahá'í communication to be established. Electronic bulletin boards such as "Newswire" in the United States, and international and national computer networks such as "bahai-net," allowed individual believers in far-flung locations to exchange ideas and make contacts. The regular use of satellites to link believers in the Cook Islands, Hawaii, Western and American Samoa and the United States, beginning in 1986, foreshadowed a time when satellites would connect the whole Bahá'í world.

In 1990 the Media Services Department of the United States National Center began regularly producing *Bahá'í Newsreel,* a videotape highlighting Bahá'í events around the world. Six editions of the newsreel were produced and sent to almost all National Spiritual Assemblies during the Plan. In the final year, tapes also became available in Spanish and French.

The importance of face-to-face communication was not lost in the midst of the new possibilities opened up by technology. The United States initiated two programs to foster greater unity among members of its geographically widespread community: the "Weekend Visits Program," begun in 1989, brought groups of fifteen to thirty Bahá'ís to the National Center to exchange thoughts

and concerns with the National Assembly; the "Town Meetings Program" begun in 1990 and planned by the Treasurer's Office and members of the Auxiliary Boards, "fostered increasingly open and frank discussion with the community and has provided... vital information about many aspects of the community's life."

In Taiwan the National Assembly and national committees held meetings around the country to help members meet as many individual believers as possible. In Zimbabwe the Regional Teaching Committee system created a communication network using traveling teachers to deliver news and messages.

Higher Levels of Consultation

A sign of growing maturity in Bahá'í communities was the importance given to better practicing the art of consultation. The believers developed materials, organized classes and seminars, and began Assembly meetings with deepenings on this fine art.

Among the materials created and distributed were Brazil's *Bahá'í Consultation* and *Consult to Decide Better*; audio-visual aids and a booklet were produced and disseminated in Bangladesh; a complete course was prepared in Madagascar; and a document was written for presentations during Bahá'í harmattan schools in Togo.

Consultation was often studied in conferences, institutes and summer schools in many countries. India organized an annual conference on it, and workshops were held in Botswana, Burkina Faso, Denmark, El Salvador, Luxembourg and Spain.

The practice of consultation formed a major portion of several courses. During a nine-day workshop in Australia, Bahá'ís from three Aboriginal Reserves elected a mock Assembly and practiced consulting on hypothetical issues; an Auxiliary Board member joined the process, thereby helping participants to gain insight into the role of that institution. At a conference in the Western Caroline Islands sponsored by a Regional Teaching Committee, participants formed "families" for a demonstration of consultation in this context; the groups discussed the rights and responsibilities of each family member, family discipline and the elimination of prejudice.

National Assemblies in Bolivia, Guyana, Mali and Norway reported reserving time during their meetings for regular study of passages in the Bahá'í Writings on consultation.

Support of the Fund

The health of the Bahá'í Fund is yet another indicator of the community's developing maturity. Although there is no way to measure the spirit of sacrifice and sense of duty behind voluntary contributions, efforts by local believers to take more responsibility for the needs of national and international funds indicate spiritual growth.

In 1989 Landegg Academy held its first study course on "Effective Fund Management for the Development of the Faith," which illustrated the importance of fostering a spiritual basis for donations.

In the United States the "Local Assembly Goals Program for the National Fund" was launched in October 1990. Based on factors such as locality size and past record of donations, the National Assembly made specific recommendations to a number of Local Assemblies which reflected the level of sacrifice felt to be within the local community's power.

In Canada the Local Assembly of West Vancouver, British Columbia, initiated what became a national program to contribute in specified units toward elimination of the 1990–91 National Fund deficit.

The number of regular contributors to the National Fund of Thailand increased fourteenfold after the national treasurer began making personal visits to communities and sessions on the Fund were included in nearly all schools and conferences.

Local communities in several countries regularly supported their National Funds by planting crops to sell just for this purpose.



The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum opening the local Bahá'í Center in Sheung Shui, Hong Kong, in November 1990.

Right: Counsellor Lucretia Warren with members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Mozambique in front of their newly acquired National Bahá'í Center, 1989.





Above: The new National Office of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Kiribati which was dedicated in 1989.



Right: Friends gathered at the Bahá'í Center in Ndava, Burundi, for the inauguration held 22 October 1989.

Fruit grown on the national endowment property at Farmers, St. Thomas Parish, Barbados, was used to make jam to sell for the Fund. The Local Assembly of Nyiakungu, Kenya, grew and sold tomatoes to become the first Assembly to meet its contribution goal for the National Fund. The Local Assembly of Tshilaka, Zaire, harvested crops of coffee, corn, manioc, beans and peanuts to benefit the Fund. Believers in Danane, Côte d'Ivoire, cultivated rice for three consecutive years to support their Local Fund.

BAHÁ'Í PROPERTIES

As the Bahá'í community expanded, a greater number of localities were able to build, purchase or rent local, regional and national Bahá'í centers. Efforts were also made to renovate existing properties, encouraged by the message from the House of Justice in October 1990 outlining standards for maintaining Bahá'í properties.

New national centers were acquired in Ciskei, Macau, Mozambique, Romania and Saint Lucia. In Botswana, Project "Buy a Brick" was initiated in 1988 to accelerate contributions for the new center. The greatest number of new regional centers were acquired in African countries such as Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe. More than 200 local centers were opened throughout the world.

Two of the most significant achievements in this area were the construction of the Mother Temple of the Indian subcontinent, which was dedicated to public worship in December 1986 (see pp. 731–740), and the opening of the De Poort Conference Centre in the Netherlands in June 1987. De Poort, which means "the gate," is owned and operated by the Dutch Bahá'í community and hosts gatherings sponsored by members of the European Bahá'í community and various other organizations.

Renovation of a number of Bahá'í properties also took place, the most extensive being the refurbishment of the Houses of Worship in Kampala, Uganda, and in Wilmette, U.S.A.

LEGAL RECOGNITION OF BAHÁ'Í INSTITUTIONS

The Universal House of Justice was able to call for the re-formation of the National Assemblies of the Congo Republic and Niger at Riḍván 1992 after the Faith had been legally recognized by the authorities in both countries. These significant events were part of a trend toward governments' officially recognizing the Faith's independence. This facilitated the incorporation of its Assemblies, and acceptance of the legality of Bahá'í marriage and absences of Bahá'í students from public schools on Holy Days.

A milestone in legal recognition of the Faith occurred in Germany in February 1991 when the Federal Constitutional Court, the highest legal authority in the country, affirmed the legality of Assembly bylaws, upholding the constitutional appeal made by the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tübingen after a series of lower courts had refused incorporation. The lower courts had based their decision on the grounds that the authority granted to the National Assembly in the bylaws of the Local Assembly violated the legal principle requiring all legally incorporated associations to be autonomous. In a decision with far-reaching implications, the Federal Court affirmed the right of the Bahá'ís to organize as a hierarchically structured legal community according to the revealed Law of God. Because the decision was based partially on the constitutional right to freedom of religious practice, the Court declared its recognition of the Faith as an independent religion, stating, "the character of the Bahá'í Faith as a religion and the Bahá'í Community as a religious community is evident, in actual everyday life, cultural tradition, and in the understanding of the general public as well as of the science of comparative religion." The Court even took the rare step of issuing a statement to the press explaining its decision.

In June 1988, the Legislative Council of Hong Kong passed an ordinance giving the Bahá'í Assembly a new status which may

well afford the Faith further legal protection in the years beyond 1997 when Hong Kong becomes a part of the People's Republic of China. The National Assembly of Saint Lucia was also incorporated, and the Ciskei Assembly's constitution was approved by its Government.

Government documents acknowledging the Faith were used in India, where the Director of the Census instructed all enumerators to record the Bahá'í Faith as an independent religion and list the believers properly. In Turkey, some fifty believers were able to change the religion section of their birth certificates from "Islam" to "Bahá'í." In Austria, Bahá'í credentials became accepted as valid documents for obtaining visas, and, in Saint Lucia, Bahá'í registration of births and deaths was recognized.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands was issued mailboxes in the State Senate and the House of Representatives to receive copies of all bills before the legislature. Bahá'í institutions received tax exemptions in Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, New Caledonia and Loyalty Islands, and Uruguay.

Advances were made in recognition of Bahá'í marriage. The Nigerian government permitted Bahá'í institutions to issue government marriage certificates; five additional Local Assemblies in Uganda were authorized to conduct legally valid marriage ceremonies; Bahá'í marriages were recognized for the first time in an additional nine National Assembly areas; and Bahá'í marriage officers were appointed in Grenada, Guyana, Pakistan, Saint Lucia and Transkei.

Progress was also made toward excusing more students and teachers from schools on Bahá'í Holy Days. In Ecuador permission was granted for the Raúl Pavón School to close on Holy Days. In Uganda the Education Department of Mbale granted students exemption from classes on the nine Holy Days, the first instance of Holy Day recognition since the 1979 ban on the Faith was lifted. Chicago's Board of Education in the United States, the Superintendent of Education for the Northern Mariana Islands, Germany's Bavarian State Ministry for Education and Culture, and the Cantonal authorities in Bern, Switzerland, all gave permission for Bahá'ís to be absent on Holy Days. In Zimbabwe the Holy Days are listed on government calendars. Authorities in three counties of the Republic of Ireland have granted a holiday to all pupils for the Birthday of Bahá'u'lláh.

e. Promoting Universal Participation and the Spiritual Enrichment of Individual Believers

In its Riḍván message of 1988, the Universal House of Justice wrote:

> ...it is on the initiative, the resolute will of the individual to teach and to serve, that the success of the entire community depends.... The ultimate triumph of the Cause is assured by that 'one thing and only one thing' so poignantly emphasized by Shoghi Effendi, namely, 'the extent to which our own inner life and private character mirror forth in their manifold aspects the splendor of the eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh'.

Universal Participation

Bahá'í institutions nurtured believers toward higher levels of participation in community life and service to the Cause by using educational methods that reached the widest possible Bahá'í audience, and by relating the Teachings to the particular backgrounds of the individuals in the community.

A wide Bahá'í audience was reached through ongoing study guides published in national newsletters, such as the course on the Kitáb-i-Íqán that ran in the October and November 1989 issues of *The American Bahá'í* and was reproduced by the National Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands and mailed to all believers through Local Assemblies. In addition, a study guide on the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf was published

in the February, March and April 1991 issues. Other methods used to reach believers included an experimental program in India offering instruction through television, and increased use in Brazil of riverboats to carry Bahá'ís along the Amazon River and its tributaries, providing deepening from village to village.

Correspondence courses were used to reach believers who might not otherwise have access to regular deepenings or be able to attend Bahá'í schools. During the Plan courses were developed in places such as Canada, El Salvador, Bangladesh, Thailand, Burkina Faso and Tanzania, and previously published lessons continued to be distributed in Saint Lucia, India, Botswana, Chad and Malawi. In Belize, Brazil and Bangladesh, all of which experienced the challenges of consolidation following large-scale enrollments, at least one correspondence course was sent to each new believer. Zimbabwe reported that 4,500 believers participated in correspondence courses. Courses specifically for children were published in Taiwan and Malaysia.

New believers were helped to establish the foundations of their Bahá'í identities in a variety of ways, the most common being the sending of Bahá'í books, compilations of the Writings, or correspondence courses with welcome cards. In Guyana a "National Deepening Program" for new believers was launched in 1992, in which 1,000 have participated. In the Netherlands all new believers were invited to the National Center to meet the National Assembly and study the administration, and to a special weekend of study at De Poort Conference Centre. The National Assembly of Burundi regularly reserved one day of its program of classes for new Bahá'ís to ask questions. The National Assembly of Rwanda regularly corresponded with new believers, sending news, deepening courses and selections from the Holy Writings. In Puerto Rico several regional conferences for new believers were held.

Particular efforts were made to help believers integrate their ethnic identities and their Bahá'í identities, particularly for indigenous people entering the Faith. In New Zealand a "Whare Wananga" (School of Learning) was established in June 1987 to provide twice-yearly intensive courses for the Maori Bahá'ís on the teachings and history of the Faith and the relationship between Maori culture and the teachings. Also in New Zealand 107 Maori Bahá'í women, including National Assembly and National Teaching Committee members, held their first National Women's "Hui", or traditional gathering, in February 1987. In May of that year the National Convention of New Zealand was held for the first time at a "marae" (traditional Maori meeting place). The message from the Convention to the World Centre said the decision to hold the convention at a "marae" tapped the spiritual reservoir of the indigenous culture.

In the United States in August 1988, Native American men and women representing fifty tribes gathered under a giant tent surrounded by teepees near the sacred burial site of Chief Sitting Bull at Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota to attend the Bahá'í-sponsored "Fifth Continental Indigenous Council". Written pledges to serve the Cause and carry the Faith to Africa, Europe and South America were received by the National Assembly on the last night of the Council. In July 1989 Bahá'ís from eight countries joined seven Counsellors for a conference in Bolivia on the development of the Faith among the indigenous peoples of Latin America. Deepening conferences and training programs specifically for the Lunda people of Zambia also resulted in offers to travel to teach and homefront pioneer. In Saint Lucia assistance was provided for indigenous believers to take part in overseas conferences and teaching projects.

Zimbabwe provides another example of success in encouraging the participation of native believers. The majority of Regional Teaching Committee members were local

Bahá'ís, ninety percent of Convention delegates were indigenous, deepening institute teachers were indigenous and classes were conducted in vernacular languages.

Strengthening the Bahá'í identities of new believers was particularly crucial in areas where mass enrollment had occurred. The method used by resident teaching teams in Guyana of immediately revisiting new believers, providing deepening, and involving them in the teaching work right away, spread to other countries experiencing entry by troops. For example, a 1988 teaching project in Bolivia began with a two-day spiritualization and training course at the Firdawsi Institute in Caracollo, resulted in the enrollment of more than 1,000 new souls and ended with deepening courses designed to maintain the momentum of expansion and consolidation.

Individual Spiritual Enrichment

Regular deepenings sponsored by Bahá'í institutions or initiated by individual believers, and annual summer, winter and spring schools held regionally or nationally continued to provide consistent opportunities for the Bahá'ís to develop their understanding of the Teachings and to experience the spiritual unity of these gatherings. The focus of study shifted more and more to the Life of Bahá'u'lláh as the Holy Year approached. In Alaska all believers were sent a copy of the Statement on Bahá'u'lláh.

The Assembly of Thailand reported greater enthusiasm and participation in Bahá'í summer and winter schools when the programs were changed from lecture format to interactive learning.

The word "institute" was used to designate a variety of Bahá'í educational entities, from comprehensive consolidation and spiritual enrichment programs, to permanent facilities offering regular courses, to one-time weekend workshops.

One example of a comprehensive program was Hawaii's Spiritualization Campaign, which focused the entire community on the basics of Bahá'í life by producing two compilations, *Prayer and Meditation* and *Shining Examples*, and then launching a National Teaching Committee plan, printed in booklet form, called *Spiritualization in Action*. Meetings on each island conducted by National Assembly members began in November 1991. The Spiritual Enrichment Committee produced a series of leaflets on the requisites for spiritual growth to be used to stimulate consultation during Nineteen Day Feasts.

Material promoting reflection on spiritual principles was also provided to national communities by the Universal House of Justice. A compilation on trustworthiness prepared by the Research Department of the Bahá'í World Centre was sent to all National Assemblies in January 1987, and extracts from the Writings concerning the sanctity of Bahá'í marriage, together with a statement on preserving Bahá'í marriages, were sent in December 1990.

Literacy

In its Riḍván 1989 message the Universal House of Justice stated that "further systematic attention needs to be given to the eventual elimination of illiteracy from the Bahá'í community, an accomplishment which would, beyond anything else, make the Holy Word accessible to all the friends and thus reinforce their efforts to live the Bahá'í life."

The importance of such a campaign was again emphasized when the House of Justice wrote a letter to all National Assemblies on 10 July 1989, calling on each to address itself to this objective. "Access to [the Holy Word]," the letter read, "constant study of it and daily use of it in our individual lives are vital to the inner personal transformation towards which we strive and whose ultimate outer manifestation will be the emergence of that divine civilization which is the promise of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh."

Bahá'ís responded to this call in various ways, participating in commemorations of the United Nations International Literacy

Year in 1990, joining local adult literacy programs and creating their own programs.

BAHÁ'Í SCHOLARSHIP

Notable advances were made in the development of Bahá'í scholarship during the course of the Plan, such that an increasing number of believers were engaged in analyzing the problems of humanity and demonstrating the efficacy of the Bahá'í teachings in solving these problems.

The process of relating the Teachings to the current issues of concern to the people of the world was fostered by the activities of the Associations for Bahá'í Studies which are to be found now in every continental area, and which attract a growing number of people, both Bahá'ís and others, to their periodic meetings on such topics as racial unity, the equality of men and women, the development of world order, and the spiritual foundations of social development. (See also pp. 461–470)

A significant role is played by the Association for Bahá'í Studies in North America, which has published proceedings of some of its conferences in books such as *Unity: The Creative Foundation of Peace; Racial Unity: An Imperative for Social Progress; The Bahá'í Faith and Islam*; and *The Bahá'í Faith and Marxism*..

The inauguration in 1988 of *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies*, a quarterly, trilingual journal that publishes articles by scholars of the Bahá'í Writings, created a forum open to all researchers.

Several Bahá'ís participated in a scientific conference organized by the International Society for General Systems Research in Budapest, Hungary, in 1987. Dr. Ervin Laszlo, a renowned scientist and member of the Club of Rome, had encouraged the Bahá'ís to participate and requested that a paper on the Faith be presented. *The Bahá'í Community as a Model for Social Change*, which described the society-building processes of the Bahá'í community and the operation of the Administrative Order using the language and concepts of general evolution and systems theories, was very well received. Contact with this society, later renamed the International Society for the Systems Sciences, was maintained through the presentation of papers with Bahá'í content at each of its annual meetings. (See also "General Systems...", pp. 459–460)

In 1988 Switzerland's Landegg Conference Center, a venue used for conferences, seminars and summer schools since being acquired by Bahá'ís in 1983, became the home of Landegg Academy which offers seminars, symposia, conferences and forums for Bahá'ís, such as a conference for young professionals on "Reaching People of Capacity," and for the wider academic community, such as symposia on conflict resolution and the global environmental crisis. In September 1990 the historic first "International Dialogue on the Transition to a Global Society," organized by Landegg in cooperation with the Vienna Academy for the Study of the Future and the University of Maryland, brought together eighty leaders of thought from around the world to present papers and discuss the changing world order.

In August 1989 Landegg launched the "Certificate Programme in Bahá'í Studies." Designed to foster systematic Bahá'í scholarship as called for by Shoghi Effendi, the three-year independent study course requires participants to spend the month of August each year at Landegg and to submit a number of papers throughout the rest of the year. The program began with twenty-eight students from eleven countries.

The establishment of Bahá'í Chairs at universities in the United States and India also marked a significant step in the development of Bahá'í scholarship.

f. Bahá'í Education of Children and Youth and Bahá'í Family Life

The education of children and youth and the nurturing of Bahá'í families have been important components of several recent Plans. However, the efforts required to open new areas to the Faith and to consolidate new communities often meant that few resources were available for this crucial concern. During the Six Year Plan the institutions of the Faith, encouraged by the Counsellors, gave fresh attention to the needs of children and youth. As the Plan drew to a close the training of children's teachers and the development of children's materials were progressing with increased vigor and resolve, often as a major activity of the growing number of permanent teaching institutes.

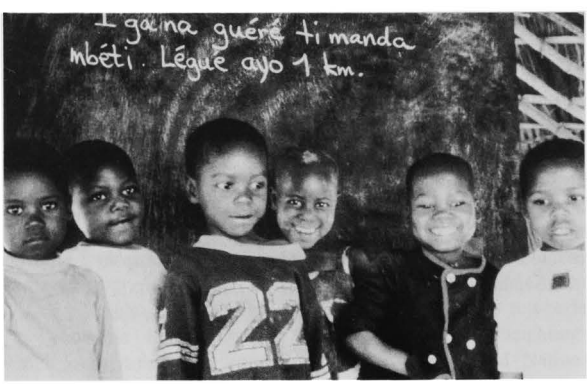
Renewed focus on the importance of educating children, youth and families, and greater understanding of the requirements for building successful programs, were major achievements of the Plan in this area.

BAHÁ'Í CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

A December 1988 letter from the International Teaching Centre to all Continental Counsellors shared a vision of the children of the world as teachers of their own generation, and as agents for the deepening of others, placing particular emphasis on children aged ten to sixteen. The Counsellors had seen how in communities where strong traditions of child education had been established ten or twenty years earlier, previously weak Local Assemblies were beginning to function and new generations of stalwart believers were arising.

Following this letter and others in a similar vein, the idea of placing emphasis on children and youth increasingly became the focus of the believers' thinking, consultation and planning. In Africa, Latin America and Asia, as a result of large-scale enrollments among the masses, many Bahá'í communities were particularly obliged to take a new look at the challenges of child education. In Colombia, beginning in 1990, traditional campaigns of expansion and consolidation were altered to pay greater attention to children and junior youth and, through them, to their parents. In the Caribbean also, it was found that where organized children's classes occurred, they provided the greatest access to the people. In many villages of the world it was not only Bahá'í children but also children and junior youth in the general population who showed an ardent desire to receive Bahá'í education. As the Plan drew to a close, more communities were incorporating the establishment of children's classes into their plans of action for large-scale expansion.

Teachers of children's classes were trained during a number of seminars organized by national and local Bahá'í institutions and by



Children in a Bahá'í tutorial school in Ngoakiri II, in the Central African Republic, 1987.

permanent institutes. The International Teaching Centre, in a letter to all Counsellors in November 1992, foresaw the Six Year Plan setting the stage for the coming Three Year Plan, and stated that "the rapid multiplication of programs for the training of children's class teachers represents one of the most promising developments of institutes around the world".

The Ruhi Institute in Colombia continued to train youth as facilitators capable of stimulating other youth to educate themselves in order to become effective Bahá'í teachers for the children in their communities. Ruhi materials are designed to help the believers learn to study the Sacred Writings on their own and to apply them in their daily lives, thus spurring them on to higher and higher levels of service to the Cause. The materials were also used in other Latin American countries, several African nations and in India. The National Assembly of India published one of the Ruhi Institute manuals in Hindi, and in June 1991 held an intensive course to prepare over forty individuals as trainers of children's class teachers. This effort formed part of a program to train hundreds of teachers in the Hindi-speaking states.

The New Era Development Institute in India and Nur University in Bolivia also prepared material for training teachers.

Special activities to complement classes added to the positive Bahá'í experiences of children. Nicaragua's first National Children's Conference was held in Managua in 1990, with more than forty children from six communities participating in deepenings, singing, games and the breaking of a traditional "piñata" filled with gifts. Two children's conferences were held in Japan in the last year of the Plan. The first "Children's Unity Camp" was organized in Malaysia.

CURRICULA AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Efforts to create materials for use in children's classes were carried out in a number of countries. The Children's Education Task Force in Australia developed a complete curriculum of Bahá'í studies for children up to age fifteen and worked to fulfill its National Assembly's international collaboration goal to produce and exchange materials with other National Assemblies in the Pacific. The School of the Nations in Brazil and the Maxwell International School in Canada each began long-range projects of rewriting the curricula of their academic courses to reflect a spiritual approach to the subjects and to provide appropriate ethical content. Curricular materials for Bahá'í children's classes were developed in many communities, including Canada, Fiji, France, Gabon, Kenya, Norway, Singapore, Thailand and the United States.

A number of National Assemblies and Bahá'í educational institutions developed



A Bahá'í children's class in Florida, southern Uruguay, poses for a happy photograph, November 1988.



A Bahá'í tutorial school in Chaco, Paraguay, in March 1989.

curricula for teaching comparative religion and the Bahá'í Faith in public schools. A particular milestone was the approval of a Bahá'í curriculum for public schools in the states of New South Wales and Queensland, in Australia. The Chilean Ministry of Education approved the inclusion of study programs about the Faith in the general high school curriculum, and the National Assembly prepared teachers for this task. Courses on religion and moral education prepared by Bahá'ís were used in Brazilian public schools, and efforts were made to introduce courses on the Faith in the educational systems of Bolivia, Cameroon and Spain.

Near the end of the Plan, Malawi's Regional Education Officer in the Southern Region accepted a plan for Bahá'ís to present the history and moral teachings of the Faith in secondary schools. Also, a curriculum on the Faith developed by the National Assemblies of Jamaica and of Trinidad and Tobago was submitted to the Caribbean Examinations Council for use in the English-speaking Caribbean islands.

Publications for children also helped to involve children in the rhythm of Bahá'í community life. A one-page lesson in every Feast letter in Zimbabwe was said to be instrumental in establishing children's classes in rural areas; a separate Feast letter for children was distributed in Brazil; and in Puerto Rico a page of the national newsletter was reserved for children. Chile published children's letters and artwork in a quarterly bulletin called *Capullitos,* and a publication for children called *Light of the Lotus* was produced in the Canary Islands.

YOUTH

Throughout the Plan the Bahá'í education of youth took a variety of forms, including national and international youth conferences (often organized largely by the youth themselves), deepening retreats, youth camps and week-long study institutes. For example, in the United States an international youth conference organized in 1988 attracted some 8,000 participants. Youth schools, youth symposia and forums for young professionals, held at Landegg Academy in Switzerland, among other places, provided opportunities for intensive study and international exchange.

Education programs that focused on preparing youth for the teaching field proved particularly successful. In the summer of 1991, following several intensive teacher training courses for youth that were sponsored by the National Teaching Committee in the United States and included field experience, some sixty full-time teaching teams arose. Some of the youth became so excited by their experiences that they decided to postpone their studies for one year to continue teaching full-time.

ASSISTING PARENTS

Parental guidance is central to the education of Bahá'í youth and children, and a number of programs were devised to help parents prepare for their vital role. Efforts were made to assist African mothers who wished to supplement their education so that they would be better prepared to educate their children; the African women Counsellors in particular saw this as a worthy mission and undertook extensive travels to further this aim. The Bahá'í Programme for Mothers, an expanding series of booklets published by the National Spiritual Assembly of Kenya, provided guidance on raising healthy children, teaching good character and creating a spiritual home environment. Translated into almost forty languages, the booklets are widely used by parents throughout Africa, and in 1987 a set was sent by the House of Justice to all National Assemblies.

The Bahá'í Education Network Committee in Canada collaborated with various Local Assemblies to sponsor more than thirty workshops on helping parents teach values and virtues to children. The workshops were attended by over 1,000 people, half of whom were not Bahá'ís. In Costa Rica a conference devoted to family consultation and parent-child relations was well attended.

In July 1986 classes for women in Pakistan on the basics of health care, hygiene and the feeding of infants, attended by fifty women and fifty children needing medical treatment, were commended by the government. In Papua New Guinea a National Women's Conference in October 1987 covered the training of children.

The Bahá'í Mothers' Deepening Project of the Bahá'í National Teaching Committee of the Philippines was designed to give Filipina Bahá'í mothers and future mothers guidance on the care, education and training of children; on maintaining a Bahá'í atmosphere in their homes; and on cultivating rapport with their husbands and families. The intensive project began in February 1988 with the holding of twenty-one Mothers' Deepening Classes in different parts of the country, and culminated in seven large Family Life Conferences in March and April 1988. A meeting to explore the principle of the equality of women and men was held in Côte d'Ivoire in October 1990, in which the Bahá'ís were joined by a dozen other concerned parties to discuss the role of women as the first educators of their children, the importance of mutual support and common goals among women, and ways to enhance understanding between mothers and daughters.

BAHÁ'Í MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

Various efforts were made throughout the world to develop programs to foster wholesome Bahá'í family life, including deepenings, conferences and special classes at summer



The wedding of two Bahá'í couples at the Lenakel Bahá'í Centre on Tanna Island in Vanuatu. January 1987.

and winter schools. Bahá'í families were encouraged to become fully involved in practicing the basic teachings of the Faith, with emphasis on prayer, maintenance of a loving and humble attitude toward others, reading of the Writings, upholding family unity through consultation and encouraging teaching of the Cause.

A conference was held in Cameroon in June 1986 to discuss the development of women, marriage, family life and child education. Also in Cameroon, mothers and fathers were invited to participate in regional conferences on family life held periodically during the Plan; topics discussed included chastity, consultation in the family, the role of fathers, discipline without physical punishment, and the effects on children of parents' words and deeds.

The Bahá'ís of San Juan, Puerto Rico, sponsored weekly talks on "Marriage as a Fortress for Well-Being". The talks, presented by a Bahá'í psychiatrist under the auspices of the Auxiliary Board, attracted media attention which led to five radio stations' broadcasting weekly announcements about the project, and one popular station's airing two-hour "call-in" shows for several months on topics related to healthy marriage.

Elsewhere around the world, a prominent Bahá'í psychiatrist conducted a one-week seminar on marriage at the Landegg Academy in Switzerland in 1986, which participants reported was practical, scholarly and creative. In September 1987 the National Bahá'í Women's Committee of Zaire held a Regional Women's Conference in Kinshasa, Zaire, on marriage, family life and the education of children. A traveling teacher visited Singapore in August 1989 and conducted a workshop on "Marriage and Family Life", which focused on setting life goals, defining one's personality, determining what one has to offer the Faith, and examining one's expectations from a partner. A traveling teacher in Lesotho conducted a three-day International Deepening Institute on Marriage and Family Life; the issues provoked intense interest among the participants, and invitations to address the public followed. A National Women's Conference, held at the Nakuru Bahá'í Center, Kenya, in February 1990, focused on the spiritual, intellectual and material well-being of the Bahá'í family; the National Women's Committee arranged television publicity and invited women representatives of the Government of Kenya to take part. The Bahá'í youth of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands joined other island youth to form a discussion group on Bahá'í marriage in July 1990. The State Bahá'í Council of Andhra Pradesh in India held a "Bahá'í Family Conference" in November 1990.

In addition to studying the topic of family life, communities worked to create Bahá'í activities for families to enjoy together. Every year the House of Worship in Sydney, Australia, hosted a Children's Day celebration in which families participated in readings, prayers and festivities. In Liberia a 400-acre farm owned by the National Assembly was used early in the Plan as a center for the education of families. In Belize a nineteen-day program of readings and activities for families was distributed. The Assembly of Sri Lanka reported that its efforts to hold family conferences and deepenings and to arrange individual visits to homes resulted in an increase in the number of identifiable Bahá'í families.

Families were the focus of teaching efforts in one city of El Salvador. A Local Spiritual Assembly chose a middle-class neighborhood where a Bahá'í family lived in which to proclaim the Faith during March 1990. Of the 355 families visited by members of the Bahá'í community, almost all accepted literature, and follow-up visits were made to thirty-six families. About fifty people from the neighborhood attended at least one evening event. By the end of four weeks ten people had embraced the Faith and there continued to be interest among people in at least ninety households. Classes in morality and virtues were established and offered to the children in the neighborhood.

g. Pursuing Social and Economic Development Activities in Well-Established Bahá'í Communities

The dramatic worldwide expansion of Bahá'í social and economic development activities since the October 1983 message by the Universal House of Justice contributed in no small measure to the emergence of the Bahá'í community from obscurity and constitutes one of the distinguishing characteristics of the development of the Cause of God in the past decade. The virtually exponential expansion achieved in the number of development activities during the Seven Year Plan (1979–1986) became more gradual during the Six Year Plan as Bahá'í communities strengthened existing programs to ensure that new ventures proceeded from a strong foundation. Bahá'ís worldwide now generally possess a much clearer understanding of the unique Bahá'í approach to development and have gained invaluable experience in developing the art of applying spiritual concepts to the practical challenges of daily life. At the conclusion of the Plan a reported 1,344 Bahá'í development endeavors were functioning throughout the world under the jurisdiction of 137 National Spiritual Assemblies. (See Appendix.)



In Guam, 18 children from the Inarajan Bahá'í School planted 600 acacia seedlings on 21 October 1990. A statement of appreciation was issued by the Forestry Division of Guam's Department of Agriculture.

Bahá'í programs established a reputation for honest management and altruistic service. Collaboration with other organizations gained momentum as support was received from organizations such as UNICEF, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and governments as widespread as Canada, India and Norway. Bahá'í institutions began to be identified as important contributors to international development, while the Bahá'í administrative network was seen as a potent force for coordinating development activities within a global framework. Many communities developed their consultative skills in order to more effectively identify feasible projects, formulate the necessary plans, and guide the resulting undertakings. The wisdom of starting small and ensuring that initial activities could be carried out successfully with local resources became increasingly evident. Assemblies became more adept at recognizing whether and how proposed development projects would contribute to the strengthening of the community. Many communities, especially those with permanent programs, began taking steps to ensure that effective development activities would continue even if external sources of support were to be withdrawn. To an ever greater degree, National Spiritual Assemblies recognized the importance of increasing the local communities' awareness of needs and possibilities, and of guiding and coordinating the efforts resulting from such awareness. Administrative capabilities

grew and Bahá'í institutions continued the process of building the organizational infrastructure needed to guide and nurture more complex programs. The diversity of Bahá'í development undertakings also increased dramatically. A high proportion of these ventures, especially in basic education and vocational training, targeted women and youth.

Effective models for stimulating self-sustaining community development were formulated and refined during the Six Year Plan and, as Bahá'í communities throughout the world began to address their development concerns, a remarkably diverse pattern of activities emerged. From modest cooperative agricultural projects which raise funds for construction of a local Bahá'í center, to community health education programs which increase the prevention of endemic diseases; from tree-planting efforts to training seminars which combat racism; from programs which offer succor to orphaned children to those which confront the problems of drug abuse; Bahá'í communities discovered myriad ways to express their faith through service to humanity. New training programs for teachers of Bahá'í children's classes emerged, based on an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the learning needs of prospective teachers who generally possessed limited educational backgrounds and teaching experience. Bahá'í educators began rewriting traditional academic curricula to reflect the spiritual perspective of the teachings. They also developed curricula for public schools, for adult literacy programs, and for courses on the Faith or on human values. All these notable areas of progress either emerged or became more evident during the Six Year Plan, and are described in more detail below.

AGRICULTURE

Small-scale agricultural activities, including training courses for the improvement of farming practices and productivity, were carried out by a number of Bahá'í communities in developing countries. In some cases the objective was to supplement or improve the nutritional value of the local diet, while in other instances the friends contributed their labor to cultivate a communal field to raise money for a useful purpose, such as the Bahá'í Fund, a Bahá'í center or a tutorial school. For some communities agricultural self-sufficiency was the goal.

A highly successful fish culture program was implemented by the Bahá'ís of Enteban Ulu in Malaysia. The seven fish ponds produced enough fish to meet the needs of the entire village of two hundred people.

The Community Development Program of the Rabbani School, Gwalior, India, achieved notable success with its model farm. The farm enabled this residential school to become almost self-sufficient in food production, while providing a real-world laboratory for the students to learn practical agricultural skills, and setting an outstanding example for area farmers. Technical assistance was offered to local agriculturists who wanted to introduce ecologically sound farming practices.

In Queensland, Australia, forty acres of bushland were donated by a Bahá'í family to be used by Aboriginal people for growing bananas and other crops. It was dedicated in a ceremony attended by many Aborigines as well as the Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone.

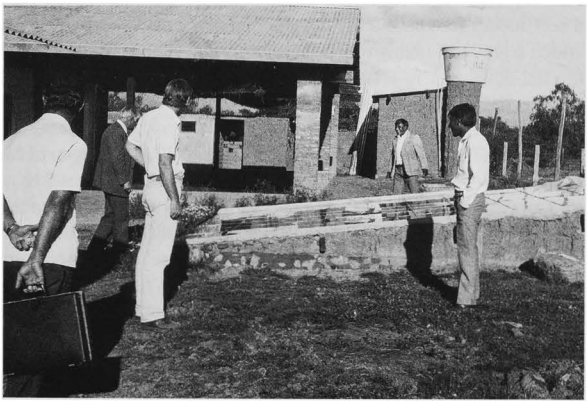
INTEGRATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Certain Bahá'í development programs have been conceived and designed with a conscious understanding that all social and spiritual needs are interrelated. This requires that social and spiritual change go hand in hand, progressing from simple to more complex undertakings. Activities of the Bayanda Project in Zaire and the New Era Development Institute in India are examples of this approach.

From the first contact of the Bayanda people (the Pygmies of northeastern Zaire) with the Faith, they received assistance and encouragement from the Bahá'í community.



An experimental pepper farm is a Bahá'í economic development project in Sarawak, Malaysia. 1988.



In Bolivia, Bahá'ís use the Dorothy Baker Center for Environmental Studies. 1987.



In Switzerland, Bahá'ís participate in the annual clean-up of the marshland formed where the Rhone River flows into Lake Geneva. March 1992.

During the Plan agricultural activities enabled the Bayanda to improve their diet and to become relatively self-sufficient; classes were held for the children; many adults learned to read and write: and health education programs improved nutrition, sanitation and hygiene. The Bayanda developed greater confidence and a new vision for their future thus enabling them to interact more successfully with the wider community.

The Community Development Facilitator Program of India's New Era Development Institute trained young people to stimulate and assist local communities to embark on the path of self-sustaining development. During the closing months of the Plan institute staff reported major success in implementing a new model for community development in which a group of highly unified trainees with modest development-related skills spent four or five days in a village and conducted a training institute for the local youth. The program included moral education classes, community service activities and training in a practical skill which could be learned quickly. The unity and spirit of service exemplified by the group of visitors, who would share in the life of the village for a relatively extended period of time, combined with integrated spiritual education and valued community service, had a profound impact. In one instance the entire village enrolled in the Faith and appeared ready to introduce important changes in the organization of village life based on their growing understanding of the Bahá'í teachings.

CONSERVATION/ENVIRONMENT

Creation reflects the names and attributes of God, and mankind has a profound responsibility to protect the natural environment and preserve its ecological balance. Thus, in its 1989 Riḍván message the Universal House of Justice called on Bahá'ís to increase their activities in support of environmental conservation, and in October it announced the establishment of the Office of the Environment as an agency of the Bahá'í International Community responsible for conducting the activities of the Faith related to the environment. A compilation entitled *Conservation of the Earth's Resources* was subsequently issued by the World Centre. Communities and schools sponsored environmental education and action programs involving wetlands conservation, afforestation, pollution control, technological advancements, community resources and energy efficiency. Outstanding environmental programs were carried forward in Taiwan and Bolivia. During the final year of the Plan the Office of the Environment and the Bahá'í community of Brazil diligently prepared for the Earth Summit to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. Among other Earth Summit activities, a major recognition award was to be bestowed upon the Bahá'í Vocational Institute for Rural Women in Indore, India, for its guinea worm eradication project.

During the concluding year of the Six Year Plan twenty-six Bahá'í tree-planting projects were undertaken, along with twenty-six other environmental activities. Many of these activities were conducted in support of government-sponsored programs or to mark World Environment Day and Earth Day. Some of the more notable initiatives during this period were those of the Anís Zunuzí Bahá'í School in Haiti and the Rabbani School in India, where tree nurseries were established and many thousands of seedlings were planted in villages. In 1986 the Rabbani School received a national award for its afforestation activities. Subsequently, its wasteland reclamation efforts, both at the school farm and in the surrounding villages, which had already reclaimed many acres of salt-affected soil, attracted widespread attention from government authorities of Madhya Pradesh. This continuing project was conducted in collaboration with the Society for Promotion of Wasteland Development in New Delhi.

Among others, collaborative tree-planting efforts were conducted in Colombia and Guam. In Colombia Bahá'í youth joined

forces with a group called the Corporation to Defend the Bucaramanga Plateau and planted numerous trees. On the island of Guam, a group of eighteen Bahá'ís assisted a government forestry agency in its tree-planting work.

A very successful environmental program was developed in Taiwan where the National Assembly's Bahá'í Office of the Environment and the Taiwan Council of Agriculture collaborated in a "Nature Awareness Education Project." During 1990 thirty-six workshops on environmental education for more than 750 kindergarten and elementary school teachers were conducted. A second series of twenty-seven workshops was held in 1991. Public awareness of the Faith in Taiwan consequently rose and cordial relations with government authorities were promoted.

In Cochabamba, Bolivia, the Dorothy Baker Center for Environmental Studies, a private non-profit institution owned by Bahá'ís, managed an environmental research center and an interactive educational facility. The Center developed a unique approach to environmental studies integrating elements of academic and environmental education, sustainable agriculture and health care.

In Northern Ireland believers organized an environmental education program to learn about community resources. Topics included wind power, conversion of agricultural wastes, small-scale water power, integrated education of children, tree planting, fish stocks in the area, willow biomass and fuel from the wetlands. Similarly, the Association for Bahá'í Studies in Colombia and a socio-ecological group of the United Nations organized an ecological forum entitled "Education has an Environmental Conscience." In Brittany, France, Bahá'ís joined members of a regional Society for the Study and Protection of Nature to carry out a three-week community service project to beautify a nature reserve; tasks included collecting firewood, clearing the land, making observation lookouts for animal and bird watchers, and painting and repairing a house.

HEALTH

The importance of both preventive and curative health care is clearly stated in the Writings. When the Universal House of Justice released its message on social and economic development in 1983, there was only one modest Bahá'í health care project in operation; by the end of the Six Year Plan, national communities around the world had undertaken fifty-six health projects of varying scopes.

Bahá'í community health education programs were conducted in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Kenya, Laos, Malawi, Malaysia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Generally speaking, programs were organized to serve areas having a significant number of relatively well-established Bahá'í communities. Participating communities nominated one or more mature and dedicated believers to receive training which would prepare them to serve as volunteer health educators. The initial course normally lasted approximately two weeks, focusing on immunization, basic hygiene and sanitation, maternal and child health, nutrition and first aid. The participants also received intensive spiritual education based on the Bahá'í teachings, such as learning prayers and passages on health from the Writings. A further development of the community health workers' program was the selection and training of some of the experienced volunteers to serve as trainers for future participants.

The volunteers, working with their Local Assemblies in a mutually supportive way, were expected to offer at least several hours of service per week to their local communities, often working in tandem with government health workers. In some cases, usually where funding had been obtained from an international development agency, it was possible to provide minimal full- or part-time staff support to coordinate activities and maintain contact with the volunteers. Overall, dropout rates were very low and



Dr. Zeeba Faroughi prescribing medicine to a patient she has examined during a free medical camp held on Bhit Island near Karachi, Pakistan. 1989.

indicators of community health status suggested that the programs were having a significant impact. The outstanding success of several of these programs attracted the attention of development agencies and governments at local, national and international levels.

For example, the Bahá'í Community Development Project on Health commenced operation in Sarh, Chad, in 1984 as a humanitarian relief project in response to the emergency situation which had resulted from civil war and widespread famine. The project expanded rapidly, and by the end of the Plan community health workers were providing health care services in almost sixty villages to more than 12,000 people. The project, which received support from international funding agencies, was praised by Chadian government officials. In 1991 a government official stated that the Bahá'í health program had been responsible for blocking the spread of a cholera epidemic into the district of Moyen-Chari, where the project operated and the largest concentration of Bahá'í communities in the country was found. The health program also gave rise to the development of a network of eighteen tutorial schools serving over 1,300 children.

In addition to health educational programs, a number of endeavors aimed at offering medical assistance were also pursued in the Bahá'í world. A few Bahá'í communities and individuals constructed small rural hospitals or clinics to serve areas with limited access to medical care. In such areas the provision of curative care as well as preventive health measures contributed significantly to the level of health of the communities which they served.

The Bayán Project in Palacios, Honduras, composed of a small hospital with out-patient services, was established in 1985 by two doctors and their families who pioneered to this remote area on the Caribbean coast. Before its establishment the nearest hospital was more than four hundred kilometers away and was only accessible by air or water transport. The new hospital provided medical consultation and surgical treatment, and its staff conducted health education in the local area. The hospital received support from various Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í sources.

Bahá'í communities in several countries, especially Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, conducted medical camps in areas where access to medical facilities was limited, offering free consultations and basic medicines. Camps specializing in eye and dental care were particularly effective.

One of the most successful medical assistance programs was conducted in Guyana where a number of Bahá'í physicians from

other countries offered their professional services to the health authorities on a short-term basis. Some physicians made repeated visits, providing specialty care and conducting in-service seminars for medical staff. Following this initiative, arrangements were made to provide shipments of medical supplies to hospitals. Not only did the success of these activities foster warm relations between the Guyanese authorities and the National Assembly of Guyana, but it also inspired the creation of a similar program in Nicaragua.

Race Unity Activities

Bahá'í communities in the United States launched institutes for racial understanding and cooperation in response to this, "the most vital and challenging issue" facing the American nation. In addition to many conferences and seminars, training sessions were conducted for members of several local police departments at their request. Within a framework emphasizing the oneness of humanity, police officers and cadets were encouraged to adopt positive attitudes and behavior in their interactions with minority groups.

Social Services

Throughout the world Bahá'í communities operated programs offering compassionate assistance to people in need: sufferers from substance abuse, orphans and homeless people, the elderly and handicapped, persons with marital difficulties, refugees and victims of disasters.

In Hawaii the Bahá'í Community Assistance Program (B-CAP) was established in 1987 to provide deepening and counseling on marriage and remarriage, assistance for family problems, a food bank and an elders' program. Three essential characteristics of B-CAP were its reliance on Bahá'í Writings for approaches to personal problems; referrals to professional agencies, doctors or social workers qualified to handle particular problems; and Local Assembly supervision of each program. B-CAP, as an arm of the National Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands, became a means by which the Bahá'í community could begin to take care of its own members, as well as train a cadre of volunteers.

In Brazil the Lar Linda Tanure Center for Social Well-Being, begun in 1986, offered shelter, aid and education to needy children who were referred by the Juvenile Justice Court in the Amazonas area. It had thirty resident children, with 150 children attending its preschool and youth programs. The Center formed part of the Association for the Coherent Development of the Amazon. Its activities for youth emphasized moral education and agricultural skills. The Center also provided courses for women in health,



Inauguration of a public well built for the community by the Local Spiritual Assembly of Bata, Equatorial Guinea. November 1988.

hygiene, nutrition and the prevention of disease.

A number of American and Canadian Bahá'í communities assisted refugees and new immigrants to adapt to life in North America. Often the Bahá'ís conducted classes in English as a second language, helped the newcomers to find jobs, and oriented them to available social services.

Several Bahá'í communities assisted with disaster relief operations in the wake of devastating storms. Relying on prayer and consultation, Bahá'í communities drew upon the friends' spirit of service to play an important role in quickly and calmly mobilizing the community during emergencies and in coping with the lingering effects of a disaster. As one example, in the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo in 1989, the Bahá'ís of the Virgin Islands actively assisted with food distributions, counseling, provision of temporary roofing for homes of the elderly, management of a shelter, and opened a local Bahá'í center to a homeless family—all this despite the fact that many of the Bahá'ís' own homes were damaged or destroyed.

WOMEN

Many Bahá'í development activities focused specifically on realizing the potential of women. The Bahá'í Vocational Training Institute for Rural Women in Indore, India, is the longest-running example of such a program. It taught village women, most of whom came from extremely isolated tribal areas in Madhya Pradesh and many of whom had never been away from home before, to read and write, and provided training in practical skills which would enable them to be self-supporting in their home communities. Moral education, personal hygiene, nutrition and basic agricultural techniques were also taught by a devoted staff which surrounded the young women with loving-kindness and personal attention. The consistent result was a dramatic transformation in the characters and competence of the participants, and the women's home communities shared in these benefits upon their return.

Another project, involving Bahá'í communities in Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, Malaysia and Nigeria, promoted the equality of men and women. During the programs men and women examined traditional gender roles based on the perspective of the Bahá'í teachings. The facilitators strove to create a loving, supportive atmosphere to encourage participants to modify their behavior in appropriate ways. In Bolivia, Cameroon and Malaysia these activities were supported by UNIFEM.

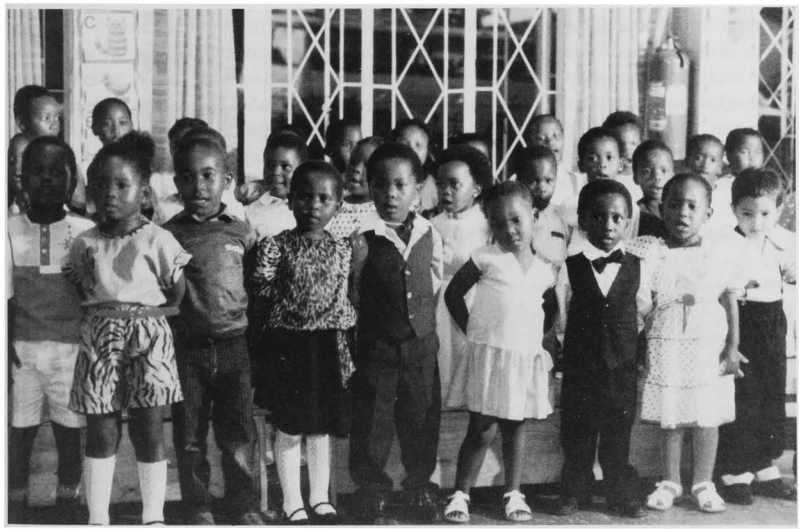
In Uganda the Bahá'ís collaborated with the Uganda Women's Finance and Credit Trust and the Uganda Women Lawyers' Association in a five-day gathering which enhanced the participants' knowledge of



Participants in a fence-making course held by Bahá'ís in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as a rural development project in November 1988.



A geography lesson at the Bahá'í School of the Nations in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, in April 1992.



The children of the Mbabane Pre-School in Swaziland pose for the photographer while singing one of their favorite songs; 1987.

financial management, marketing, bookkeeping, legal issues and laws of marriage and succession. The workshop, which brought together nearly thirty leading women, had the overall aim of enabling these women to become more effective in guiding their own destinies and in contributing to the progress of their country.

YOUTH

Youth around the world provided much of the energy, enthusiasm and spirit of service animating Bahá'í development programs by participating in a broad range of community service activities, and especially as tutorial school or children's class teachers. A large number of projects were also specifically aimed at enhancing the social and spiritual development of these young people. Two such locally initiated programs in the United States, the Elbow Learning Lab and Fathers Incorporated, gained warm commendation and recognition for their services. The Elbow Learning Lab in Griffin, Georgia, helped to meet the remedial education needs of children and youth in a low-income area where illiteracy and other social problems were widespread. In July 1992 the project received recognition as a "Point of Light" from the President of the United States. Fathers Incorporated provided academic assis tance and positive role models for inner-city youth in Detroit, Michigan, with the goal of improving academic competence and enhancing self-esteem. Activities included workshops and consultations on marriage and family life, interviewing and résumé writing, dress, behavior, peer pressure and substance abuse. Knowledge of the program's success spread in the wider community, and outside financial assistance was received to help fund a summer project.

BAHÁ'Í SCHOOLS

At the end of the Plan there were almost 500 Bahá'í tutorial schools serving an estimated 20,000 children in developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific. These schools conducted simple village-level programs which provided basic education for children with limited educational opportunities.

In many cases Bahá'í tutorial school teachers themselves possessed only modest levels of education, but they often compensated for their lack of academic training through their love for the children and the spirit of service which animated their work. Likewise, the wholehearted support of the sponsoring local Bahá'í community contributed to the success of such ventures. The teacher frequently functioned as a key believer who stimulated a wide variety of activities in the local Bahá'í community, and the tutorial school became a center for additional activities. During the Plan many Bahá'í tutorial schools, even some of those which had commenced operating under a tree, evolved to the stage of offering a basic primary school education in accordance with the government-approved curriculum.

At the end of the Plan the most notable tutorial school programs were those of India, where Bahá'ís operated almost 200, and Zaire, where over ninety were functioning. Other countries with major tutorial school programs included Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Chad, Colombia, Malawi, Panama and the Philippines.

In contrast to tutorial schools, Bahá'í academic schools are formally established institutions which have, or seek, official accreditation from government authorities. These schools employ full-time staff and usually offer academic subjects which are taught according to government standards.

During the Plan the number of Bahá'í academic schools increased from forty-one to one hundred and seventy-eight largely due to the evolution of many tutorial schools. In general, enrollments substantially increased, the range of subjects taught broadened, and physical facilities were expanded or upgraded. Major academic schools include the New Era, Rabbani and Tadong Schools in India; the New Day School in Pakistan;

the Santitham School in Thailand; the Ruaha School in Tanzania; School of the Nations in Brazil; the Anís Zunúzí School in Haiti; Colegio Núr in Chile; the Raúl Pavón School in Ecuador; and the Maxwell International School in Canada.

Bahá'í schools increasingly distinguished themselves through their academic achievements and the praiseworthy character of their students. The schools generally followed a formal academic program, as established by the educational authorities, complemented by regular prayers, religious studies, community service and vocational training. Several schools pioneered efforts to infuse Bahá'í concepts into their entire academic curricula.

In addition to schools operated by Bahá'í institutions, a number of private educational establishments were founded by believers who strove to operate their programs in accordance with the basic principles, aims and objectives which vivify Bahá'í development activities. Núr University in Bolivia and the School of the Nations in Macau are perhaps the best known of these institutions of learning.

Training Institutes

During the Six Year Plan several permanent Bahá'í institutes emerged as major centers of the Faith's social and economic development activities. The New Era Development Institute in India and the William Mmutle Masetlha Bahá'í Institute in Zambia had perhaps the most highly diversified programs. Others effective in promoting development activities included the Vocational Institute for Rural Women in India, the Djalal Eghrari Polytechnic Institute in the Amazon region of Brazil, the Ruhi Institute in Colombia, the Yukon Institute in Canada and, in the United States, the Native American Bahá'í Institute, the Louis Gregory Institute, and Louhelen, Bosch and Green Acre Bahá'í Schools.

Literacy

Access to the transforming power of the Word of God is an essential human right. In July 1989 the Universal House of Justice called on all National Assemblies to aim at the elimination of illiteracy from the Bahá'í community. In response to this call many Bahá'í communities and the offices of the Bahá'í International Community actively supported the United Nations International Literacy Year in 1990 and either instituted literacy programs or began to support existing ones.

During the Plan the number of reported Bahá'í literacy programs, many of them short-term, rose from sixty-seven to 186. Their goal was to teach reading and writing to youth and adults who either had been deprived of a formal education or who had left school functionally illiterate. Bahá'í



A Mobile Bahá'í Institute in Cotonou, Benin, in January 1989.

educators specializing in literacy began to advocate an approach using "root" or "generative" words with spiritual meanings in order to teach vocabulary while evoking meaningful discussions on vital issues. Results have indicated the effectiveness of this approach for teaching literacy and, of equal importance, for stimulating personal growth and community development.

For example, in Panama, Guaymi Indian Bahá'ís collaborated with government literacy instructors to develop a literacy course in their native tongue focusing on the use of words having spiritual significance as part of a systematic effort to preserve and revive traditional culture.

The most ambitious literacy project was established by the National Assembly of India. Its goal was to eventually achieve universal literacy among the more than two million Bahá'ís in the subcontinent. Comprehensive teaching materials were developed for courses in the Hindi and Marathi languages, and initial training sessions for prospective trainers of literacy instructors were conducted.

Curriculum Development

A number of National Spiritual Assemblies and Bahá'í educational institutions have developed curricula to teach comparative religion. Bahá'ís have also contributed to improving the overall curricula of some public schools. The Bahá'ís of Namibia were invited to participate in efforts to restructure the national education system, while the Bahá'í community of Swaziland has been involved in a significant manner in the training of preschool teachers nationwide. Also in Swaziland two Bahá'í educators have been developing core international curricula for environmental education based on the perspective of the teachings.

Ongoing teaching efforts in colleges and universities have resulted in a large number of short courses on the Bahá'í Faith and its principles. The most notable achievements were the establishment of two university Chairs related to Bahá'í Studies: one at the University of Maryland in the United States in January 1990 and one at Indore University in India in April 1990.

The accomplishments of the Bahá'í community in the area of social and economic development during the Six Year Plan reflect great audacity and commitment to service. The believers worked to apply spiritual principles to practical needs. The goodwill towards the Cause generated by these services has created countless opportunities for the future. The friends have seen that their endeavors in the path of service, no matter how modest, have set in motion processes which will long continue to produce beneficial effects.

APPENDIX

Bahá'í International Community Statement, Ninth Meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations, South Pacific Commission, 23rd to 27th May 1988, Noumea, New Caledonia.

Health, Education and the Role of Women

The Bahá'í International Community representing the Bahá'í Communities of the Pacific Region wishes to express its appreciation to the South Pacific Commission for the invitation to attend this meeting of the Committee of Governments and Administrations. Although we are keenly interested in the variety of concerns being discussed at this meeting, we would like to direct our comments to the areas of health and education. The dynamic relationship between these two dimensions of human development is fundamental to the realization of all others.

Bahá'ís believe that health is more than the absence of disease or infirmity. In addition to the three widely recognised aspects of health—physical, mental and social well-being—the spiritual dimension is likewise important and should be manifested not only in the individual, but also in the life of the family and the community.

Consequently, Bahá'í communities strive to address the needs of individuals, families, and the community as a whole in their activities. The role of education in the realization of this harmonious balance between all aspects of life cannot be overemphasized and the education of women is of particular importance in this process.

Women, as the main agents of primary health care, play an essential role in maintaining family and community health. They are the ones who are most aware of sickness and suffering in the community because of their social role as nurturers and care-takers of the young, the old, the sick and the handicapped, and they exert an important influence on health habits in the family. Although it is often recognised that primary health care has to respond to the needs of people, and that women have the most extensive awareness of these needs, their opinion is hardly ever solicited when health care programmes are being formulated.

In order for communities to benefit from the knowledge which women possess, a renewed self-confidence of women has to be encouraged. Women have to learn to regard themselves as capable human beings with important contributions to make on the basis of their life experience and their accumulated wealth of knowledge. Furthermore a conscious effort has to be made to enable women to organise and to vocalize the information they have acquired.

If this participation is to become a reality, women must penetrate all levels and all areas of the health care system. They have to be doctors, nurses, community development agents, educators, agricultural extension workers, public health officials, planners, legislators, politicians. At the same time, they have to encourage the participation of people at the grass-roots, including women and women's organizations, in the decisions affecting individual and community health. None of these results can be realized unless special efforts are made to organise education and vocational and professional training in such a way that more girls and women can take advantage of them.

Investing resources in primary health care programmes which includes health education and the application of health promoting activities based on simple but scientifically sound measures in which women can participate at the local level, is likely to provide more benefits than traditional efforts dedicated to the formation of highly skilled physicians who practice medicine in clinics and hospitals.

Primary health care activities should be fully integrated with the activities of other sectors involved in community development, agriculture, education, public works, housing, and communication, and the local population should be actively involved in the formulation and implementation of these activities, so that health care can be brought into line with local needs and priorities. These priorities will be based on decisions resulting from a continuous dialogue between the people and the services.

The Bahá'í International Community is actively involved in primary health care. In India, Malaysia, Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia and many more countries including the Pacific region, Bahá'í villages are implementing health and educational programmes of many kinds and are having much success. It is our view that these programmes are successful because the overall education of women is the key factor and consequently they recognize their own value, thereby enabling them to participate more readily in decisions concerning their communitys' health.

While the Bahá'í International Community continues to work toward the improvement of life in our communities through these programmes we also welcome the opportunity to lend support to health programmes which require local as well as professional volunteers.

2. Expansion and Consolidation of the Bahá'í Faith

Summary Statistics of the Six Year Plan 1986–1992

World Totals

	21 April 1986	*20 April 1992*
National Spiritual Assemblies	148	165
National Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds	141	146
Bahá'í Temples	6	7
Sites for national Bahá'í Temples	124	127
Bahá'í Publishing Trusts	25	28
Languages into which Bahá'í literature has been translated	802	NIA+
Bahá'í schools	599	666
Social and economic development projects (other than schools)	431	678
Countries that exempt the Bahá'í community from payment of taxes on properties	61	77
Countries that recognize Bahá'í Holy Days	76	81
Countries that recognize Bahá'í marriage	60	70
Localities where Bahá'ís reside	114,988	120,046
Isolated centres and groups	89,658	99,611
Local Spiritual Assemblies	25,330	20,435*

\+ No information available.

* Between 1986 and 1988, a numerical decrease of 11,000 Local Spiritual Assemblies and 6,100 localities occurred in India due to revised civil areas of jurisdiction. Similar changes took place in some other countries.

Africa

	21 April 1986	*20 April 1992*
National Spiritual Assemblies	43	47
National Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds	41	42
Bahá'í Temples	1	1
Sites for national Bahá'í Temples	36	36
Bahá'í Publishing Trusts	4	4
Languages into which Bahá'í literature has been translated	266	NIA
Bahá'í schools	143	166
Social and economic development projects (other than schools)	139	120
Countries that exempt the Bahá'í community from payment of taxes on properties	16	21

Countries that recognize Bahá'í Holy Days	16	18
Countries that recognize Bahá'í marriage	10	13
Localities where Bahá'ís reside	36,145	33,270
Isolated centres and groups	29,878	27,366
Local Spiritual Assemblies	6,267	5,904

AMERICAS

	21 April 1986	*20 April 1992*
National Spiritual Assemblies	41	43
National Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds	40	41
Bahá'í Temples	2	2
Sites for national Bahá'í Temples	32	31
Bahá'í Publishing Trusts	3	3
Languages into which Bahá'í literature has been translated	172	NIA
Bahá'í schools	106	184
Social and economic development projects (other than schools)	98	195
Countries that exempt the Bahá'í community from payment of taxes on properties	18	23
Countries that recognize Bahá'í Holy Days	24	25
Countries that recognize Bahá'í marriage	13	17
Localities where Bahá'ís reside	26,514	27,470
Isolated centres and groups	20,303	22,079
Local Spiritual Assemblies	6,211	5,391

ASIA

	21 April 1986	*20 April 1992*
National Spiritual Assemblies	27	29
National Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds	23	25
Bahá'í Temples	0	1
Sites for national Bahá'í Temples	22	24
Bahá'í Publishing Trusts	8	9
Languages into which Bahá'í literature has been translated	174	NIA
Bahá'í schools	342	300
Social and economic development projects (other than schools)	151	232
Countries that exempt the Bahá'í community from payment of taxes on properties	11	13
Countries that recognize Bahá'í Holy Days	13	13
Countries that recognize Bahá'í marriage	12	12
Localities where Bahá'ís reside	46,270	51,119
Isolated centres and groups	34,976	43,700
Local Spiritual Assemblies	11,294	7,419

AUSTRALASIA

	21 April 1986	*20 April 1992*
National Spiritual Assemblies	17	17
National Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds	17	17
Bahá'í Temples	2	2
Sites for national Bahá'í Temples	15	16
Bahá'í Publishing Trusts	2	2
Languages into which Bahá'í literature has been translated	110	NIA
Bahá'í schools	8	16
Social and economic development projects (other than schools)	20	101
Countries that exempt the Bahá'í community from payment of taxes on properties	8	8
Countries that recognize Bahá'í Holy Days	11	12
Countries that recognize Bahá'í marriage	16	18
Localities where Bahá'ís reside	3,062	4,094
Isolated centres and groups	2,257	3,218
Local Spiritual Assemblies	805	876

EUROPE

	21 April 1986	*20 April 1992*
National Spiritual Assemblies	20	29
National Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds	20	21
Bahá'í Temples	1	1
Sites for national Bahá'í Temples	19	20
Bahá'í Publishing Trusts	8	10
Languages into which Bahá'í literature has been translated	80	NIA
Bahá'í schools	0	0
Social and economic development projects (other than schools)	23	30
Countries that exempt the Bahá'í community from payment of taxes on properties	8	12
Countries that recognize Bahá'í Holy Days	12	13
Countries that recognize Bahá'í marriage	9	10
Localities where Bahá'ís reside	2,997	4,093
Isolated centres and groups	2,244	3,248
Local Spiritual Assemblies	753	845

II
THE TWO YEAR SUBSIDIARY PLAN 1990–1992

ON 8 February 1990, the Universal House of Justice sent the following cable to the followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the world:

FAR-REACHING EVENTS BEING ENACTED WORLD STAGE, PARTICULARLY IN EASTERN EUROPE AND SOVIET UNION, ON THRESHOLD FINAL FATE-LADEN DECADE CENTURY OF LIGHT, PROVIDE FURTHER DRAMATIC EVIDENCE RESISTLESS OPERATION OF GOD'S MAJOR PLAN FOR TRANSFORMATION OF HUMAN SOCIETY. RAPID UNFORESEEN DEVELOPMENTS NECESSITATE CORRESPONDING PARALLEL ACCELERATION IN LIFE-GIVING ENTERPRISES BEING PURSUED BY INHERITORS BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S RESPLENDENT REVELATION.

REJOICE THEREFORE ANNOUNCE LAUNCHING AT RIḌVÁN OF SUBSIDIARY TWO YEAR TEACHING PLAN FOR VAST REMAINING REACHES EASTERN EUROPE AND ASIA. MOMENTOUS STEP INVOLVES FURTHER SYSTEMATIC UNFOLDMENT PROVISIONS TABLETS MASTER-PLAN OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ ALREADY IN ADVANCED STAGE OF OPERATION OTHER AREAS PLANET. REGIONAL ENTERPRISE, CONCEIVED IN CONSULTATION INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE, DESIGNED SIGNIFICANTLY REINFORCE CURRENT SIX YEAR GLOBAL PLAN. OBJECTIVES INCLUDE ATTRACTION NUMEROUS NEW SUPPORTERS FAITH, GREAT INCREASE TRANSLATION, PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION BAHÁ'Í LITERATURE IN REQUISITE LANGUAGES ENTIRE AREA, AND EXTENSION BENEFICENT INFLUENCE DIVINELY APPOINTED ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER THROUGH ERECTION FRAME-WORK LOCAL NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í INSTITUTIONS IN AS MANY EASTERN COUNTRIES AS POSSIBLE UP TO AND INCLUDING RIḌVÁN 1992.

CALLING UPON THOSE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES EUROPE, ASIA AND AMERICA WHICH BEAR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR INDIVIDUAL NATIONS INVOLVED, TO CONSULT WITH COUNSELLORS AND FORMULATE DETAILS SPECIFIC GOALS INCORPORATING AND SUPPLEMENTING THOSE ALREADY ADOPTED AND IN PROCESS ACCOMPLISHMENT UNDER SIX YEAR PLAN. MOVED PAY TRIBUTE PRESENT HOUR REMARKABLE UNSUNG ACHIEVEMENTS THOSE INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS PRESENTLY LABOURING ADVANCEMENT CAUSE IN EASTERN EUROPE AND SOVIET UNION, ACHIEVEMENTS WHICH HAVE BLAZED TRAILS FOR COMING LARGE-SCALE INITIATIVE. CALL UPON BAHÁ'Í WORLD ARISE SUPPORT DIFFUSION WORLD-REDEEMING MESSAGE FAITH GOAL AREAS THROUGH SETTLEMENT PIONEERS AND THROUGH DISPATCH STEADY FLOW TRAVELLING TEACHERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH KNOWLEDGE LANGUAGES COUNTRIES AND REPUBLICS EASTERN BLOC.

CONCOMITANT THESE MEASURES, VITAL ONGOING PROCESS CHINESE TEACHING RECEIVING FURTHER IMPETUS.

BROAD VISTAS NOW OPEN TO FAITH GOD PROVIDE UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITIES WIN FRESH VICTORIES AS WORTHY OFFERING SACRED THRESHOLD BLESSED BEAUTY OCCASION COMMEMORATION FIRST CENTENARY HIS ASCENSION COMING HOLY YEAR. IMPLORING ABUNDANT OUTPOURING DIVINE CONFIRMATIONS PARTICIPANTS ALL FACETS HISTORIC SIX YEAR CAMPAIGN.

1. Historical Background

The countries included in what was known as the Eastern Bloc had witnessed significant developments in the spread of the Cause towards the end of the nineteenth century and in the early decades of the twentieth. In Bahá'u'lláh's lifetime, Bahá'ís were living in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, and Turkistan (now known as Central Asia), the first Bahá'ís settling in the latter in 1882.

A flourishing Bahá'í community developed in Ashkhabad ('Ishqábád) and became a centre of Bahá'í scholarship. In 1902, construction began in Ashkhabad of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Bahá'í world, an act characterized by Shoghi Effendi as "the first major undertaking launched through the concerted efforts of His followers in the Heroic Age of His Faith". Russia became the first country to extend full recognition, justice, and protection to the followers of the Bahá'í religion. Strong Bahá'í communities, with their own Local Spiritual Assemblies, were eventually established in Moscow, Baku, and other centres in the Soviet Union; indeed in 1925 two National Spiritual Assemblies, that of the Caucasus, with its seat in Baku, and that of Turkistan, with its seat in Ashkhabad, came into being.

The Faith had also attracted the attention of prominent figures in Russia, such as Leo Tolstoy. A Russian translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas had been made by Aleksandr Grigorevich Tumanskiĭ and a compilation of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh in Arabic was published in St. Petersburg in 1908. The poetess and dramatist Grinevskaya had written two dramas, one on the Báb and one on Bahá'u'lláh; they had been performed in St. Petersburg and other places, including in Germany after they had been translated by the poet Fielder.

In the countries of Eastern Europe outside the Soviet Union, the Faith had been introduced by various means. 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself visited Budapest in 1913 and aroused the interest of eminent Hungarians. He expressed the wish that Budapest "might become a centre for the reunion of the East and West, and that from this city the light might emanate to other places". The first Local Spiritual Assembly in Budapest was elected in 1939.

The indomitable Martha Root visited Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia during the 1920s and 1930s. Queen Marie of Romania penned her heartfelt tributes to Bahá'u'lláh and His Message, earning the immortal distinction of being the first among royalty to raise her voice in His praise. Small Bahá'í communities grew in a number of these lands. Vuk Echtner, in Czechoslovakia, learned of the Faith in 1925 and later was imprisoned for being a Bahá'í. Bulgaria was blessed from 1930 to 1954 by the selfless labours of Marion Jack, whom Shoghi Effendi called a "shining example to pioneers", and by the laying to rest in its soil of her and of Adam Benke, the pioneer from Germany whom Shoghi Effendi designated as the first European Bahá'í martyr.

Esperanto played an important role in the spread of the Faith in these regions, particularly in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, where believers continued to reside throughout the entire period. The earliest records of the Bahá'í Faith in the Baltic States mention four persons in Lithuania in the early 1930s who were Esperanto correspondents of Dr. Hermann Grossmann and his wife, Anna. These men showed interest in the Bahá'í teachings and were eventually visited by Martha Root in 1934. One of the earliest and most outstanding believers in Poland was Lidia Zamenhof, daughter of the creator of Esperanto.

With the consolidation of Communist rule in the Soviet Union, restrictions began to be imposed upon Bahá'í communities, becoming more pronounced in 1928 and increasing during the next ten years. The Soviet authorities confiscated documents, books, and a



The Bahá'ís of Moscow celebrating a Nineteen Day Feast for the first time since the 1930s. The event took place in the Hainsworths' home. 9 April 1989.

printing press, dissolved Bahá'í committees, and took over Bahá'í schools. Hundreds of Bahá'ís were imprisoned, some were sentenced to exile in Siberia and other penal settlements, and others were deported to Írán. The National Assembly of Turkistan was dissolved. The Temple in Ashkhabad was expropriated and turned into an art gallery.

A small number of Bahá'ís continued to reside in the region, striving to keep the flame of their faith alive in the face of intensive atheist propaganda, the ever-present danger of renewed persecution, and the disability imposed by the prohibition of teaching religion to anyone under the age of eighteen. For these reasons, the flow of news from the Bahá'ís in the Soviet Union to their fellow believers outside virtually ceased, and only very gradually over the years did it become possible to re-open avenues of communication in a few instances.

World War II and the subsequent advance of Communism in Eastern Europe left only tiny remnants of Bahá'í communities. Devoted individuals and families remained steadfast through many difficult years. Despite this situation, Shoghi Effendi included all these territories in his Ten Year Plan, unveiled in 1953, as follows.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria was made responsible for opening Albania, Estonia, Finno-Karelia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldavia (Moldova), Romania and White Russia (Belarus) and for consolidating Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (S.F.S.R.), and Yugoslavia.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Írán was made responsible for opening Kirgizia (later named Kyrgyzstan), Mongolia, Tajikistan (Tadzhikistan) and Uzbekistan, and for consolidating Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, and Turkmenistan.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the United States was responsible for opening Kazakhstan, Sakhalin, and the Ukraine.

Goals for the translation of Bahá'í literature into many of the languages of these countries were also part of the Ten Year Crusade.

The Guardian expressed all these goals as being subject to "circumstances permitting." Nevertheless, activities were carried out with increasing efficacy through all the succeeding decades. The Bahá'ís of Germany and Austria in particular were spurred on by words of the Guardian such as these:

> ...a community that has achieved so much in the past for our Faith, that has been so dearly loved by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and is destined to spread, as He foretold, the light of God's sacred Revelation not only in the heart of Europe but throughout that dark, war-devastated spiritually famished continent. (*22 November 1946*)

> ...carry the fame of this community... as far as the Eastern fringes of the Asiatic continent. *(30 October 1951)*
>
> The administrative base from which it must spread out into Eastern and Southern Europe, and beyond these spheres into the heart of Northern Asia, as far as the China Sea, must first be thoroughly consolidated. *(30 October 1951)*

The beloved Guardian referred to these tasks as "the Mission envisaged for them by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and now confirmed through the provisions of the Ten-Year Plan". *(14 August 1957)*

As the years passed and new National Assemblies came into existence, some of the goals originally allotted to the community of Germany and Austria were reassigned. The newly formed National Assembly of Austria was given responsibility for Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. The National Assembly of Finland was given responsibility for the goals in Estonia, a country whose language is akin to Finnish. The National Assembly of Sweden was given responsibility for Latvia and Lithuania. Responsibility for Sakhalin was transferred from the National Assembly of the United States to that of North East Asia (later Japan). Finno-Karelia ceased to be a separate Soviet Socialist Republic (S.S.R.) and became an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (A.S.S.R.) of the Russian S.F.S.R.

When persecutions in the Cradle of the Faith made it no longer feasible for the Iranian Bahá'í community to pursue its goals in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Mongolia, responsibility for these areas was transferred. Mongolia and the republics of Central Asia for which Írán had been responsible were given first to the National Assembly of India, then to Germany, while the Caucasian republics (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia) were transferred directly to Germany. The Central Asian republic of Kazakhstan and the Ukraine remained under the jurisdiction of the National Assembly of the United States.

The work continued patiently, and quietly, with relays of travelling teachers continually crossing and recrossing these lands, contacting old believers, bringing new souls into the Faith, and fostering warm relationships with seekers. Such was the danger that little if any of this activity could be reported to the Bahá'í world. Already during the latter years of the Guardian's lifetime it was found that there were Bahá'ís living in certain of the Central Asian republics which had previously been reported to be virgin territories. Later Firaydún Khazrá'í settled in Romania and Helmut Winkelbach settled in White Russia (Belarus), becoming Knights of Bahá'u'lláh. Moldavia (Moldova) was opened to the Faith by a single believer, Annemarie Krüger, who through persistent visits and teaching brought the first native Moldavian into the Faith in Kishinev (Chişinău); she was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh by the Universal House of Justice for this achievement. In 1979, a Bahá'í of Polish background, Anna Monadjem, pioneered with her family to Poland and settled on the farm of her ancestors.

During the 1980s, accounts were found in the International Archives of the pioneering work done in Albania by Mr. Refo Çapari, a Bahá'í of Albanian descent from New York who had arrived in Tirana in 1931. He had stayed in Albania and died there alone and of starvation. Meanwhile, a flourishing Bahá'í community had been established which had corresponded with the Guardian. The records revealed that the conditions of World War II and its aftermath had dispersed these believers, and indicated that members of Mr. Çapari's family might be living in Yugoslavia. The National Assembly of Austria therefore sent Bahá'ís to look for them. The search was fruitful, and these faithful, long-suffering believers put the Bahá'í institutions in touch with another member of their family who had been living as the only Bahá'í in Albania for forty years, raising her children as firm believers in the Faith. Thus began the unprecedented efflorescence of the Bahá'í community of Albania.

The emergence of the policies of glasnost and perestroika in the mid-1980s and the reforms launched in the Soviet Union aroused intense interest in the countries which were responsible for the establishment of the Faith there. These new opportunities and the steps necessary to take advantage of them were major themes of the consultation at the Counsellors' Conference held in the Holy Land at the end of 1986. Shortly thereafter the National Assembly of Germany held a special conference, at the end of March 1987 in Langenhain, for the representatives of the various responsible National Assemblies and committees to consult on the situation. This was immediately followed by a "Great Eastern Conference" in Dieburg. At the request of the National Assembly of Germany, which attached great importance to these conferences, the Universal House of Justice sent one of its members to represent it. At that time it was unclear whether the precious opportunities then available would remain for long. It was decided that, in either eventuality, it was vital for the Bahá'ís to seize their chance without delay. Two Counsellors particularly stimulated and assisted the teaching work in Eastern countries: 'Abbás Katirai in Asian Russia and Sohrab Youssefian in Albania and Romania. Paul Semenoff was noteworthy for his work in European Russia and the Ukraine.

The fourteen believers who made up the Hungarian community in 1987 were blessed to be visited by the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, who inspired them with a vision of the future. The Hand of the Cause also visited Mongolia in 1989, where she was invited to give lectures about her travels and about world peace to students of English at a university. In some cases, the Faith could be directly promoted, as in Poland where a Bahá'í booth was set up at the World Esperanto Congress in 1987 and public events were held to proclaim the Faith. But generally, teaching consisted of making friends and preparing for a time when restrictions on religion would be lifted.

An example of the kind of painstaking, persistent work which helped make possible the open teaching projects of the Two Year Plan, comes from an individual who saw a need and arose to fill it. In October 1987, Lynda Godwin made her first journey to the Soviet Union, travelling under the auspices of a programme called Citizen Diplomacy, which encouraged individuals to design projects of cultural exchange between Americans and Soviets. She developed one project, called the Soviet/American Teachers Task Force, which brought American teachers to the Soviet Union to team teach in Soviet class rooms, and another called Birthday Friends for Peace, which made pen pals out of Soviet and American children with common birth dates. The projects were so successful that she was invited back numerous times, making more friends each visit as she worked with Soviet guides and translators and arranged for visitors to stay in Soviet homes. Between October 1987 and April 1992, Lynda Godwin made at least twenty trips into what became the former Soviet Union, each time introducing a new group to the region and finding different avenues for exchange.

Two plans projected by the Universal House of Justice were the opening of Bahá'í Information Offices in Moscow and Budapest. Documentation was prepared, a search was begun for suitable premises in both cities, and a formal approach was made to the appropriate agency of the Soviet Government on behalf of the Bahá'í International Community. However, events advanced so rapidly that these initiatives were subsequently superseded by the rapid spread of the Faith in both countries and the establishment of Local and National Assemblies.

The accelerating growth of the Bahá'í communities and the drastically changing conditions in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc impelled the Universal House of Justice to call for a subsidiary Two Year Teaching Plan to run from Riḍván 1990 to Riḍván 1992, with greatly increased goals for all these lands.

2. TRAVELLING TEACHERS AND PIONEERS

The laws concerning the practice and sharing of religion in the Soviet Union had begun to change in 1989, the same year that the Berlin Wall was breached. Restrictions on bringing in literature were lifted and the first open teaching event occurred when Bahá'ís from Scandinavia participated in the Murmansk Peace Festival organized by the Red Army. In August 1989, an individual working in the region wrote: "This is a very special moment in the history of the Russian nation and the Soviet peoples. It is a moment, I feel, as do most of those who are deeply involved in the work there, especially created by God to facilitate the presentation of the Greatest Gift, the Message which the King of Glory has brought for all mankind. There are mighty spiritual forces at work throughout the length and breadth of that land ... forces which make possible the realization of the most audacious of plans. All that is required is for the instruments of His Faith, we the believers, to be present, to trust fully in and be willing to follow the clear direction given by Bahá'u'lláh."

In November 1989, The Promise of World Peace Tour became the largest group of Bahá'ís ever invited to enter the Soviet Union with a specific Bahá'í purpose approved by Soviet officials: to disseminate the Peace Statement. After studying the Statement, holding fund-raisers, and giving interviews about the project during the course of a year, sixty-two Bahá'ís from eight nations entered the Soviet Union under the auspices of Youth Ambassadors International. They presented 3,000 copies of the Peace Statement and proclaimed the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh from public platforms, in schools and universities, and in Soviet homes. The man largely responsible for the first public presentation of the Statement in Kazan later embraced the Faith, was elected chairman of the first Spiritual Assembly there, and eventually was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics at Riḍván 1991.

As laws and attitudes changed, a hunger for information about the Faith became evident, and Lynda Godwin found herself in the position to help meet this need. She was able to draw on her experience and contacts from leading projects sponsored by non-Bahá'ís to organize explicitly Bahá'í endeavours. A company called Inter National Soviet Resources, Inc. was formed to oversee the work. Another group of Bahá'ís in the United States created the Soviet-American Cooperative Society, and in Canada NetEast was established to assist Canadian Bahá'ís to understand the needs of the Faith in the Soviet Union and how they could be of service.



The Bahá'í display at the Murmansk Peace and Environment Festival, organized by the Red Army in July 1989. This was the first open teaching event in the U.S.S.R.

Among the projects Lynda Godwin and others organized were two international women's forums which allowed Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís from different backgrounds to share their ideas about the issues facing women; two business seminars in the Ukraine to share the Bahá'í principles related to economics and ethics; the Lesson in Peace teaching trip; and tours of the musical performers Red Grammer, El Viento Canta, and Daystar.

In fact, Bahá'í musicians and singing groups responding to the call of the Two Year Plan brought many people into contact with the Bahá'í Faith for the first time. A variety of talented performers drew large crowds in the streets, parks, schools, and theatres of the Eastern Bloc, as they demonstrated the unique beauty of art expressed in praise of God. When audience members sought the source of the artists' special spirit, they found Bahá'u'lláh.

El Viento Canta, a group which had formed at the Bahá'í World Centre and which had travelled throughout Western Europe and Africa sharing traditional Latin American music and teaching the Faith (see also "Special Youth Projects", p.443), began a three-month tour of the newly opening areas in January 1990. Their route took them from Yugoslavia to Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Russia, the Ukraine, Siberia, and Mongolia. They played before audiences ranging from fifty to 1,000, and performed and were interviewed on television in Yugoslavia, Hungary, and in Leningrad and Moscow in Russia.

Following El Viento Canta's concerts, lively discussions of the Faith continued for hours around the stage and in coffee shops, hotel lobbies, and private homes. One night in Odessa, conversations about the Faith were in progress in four dormitory rooms at once, in English, German, Spanish, and Russian. It was not uncommon for people to stand in line for over half an hour after concerts to register in a guest book for later contact and literature. More than once, audience members travelled many hours to see El Viento Canta perform at its next destination, as they deeply missed being near the spirit of the group. One admirer journeyed thirty-two hours.

Another performing group which had formed at the Bahá'í World Centre and which greatly stimulated the teaching work in the Soviet Union was Daystar. Twenty-three singers and dancers and a French mime artiste spent July 1990 enchanting hearts, making friends, and sharing Bahá'u'lláh's Message in the major cities of the Soviet Union. The group travelled with eight Soviet guides and stayed in Russian homes, learning as much as they could about the culture they were privileged to visit.

Among the venues for Daystar's well-attended concerts were parks, a philharmonic hall, a children's camp, and the dining car of the train from Leningrad to Kiev. A presentation on the Faith, which included slides, was shown nightly in hotel lobbies. The group's members had the honour of being the first Bahá'ís ever to visit Chernovtsy, in the Ukraine, where they met children who had never before seen anyone from outside Russia.

In the summer of 1991, six youth formed Daystar II as part of the "Youth Can Move the World" project. The project drew on the spirit and talents of Daystar, another music group called Bridges which played folk, bluegrass, contemporary, and country music from the United States, and thirty-eight other international participants. The group was divided into three teams, each assisted by four or five Russians who served as guides and translators. Through their efforts people were able to witness, some for the first time, living examples of the transforming power of Bahá'u'lláh.

Light in the Darkness, a music group which had formed in Italy in December 1988, spread the Faith in Yugoslavia, Poland, and Romania during the Plan. Audience members at their concerts heard the principles of the Faith explained between the singing of Bahá'í songs and popular songs about peace.



A music group spontaneously formed among participants in the Tahirih II Teaching Project in Neptune, Romania, in July 1991. It performed in the streets, causing crowds to gather.



Travelling teachers from Brazil sing for young friends in Poland in 1990.



Members of El Viento Canta giving a radio interview in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, 1990.



Bahá'ís attending the first National Bahá'í Conference to be held in the U.S.S.R. in about 60 years. The event took place on 24–25 February 1990 near Moscow.

At the end of each concert, audience members were directly invited to join the Bahá'í community.

In summer 1991, Light in the Darkness performed at the first European Youth Conference in Neptune, Romania, and at other locations in the area. When the group took a break during one concert that had 1,000 spectators, people began lining up at a Bahá'í information booth near the stage. Eighty of them declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh.

The world renowned jazz musician Dizzy Gillespie mentioned the Bahá'í Faith from the stage during concerts in East Berlin, Moscow, and Prague in May 1990. The musical tour was organized by professional agencies in honour of a European event called One World Week. At each concert, about 2,000 people heard the announcement that the performance was a contribution of the Bahá'í community to the special week and that it was dedicated to peace and global understanding. The East Berlin concert was attended by the President of the East German Parliament, and portions of it were broadcast on East German television. In Moscow, the performance was held under the patronage of Mrs. Raisa Gorbacheva and was followed by a one-hour press conference attended by eighty international journalists. The President of the new Republic of Czechoslovakia, Vaclav Havel, and his wife attended the concert in Prague. Following a press conference with about one hundred reporters, Dizzy Gillespie and the Bahá'í representatives were received privately by the President.

In July 1991, an International Bahá'í Art Forum, held in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, brought together approximately fifty artists from around Europe and the Soviet Union to exchange ideas, share their work, and discuss the contributions artists could make to the coming Bahá'í Holy Year. An art gallery exhibited works by Bahá'í artists, and every evening for a week, public performances were held. Two musicians embraced the Faith during the week.

Renowned violinist Bijan Khadem-Missagh shared his talents during one of the public concerts associated with the Art Forum. Mr. Khadem-Missagh and singer Ahdieh Pakravan also brought the name of the Faith to many of the inhabitants of Dushanbe, Tajikistan, during concerts given in the autumn of 1991.

The European Bahá'í Youth Council helped channel the energies of European youth into the work of the Two Year Plan by organising teaching projects in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia during the summer of 1990. In addition, the George Adam Benke Project held in the autumn led to the formation of the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Bulgaria since World War II. The Youth Council continued to contribute significantly to the teaching work during the remainder of the Plan. (See also "European Bahá'í Youth Council", p.432.)

With the Tablets of the Divine Plan as their guide, a group of youth from the United States formed the Marion Jack Teaching Project in the summer of 1990 to bring Bahá'u'lláh's Message to the Soviet Union. Carrying 10,000 copies of the Peace Statement and 2,000 copies of The Hidden Words in Russian, the youth travelled from the Ukraine to Siberia. When members of the team visited the village of Kolodnia, Siberia, the chief invited them to return to "our village and tell us how to become a Bahá'í village". A second Marion Jack Project was organized for January 1991, and Marion Jack III took place that summer.

While members of the first Marion Jack Project were traversing the Soviet Union west to east, nineteen Bahá'ís from nine countries were sailing south down the Volga and Don Rivers from Petrozavodsk toward the Black Sea. A group of Soviet citizens had decided to build three Viking-style ships and sail them from the Soviet Union to the Holy Land. When Captain Alexander Dubovsky, who had become a Bahá'í in the summer of

1989 at an Army-sponsored peace fair, heard of the plan for the Golden Age Mission, he recruited Bahá'ís for it. When none of the other passenger groups showed up for the journey, it became a mission for Bahá'u'lláh.

Down the rivers they sailed, going ashore and teaching by setting up display stands with pictures and Bahá'í literature in town after town. Conditions were extremely rugged, as the little ships (18 x 20 metres) had no cabins and were caught in storms several times. Yet each member carried a copy of a letter of encouragement from the Universal House of Justice, and they "huddled around it during storms, shouted it in exaltation and murmured it in wonder and praise". In almost every port of call, one or more people embraced the Faith, and eleven members of the ships' crews became believers. Although the Bahá'ís had to end their journey in the Soviet Union, the ship called "Hope" arrived in Haifa in September with twenty-four Russians aboard. The travellers spent three days meeting with members of the Bahá'í World Centre staff and visiting the Holy Shrines.

Many groups organized themselves during this period to make short-term teaching trips. For one week in June 1991, fifteen Bahá'ís from Austria and Italy travelled to Albania and were able to enrol 150 people into the Faith. "Teaching was carried out everywhere", a participant reported, "in the streets, in the houses of the friends where we were received with unforgettable hospitality, on the beach, in the hall of the Albanian Parliament, in hotels, in universities, and musical academies—and enrolments occurred everywhere".

In August 1991, thirteen Bahá'ís from six European countries took part in teaching projects in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and in Bishkek, Kirgizia. The teams set up book stalls in a busy square, in a town, and at a university; spoke about the Faith to members of a spiritual organization; and were interviewed for radio and television.

On 1 January 1991, a French Bahá'í group, calling itself Caravan of Peace, was able to present the Peace Statement to the authorities of Sarajevo, Yugoslavia.

The collapse of the Eastern Bloc's political, economic, and social systems, coupled with the region's emergence from decades of isolation, created great demand for information on a wide range of topics. Bahá'í experts in various fields travelled to the area to share their professional experience and to explain how Bahá'u'lláh's principles speak to the needs of the modern world.

The Hand of the Cause 'Ali-Akbar Furútan was able to visit Russia in 1990 after more than sixty years away. He was invited to speak to the approximately 380 participants of the "International Conference of Young Psychologists" at Moscow University.



A group of nineteen Bahá'ís spent three weeks sailing down the Volga and Don Rivers on this and two other Viking-style ships in the summer of 1990, teaching the Faith to both ship crews and dock-side visitors.

Mr. Furútan also gave a lecture on education at the Murmansk Institute of Pedagogy.

Counsellors conducted seminars on moral education in Albania and Czechoslovakia, and possibilities for future cooperation and exchange were discussed. Also in Czechoslovakia, an environmental consultant was able to approach high-ranking government officials responsible for environmental issues. In 1988, a presentation entitled "Participatory Radio for Rural Development: the Bahá'í Experiments" was presented at the International Colloquium on Communication and Culture in Bled, Yugoslavia.

A number of Bahá'í doctors were able to consult their Eastern European colleagues for the first time. In the spring of 1990, a doctor visiting Uzbekistan was able to share the Faith at a hospital in Tashkent. In every department, at least one doctor read the Peace Statement and discussed it with fellow physicians. In the autumn of 1991, a Bahá'í was invited by the Institute of Preventative Medicine in Uzbekistan, to present two papers at a congress of genetics and molecular biology. The doctor was able to mention the Faith in his speech and during informal talks with doctors and scientists. He stressed the importance of cooperation between the East and the West.

Three doctors from three different countries spent twelve days in August 1991 at the university town of Olomouc, Czechoslovakia, where they conducted an unprecedented combined course in medical English and "The Promise of World Peace" for a group of Czechoslovakian doctors. Also at the University of Olomouc, the Bahá'ís helped organize a symposium called "Rational Faith and Blind Science?" which was addressed by a Bahá'í physicist from Germany. Two Bahá'ís were frequent visitors to Czechoslovakia, where they lectured on psychology at different universities and assisted with the teaching work.

Media coverage of many Bahá'í-sponsored events was excellent, as journalists eagerly sought information about life outside the Eastern Bloc. In addition to coverage of the events described above and fairly regular interviews of travelling teachers around the region, several films on the Faith were broadcast. Russian television aired a documentary on the Bahá'í Faith called "A Temple on My Way" which was produced by the Russian company Rus-film. The video "Jewel in the Lotus", about the Bahá'í House of Worship in India, was broadcast on national television in Bulgaria through the unified efforts of the Varna Bahá'í community and travelling teachers. Polish television aired a documentary about the Faith called "The Fold of the Ninth Prophet".

As the teaching work began to include more and more native believers, (see also section on "Numerous New Supporters attracted to the Faith", p. 207.) teaching conferences were held to stimulate and coordinate these efforts. The first national teaching conference in Albania, held in Durres in November 1991, drew 200 Albanian Bahá'ís from ten different localities and fifty travelling teachers. A journalist who attended all the sessions decided to spread the Faith through his newspaper. The teaching conference ended with a public meeting at a hall in the centre of the city. The first national teaching conferences of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia also occurred in 1991. In January 1992, the first teaching conference of Croatia and Slovenia took place in Kranj.

Approximately 400 believers performed "the prince of all goodly deeds" during the Two Year Plan, leaving their homes to resettle in the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe. The final two pioneering goals of the Ten Year Crusade were fulfilled when Sean Hinton settled in Mongolia and 'Abbás and Riḍváníyyih Katirai settled in Sakhalin. As the Plan progressed, native believers began arising to pioneer. The first Slovak homefront pioneers of Czechoslovakia moved to Jindrichuv Hradec in 1991. The first Ukrainian pioneer settled in Minsk in early 1992.



The Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Akbar Furútan in Samarkand (U.S.S.R.), visiting with some Bahá'í friends on 1 April 1990.



Bahá'ís meeting with the President of Albania, His Excellency Ramiz Alia, in his offices in Durres, 1 November 1991. Shown from left: Mrs. Luci Bylykbashi of the Local Assembly of Durres, President Alia, Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre Farzam Arbab, Mrs. Laurie Arbab, and Mr. Gian-Franco Mazzoni of the National Assembly of Italy.

3. Numerous New Supporters Attracted to the Faith

By the end of the Two Year Plan, more than 12,000 people in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and Mongolia had embraced the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and thousands more had been exposed to His Message. Many who had not formally enrolled in the community had expressed their deep appreciation for the teachings and helped make it possible for them to spread.

People from all backgrounds became Bahá'ís. The comments of one travelling teacher in Albania were very typical: "Many different kinds of people accepted the Faith—cultured people, artists, professionals, students, musicians, actors, directors, judges, refugees and the unemployed". A seventy-year-old nun, after forty-eight years of service to the Catholic Church, accepted the Bahá'í Faith in Maribor, Yugoslavia. After reading *Thief in the Night*, she said, "I came to the clear understanding that I have to strive for complete integration into the Bahá'í community." In the village of Kolindo in Sakhalin, a mayor and leaders of the indigenous minority were among more than 150 people who declared their allegiance to Bahá'u'lláh.

A readiness to accept the Faith quite soon after first hearing about it was not unusual in Eastern Europe. In one case, a Bahá'í was speaking to an Albanian lawyer regarding official recognition for the Faith when the lawyer said, "I have always believed in these teachings. Please register my name. I want to be a Bahá'í." The Bahá'í who had been speaking to her was surprised by her readiness and asked for an opportunity to explain more. During the next fifteen minutes, she stopped him two or three more times, repeating her wish to enrol. The next day, when contacted by one of the local believers, the lawyer said, "I have consulted all my friends.... They all want to join [the Faith]". When she was visited later by her original teacher and was offered a wall hanging with three prayers on it, she said she already knew the short obligatory prayer almost by heart from reading it in *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era.*

Also in Albania, a young man approached some travelling teachers to ask them where they came from, and upon hearing of the Faith, said that a Faith like this can only be true. He said the oneness of mankind is the highest aspiration of today's man. After enrolling in the Faith three days later, the man shared the teachings with a co-worker who then requested a meeting with the travelling teachers. After some discussion, this man called on yet another friend and said, "I have met some Italian friends who have disclosed to me a religion that spiritualizes democracy and democratizes spirituality." Both men joined the Faith, the latter returning to his home, waking up his wife and seventeen-year-old son, and sharing the Cause with them. Both accepted Bahá'u'lláh that night.

In Romania, 350 people in at least sixty different localities accepted the Faith during a three-week teaching campaign.

In the Soviet Union, it was more common for those first hearing about the Faith to eagerly begin an intense study and application of its teachings which could continue for a number of years before enrolment in the community. Travelling teachers were often amazed at the depth of understanding and commitment demonstrated by seekers and new believers.

One of the numerous examples of this comes from the Ukraine. A man was exposed to the Faith at a Bahá'í business forum, and after the Bahá'ís left, he continued to think deeply about what he had learned. He began abstaining from the use of alcohol and then made the major decision to resign his membership in the Communist Party, a move that would cause him to lose his job as manager at a large plant. He formed the goal of creating his own business based on the principles learned at the Bahá'í forum. He also decided that although he would like his

family members to become Bahá'ís, and that according to tradition he could issue this decree, he would instead expose them to the teachings and let them reach their own conclusions. "My whole family will be Bahá'í someday but it must be when they discover it in their hearts," he said.

For several years prior to 1990, four men from Leningrad University had studied the Faith without knowing that there were any Bahá'ís in their city or that there was literature in Russian. The situation came to light when the men wrote a letter to the Association for Bahá'í Studies in Canada. When a pioneer later visited them, she found four dedicated believers.

When a travelling teacher asked a member of a new Local Spiritual Assembly about the election, the relatively new Bahá'í explained in great detail the whole election procedure, including rules for absentee votes and tellers, and showed the ballot that had been carefully prepared. The visitor stood in silence as the native believer demonstrated his clear understanding of the important process of which he had become a part.

A fervent eagerness to share their newfound Faith with others was common among new believers throughout the Eastern Bloc. Speaking about some of the 126 people who enrolled in Bulgaria during December 1991 and January 1992, one travelling teacher said, "Watching them teach and talk about Bahá'u'lláh made one wonder whether these are the ones who could cross the seven valleys in 'seven steps, nay rather in seven breaths, nay rather in a single breath'". Within a day or two of enrolling, some of them took full responsibility for the teaching efforts, translating talks and articles, distributing leaflets, giving public talks, inviting people to join the Faith and giving their phone numbers as contact points. In Albania, a travelling teacher found that "once they heard about the Faith, they immediately became active so as to make their contribution to the establishment of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh".

One of the people to declare his faith in the Soviet Union just before the Two Year Plan was a sixteen-year-old boy who immediately taught his mother what he had learned. A few months later, she enrolled and set in motion the Russian film project about the Faith. She in turn taught her parents who brought nine residents of their Ukrainian village into the Faith.

Much of the teaching work was facilitated by the enthusiastic support of non-Bahá'ís who appreciated Bahá'í principles and contributed to their diffusion. One family, who discovered the Bahá'í Faith when they offered to host a travelling Bahá'í in their home, called themselves devout atheists, yet they regularly talked late into the night with their guest about God, religion, Christianity, and the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Each day they would share what they had learned with co-workers. When Bahá'ís returned to the city for other teaching projects, the family repeatedly allowed their home to be used as a central point of contact for Bahá'ís needing to exchange messages. Another woman who hosted a travelling Bahá'í made her modest flat available for firesides, coming home from work each night and preparing food for twenty-five to thirty-five people on a tiny two-burner stove.

Following a Bahá'í business seminar in the Soviet Union, one company chief called all his employees together to announce that the office would begin applying some newly-learned spiritual principles to its work. He told the employees that they would be using consultation so he could hear their contributions and feedback. This was an entirely new concept, and the employees were amazed.

In one of the Soviet cities where the music group Daystar performed, the director of a philharmonic hall offered the facility and the staff at no charge. Following El Viento Canta's tour, university students in another city instantly prepared the necessary documents to make the visits of more Bahá'í groups possible and offered to cover the expenses of the concert hall and accommodations.

One university student in the Ukraine, who was not a Bahá'í, received the highest mark in his class for his presentation on the Faith in a course called "Scientific Atheism". The student had discovered the teachings when he volunteered to help guide a group of travelling teachers. He read all the books he was given and prepared a thirty minute oral presentation which won the praise of his professor.

In Mongolia, the organizers of the eighth Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace invited the Bahá'í International Community to send representatives. The delegation received a warm response to its statement, "The Common Goal of Universal Peace in Buddhism and the Bahá'í Faith", which was delivered by the only woman speaker at the gathering. A Bahá'í International Community representative was the only non-Buddhist speaker to address a public meeting arranged for the conference's final day.

Other support for spread of the Faith came from the organizers of the centenary Universal Czech Exhibition. The Bahá'ís were the only religion to have a special exhibit, because the organizers were attracted to the concept of the oneness of religions and felt the Bahá'í Faith could represent all the faiths.

The Albanian Minister of Education attended the opening session of a national symposium called "A New Framework for Moral Education" held in Tirana in 1991. In fact, the Ministry co-sponsored the event, which was initiated by Bahá'ís and well-received by the 300 university professors, teachers, educational administrators, and students who attended. The Ministry officials said the symposium had provided them with the impetus they needed to begin changing their educational system in a fundamental way.

After a successful public meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria, a high government official asked the Bahá'ís to help draft legislation on religious tolerance. In Tajikistan, a member of the Supreme Soviet attended quite a few Bahá'í meetings and expressed several times her great respect and love for Ṭáhirih and for the Bahá'í Faith in general. The former President of Uzbekistan said he was deeply impressed and highly interested in the Faith after visiting the House of Worship in India and then meeting Bahá'ís back in Uzbekistan. After the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Croatia was visited and presented with *The Promise of World Peace,* he said, "Your Peace Message has been studied in our Ministry and we support this initiative".

One of the prominent people who not only supported the Bahá'ís but joined the community was the first Deputy Minister of Culture of Tajikistan, who became a Bahá'í along with twenty-four members of the Opera Choir in Dushanbe, after the concert of Bijan Khadem-Missagh in 1991.



The delegation of the Bahá'í International Community, which was invited to attend the eighth Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace, held in Ulaan-Baatar, Mongolia, in September 1990.

For both those who declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh and those who chose to take more time to investigate, their encounters with the Faith often meant an end to many forms of isolation. Living in societies where ideas were tightly controlled, spiritual needs were not acknowledged, and interaction with foreigners was extremely limited, the people of these regions had been deprived of exposure to the world's growing acceptance of oneness. At one international women's forum which the Bahá'ís organized in Leningrad, a participant commented that it was a whole new thought for her to realize that she was part of a global sisterhood. Similarly, a Bahá'í who travelled to the Soviet Union and participated in a Bahá'í business forum observed: "The Soviets made a 180 degree turn from the first day to the last. They realized that they are not alone in their struggles. Even the West is going through hard times and must change. We can encourage each other and share skills to implement up-to-date thinking as we jointly prepare for the twenty-first century." A Soviet participant in the school said it was the first time she had seen the eyes of the businessmen shine.

When the first Moscow Bahá'í conference took place in December 1990, it was a completely new experience for the Soviets to openly gather for expressly spiritual reasons, to meet people from different areas without the need for suspicion, and to realize that there was no hierarchy among them. Even though they had known there were Bahá'ís scattered throughout their vast country, it was the first time they actually sat side by side.

4. Translation, Publication, and Dissemination of Bahá'í Literature in Requisite Languages of the Entire Area

In the early years of the twentieth century, a number of translations of Bahá'í Sacred Writings and introductory materials about the Faith were produced in the languages of the region that later became the Eastern Bloc. As already mentioned, a Russian translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was made, and a compilation of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh was published in St. Petersburg in 1908. In addition, *Paris Talks* was printed in Polish in 1915. Literature printed in Albanian included *Words of Wisdom* in 1930, the Kitáb-i-Íqán in 1932, and *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* in 1933. A Bulgarian translation of The Hidden Words was printed in 1937.

During the decades that followed, a few other publications were also produced. *An Introduction to the Bahá'í Faith* in Albanian came out in 1954. *Paris Talks* was printed in Estonian in 1968. A book of selections from *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* in Hungarian was printed in 1979, followed by a selection of prayers in 1981, and The Hidden Words in 1982. A Polish translation of The Hidden Words was produced in 1979. Publications in Romanian included a prayer book printed in 1982, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* in 1983, and The Hidden Words in 1984. The Eastern Literature Committee in Germany was particularly active, preparing and publishing Bahá'í literature in most of the languages of the countries for which the German community had responsibility.

However, as manuscripts were not allowed into or out of the countries of the Eastern Bloc before the collapse of communism, the translations were often done by native speakers living in exile, many of whom did not speak the most current version of the language. In 1989, the laws restricting religious literature in the Soviet Union were lifted, and in 1990 the Spiritual Assembly of Moscow obtained government permission to have Bahá'í books published in Russian. Despite the obstacles that existed when the Six Year Plan began, nearly two dozen Bahá'í books, booklets, Tablets and introductory pamphlets were translated and printed in Russian during this period. Also, 50,000 copies of a Russian edition of

the Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí Akbar Furútan's book *Mothers, Fathers and Children* were printed in 1992.

To serve the needs of the rapidly expanding Bahá'í communities in Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, and Russia, particular efforts were made to quickly print large quantities of "core literature" in the languages of these countries. (See p.158 for an explanation of the core literature programme.) In all the nations of the former Eastern Bloc, previous translations were revised, new translations made, and reprints of existing materials produced. The translations and publications are too numerous to list, but a few examples will provide a sense of the range of projects undertaken in such a short period of time.

During the Two Year Plan, prayer books were printed in Azeri, Croatian, Macedonian, and Slovene; the Kitáb-i-Íqán was printed in Romanian; *Selections from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* was printed in Hungarian; the Kitáb-i-'Ahd was printed in Polish; *The Reality of Man* was printed in Czech and Slovak; *Paris Talks* was printed in Serbian; *The Promise of World Peace* was translated into Estonian, and printed in Armenian, Georgian, and Latvian; *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* was translated into Lithuanian; and *Pathway to Peace* was printed in Mongolian and Uzbek. The Hidden Words was published in Armenian in the prestigious bimonthly newspaper *Punik* in 1991.

Even before the Two Year Plan, book fairs in the Eastern Bloc had provided an important vehicle for bringing Bahá'í literature to the attention of a wide audience, and they continued to serve this vital function.

The German Bahá'í Publishing Trust, in collaboration with other Bahá'í Publishing Trusts, began its successful biennial representation at the Moscow International Book Fair significantly before the Two Year Plan, and continued participation until the fair's cancellation in 1989. At the close of several book fairs, Bahá'í books were donated to the Lenin Library in Moscow which in turn distributed them to other libraries, including one of the main libraries in Leningrad.

An annual international book and video fair in Budapest, Hungary, first held in 1989, included Bahá'í participation every year. The Publishing Trust of the United Kingdom organized the Bahá'í booth, which was visited by prominent people such as the Minister of Education, and drew the attention of the Hungarian National Television and Radio Company. Hundreds of items of literature were distributed each year.

The Bahá'í Committee for Eastern Literature organized a very successful book fair in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1989, at which 4,500 copies of the Perspective Series booklet *The Bahá'í Faith* in Serbian were distributed. The following year, the Bahá'í Book Distribution Service Austria participated in the thirty-fifth International Book Fair in Belgrade. Approximately 2,000 introductions to the Faith, 700 copies of *The Promise of World Peace*, and one hundred copies of prayers were distributed.

A Bahá'í Book Exhibition, held in Riga, Latvia, in October 1990 under the auspices of the Central Latvian State Library, attracted some 600 people. Following the exhibit a great number of the Bahá'í books were contributed to the State Library.

It is difficult to convey the significance of the translation, production, and distribution work which intensified during the Two Year Plan. Perhaps its importance can be hinted at by recounting the story of a Russian believer, who, when she saw *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* in Russian for the first time, was "like a starving person who just found food". She grabbed two copies, held them to her breast and cried, "Now my friends can see that I am telling the truth ... they can read these".



Knight of Bahá'u'lláh 'Abbás Katirai (left) arrived in Sakhalin on 24 March 1990 with his wife, Riḍváníyyih, fulfilling the last remaining pioneer goal of the Ten Year Crusade.

5. Development of the Administrative Order

By the end of the Two Year Plan, 127 Local Spiritual Assemblies had formed throughout Eastern Europe, Mongolia, and the former Soviet Union. Bahá'ís were residing in more than 700 localities. In a region of the world where just a few short years earlier it had been illegal to openly teach the Faith, the administrative order brought by Bahá'u'lláh had taken root.

The Spiritual Assembly of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

In March 1990 the Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí Akbar Furútan, who had lived in the Soviet Union from 1914 to 1930, studying at Moscow University and serving the Cause in Ashkhabad, returned to the U.S.S.R. and witnessed the re-election of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Moscow after a lapse of some fifty years. Slightly more than one year later, at Riḍván 1991, he returned again, this time as a representative of the Universal House of Justice to attend the historic election of the first Spiritual Assembly of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

In the three major addresses Mr. Furútan gave to the Convention in the Russian language, he related some of his early experiences in Moscow; spoke about the spiritual importance of the election of a Spiritual Assembly for the largest country of the world; reflected on the high expectations of the Guardian concerning the progress of the Faith in the Soviet Union; and prepared the delegates for their heavy responsibility. Mr. Furútan also read, in Russian, the message from the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the U.S.S.R. for Riḍván 1991.

When the time came for representatives of other National Assemblies to present gifts to the new Assembly, the Soviet Bahá'ís also felt moved to proceed to the front of the hall and make their contributions. Some gave books, others funds, and others recounted the great difficulties they had faced during the past decades and expressed their utmost joy about the formation of the Assembly. For more than ninety minutes, Bahá'ís from throughout the Soviet Union proceeded to the front to express their joy.

In March 1992, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Spiritual Assembly of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was renamed the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Baltic States and Georgia. At Riḍván 1992 this Assembly was renamed the Regional Spiritual Assembly of Russia, Georgia and Armenia, and the territory under its jurisdiction was reduced. Four other National or

Regional Spiritual Assemblies were established to cover the territory of the former U.S.S.R.: the National Spiritual Assembly of Azerbaijan; the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Baltic States; the Regional Spiritual Assembly of Central Asia; and the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova.

The Regional Spiritual Assembly of Russia, Georgia and Armenia

At the beginning of the Six Year Plan, there had been seven believers in Russia. Bahá'ís from various countries had been studying in the U.S.S.R., and a young couple from the United Kingdom had settled in Moscow in 1982. After the beginning of the Six Year Plan, other pioneers followed who greatly assisted the teaching work which had been persistently pursued by relays of travelling teachers for many years.

In 1990 'Abbás and Riḍváníyyih Katirai settled in Sakhalin, for which they were named Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, thereby completing the pioneering work called for by the Guardian at the opening of the Ten Year Crusade. At the end of the Six Year Plan, there were some forty pioneers in Russia.

By Riḍván 1992 there were some thirty Local Assemblies in Russia, one in Armenia and one group in Georgia. Assemblies in Moscow, Ulan-Ude, Kazan, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk and Kholmsk were registered, and a local centre had been purchased in Kazan. The Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Russia, Georgia and Armenia was overseeing the largest Bahá'í territorial area in the world, with a general population of over 155 million.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Azerbaijan

There is no accurate record of the number of believers in Azerbaijan at the beginning of the Six Year Plan. The goal of the Two Year Plan was to form two Local Assemblies. By Riḍván 1992, Azerbaijan had three Local Assemblies, five groups and approximately 150 believers, the majority living in Baku. Furthermore, the Baku Assembly was officially registered.

Teaching and consolidation were carried out in the early stages of the Six Year Plan by travelling teachers making contact with relatives in Azerbaijan. Many of the descendants of the early believers had kept their deep love for the Faith through all the years of religious oppression. Later in the Plan radio and television interviews brought the Faith to the attention of the public.

By the end of the Plan, four long-term pioneers had settled in Azerbaijan. Like the travelling teachers, they played a crucial role in the development of the community, and their efforts produced notable results.

At Riḍván 1992, the National Spiritual Assembly of Azerbaijan, with its seat in Baku, was elected after a lapse of more than fifty years.

The Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Baltic States

The Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were independent countries before being annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940. These republics became sovereign countries again in 1991.

At Riḍván 1992 the first Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Baltic States was established with its seat in Tallinn, Estonia. One hundred Bahá'ís from the Baltic States and ten other countries filled the hall to capacity for this historic first convention, at which the Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí Akbar Furútan represented the House of Justice. Mr. Furútan spoke in Russian when conveying the love and greetings of the House of Justice to the friends.

Estonia, whose population of nearly two million is eighty per cent Lutheran, had only three Bahá'ís at the beginning of the Six Year Plan, including Brigitte Lundblade, who had returned to her country of birth in April 1989. Other pioneers joined her, and their dedicated efforts led to the formation of two Local Assemblies: one in the capital city



Bahá'ís in Tallinn, Estonia, U.S.S.R. on 7 June 1987. From left to right: Johannes Palu, Raja Palu, Antonina Apollo, Vjaceslav Hromov.



In Riga, Latvia, pioneers Darrel and Sylvia Vice, with their children Tamara and Talis, held their first Nineteen Day Feast on 7 September 1989.

of Tallinn formed at Riḍván 1990, and one in Tartu, formed at Riḍván 1991.

Latvia, with a population of nearly three million people, has three primary religions: Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox. The first Local Spiritual Assembly of Riga, the Latvian capital, was formed in January 1991. By the end of the Plan, two pioneers resided in this country.

Lithuania, with a population of nearly four million, is ninety per cent Roman Catholic. The first Local Assembly of Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital, was formed in September 1990. In January 1992 Lithuania held its first large-scale teaching project called "Project Kaunas". It was sponsored by the International Goals Committee of Sweden and proved to be very successful. The Plan ended with four pioneers in Lithuania.

The Regional Spiritual Assembly of Central Asia

The population of this region is approximately fifty million and includes the republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. There is no accurate record of the number of believers in these republics at the beginning of the Six Year Plan; however, by the end of the Plan, there were approximately 500 Bahá'ís, and all the goals had been achieved, with eight Local Assemblies established or re-established. The historic re-establishment of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Ashkhabad had taken place at Riḍván 1989, and the Assembly had been registered the same year. The first Local Assembly in Tajikistan had been formed in Dushanbe at Riḍván 1990 and was recognized by the Ministry for Religious Affairs in November of that year. A local centre had been purchased in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

At Riḍván 1992 the Regional Spiritual Assembly of Central Asia with its seat in Ashkhabad was re-formed, having previously existed from 1925 to 1939 as the National Spiritual Assembly of Turkistan. Inspired and guided by the Counsellors at the Convention, the new National Assembly immediately formulated a one-year teaching plan which was received by the assembled believers with joy and appreciation.

The Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova

In the Ukraine, three Local Assemblies had been formed by 1990 as a result of the consolidation work of travelling teachers and a few pioneers. By Riḍván 1991 the community had grown to six Local Assemblies and 200 believers; by the end of that year, eighteen long-term pioneers were settled in various parts of the country. The Plan ended with some 250 believers in the Ukraine.

Belarus (White Russia) had been opened by Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Helmut Winkelbach in 1978, who stayed for two years. He returned in 1986 with his wife, Olga, a native of that country. Their teaching efforts and the arrival of one more pioneer produced a group of eight believers by Riḍván 1991. By September that year a Local Assembly had been formed in Minsk. Other enrolments occurred after a group of twenty enthusiastic travelling teachers came through from the United Kingdom. By the end of the Plan there were twenty-three adults, six youth and one Local Assembly in Belarus.

Moldova began the Six Year Plan with one believer. In May 1991 the first Local Assembly was formed in Chişinău (Kishinev), and a pioneer from the United States arrived. At the end of the Plan there were approximately fifty believers in Moldova.

At Riḍván 1992 as a result of the teaching activity during the Two Year Plan, the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova was formed with its seat in Kiev. The Hand of the Cause of God Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá represented the House of Justice at this Regional Convention. By then there were six Local Assemblies in the Ukraine with two, Kiev and Odessa, officially registered; one Local Assembly in Belarus; and one in Moldova, all goals having been achieved. A local centre had been purchased in Chişinău, Moldova.



Seventy-five Bahá'ís from twelve cities and villages attending the National Teaching Conference held in Plovdiv, Bulgaria from 25 to 27 October 1991.



Participants in the regional conference held in Odessa, Ukraine, from 14 to 16 February, 1992. "Fellowship, deepening, and rich artistic presentation filled our hours," according to the conference report.

Other Countries of the Former Eastern Bloc

ALBANIA

The goal of the Two Year Plan for Albania was to establish one group of nine adults and open three localities, but by the end of that Plan there were between 3,000 and 4,000 Bahá'ís in Albania with eighteen Local Spiritual Assemblies and fourteen groups. The number of travelling teachers and the subsequent diffusion of the Faith had accelerated dramatically following the contacts made with descendants of the Çapari family in 1985 in Tirana. These activities had been enthusiastically promoted by the National Assembly of Italy, which had been asked to lead this work, sharing the responsibility long held by the Bahá'ís of Germany.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Albania was elected at Riḍván 1992 at a Convention attended by over 180 Albanian Bahá'ís from all parts of the country. The news of this Convention and the announcement of the election of the Assembly was broadcast the following day by the national television during prime-time news.

BULGARIA

The original Six Year Plan goal for Bulgaria was to establish one group of nine believers and open six localities. With the Two Year Plan the goal was expanded to establish two Local Spiritual Assemblies and open six localities to the Faith.

The first Local Spiritual Assembly was formed in Plovdiv in January 1991. During the week of the election there were teaching activities in which thirty-one people embraced the Faith. In March 1991 the Local Spiritual Assembly of Sofia was re-formed, and by Riḍván there were 150 Bahá'ís in eight localities with three Local Assemblies. During that same year the first National Teaching Conference was held and the first National Teaching Committee appointed.

The Faith was officially registered in Bulgaria on 26 November 1991, and by that date a small Bahá'í centre had been rented in Sofia. By the end of the Six Year Plan, there were 400 Bahá'ís residing in twenty-five localities with ten Local Assemblies. The first National Spiritual Assembly of Bulgaria was elected at Riḍván 1992 in the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, the representative of the Universal House of Justice.

Nearly 200 people from eighteen countries and twenty-one localities in Bulgaria attended the Convention, which was held in Sofia. "Bulgaria is bursting into a beautiful and abundant spring which seems symbolic of the wonderful, united, enthusiastic and happy spirit animating the first Bahá'í Convention held in this promising land," it was reported. On the last day of the Convention, the participants accompanied the Hand of the Cause to the burial places of Adam Benke and Marion Jack in the central cemetery of Sofia. That evening, ninety per cent of the audience, carried away by sheer joy, optimism and exuberance about the significance of the convention, danced together holding hands, a snaking column winding around the aisles of the hall.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

At the beginning of the Six Year Plan there were fifteen believers in Czechoslovakia, and the initial goal was to form one group of nine adults and open five localities to the Faith. With the Two Year Plan this goal was raised to forming four Local Spiritual Assemblies, opening six localities and forming a National Spiritual Assembly at Riḍván 1992. These goals were all surpassed. The first Local Assembly was elected in Prague in June 1990. Approximately forty-five per cent of the growth in the number of believers during the Six Year Plan occurred during the final year. By the end of the Plan, Czechoslovakia had five Local Spiritual Assemblies, seven groups and approximately 170 believers, including forty-one pioneers.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Czechoslovakia was elected at Riḍván 1991 in the presence of the Hand of the Cause of

God Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá as representative of the Universal House of Justice. The Convention participants reported: "Indeed, a new and glorious chapter in the history of the Bahá'í community of Czechoslovakia has opened. The future is truly dazzling. We stand committed to face these prospects united in service to our beloved Lord, ever mindful of the immeasurable sacrifices made by those heroic souls whose immortal services have brought us to where we now stand."

East Germany

Although the territories of both parts of Germany had always been under the jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany, that Assembly had experienced great difficulty in making contact with the few Bahá'ís living in the East until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the opening of the frontier.

In September 1990, just before the unification of the two parts of Germany, the National Spiritual Assembly obtained official recognition from the Cabinet Council's Department of Religious Affairs as "The Religious Community of the Bahá'ís in the German Democratic Republic". This farsighted action by the National Assembly ensured the recognition of the Faith in each of the five new eastern states of the united Federal Republic. The first Local Assembly in that region was elected in March 1992 in Erfurt. By the end of the Six Year Plan there were approximately fifty Bahá'ís in the eastern part of Germany, with two Local Spiritual Assemblies and twenty pioneers.

Hungary

The goals of the Six Year Plan for Hungary were to form two groups of nine adult Bahá'ís each and to open six localities. In 1987 Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum visited Budapest, greatly encouraging the small number of local friends and inspiring an increase in the flow of travelling teachers.

By 1989 there were five pioneers residing in three localities. In that same year the first summer school was held, followed by one each subsequent year. By 1990 there were forty believers, including eight pioneers. The Local Assembly of Budapest was reformed in the presence of a Counsellor, the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Austria, and fifty Hungarian believers and Austrian visitors, at what was called the most joyous Riḍván since before World War II. The friends recalled the historic visit of the beloved Master to Budapest and His stay only a few metres from the place the election was being held.

By 1991, after a number of teaching projects and the formation of the first National Teaching Committee, the community had grown to two Local Spiritual Assemblies



Bahá'í youth from several different countries staffing a display in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, on 27 August 1990.

and eight localities, and there were nineteen resident pioneers. By the end of the Plan there were 130 believers, four Local Spiritual Assemblies, twenty-six localities and twenty-five pioneers scattered around the country.

The first National Spiritual Assembly was elected at Riḍván 1992, with the Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí Akbar Furútan representing the Universal House of Justice. After the devotional part of the Convention, the approximately 160 participants from nineteen countries were thrilled to witness the enrolments of three more Hungarian friends into the Faith.

POLAND

Poland was opened to the Faith in 1926 by Martha Root, who visited again in 1932. After the seeds she planted lay dormant for many years, the Faith began to blossom in 1990 when Bahá'ís from many countries, particularly Germany, the United Kingdom and Ireland, responded to new teaching opportunities. In 1991, Ola Pavlovska returned to the land of her birth and settled in Warsaw. By the beginning of the Six Year Plan thirteen believers were reported to be in Poland; by the end of the Two Year Plan there were approximately eighty.

By April 1992, there were seven Local Assemblies in Poland, and the Bahá'í Faith was officially registered and recognized by the Department of Religious Affairs of the Council of Ministers, in Warsaw, thus ensuring full legal status for existing and future Assemblies. The National Assembly was elected at Riḍván 1992 in the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, who served as the representative of the Universal House of Justice.

Almost the entire Polish Bahá'í community and guests from thirty-four countries attended the first National Convention, held in Warsaw. The Convention paid a special tribute to Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Ola Pavlovska, who after many years in the pioneering field, was able to return to her native Poland.

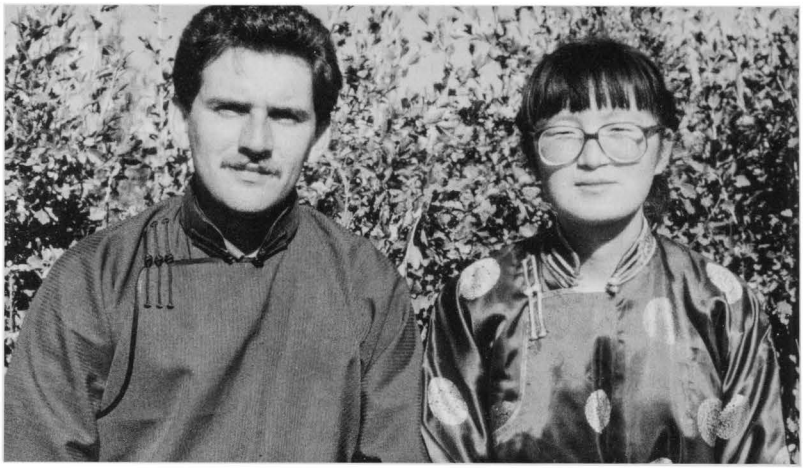
ROMANIA

After the communist takeover of Romania following World War II, the Bahá'ís were forbidden to teach the Faith. In 1989 government restraints relaxed, and the Faith began to spread with the support of travelling teachers from Austria and Germany. At the outset of the Six Year Plan the Romanian Bahá'í community consisted of three students from Germany and one native believer.

By Riḍván 1989 six localities had been opened to the Faith, and there were sixteen adult believers. Many music groups and travelling teachers continued to spread the Faith in different parts of the country, leading to the holding of the first National Bahá'í Teaching Conference in 1990, at which forty people became Bahá'ís.



Five members of New Zealand's Youth for One World, who travelled to East Germany in the summer of 1990, then went on to Romania.



The Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Mongolia, Sean Hinton (left) seated with the first native Mongolian Bahá'í, Oyundelger; 1990.

By Riḍván 1991 the great receptivity of the Romanian people and the ardent services of the Bahá'ís had raised the community to twelve Local Assemblies, twenty-eight groups and fifty-seven isolated centres, with some 1,000 believers in all. A firm foundation had been created for the election of the National Assembly that Riḍván, in the presence of the Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, representing the House of Justice.

The historic Convention was covered on a forty-minute-long national television programme which included an interview with Rúḥíyyih Khánum. A dynamic press conference with twenty-four journalists was also held. During the Convention and closing public meeting, the 300 participants welcomed forty-four new believers into the Faith.

Following the Convention, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum visited the grave of Queen Marie of Romania with Bahá'í friends.

YUGOSLAVIA

The goal of the Six Year Plan for Yugoslavia was to form two groups of nine adults and to open eleven localities. The goal of the subsidiary Two Year Plan was to establish four Local Spiritual Assemblies, increase the number of localities to thirteen and form the National Assembly. All of the goals were reached except the formation of the National Assembly, which could not be achieved due to the extreme political unrest in the country.

The National Assembly of Austria continued to be responsible for the Faith in Yugoslavia throughout the period. After the political breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991 two Regional Teaching Committees were formed to cover the geographical areas of the former republic. They were named the Regional Teaching Committee of the Bahá'ís of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia; and the Regional Teaching Committee of the Bahá'ís of Croatia and Slovenia.

Despite the challenges of ethnic rivalries, political unrest and extremely diverse cultures and languages, Bahá'í travelling teachers, mainly from Austria, contributed greatly to the growth of the Faith in Yugoslavia. Greater awareness of the Faith had been raised in 1988 when Bahá'ís presented papers on current issues at several conferences.

By the end of the Plan the former Yugoslavia had approximately 120 believers,

including twenty pioneers, and four Local Assemblies. In April 1992 the Faith was officially recognized in Slovenia.

MONGOLIA

When Sean Hinton, a young Bahá'í from Australia, first entered Mongolia in December 1988 to do research, it was still a virgin territory and one of two remaining pioneer goals from the Ten Year Crusade. Mr. Hinton was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for being the first Bahá'í to settle in Mongolia. He spent several prolonged periods in the country studying Mongolian folk music, sometimes in very remote areas of the Altai Mountains. In 1989, the first Mongolian enrolled in the Faith.

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum visited Mongolia for one week in May 1989. She gave a series of lectures about her travels and about world peace to university students studying English in Mongolia. In the spring of 1990, the music group El Viento Canta communicated the Bahá'í spirit to nationwide television and radio audiences, and the second and third Mongolians became Bahá'ís. One of these new believers, Burembayar, translated the first Bahá'í prayers into Mongolian.

The goal of the Two Year Plan was to establish one group and to open three localities. Travelling teachers from Germany, Switzerland, Canada, the United States and Malaysia were among those who visited the country, and two new pioneers, one from Germany and one from the United States, joined Mr. Hinton in settling there.

Toward the end of 1991 responsibility for the Faith in Mongolia was transferred from the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany to the Spiritual Assembly of Singapore. The formation of the first Mongolian Local Spiritual Assembly in Ulaan-Baatar was reported at Riḍván 1992.

6. MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE TWO YEAR PLAN

> There is no doubt that the day will come when the very people who are now engaged in destroying the foundations of faith in God and promoting this baseless doctrine of materialism will arise and, by their own hand, snuff out the flame of this commotion...,

the Guardian wrote in 1923, concerning the events then transpiring in Russia.

> They will sweep away the entire structure of their unrestrained godlessness and will arise with heart and soul, and with hitherto unmatched vigour, to atone for their past failures. They will join the ranks of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh and arise to promote His Cause...

This time seems finally to have come. An indication of the extraordinary achievements made during the short span of the Two Year Plan can be seen from the listing of the goals at the outset of the Six Year Plan, the goals established for the Two Year Plan, and the actual situation in each country at Riḍván 1992 when both plans came to an end.

GOALS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE AND MONGOLIA

Territory	Six Year Plan Goals	Two Year Plan Goals	Achievements
Albania	Open to the Faith	One group of 9 in Tirana Open 3 localities	18 LSAs 21 other localities NSA formed and registered at Riḍván 1992
Bulgaria	Form 1 group of 9 Open 6 localities	Form 2 LSAs Open 6 localities	10 LSAs 25 localities NSA formed at Riḍván 1992
Czechoslovakia	Form 1 group of 9 Open 5 localities	Form 4 LSAs Open 6 localities Establish NSA at Riḍván 1992	5 LSAs 11 localities NSA formed at Riḍván 1991
Former East Germany	Form 4 groups of 9	Form 6 LSAs Open 30 localities At least 12 groups	2 LSAs 26 other localities
Hungary	Form 2 groups of 9 Open 6 localities	Form 5 LSAs Open 13 localities Establish NSA at Riḍván 1992	4 LSAs 17 localities NSA formed at Riḍván 1992
Poland	Form 4 groups of 9	Form 6 LSAs Establish NSA at Riḍván 1992	8 LSAs 29 other localities NSA formed at Riḍván 1992 Faith registered
Romania	Open 6 localities	Form 4 LSAs Open 10 localities Establish NSA at Riḍván 1992	25 LSAs 485 localities NSA formed at Riḍván 1991
Yugoslavia	Form 2 groups of 9 Open 11 localities	Form 4 LSAs Open 13 localities Establish NSA at Riḍván 1992	4 LSAs 20 other localities Political situation did not allow NSA to be formed
Mongolia	Open to the Faith	Establish 1 group Open 3 localities	1 LSA in Ulaan-Baatar

GOALS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

Territory	Six Year Plan Goals	Two Year Plan Goals	Achievements
Armenia	Consolidate	LSA in Yerevan	LSA Yerevan
Azerbaijan	Consolidate	Establish 2 LSAs	3 LSAs 5 other localities NSA at Riḍván 1992
Belarus (Bielarus)	Reopen to the Faith	Form LSA in Minsk	1 LSA in Minsk
Estonia	Form 1 group of 9	Form 1 LSA Open 4 localities	2 LSAs 3 other localities
Georgia	Consolidate	Form 1 LSA in Tbilisi	1 group in Tbilisi
Kazakhstan	Consolidate	Form 1 LSA Form 1 group	1 LSA 1 locality
Kyrgyzstan (Kirgizia)	Consolidate	Form 1 LSA in Bishkek (Frunze)	1 LSA in Bishkek
Latvia	Form 1 group of 9 in Riga	Form 1 LSA Open 3 localities	1 LSA 2 other localities
Lithuania	Form 1 group of 9 in Vilnius	Form 1 LSA Open 3 localities	1 LSA 2 other localities
Moldova (Moldavia)	Settle one pioneer	Form 1 LSA in Kishinev (Chişinau)	1 LSA in Kishinev (Chişinau)
Russia	Groups of 9 in Leningrad & Moscow Open Petroskoi Open at least 6 localities	Form at least 7 LSAs 1 LSA and 3 localities in Sakhalin Establish NSA at Riḍván 1992	25 LSAs More than 50 other localities NSA formed at Riḍván 1991
Tajikistan (Tadzhikistan)	Consolidate	LSA in Dushanbe	1 LSA in Dushanbe 3 other localities
Turkmenistan	Consolidate	Form 2 LSAs	3 LSAs 3 other localities

GOALS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION *(CONTINUED)*

Territory	Six Year Plan Goals	Two Year Plan Goals	Achievements
Ukraine	Consolidate	Form 4–5 LSAs	7 LSAs More than 10 other localities
Uzbekistan	Consolidate	Form 2 LSAs in Tashkent and Samarkand	2 LSAs in Tashkent and Samarkand 2 other localities



The first issue of the Russian Bahá'í newsletter, "The Express", is done after friends worked all night to meet their self-imposed deadline. December 1991.



The first Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Marv, Turkmenistan, Russia. Formed on 23 September 1990.

III
INTERNATIONAL SURVEY OF CURRENT BAHÁ'Í ACTIVITIES 1986–1992

1. THE OPENING OF THE FOURTH EPOCH OF THE FORMATIVE AGE

SHERNA DEAMER

The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, whose supreme mission is none other but the achievement of [the] organic and spiritual unity of the whole body of nations, should... be regarded as... marking the last and highest stage in the stupendous evolution of man's collective life on this planet.[1]

THE growth of the Bahá'í Faith could be charted, Shoghi Effendi wrote, in terms of three major stages: the Heroic Age (1844–1921) associated with the Central Figures of the Faith; the Formative Age (1921–), during which the Administrative Order would be established; and the Golden Age, which will see the emergence of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Within each Age, Shoghi Effendi described distinguishable periods. In the Formative Age he used the term "first epoch" for the period 1921–1944/46, when the foundations of the Administrative Order were first erected—the Local and National Spiritual Assemblies. The second epoch encompassed 1946–1963, when the Faith spread, its administration matured, and its World Centre was consolidated. A notable feature of this epoch was the designation by Shoghi Effendi, beginning in 1951, of Hands of the Cause of God to assist him, and then, in 1954, of Auxiliary Boards to assist the Hands. He also created the International Bahá'í Council, in 1951, as the forerunner of the Universal House of Justice.

The third epoch encompassed 1963–1986, when the influence of the Faith began extending into the world at large, and the Bahá'í community began to demonstrate its potentialities. The third epoch began with the inaugural election of the Universal House of Justice, and witnessed the writing of the constitution of that Supreme Body, the codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, and the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy when the Universal House of Justice moved into its permanent Seat at the apex of the Arc on Mount Carmel. The institutions of the Continental Boards of Counsellors and the International Teaching Centre were created and developed during the third epoch.

The opening of the fourth epoch of the Formative Age of the Faith was announced in a letter dated 2 January 1986, written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the world. In that letter, a process was outlined whereby the task of formulating national goals would devolve largely on the

[1] Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 163.

National Spiritual Assemblies, in consultation with the Boards of Counsellors, rather than being specified by the Universal House of Justice or the International Teaching Centre. Emphasizing the significance of this development, the House of Justice stated that "...we have no hesitation in recognizing that this new development in the maturation of Bahá'í institutions marks the inception of the fourth epoch of that Age".

The concept of national goals had first been introduced by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in a series of letters He had written to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada between 1916 and 1917. Called the Tablets of the Divine Plan, they had offered a vision of the Faith spread around the world and encouraged the friends to act on that vision. Shoghi Effendi had used the Tablets of the Divine Plan as the charter for a series of Plans he designed to spread the Faith, and to provide an administrative order for the community. The Universal House of Justice had continued to develop Plans for the Bahá'í world, in consultation with the International Teaching Centre after that institution was created in 1973.

The last Plan of the third epoch was the third Seven Year Plan, which covered the period from 1979 to 1986. At the end of this Plan, Bahá'ís were living in 116,707 localities around the world, representing about 2,100 ethnic groups with members who had embraced the Faith. One hundred and forty-eight National Spiritual Assemblies and 32,854 Local Spiritual Assemblies were elected at Riḍván 1986, and thousands of properties enhanced the ability of the Bahá'ís to carry forward the work of the Cause.

The numerical growth in the rolls of believers reflected the growing spiritual transformation of the lives of the believers. From the early days of the Cause Bahá'ís had founded schools and hospitals, homes for the aged and charities for the poor. As Bahá'ís developed the attitudes of service called for by their Faith, they found new abilities to translate its Teachings into action. By the end of the Seven Year Plan, an Office of Social and Economic Development had been established at the Bahá'í World Centre to help coordinate the more than one thousand projects initiated by Bahá'ís in the fields of agriculture, community development, health, education, improvement of the status of women, environment, and other areas of activity.



Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre Donald Rogers (center) facilitated community consultation on the Six Year Plan held in Kingstown, St. Vincent, in May 1986.

The increasing numbers of Bahá'ís and the activities they sponsored demanded a corresponding maturation of the institutions of the Faith. Births were recorded, marriages conducted, and funerals organized. By the end of the Seven Year Plan, locally sponsored children's classes were held in 165 countries or territories, youth activities in 143, and special women's activities in 116 countries or territories. Funds were raised, newsletters were published, properties were acquired, and legal recognition of the Faith was attained.

In 1985, the development of the Faith took a dramatic new course with the release of *The Promise of World Peace*, a letter from the Universal House of Justice to the peoples of the world. This was the first time the House of Justice had ever addressed itself directly to the generality of humankind, and it took up the central issue facing the human race in the closing years of the twentieth century. (For the full text of *The Promise of World Peace* see pp. 324–333 of *The Bahá'í World*, volume XIX.)

The Universal House of Justice asked the National Spiritual Assemblies around the globe to present copies of *The Promise of World Peace* to the Heads of State of their respective nations and territories, and by Riḍván 1986 a total of 138 such presentations had been made. Concurrently, the Bahá'í world community began to distribute *The Promise of World Peace* to other leaders of society as well as to their friends and neighbours, so that within eighteen months of its release, more than a million copies, in some seventy languages, had been presented.

The launching of the Peace Message had an electrifying effect upon the Bahá'ís of the world, and evoked a new confidence in the elected administrators of the Faith. But the most dramatic development of the Faith's institutions during the third epoch was the result of forces outside of the control of the believers. In its 1986 Riḍván message to the Bahá'ís of the world the Universal House of Justice wrote:

> The opening of [the Seven Year] Plan coincided with the recrudescence of savage persecution of the Bahá'í community in Iran, a deliberate effort to eliminate the Cause of God from the land of its birth. The heroic steadfastness of the Persian friends has been the mainspring of tremendous international attention focussed



In Thailand, Bahá'ís in a refugee camp called "Site Two North Camp" were married during a ceremony held on 7 October 1987.

on the Cause, eventually bringing it to the agenda of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and, together with worldwide publicity in all the media, accomplishing its emergence from the obscurity which characterized and sheltered the first period of its life.

The implications of the Faith's emergence from obscurity were discussed during the fifth Bahá'í International Convention, held in the Holy Land from 30 April to 2 May 1983. Among the themes especially emphasized was the importance of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh living up to the high standards set by the Blessed Beauty, so that Bahá'í institutions and community life can confidently welcome examination by the peoples of the world.

To assist National Spiritual Assemblies determine their own levels of maturity, the Bahá'í World Centre's Department of the Secretariat sent a letter on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to each Assembly on 25 November 1984, asking it to evaluate its community's strengths and weaknesses:

> *1. Current Status and Specific Needs of the Bahá'í Community.* What distinctive strengths and weaknesses do you see in your community? Are there any unusual features of the condition of the Faith in your community which must be taken into account in the formulation of the next Plan?
>
> *2. Condition of the Nation.* Do the social, political and economic trends indicate any unusual opportunities or difficulties for the development of the Bahá'í community in the immediate years ahead?

The assessment of each country's strengths and weaknesses became "the preliminary steps in goal-setting", the Universal House of Justice wrote to all National Spiritual Assemblies in a letter dated 25 February 1986. They "will undoubtedly be of great assistance to each one of you as you enter the next stage of the process".

Each National Spiritual Assembly was also asked to meet with a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors before Riḍván 1986, "so that from this initial consultation a basis will be laid for consultation on the goals at the National Conventions". Delegates from throughout each country gathered during Riḍván and shared their thoughts and feelings about the proposed goals, then took new ideas home to be discussed at the grassroots level. Meanwhile, the National Assembly members elected during the Conventions consulted with Counsellors about the ideas presented by the delegates and drafted a set of goals for the Six Year Plan to be considered at the Bahá'í World Centre.

Each set of goals was evaluated by the Universal House of Justice and the International Teaching Centre in relationship to the country's strengths and weaknesses as described by the National Assembly itself and in relationship to the goals of other National Spiritual Assemblies. If the goals seemed within the country's potential and the broader direction of the Faith's development, they were warmly endorsed. Where further consideration was needed, they were referred back to the Spiritual Assemblies concerned for consultation and revision.

It was this involvement of the total community in setting goals through self-evaluation, consultation at all levels, and full cooperation between the appointed and elected arms of the Administrative Order that was a new feature of the development of the Faith, one that distinguishes the fourth epoch of its history.

Once the goals of the new Plan were set and published, the friends began working toward their fulfilment. As one result, by the end of the first six years of the fourth epoch, at least one and a half million new Bahá'ís had enrolled in the Faith. The community's success in the wide diffusion of Bahá'u'lláh's Message was publicly recognized when the Encyclopaedia Britannica, in its *Britannica Book of the Year* for 1988,

described the Faith as the second most widely spread religion after Christianity.

In addition to the Six Year Plan goals set by the National Spiritual Assemblies for themselves, the Universal House of Justice assigned international collaboration goals for National Assemblies. Communities who had the advantage of bonds that crossed national borders, such as commonality of language, racial background or cultural traditions, were asked to work together to support international projects including teaching activities, the translation and distribution of Bahá'í literature, the development of Bahá'í educational material for children, and the production of audio-visual materials. In many cases communities were asked to supply funds to support social and economic development activities, or other work of the Faith in other lands.

The international collaboration goals were conveyed to all National Spiritual Assemblies in a letter from the Universal House of Justice dated 5 June 1987.

> The goals are devised not only to achieve objectives, but to encourage mutual cooperation and sharing of ideas between National Spiritual Assemblies, processes which will strengthen the Bahá'í world community and enable it to present to mankind the pattern of a truly organic, universal, diversified but united society.

Both the change in the numbers of followers of Bahá'u'lláh and the way in which they are working together are altering the public image of the Faith. The persecution of the Bahá'ís in Írán brought the Faith to a new level of recognition, and the increasing maturity of its life gives its experience great importance for the social and moral development of humanity generally. The views of Bahá'ís are being sought by people working on problems at local, national, and international levels. Examples of this are replete in the pages of this volume.

That the world sorely needs an encouraging model as it moves into the twenty-first century is made only too clear with any cursory glance through a daily newspaper. In *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, Shoghi Effendi referred to the "two-fold process" which is "to bring to a climax the forces that are transforming the face of our planet". One process is destructive, the other is constructive. "The constructive process stands associated with the nascent Faith of Bahá-'u'lláh, and is the harbinger of the New World Order that Faith must erelong establish."

> In a world the structure of whose political and social institutions is impaired, whose vision is befogged, whose conscience is bewildered, whose religious systems have become anemic and lost their virtue, this healing Agency, this leavening Power, this cementing Force, intensely alive and all-pervasive, has been taking shape, is crystallizing into institutions, is mobilizing its forces, and is preparing for the spiritual conquest and the complete redemption of mankind.[1]

[1] *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 195.

A. A Letter from the Universal House of Justice

2 January 1986

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly-loved Friends,

The eager expectation with which we welcomed to the World Centre, on 27 December, sixty-four Counsellors from the five continents to discuss, with the International Teaching Centre, the challenges and opportunities facing the Bahá'í world community, has, at the conclusion of their historic conference, been transmuted into feelings of deepest joy, gratitude and love.

Graced by the presence of the Hands of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, Ugo Giachery, 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá and Collis Featherstone, the Conference was organized and managed

with admirable foresight and efficiency by the International Teaching Centre, whose individual members watched over and served untiringly the needs of the participants and the progress of the Conference itself.

Convened in the concourse of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice as the Counsellors of the Bahá'í world entered upon their new five-year term of office, within months of the termination of the Seven Year Plan and the opening of the new Six Year Plan, its aura heightened by the spiritual potencies of the Holy Shrines and the euphoric sense of victory and blessing now pervading the entire Bahá'í world, the Conference attained such heights of consultative exaltation, spirituality and power as only those serving the Blessed Beauty can enjoy.

The organic growth of the Cause of God, indicated by recent significant developments in its life, becomes markedly apparent in the light of the main objectives and expectations of the Six Year Plan: a vast expansion of the numerical and financial resources of the Cause; enlargement of its status in the world; a world-wide increase in the production, distribution and use of Bahá'í literature; a firmer and world-wide demonstration of the Bahá'í way of life requiring special consideration of the Bahá'í education of children and youth, the strengthening of Bahá'í family life and attention to universal participation and the spiritual enrichment of individual life; further acceleration in the process of the maturation of local and national Bahá'í communities and a dynamic consolidation of the unity of the two arms of the Administrative Order; an extension of the involvement of the Bahá'í world community in the needs of the world around it; and the pursuit of social and economic development in well-established Bahá'í communities. These are some of the features of the Six Year Plan which will open on 21 April 1986 and terminate on 20 April 1992.

Riḍván 1992 will mark the inception of a Holy Year, during which the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh will be observed by commemorations around the world and the inauguration of His Covenant will be celebrated, in the City of the Covenant, by the holding of the second Bahá'í World Congress.

The beloved Counsellors, strengthened and enriched by their experience in the Holy Land, will, as early as possible, consult with all National Spiritual Assemblies on measures to conclude triumphantly the current Plan, and on preparations to launch the Six Year Plan. In anticipation of those consultations, National Spiritual Assemblies will receive the full announcement of the aims and characteristics of that Plan, so that together with the Counsellors they may formulate the national plans which will, for each community, establish its pursuit of the overall objectives.

This new process, whereby the national goals of the next Plan are to be largely formulated by National Spiritual Assemblies and Boards of Counsellors, signalizes the inauguration of a new stage in the unfoldment of the Administrative Order. Our beloved Guardian anticipated a succession of epochs during the Formative Age of the Faith; we have no hesitation in recognizing that this new development in the maturation of Bahá'í institutions marks the inception of the fourth epoch of that Age.

Shoghi Effendi perceived in the organic life of the Cause a dialectic of victory and crisis. The unprecedented triumphs, generated by the adamantine steadfastness of the Iranian friends, will inevitably provoke opposition to test and increase our strength. Let every Bahá'í in the world be assured that whatever may befall this growing Faith of God is but incontrovertible evidence of the loving care with which the King of Glory and His martyred Herald, through the incomparable Centre of His Covenant and our beloved Guardian, are preparing His humble followers for ultimate and magnificent triumph. Our loving prayers are with you all.

The Universal House of Justice

B. STATEMENT BY THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT ON THE EPOCHS OF THE FORMATIVE AGE

5 February 1986
To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

In the letter dated 2 January 1986 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the world, reference was made to the inception of the fourth epoch of the Formative Age. In response to questions subsequently put to the House of Justice about the periods related to the earlier epochs of that Age, the Research Department was requested to prepare a statement on the subject. This has now been presented, and a copy is enclosed.

Kindly share this material of topical interest with the friends, as you deem fit, so that it may be studied in their deepening classes, summer schools, conferences and similar gatherings.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
For Department of the Secretariat

The Epochs of the Formative Age

Prepared by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice

INTRODUCTION

In disclosing the panoramic vision of the unfoldment of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, Shoghi Effendi refers to three major evolutionary stages through which the Faith must pass—the Apostolic or Heroic Age (1844–1921) associated with the Central Figures of the Faith;[1] the Formative or Transitional Age (1921–),[2] the "hall-mark"[3] of which is the rise and establishment of the Administrative Order, based on the execution of the provisions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament;[4] and, the Golden Age which will represent the "consummation of this glorious Dispensation".[5] Close examination of the details of Bahá'í history reveals that the individual Ages are comprised of a number of periods—inseparable parts of one integrated whole.[6]

In relation to the Heroic Age of our Faith, the Guardian, in a letter dated 5 June 1947 to the American Bahá'ís, specified that this Age consisted of three epochs and described the distinguishing features of each:

> ...the Apostolic and Heroic Age of our Faith, fell into three distinct epochs, of nine, of thirty-nine and of twenty-nine years' duration, associated respectively with the Bábí Dispensation and the ministries of Bahá'u'lláh and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This primitive Age of the Bahá'í Era, unapproached in spiritual fecundity by any period associated with the mission of the Founder of any previous Dispensation, was impregnated, from its inception to its termination, with the creative energies generated through the advent of two independent Manifestations and the establishment of a Covenant unique in the spiritual annals of mankind.[7]

The Formative Age, in which we now live and serve,[8] was ushered in with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.[9] Its major thrust is the shaping, development and consolidation of the local, national and international institutions of the Faith.[10] It is clear from the enumeration of the tasks associated with the Formative Age that their achievement will require increasingly mature levels of functioning of the Bahá'í community:

> During this Formative Age of the Faith, and in the course of present and succeeding epochs, the last and crowning stage in the erection of the framework of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh—the election of the Universal House of Justice—will have been completed, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Mother-Book of His Revelation, will have been codified and its laws promulgated, the Lesser Peace will have been established, the unity of mankind will have been

> achieved and its maturity attained, the Plan conceived by 'Abdu'l-Bahá will have been executed, the emancipation of the Faith from the fetters of religious orthodoxy will have been effected, and its independent religious status will have been universally recognized, ...[11]

The epochs of the Formative Age mark progressive stages in the evolution of the organic Bahá'í community and signal the maturation of its institutions, thus enabling the Faith to operate at new levels and to initiate new functions. The timing of each epoch is designated by the Head of the Faith, and given the organic nature of evolutionary development, the transition from one epoch to another may not be abrupt, but may well occur over a period of time. This is the case, for example, in relation to both the inception of the Formative Age and the end of its first epoch. In relation to the former, the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá is the transitional event most often identified with the close of the Heroic Age and the beginning of the Formative Age.[12] However, the Guardian also asserts that the Apostolic Age of the Faith concluded "more particularly with the passing [in 1932] of His well-beloved and illustrious sister, the Most Exalted Leaf—the last survivor of a glorious and heroic age".[13] With regard to the termination of the first epoch of the Formative Age, Shoghi Effendi has placed this between the years 1944[14] and 1946.[15]

Before describing the individual epochs of the Formative Age, it is important to comment on the use of the term "epoch" in the writings of the Guardian. In a letter dated 18 January 1953, written on his behalf to a National Spiritual Assembly, it is explained that the term is used to apply both to the stages in the Formative Age of the Faith, and to the phases in the unfoldment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan.[16] We are currently in the fourth epoch of the Formative Age[17] and the second epoch of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan.[18] (The first epoch of the Divine Plan began in 1937, with the inception of the First Seven Year Plan of the North American Bahá'í community, and concluded with the successful completion of the Ten Year Crusade in 1963.[19] The second epoch of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan commenced in 1964 with the inauguration of the Nine Year Plan of the Universal House of Justice.)

The primary focus of this statement is on the epochs of the Formative Age of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh.

The First Epoch of the Formative Age 1921–1944/46

The first epoch of this Age witnessed the "birth and the primary stages in the erection of the framework of the Administrative Order of the Faith".[20] The epoch was characterized by concentration on the formation of local and national institutions in all five continents,[21] thereby initiating the erection of the machinery necessary for future systematic teaching activities. This epoch was further marked by the launching, at the instigation of the Guardian, of the First Seven Year Plan (1937–1944) by the American Bahá'í community. This Plan, drawing its inspiration from the Tablets of the Divine Plan, represented the first systematic teaching campaign of the Bahá'í community and inaugurated the initial stage of the execution of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan in the Western Hemisphere.[22]

The Second Epoch of the Formative Age 1946–1963

This epoch extended the developments of the first epoch by calling for the "consummation of a laboriously constructed Administrative Order",[23] and was to witness the formulation of a succession of teaching plans designed to facilitate the development of the Faith beyond the confines of the Western Hemisphere and the continent of Europe.[24] This epoch was distinguished, in the first instance, by the simultaneous and often spontaneous prosecution of Bahá'í national plans in both the East and the West.[25] For example, in a letter written at Naw-Rúz 105 to the Bahá'ís in

the East, the beloved Guardian listed the specific plans undertaken by the United States, British, Indian, Persian, Australian and New Zealand, and 'Iráqí National Spiritual Assemblies, and indicated that this concerted action signalized the transition into the second epoch of the Formative Age.[26] The internal consolidation and the administrative experience gained by the National Assemblies was utilized and mobilized by the Guardian with the launching of the Ten Year Crusade[27]—a crusade involving the simultaneous prosecution of twelve national plans. The plans derived their direction from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan, and the goals were assigned by Shoghi Effendi from the World Centre of the Faith.[28] A second distinguishing feature of this epoch was the "RISE"[29] and "STEADY CONSOLIDATION"[30] of the World Centre of the Faith.

The second epoch thus clearly demonstrated the further maturation of the institutions of the Administrative Order. It witnessed the appointment of the Hands of the Cause,[31] the introduction of Auxiliary Boards,[32] and the establishment of the International Bahá'í Council.[33] The culminating event of the epoch was the election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963. It further demonstrated the more effective and co-ordinated use of the administrative machinery to prosecute the goals of the first global spiritual crusade, and the emergence in ever sharper relief of the World Centre of the Faith.

THE THIRD EPOCH OF THE FORMATIVE AGE 1963–1986

In addressing the British National Spiritual Assembly in 1951, the Guardian foreshadowed "world-wide enterprises destined to be embarked upon, in future epochs of that same [Formative] Age, by the Universal House of Justice".[34] In announcing the Nine Year Plan, "the second of those world-encircling enterprises destined in the course of time to carry the Word of God to every human soul",[35] the Universal House of Justice embarked upon the process anticipated by the Guardian and proclaimed the commencement of the third epoch of the Formative Age, an epoch which called the Bahá'ís to a yet more mature level of administrative functioning, consistent with the expected vast increase in the size and diversity of the community, its emergence as a model to mankind, and the extension of the influence of the Faith in the world at large. The House of Justice, in a letter dated October 1963, stated:

> Beloved friends, the Cause of God, guarded and nurtured since its inception by God's Messengers, by the Centre of His Covenant and by His Sign on earth, now enters a new epoch, the third of the Formative Age. It must now grow rapidly in size, increase its spiritual cohesion and executive ability, develop its institutions and extend its influence into all strata of society. We, its members, must, by constant study of the life-giving Word, and by dedicated service, deepen in spiritual understanding and show to the world a mature, responsible, fundamentally assured and happy way of life, far removed from the passions, prejudices and distractions of present day society.[36]

The period of the third epoch encompassed three world plans, involving all National Spiritual Assemblies, under the direction of the Universal House of Justice, namely, the Nine Year Plan (1964–1973), the Five Year Plan (1974–1979), and the Seven Year Plan (1979–1986). This third epoch witnessed the emergence of the Faith from obscurity[37] and the initiation of activities designed to foster the social and economic development of communities.[38] The institution of the Continental Boards of Counsellors was brought into existence[39] leading to the establishment of the International Teaching Centre.[40] Assistants to the Auxiliary Boards were also introduced.[41] At the World Centre of the Faith, the historic construction and occupation of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice was a crowning event.[42]

THE FOURTH EPOCH OF THE FORMATIVE AGE 1986–

In a letter dated 2 January 1986 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, the Supreme Body announced the inception of the fourth epoch of the Formative Age. It highlighted the significant developments that had taken place in the "organic growth of the Cause of God"[4] during the course of the recently completed third epoch, by assessing the readiness of the Bahá'í community to begin to address the objectives of the new Six Year Plan scheduled to begin on 21 April 1986, and, outlined the general aims and characteristics of this new Plan. Whereas national plans had previously derived largely from the World Centre, in this new epoch the specific goals for each national community will be formulated, within the framework of the overall objectives of the Plan, by means of consultation between the particular National Spiritual Assembly and the Continental Board of Counsellors. As the Universal House of Justice states:

> This new process...signalizes the inauguration of a new stage in the unfoldment of the Administrative Order. Our beloved Guardian anticipated a succession of epochs during the Formative Age of the Faith; we have no hesitation in recognizing that this new development in the maturation of Bahá'í institutions marks the inception of the fourth epoch of that Age.[44]

FUTURE EPOCHS

The tasks that remain to be accomplished during the course of the Formative Age are many and challenging. Additional epochs can be anticipated, each marking significant stages in the evolution of the Administrative Order and culminating in the Golden Age of the Faith.[45] The Golden Age, itself, will involve "successive epochs"[46] leading ultimately to the establishment of the Most Great Peace, to the World Bahá'í Commonwealth and to the "birth and efflorescence of a world civilization".[47]

NOTES

1 Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980), pp. 4–5. Letter dated 5 June 1947 to the American Bahá'ís.
2 Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 98. Letter dated 8 February 1934.
3 *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 156. Letter dated 8 February 1934.
4 *Citadel of Faith*, p. 5. Letter dated 5 June 1947 to the American Bahá'ís.
5 *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 156. Letter dated 8 February 1934.
6 Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1970), p. xv.
7 *Citadel of Faith*, pp. 4–5. Letter dated 5 June 1947 to the American Bahá'ís.
8 *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 98. Letter dated 8 February 1934.
9 *God Passes By*, p. xiv.
10 ibid. p. 324.
11 *Citadel, of Faith*, p. 6. Letter dated 5 June 1947 to the American Bahá'ís.
12 *God Passes By*, p. xiv.
13 *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 98. Letter dated 8 February 1934.
14 *Citadel of Faith*, p. 5. Letter dated 5 June 1947 to the American Bahá'ís.
15 *Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950–1957* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), p. 89. Cablegram dated 23 August 1955. See also letter dated 18 January 1953 written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States (reference cited in no. 16 below).
16 *Bahá'í News*, no. 265, March 1953, p. 4. Letter dated 18 January 1953 written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Assembly of the U. S.
17 Letter dated 2 January 1986 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World.

18 Universal House of Justice, *Wellspring of Guidance* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1969), p.25. Letter dated Riḍván 1964 from the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World.
19 *Bahá'í News*, no. 265, p. 4. Letter dated 18 January 1953 written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States.
20 *Citadel of Faith*, p. 5. Letter dated 5 June 1947 to the American Bahá'ís.
21 *Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950–1957*, p. 19. Cablegram dated 24 December 1951.
22 *Citadel of Faith*, p. 5. Letter dated 5 June 1947 to the American Bahá'ís.
23 *Citadel of Faith*, p. 6. Letter dated 5 June 1947 to the American Bahá'ís.
24 ibid. p. 6.
25 *Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950–1957*, p. 13. Cablegram dated 25 April 1951.
26 *Tawqí'át-i-Mubárakih, 102–109 B.E.* (Ṭihrán: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 125 B.E.), pp. 99–188. Letter dated Naw-Rúz 105 B.E. to the Bahá'ís in the East.
27 *Citadel of Faith*, p. 140. Letter dated 20 August 1955 to the American Bahá'ís.
28 *Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950–1957*, pp. 151–153. Letter dated 4 May 1953.
29 ibid., p. 13. Cablegram dated 25 April 1951.
30 *Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950–1957*, p. 13. Cablegram dated 25 April 1951.
31 ibid., pp. 18–20. Cablegram dated 24 December 1951.
32 ibid., p. 44. Cablegram dated 8 October 1952. And, pp. 127–128. Letter dated October 1957.
33 ibid., pp. 7–8. Cablegram dated 9 January 1951.
34 Shoghi Effendi, *Unfolding Destiny* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1981), p. 261. Guardian's postscript to a letter dated 25 February 1951, written on his behalf to the National Assembly of the British Isles.
35 *Wellspring of Guidance*, p. 14. Letter dated October 1963 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World.
36 *Wellspring of Guidance*, pp. 17–18. Letter dated October 1963 written the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World.
37 Letter dated 19 May 1983 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World.
38 Letter dated 20 October 1983 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World.
39 *Wellspring of Guidance*, p. 139. Cablegram dated 21 June 1968 from the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World.
40 Letter dated 8 June 1973 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World.
41 Letters dated 8 June 1973 written by the House of Justice to the Continental Board of Counsellors, and, 7 October 1973 to the Bahá'ís of the World.
42 Telex dated 1 February 1983 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World.
43 Letter dated, 2 January 1986 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World.
44 ibid.
45 *Citadel of Faith*, p. 6. Letter dated 5 June 1947 to the American Bahá'ís.
46 *Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950–1957*, p. 155. Letter dated 4 May 1953.
47 *Citadel of Faith*, p. 6. Letter dated 5 June 1947 to the American Bahá'ís.



American Bahá'í entertainers Leslie and Kelly (second and third from left) in Taipei, Taiwan, during a news conference held in May 1986.

C. International Collaboration Goals

In addition to the Six Year Plan goals set by National Spiritual Assemblies for themselves, the Universal House of Justice assigned international collaboration goals for National Assemblies to support and assist each other in a variety of ways. These special goals were conveyed to National Assemblies in June 1987. As the Plan progressed goals were added, eliminated or modified.

This information is based on correspondence and other material received by the Department of Statistics before the end of 1992; only goals achieved by Riḍván 1992 are included.

Summary of Collaboration Achievements by National Bahá'í Communities

AFRICA: 44

13 Provision of international travelling teachers
18 Cross-border teaching activities
1 Assistance with special teaching activity
4 Enrichment and translation of Bahá'í literature and training material
8 Development and provision of Bahá'í educational material for children

AMERICAS 154

78 Provision of international travelling teachers
25 Cross-border teaching activities
2 Assistance with special teaching activity
10 Enrichment and translation of Bahá'í literature and training material
29 Development and provision of Bahá'í educational material for children
4 Development of audio-visual material
4 Contribution of funds to acquire/maintain property
2 Miscellaneous collaboration

ASIA 138

34 Provision of international travelling teachers
3 Cross-border teaching activities
12 Enrichment and translation of Bahá'í literature and training material
15 Development and provision of Bahá'í educational material for children
8 Establishment or consolidation of national communities
38 Contribution of funds to acquire or maintain property
7 Contribution of funds to acquire or equip a mobile institute or vehicle
3 Contribution of funds to establish rural schools
7 Contribution towards youth participation in Bahá'í schools
4 Support of twin-city projects
7 Miscellaneous collaboration

AUSTRALASIA 41

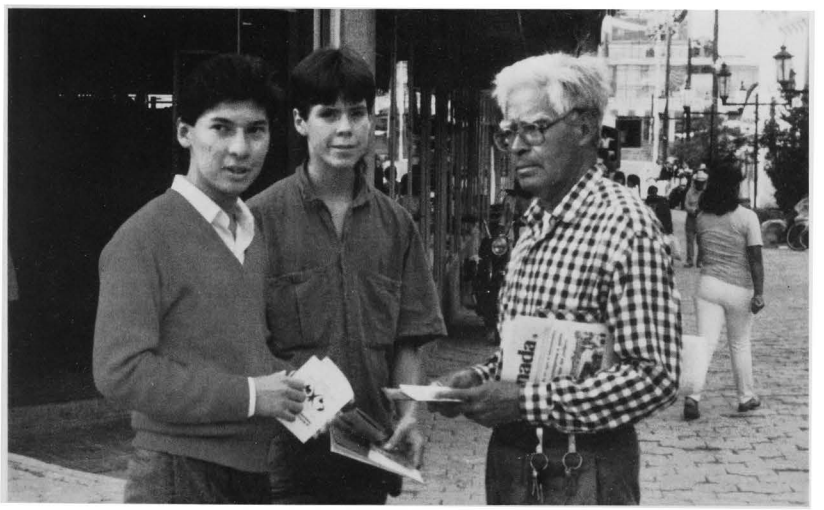
25 Provision of international travelling teachers
1 Assistance with special teaching activity
13 Development and provision of Bahá'í educational material for children
1 Contribution of funds to acquire/maintain property
1 Miscellaneous collaboration

EUROPE 98

33 Provision of international travelling teachers
37 Cross-border teaching activities
1 Assistance with special teaching activity
3 Enrichment and translation of Bahá'í literature and training material
12 Development and provision of Bahá'í educational material for children
2 Development of audio-visual material
5 Contribution of funds to acquire/maintain property
3 Contribution of funds to acquire/equip a mobile institute or vehicle
2 Miscellaneous collaboration

WORLD TOTAL 475

183 Provision of international travelling teachers
83 Cross-border teaching activities
5 Assistance with special teaching activity
29 Enrichment and translation of Bahá'í literature and training material
77 Development and provision of Bahá'í educational material for children
6 Development of audio-visual material
8 Establishment or consolidation of national communities
48 Contribution of funds to acquire/maintain property
10 Contribution of funds to acquire/equip a mobile institute or vehicle
3 Contribution of funds to establish rural schools
7 Contribution towards youth participation in Bahá'í schools
4 Support of twin-city projects
12 Miscellaneous collaboration



Two Bahá'í youth from the United States participate in a cross-border teaching project which took place in Zacatacas, Mexico, in July 1987.



In St. Lucia, representatives of National Assemblies from thirteen eastern Caribbean countries and the International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center gathered for a Planning Conference held from 16–18 October 1987.



Representatives of five National Assemblies and Bahá'í International Community offices in New York and Geneva met in February 1988 to discuss external affairs work of the Faith. Represented were: Canada, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States.

D. PUBLIC RECOGNITION OF THE TRUE CHARACTER OF THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY

Of the myriad examples of public recognition of the true character of the Bahá'í community mentioned throughout this volume, two have been chosen for reproduction: "World Religious Statistics," *an article published in the* 1988 Britannica Book of the Year; *and* "What is the Baha'i Faith?", *a leaflet published by the [Roman Catholic] Bishops' Conference of England and Wales' Committee for Other Faiths.*

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a. World Religious Statistics

Reprinted from the 1988 Britannica Book of the Year

The 1987 table below gives details of the global spread of the world's 16 largest faiths or ideologies. It illustrates the articles on the various religions by showing each religion's continental statistics in the overall global context. It also demonstrates an extraordinary religious development of the 20th century religious pluralism.

As the right-hand column demonstrates, over 14 major religious systems are each now found in over 80 countries. Christianity, Islam, and the Bahá'í World Faith are the most global; agnosticism and atheism are also widespread. Hinduism has recently spread to 88 countries, Buddhism to 86.

This 20th-century spread has brought the religions into contact with each other as never before. Thus we find Filipino Catholics and Korean Protestants in Saudi Arabia, Gujarati Hindus in rural England, Tibetan Tantrists in Wales, Muslim mosques in every capital of Western Europe including Rome. The long-term effects of this mass proximity are sure to be profound. They are certainly resulting in unprecedented interest in other people's religions, expressed in seminars, courses, discussion, dialogue, tolerance, and even acceptance.

(David B. Barrett)

NOTES:

Continents. UN demographic practice divides the world into eight continental areas as shown below (*see* United Nations, *World Population Prospects*, New York, 1986, with population of all countries covering the period 1950–2025). **Countries.** The last column enumerates sovereign and nonsovereign countries in which each religion has a significant following. **Rows.** The list of religions is arranged by descending order of magnitude of global adherents in 1987 (last two columns but one). **Adherents.** As defined and enumerated for each of the world's countries in *World Christian Encyclopedia* (1982), projected to mid-1987 **Christians.** Followers of Jesus Christ affiliated to churches (church members, including children), plus persons professing in census or polls though not so affiliated. **Other Christians.** Catholics (non-Roman), marginal Protestants, crypto-Christians, and adherents of African, Asian, Black, and Latin-American indigenous churches, **Muslims.** 83% Sunnis, 16% Shi'ahs, 1% other schools. **Nonreligious.** Persons professing no religion, non-believers, agnostics, freethinkers, dereligionized secularists indifferent to all religion. **Hindus.** 70% Valshnavites, 25% Shaivites, 2% neo-Hindus and reform Hindus. **Buddhists.** 58% Mahayana, 38% Theravada, 6%Tantrism. **Atheists.** Persons professing atheism, skepticism, disbelief, or irreligion, including antireligious (opposed to all religion). **Chinese folk religionists.** Followers of traditional Chinese religion (local deities, ancestor veneration, Confucian ethics, Taoism, universism, divination, some Buddhist elements). **New-Religionists.** Followers of Asiatic 20th-century New Religions, New Religious movements, radical new crisis religions, and non-Christian syncretistic mass religions, all founded since 1800 and mostly since 1945. **Jews.** 84% Ashkenazim, 10% Orientals, 4% Sephardim **Confucians.** Non-Chinese followers of Confucianism, mostly Koreans in Korea. **Other religionists.** Including 50 minor world religions and a large number of spiritist religions, New Age religions, quasi religions, pseudoreligions, parareligions, religious systems, mystic systems, religious and semireligious brotherhoods of numerous varieties. **Total Population.** UN medium variant figures for mid-1987, as given in *World Population Prospects* (1986) pages 72–77.

ADHERENTS OF ALL RELIGIONS BY EIGHT CONTINENTAL AREAS, 1987:

	Africa	East Asia	Europe	Latin America
Christians	271,035,700	78,100,000	413,920,700	395,554,500
- Roman Catholics	102,522,200	9,204,000	257,155,000	371,863,600
- Protestants	71,883,000	32,100,000	76,652,000	13,960,000
- Orthodox	24,746,700	81,000	35,606,100	570,000
- Anglicans	22,389,900	334,000	32,886,200	1,210,000
- Other Christians	49,493,900	36,381,000	11,621,400	7,950,900
Muslims	245,110,500	23,795,000	8,901,500	645,000
Nonreligious	1,495,000	641,756,600	50,923,940	13,237,000
Hindus	1,410,000	10,100	590,000	660,000
Buddhists	12,800	154,796,300	216,000	490,000
Atheists	240,000	136,886,000	17,803,000	2,538,000
Chinese folk religionists	9,500	179,103,100	49,000	60,000
New-Religionists	13,000	42,217,200	34,000	370,000
Tribal religionists	68,219,450	730,000	100	1,160,000
Jews	257,000	1,800	1,483,600	990,000
Sikhs	26,000	1,000	215,000	6,000
Shamanists	1,000	12,500,000	400	400
Confucians	500	5,900,000	1,000	500
Bahá'ís	1,265,000	48,400	70,500	570,000
Jains	47,500	500	9,900	2,000
Shintoists	50	3,400,000	360	800
Other religionists	65,000	62,000	310,000	6,768,800
Total Population	**589,208,000**	**1,279,308,000**	**494,529,000**	**423,053,000**

This article updates the *Macropædia* articles the Buddha and BUDDHISM; CHRISTIANITY; EASTERN ORTHODOXY; Muḥammad and the Religion of ISLAM; JUDAISM; PROTESTANTISM; The Study and Classification of RELIGIONS; ROMAN CATHOLICISM; and *Micropædia* entries on the various denominations.

ADHERENTS OF ALL RELIGIONS (CONT.)

Northern America	Oceania	South Asia	U.S.S.R.	World	%	Countries
232,048,400	21,287,100,	129,076,700	103,373,400	**1,644,396,500**	32.9	254
91,209,800	7,434,000	81,694,100	5,111,900	**926,194,600**	18.5	242
94,965,500	7,510,000	26,142,100	8,803,800	**332,016,400**	6.6	230
5,910,000	507,400	3,200,000	89,442,300	**160,063,500**	3.2	98
7,511,000	5,350,000	290,000	400	**69,971,500**	1.4	148
32,452,100	485,700	17,750,500	15,000	**156,150,500**	3.1	110
2,682,600	96,000	547,350,500	31,807,200	**860,388,300**	17.2	172
21,047,700	2,884,400	20,651,100	84,332,030	**836,327,770**	16.7	220
810,000	295,000	651,918,900	1,200	**655,695,200**	13.1	88
190,000	16,000	153,585,000	320,000	**309,626,100**	6.2	86
1,073,000	512,000	5,300,000	60,774,500	**225,126,500**	4.5	130
110,000	16,000	8,169,400	100	**187,517,100**	3.7	56
1,075,600	6,100	66,990,000	200	**110,706,100**	2.2	25
60,000	81,000	24,508,200	0	**94,758,750**	1.9	98
8,084,000	86,000	4,050,000	3,123,000	**18,075,400**	0.4	125
9,500	6,600	16,340,000	50	**16,604,150**	0.3	20
200	200	10,000	250,000	**12,762,200**	0.2	10
10,000	200	2,000	200	**5,914,400**	0.1	3
310,000	59,000	2,300,000	5,000	**4,627,900**	0.1	205
2,000	900	3,400,000	20	**3,462,820**	0.1	10
1,000	500	200	100	**3,403,010**	0.1	3
750,000	25,000	230,000	6,000	**8,216,800**	0.2	170
268,264,000	**25,372,000**	**1,633,882,000**	**283,993,000**	**4,997,609,000**	**100.0**	**254**

b. Getting to Know People of other Faiths
(A leaflet published by the [Roman Catholic] Bishops' Conference of England and Wales' Committee for Other Faiths)

What is the Baha'i Faith?

Introduction

In the Vatican II 'Declaration on the relationship of the Church with Non-Christians' we find that the Church speaks with warmth and openness and greets People of Faith as partners in a single great enterprise. These religions contain much that is good and holy and provide ways of salvation for millions of people all over the world. Throughout the documents of Vatican II we find encouragement to respect, accept and meet as friends, those who profess faiths different from our own. The Baha'i Faith will be introduced here in this spirit.

Who are the Baha'is?

The Baha'i founders sprang from Islamic roots, but are seen by the Baha'is as founding a religion that fulfils all previous religions. Today Baha'is are people who formerly had different religious backgrounds. They have been Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians or else they had no religion at all. They give equal homage to all the past prophets, but believe that religion progressively evolves, and that Baha'u'llah is God's spokesman for this age. Although Baha'is are from different religious, racial, national, economic and social classes, the Baha'i teachings have given them a higher loyalty—the loyalty to humanity.

To a Baha'i there is no demarcation between religion and everyday life. The most important prayer, Baha'is say, is a person's daily life. Religion, in other words, is an attitude towards God reflected in life.

Today there are between 5 and 6 million Baha'is in the world, extending over more than three hundred and forty countries, territories and island groups. In England there are 6,000 registered Baha'is (1989) with 180 local Assemblies, resident in over 400 localities. At least 9 people are needed to form a local assembly. The Scriptures of the Baha'i Faith consist of the writings of the founders and are translated into over six hundred languages. The rapid growth they have experienced puts them in the category of a world religion, the youngest in the line of the prophetic tradition.

Origins of the Baha'i Faith

The Forerunner of the Baha'i Faith was a young Persian merchant known as the Bab (the Gate), who in 1844 proclaimed Himself to be a Messenger of God and a herald of One greater than Himself—One who would inaugurate a new era in religion and civilization. Like earlier Messengers of God, the Bab was opposed and denounced. After six years of persecution He was publicly martyred at the age of 30 in Tabriz.

Its founder was Baha'u'llah (the Glory of God), a Persian nobleman who in 1863

declared Himself to be the One whose coming the Bab and all the previous Prophets had foretold. Like His predecessor, He was bitterly opposed and persecuted. During nearly forty years of exile and imprisonment He committed to writing the teachings of His revelation, some of them in letters to the most important kings and leaders of religion, as well as teaching and training His followers. His fourth and last place of banishment, reached in 1865, was the prison city of 'Akka (Acre), Palestine, where He passed away in 1892 at the age of seventy-four.

Its authorised interpreter and exemplar was Abdu'l-Baha (the servant of the Glory), eldest son of Baha'u'llah, who was appointed by his father as the Centre of His Covenant and the one to whom all must turn for instruction and guidance. Abdu'l-Baha was the close companion and constant helper of his father, whose sufferings he shared. He remained a prisoner until 1908, when the old regime in Turkey was overthrown and all religious and political prisoners throughout the Turkish Empire were liberated. Afterwards he travelled widely in Egypt, Europe and America, explaining and exemplifying the principles of the Faith and inspiring and directing the activities of its followers throughout the world. He passed away in Haifa in 1921, mourned by people of all faiths. His life was and continues to be a shining example to all. In his will and testament, Abdu'l-Baha appointed his grandson, Shoghi Effendi, to be the Guardian of the Faith, and the interpreter of its scripture. Under his guiding hand, the faith spread rapidly. He passed away in London in 1957. Since 1963 the Faith has been under the guidance of the Universal House of Justice.

The Baha'i Faith ....

Proclaims:– The Oneness of God, the Oneness of Religion and of Mankind, and the equality of men and women. It encourages the elimination of prejudice of all kinds, universal education, elimination of extremes of wealth and poverty, the protection of cultural diversity. It also advocates individual search after truth, the harmony of science and religion, use of an auxiliary universal language and world government.

The Baha'i House of Worship

A Baha'i house of worship is open to people of all nations, races, classes and creeds. It is a place of prayer and meditation for all, a gift from the Baha'is and a demonstration of their faith of the oneness of God, the oneness of His Prophets and the oneness of mankind.

There is one major Baha'i House of worship in each continent. For local regular gatherings the Baha'is hold meetings in their homes or in hired halls. The community has neither a priesthood nor rituals. The Baha'is see their teachings as a ringing call to action. They see them as offering hope, courage and vision, in a world beset with universal problems.

Baha'i Administration

Consultation is the keynote of all Baha'i administration.
There is no clergy and no ritual.
The Scripture is in written form, preserved and authentic. Administrative bodies are called Spiritual Assemblies; they are local, national and international. All Assemblies meet in a spirit of prayer.

These spiritual Assemblies are elected by the people, but their responsibility is trust from God to whom alone they are answerable.

There is no seeking for votes, no candidates, no platform promises, no parties.

The Nineteen Day Feast is a community occasion, for the reading of prayers, discussion of affairs with the Local Spiritual Assembly, and material refreshment together.

The Universal House of Justice—an elected International body constituted by Baha'u'llah as the supreme legislative and governing body of the Faith—carries out its duties at the Baha'i World Centre in Haifa, Israel.

Only members of the Baha'i Faith may contribute to the Baha'i Fund.

Questions for discussion

1. Baha'is clearly place great emphasis on social teaching and the community of humankind. How do we as Christians respond to the social teaching of the Church?
2. In what areas would cooperation with people of Baha'i faith be most fruitful and possible?

Suggested further reading

'The Baha'i Faith' Leaflet published by the Baha'i publishing Trust, 6 Mount Pleasant, Oakham, Leicestershire.
'The Baha'i Faith' Booklet Ibid.
'Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah'.
'Paris Talks' by Abdu'l-Baha.
'Guidance for Today and Tomorrow' by Shoghi Effendi.
'Baha'u'llah and the New Era' by Dr. J.E. Esslemont.
A complete catalogue of Baha'i literature can be obtained by writing to: The Baha'i Publishing Trust, 6 Mount Pleasant, Oakham, Leicestershire LE15 6HY.

This is part of the series of leaflets prepared for the Catholic community by the Committee for Other Faiths. Understanding and friendly relations with those who believe in God and live their lives with religious principles and purpose contribute to the harmony of society and the happiness of all. The series offers useful information to those who want to overcome the obstacle of ignorance and promote through dialogue, prayer and action the Catholic Church's teaching of respect and love for all peoples.

The Committee is grateful to its member Sr. Elizabeth West YSCJ for this contribution
+ Charles Henderson
Chairman

COMMITTEE FOR OTHER FAITHS PUBLICATIONS
"Getting to Know People of Other Faiths"—introduction to the series. "Neighbours and Neighbourhood—a Catholic introduction to living with neighbours of other Faiths". "What is Islam?". "What is Buddhism?". "Who was the Buddha?". "What is Hinduism?". "The Mosque—the Muslim House of Prayer". "What is the Baha'i Faith?". "Our Sikh Neighbours". "Is God at work outside the Church?". "Christian Prayer and Eastern Meditation".

ORDERS may be sent to: C.F.O.F., 6a Cresswell Park, London SE3 9RD. Orders up to 25 leaflets will be charged at 10p per leaflet plus 50p postage and packing. Orders in bundles to 50 of the same leaflet £3.00 post free (U.K. only). Please make cheques payable to: **N.C.F. (Other Faiths)**. Postage increases should be added.

Further information and copies of these leaflets can also be obtained from:
The Multi-Faith Centre, Harborne Hall, Old Church Road, Harborne, Birmingham B17 0BE and The Westminster Interfaith Programme, 110 Thornbury Road, Osterley, Middlesex TW7 4NN.

COMMITTEE FOR OTHER FAITHS
Bishops' Conference of England and Wales



Pope John Paul II, and Franco Ceccherini (left) representing the Bahá'í International Community, at a meeting between the International Council of the World Conference on Religion and Peace held 4 July 1991.



Bahá'í representatives presenting a copy of The Promise of World Peace *to the Prime Minister of the Bahamas, the Right Honourable Sir Lynden Pindling, on 3 February 1988.*



It is said that in South Africa, a diamond mine is discovered. Although this mine is most valuable, yet after all it is stone. Perchance, God willing, the mine of humanity may be discovered and the brilliant pearls of the Kingdom be found.
—'Abdu'l-Bahá

2. SURVEY BY CONTINENTS

A. AFRICA

BAHÁ'ÍS in the approximately fifty diverse countries which made up the African continent in 1986 faced a daunting array of challenges. Few areas escaped the effects of political strife, extreme poverty, underdeveloped infrastructure, and the ravages of civil wars. Yet the believers, seeing these problems in the larger context of God's unfolding plan, ever kept in view the beauty, strength, and potential of Africa.

Faced with limited material means, the Bahá'ís continued to seek out and capitalize on the unique resources existing in their countries. In areas where illiteracy rates were high and televisions scarce, radio was widely and effectively used to share the Faith and to connect its adherents. Recognizing the importance and pervasiveness of music in African culture, the believers shared their Faith through song and organized music festivals to stimulate the development of this art form. The warmth and hospitality characteristic of much of African society and the enthusiasm and dedication of the African Bahá'í youth created a recipe for continued teaching success.

At the same time, Bahá'í communities strove to develop the resources they had identified as lacking when the Six Year Plan began. Noting the crucial need for meeting places, the believers found ways to stretch limited funds and build or acquire more local and regional centres than any other continent. Recognizing the importance of providing Bahá'í literature in the many languages of Africa, the believers made great strides in the area of translation. Understanding the contributions which Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings make to the field of development, the believers established and expanded projects in the areas of health and education which gained the respect of governments and the people involved.

The perseverance of the African believers and pioneers brought the continent closer to its destiny, as illumined by the words written on behalf of the Guardian:

> Africa is truly awakening and finding herself, and she undoubtedly has a great message to give, and a great contribution to make to the advancement of world civilization. To the degree to which her people accept Bahá'u'lláh, will they be blessed, strengthened, and protected.[1]

Government Relations

Much of the political life of Africa in the late twentieth century was characterized by upheaval and violence, as many nations on the continent struggled to establish new directions following their independence. Yet Bahá'í communities in Africa were able to remain politically neutral while gaining government permission and even support for their activities by following Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings on loyalty to government and non-participation in partisan politics. The Bahá'ís worked to create and respond to opportunities for educating public officials about the Faith, and growing awareness led to new legal rights being granted.

Bahá'í delegations met with Heads of State and high government officials in a number of African nations, presenting some with copies of *The Promise of World Peace*. During the Plan, the Peace Statement was presented in person to the Presidents of

[1] 4 June 1954 to the British Africa Committee, published in *Unfolding Destiny*, p. 330.

Chad, Equatorial Guinea, and South Africa; the King of Lesotho; and the House of Chiefs in Botswana, the nation's highest traditional body. When the Bahá'ís of the Seychelles met with the President of the Republic, France Albert René, in December 1991, the delegation found that the questions he asked demonstrated he was already well-informed about the spread of the Faith in the Indian Ocean region.

A meeting with the President of Zaire, Mobutu Sese Seko, which took place in November 1990, resulted in the gradual emergence of the Faith from obscurity in that country; the National Spiritual Assembly received requests for Bahá'í literature from other important government dignitaries, and then distributed books at all levels. When the King of Lesotho, His Majesty King Letsie III, met with the Bahá'ís in April 1991, he expressed his admiration for the Bahá'í principles and his hope that they would spread across his country.

The Peace Statement was also distributed to the Chairman of the Council of State in Ciskei, several hundred administrative authorities in Burkina Faso, Government ministers in Togo, countless Government officials in Transkei, and the Head of State of Rwanda through the Chief of Etiquette.

In addition to meetings with officials, Bahá'í involvement in development projects brought the Faith to the attention of governments. Extensive Bahá'í participation in the Kenya Expanded Programme for Immunization (see subsection on Social and Economic Development, p. 179) over a period of five years helped to establish a good working relationship between the Government and the Bahá'ís. Similarly, relations between the Malawi Government and the Bahá'ís were strengthened in 1990 when the Primary Health Care Programme began.

The establishment of Radio Bahá'í Liberia in 1987 drew attention and praise from government officials. At the inauguration ceremony, the Assistant Minister for Posts and Telecommunications spoke of his admiration for the Bahá'ís and their talent for maximizing materials and human resources. He stated, "Radio Bahá'í, in our view, is a significant achievement ... a turning point in our existence as a nation."

Some of the most significant fruits of the growing awareness of and respect for the work of the Bahá'ís came in the form of legal recognition of the Faith's institutions. Five National Assemblies were formed or re-formed in Africa during the Plan, and three of these Assemblies received official recognition. In 1988, the Government of Guinea-Bissau signed a document recognizing the National Spiritual Assembly, and in 1989 the *Government Gazette* published the "Official Recognition and Statutes of the National Spiritual Assembly"; in September



The President of the Seychelles, His Excellency Albert René (centre) met with a Bahá'í delegation in Victoria on 31 December 1991. Counsellor Gilbert Robert (second from right) joined five representatives of National Assemblies of the Indian Ocean.

1991, the Government of the Congo acknowledged the legal existence of the Bahá'í community; and in December 1991, the Government of Niger authorized Bahá'í institutions in that country to engage in the activities of the Faith.

The National Spiritual of Assembly of Zaire was re-formed in 1987; the National Assembly of Guinea-Bissau was formed in 1989; and the Assemblies of Angola, of the Congo Republic, and of Niger were established in 1992.

Bahá'í marriage was recognized by several governments. In September 1988 the Bahá'ís of Nigeria were granted a marriage licence which authorized them to hold weddings at the National Teaching Institute in Oghara, Bendel State. The licence is a privilege granted only to some religions. In 1989 the federal government granted the Faith, as a religious institution, authorization to issue government marriage certificates.

In Uganda, additional Local Spiritual Assemblies were empowered to conduct Bahá'í marriages, extending the general recognition granted just prior to the beginning of the Plan. Bahá'í marriage was also recognized in Guinea-Bissau.

In Zimbabwe, recognition of the Faith resulted in Bahá'í Holy Days being listed on government and public school calendars to mark when teachers and students could be excused from class.

Yet another sign of good relations between Bahá'ís and African governments was the increasing frequency with which governments invited Bahá'ís to participate in official functions and to contribute their ideas.

When the Government of Uganda organized a National Seminar for Religious Leaders in July 1989 to discuss ways the Government and religious institutions could work together in harmony, the Bahá'ís were invited to send six representatives. The President of Uganda opened the seminar, urging religious leaders to play their part in rehabilitating the moral conduct of society. He emphasized the importance of women in society and the role of science and technology in development. The Bahá'ís responded to his challenges by preparing a written statement with quotations from the Writings on the equality of men and women, the harmony between science and religion, and work as worship. The statement was distributed to all seminar participants.

During the seminar, Uganda's Minister of State invited the Bahá'ís to meet with him later, which three members of the National Assembly did. During the meeting, the Minister asked questions about the origin of the Faith and its administrative structure, and the Bahá'í delegation spoke about the relationship of the Faith to government and the Bahá'í perspective on peace. The Minister



Bahá'ís taking part in a parade in Bangui on the occasion of the twenty-eighth anniversary of the proclamation of Independence of the Central African Republic. 1 December 1986.

was presented with the Peace Statement and a copy of *The Earth is But One Country*.

When the Rural Development Office of the Transkei Government began to plan an event for World Environment Day in 1990, members of the organizing committee met Bahá'ís who worked in the water department and, through them, became fully acquainted with the Bahá'í Office of the Environment in Transkei. The two Bahá'í water department officials, who shared Bahá'í concepts related to the environment, were asked to help organize the event. The Bahá'ís were also requested to prepare a statement on behalf of the Chairman of the Military Council to be broadcast over the radio, and they were invited to participate in a radio panel discussion.

The Bahá'ís of Zambia reported that "significant progress towards the recognition of the Faith" took place in October 1990 when Bahá'ís received, for the first time, an invitation from the Cabinet to participate in the nation's independence anniversary. Each religion was allocated eight minutes in an evening programme which was performed in the presence of the Head of State, the Prime Minister, many other high officials, and an audience of more than 1,500 people. The Bahá'í presentation was very well received. The Head of State pointed out in his closing speech that what Zambia needs is unity in diversity; the master of ceremonies, a staff member of the State House, introduced the Bahá'í group by saying, "they have a beautiful message to give"; and the audience applauded the message from the National Spiritual Assembly when it was delivered.



During a teaching conference in Assomada, Cape Verde, in 1987, two youth present a theatrical piece about teaching in Írán.

Members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Kenya were routinely invited by the Office of the President to attend official functions. Bahá'í representatives were also consistently invited to attend major events in Cape Verde, as the Faith is one of only four officially recognized religions in the country. In Botswana, cabinet ministers and chiefs often attended Bahá'í activities. The Bahá'ís of Togo were invited by the Chief of State to have a stand at an international commercial fair; the Bahá'í exhibit was visited by thousands of people, including the Chief of State and his entourage.

Universities

Politicians were not the only leaders of thought to become more familiar with the Bahá'í Faith. African academicians also expanded their knowledge of the Teachings, and the Faith was recognized as a topic worthy of serious study by a growing number of universities. The Faith was included in courses taught by both Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í professors.

By the end of the Six Year Plan, the Faith had been part of the curriculum at the University of Swaziland for more than four years. Bahá'ís taught the history, principles, and administration of the Faith to third year students. In 1991, university officials asked the Bahá'ís to develop a curriculum on specific Bahá'í subjects in relation to African customs and traditional religions.

Courses based on Bahá'í principles and taught by Bahá'ís were offered several times at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. In 1989, Dr. Tim Rost designed and taught courses called "Peace and Justice" and "Religion and Development". This led members of the Department of Religious Studies to visit the House of Worship in Kampala to familiarize themselves with the Faith and its institutions.

In 1991, Dr. Mark Perry was invited to join the Department at Makerere University to teach special courses on "Religion and Social and Economic Development' and "Research Methods". The course on development, which examined the contributions that religion can make to the transformation of Ugandan society, included a specific discussion on the Bahá'í Faith. The course on research methods generated a great deal of interest in, and discussion of, fundamental spiritual principles.

When the Spiritual Assembly of Malawi responded to a request for information from the Head of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Zomba, the Bahá'ís discovered that the professor had already been using *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* to teach the Faith in his classes. After meeting with some Bahá'ís, he invited them to address his students, who responded enthusiastically to the presentation and asked many questions.

Talks on the Faith were also given at Malawi's Chancellor University in a course on comparative religion. At the end of the Six Year Plan, the government approved a plan for the Bahá'ís to present the Faith, its history and moral teachings, in teacher training colleges around the country.

In Burkina Faso, the Higher School of Law of the University of Ouagadougou gave permission for two courses on "The Programme of Bahá'u'lláh for Peace" to be taught, fulfilling one of the National Assembly's goals for the Six Year Plan. One of the Bahá'ís of Burkina had already given two courses on the Bahá'í Faith and peace. In Kenya, the head of Christian Religious Education at Shanzu Teacher Training College in Mombasa invited three Bahá'í speakers to address first-year students at the school. The 420 students subjected the speakers to many questions. The Faith was added to the syllabus of the College's religious education section as a new topic of study.

Other African nations where the Bahá'í Faith was included in post-secondary courses of study included: South Africa, where it was part of the syllabus for a course called "Science and Philosophy of Religion" at the University of Westville, Durban, in Natal; Zimbabwe, where portions of the curriculum for comparative religious studies at the University of Zimbabwe and Gweru Teacher Training College included the Faith; and Sierra Leone, where a pioneer started a course on the Faith at Makeni Teachers College.

Social and Economic Development

In its message to the Bahá'ís of the world at Riḍván 1990, the Universal House of Justice wrote, 'The affairs of mankind have reached a stage at which increasing calls will be made upon our community to assist, through advice and practical measures, in solving critical social problems". Development projects were one type of assistance offered to an ailing humanity. During the Plan, existing programmes were expanded and new initiatives launched. The majority of the Bahá'í social and economic development projects in Africa related either to health care or education. In fact, Africa was the continent with the greatest number of health-related projects.

In accordance with a philosophy of development which emphasizes local self-reliance and self-determination, the Bahá'í health professionals trained local believers to become leaders in health education. In Zaire, the Regional Social and Economic Development Committee of Kivu (CREDESE) prepared participants in its programmes to teach different health-related subjects using



In Burkina Faso, a training and refresher course for primary health workers was held from 4 to 7 May 1990 in Koalio as part of an on-going sanitation and nutrition educational project sponsored by the National Bahá'í Social and Economic Development Committee.



In Lomé, Togo, children in the Rainbow International School and Kindergarten present their cultures during a Peace Festival held March 1990.



In the Prefecture of Ginkongozo-Rugazi, Rwanda, children, parents and tutors can be seen during a literacy course held in 1988.

simple teaching aids. This training was part of CREDESE's support for the activities of a large number of local Bahá'í Councils working to transform their communities. In Zambia, instructors from the William Mmutle Masehla Bahá'í Institute travelled to villages to give seminars on the causes of various illnesses and how they can be prevented. The Masehla Institute also offered its first All-Women Training Programme for Community Primary Health Educators.

Throughout the Six Year Plan, Bahá'í volunteers assisted with the operation of the Kenya Expanded Programme for Immunization, helping to inoculate more than 7,500 children. In 1988, Bahá'í participation became more formalized under the name Kenya Bahá'í Social Mobilization Programme for Immunization, the first project Bahá'ís embarked upon in collaboration with the Canadian Public Health Association. Working with the Kenya Expanded Programme for Immunization, the Bahá'ís offered a series of seminars to train primary health care workers to educate people about the importance of immunization. Other seminars brought together various members of communities interested in health, such as medical personnel, traditional healers, and local officials, to share information and ideas. The project was approved by Kenya's Ministry of Health.

In September 1990, the Bahá'í administrator of the immunization programme was invited by the Ministry of Health to attend a series of workshops on health care planning, and he chaired one of the sessions. The District Commissioner of Bungoma, where the workshops took place, commended the Bahá'ís, in both his opening and closing statements, for their good work in the District.

Community health workers were also trained in Burkina Faso, where members of the Health and Nutrition Project taught basic nutrition and sanitation and provided first aid care. In Chad, the Community Development Project on Health expanded and received support from international funding agencies. Training programmes for community health workers were also conducted in Cameroon, Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda. Throughout the Plan, Canadian Bahá'í Dr. Ethel Martens trained Bahá'ís in Kenya and Swaziland to become primary health care workers.

In several areas where access to hospitals was limited, Bahá'ís helped to provide maternity and emergency care. By 1991, the Hakim Dispensary in Moissala, Chad, which opened in 1985, had a permanent staff of seven and operated a laboratory and a pharmacy. In Swaziland, the Piggs Peak Clinic, a private facility operated by a Bahá'í doctor, offered regular medical consultations and conducted a health outreach programme which included visits to outlying rural areas and the screening of school children for diseases.

Education was the other area of development which received the most attention in Africa. Zaire had one of the most notable programmes of tutorial schools in the Bahá'í world, with approximately ninety operating toward the end of the Plan. By Riḍván 1992, Bahá'í tutorial schools in Chad were serving more than 1,300 students. Bahá'ís in Swaziland operated three preschools and one primary school using a curriculum largely of their own design. This curriculum was approved by the educational authorities for use in schools throughout the country. In Tanzania, the enrolment of the Ruaha Technical Secondary School grew from 160 students at its opening in 1986 to 400 by Riḍván 1992.

A committee appointed by the Universal House of Justice worked during the Plan to promote the development of educational activities in Africa. The Central and East African Regional Development Committee (known as READCO), which was appointed in November 1985, produced a wide range of educational materials for Bahá'í children's classes, conducted institutes for the training of children's class teachers, and

sponsored conferences and workshops on Bahá'í education.

Radio

The first Bahá'í radio station on the African continent, Radio Bahá'í of Liberia, was officially inaugurated on 21 March 1987 in a ceremony attended by the Assistant Minister of Telecommunications, the Deputy-Minister of Information, a traditional chief, media representatives and several hundred Bahá'ís. The event was covered on national news, and several days of continuous announcements over national radio followed. By the end of its first year, Radio Bahá'í Liberia's broadcasts had already stimulated considerable growth in the Bahá'í community. A report from a station staff member in March 1988 read, "We simply cannot keep enough Bahá'í literature... Some have walked miles to the station to get us to tell them more... There have been enrolments at the station, and demand from listeners for more Bahá'í programming."

Regular radio programmes prepared by Bahá'ís were also aired on non-Bahá'í stations. The Local Assembly of Bamenda, Cameroon, produced a weekly programme called "Mothers, Fathers, and Children". When the Bamenda Bahá'ís joined other religious groups and government authorities to plan a week-long celebration of the African Day of the Child in 1991, they decided to dedicate this regular programme to the African child. Bahá'í Writings and United Nations statistics on the plight of children were broadcast. Bahá'í children also prepared a special forty-five-minute edition of the radio programme, "Kids' Special", aimed at presenting the Bahá'í teachings.

On a Sunday morning in September 1991, Radio Transkei aired the first of nine fifteen-minute programmes based on *The Promise of World Peace*. Each segment consisted of music, an introduction, a reading from the Peace Statement in the Xhosa language, and quotations from the Bible and the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. A Bahá'í prayer and music closed each broadcast.

Radio Lesotho gave the Bahá'ís a fifteen-minute time slot every Sunday evening for one year. Beginning in September 1990, "Tumelo Ke Thebe" ("Faith is a Stronghold") covered topics such as life after death, marriage and divorce, and *The Promise of World Peace*. Each programme concluded with readings from the Sacred Texts.

Weekly radio programmes were also produced in Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, Ciskei, and Rwanda. In Madagascar, a Nineteen Day Feast tape produced by the Radio and Television Team of the National Assembly was regularly aired on National Malagasy Radio.

News stories about Bahá'í events and interviews with travelling teachers were



Staff members at Radio Bahá'í Liberia (ELRB) in Monrovia in March 1987.



In Transkei, hundreds of people stopped at the Bahá'í booth to learn about the Faith during the Agricultural Show held in Umtata from 9–12 October 1990.

broadcast on radio in Cameroon, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, and Sierra Leone. The first such interview to be aired in Equatorial Guinea—with a travelling teacher and two National Spiritual Assembly members—occurred during the Plan.

In a number of African countries, including Cape Verde, Togo, and Uganda, radio was used to announce Bahá'í activities and Holy Days.

Book Exhibitions

Many Africans discovered the Creative Word of Bahá'u'lláh for the first time when they came upon book exhibitions organized by Bahá'ís. Universities, libraries, and agricultural fairs were the most common venues.

Book displays in the students' halls of residence at Nigeria's University of Benin during four evenings in January 1989 attracted approximately 1,400 students. The Peace Statement was the most popular document at a book exhibition held at the University of Zambia in 1988, and another display was organized in 1989. Hundreds of students visited a book exhibition at Kenya's Kenyatta University near the end of the Plan. Two successful book displays were held at the University of Transkei.

The municipal library of Atakpamé, Ogou, Togo, was the site of a Bahá'í exposition in September 1990 which was visited by 300 people on the first day. In the following two weeks, a total of 2,500 people signed the guest book at the display, and during a public meeting on the exhibition's last day, thirteen people enrolled in the Faith. In Transkei, a public meeting called "The Pre-Conditions of Peace in Southern Africa and the World" followed the second annual week-long book display in the Unitra Library, creating a significant amount of interest in the Faith. In Zimbabwe, two displays were organized in libraries.

Agricultural fairs provided forums for the display of Bahá'í literature in several southern African nations. In addition to regular displays at regional and national fairs in Zambia and Zimbabwe, a booth was organized at the Transkei Agricultural Show in Umtata in October 1990. Approximately 400 people visited the booth, including the Minister of the Department of Agriculture, and many Bahá'í books in Xhosa and English were sold.

The National Assembly of Burkina estimated that 1,000 people visited Bahá'í book exhibitions held in Ouagadougou, Koudougou, and Dédougou Fada during 1987. Then in 1988, the Bahá'ís mounted an exhibition of books related to peace and children after being invited by the Government to play a central role in the commemoration of International Peace Day and Children's Day. The exhibit was officially opened by a representative of the Head of State, who, with his

entourage of government officials and ambassadors of various countries, listened to an introduction to the Faith.

A week-long book exhibition was held at the Independence Hotel in Burkina Faso in 1989, and in 1991, the Bahá'ís of Ouagadougou organized three book and poster exhibitions with the assistance of the United Nations Information Centre and the Movement for Civil Rights of Burkina Faso. The exhibits were displayed during a one-week convention and included a stand at one of the entrances to the marketplace. Some of those who visited the display were invited to a fireside and later embraced the Faith.

Thousands also heard of the Faith at Togo Fair 2000, where the Bahá'ís displayed literature. Book and poster exhibits followed by public conferences were found to be successful in that country. Book displays in urban areas were used to proclaim the Faith in the Gambia, and in Rwanda, a public reading room was opened at the National Centre.



The Bahá'í International Music Festival in Gaborone, Botswana in December 1989.

Music

...the Manifested Light, Bahá'u'lláh, in this glorious period has revealed in Holy Tablets that singing and music are the spiritual food of the hearts and souls. In this dispensation, music is one of the arts that is highly approved and is considered to be the cause of the exaltation of sad and desponding hearts.

Therefore... set to music the verses and the divine words so that they may be sung with soul-stirring melody in the Assemblies and gatherings, and that the hearts of the listeners may become tumultuous and rise towards the Kingdom of Abhá in supplication and prayer.[2]

On a continent where music has long played an exceptionally important role in community life, it was natural for those who embraced the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh to express their love of the Blessed Beauty and share His principles through song. During the Six Year Plan, music festivals and competitions were sponsored, new Bahá'í songs were composed, and a number of music groups were formed both to spread the Cause and to enrich the spiritual life of the believers.

The Continental Board of Counsellors organized three Inter-Regional Music Festivals in 1989. Held in Botswana, Liberia, and Kenya, these festivals encouraged and inspired musicians across the continent and gave birth to many other music-related activities.

Despite the political turmoil in Zaire in late December 1991, the Bahá'ís managed to attract more than 1,800 people to the first Bahá'í Youth Music Festival in Kaboke Nudu, Fizi. Eighteen choirs and youth clubs presented songs, plays, and poems on the theme of "The Life, the Mission, and the Sufferings of the Blessed Beauty". Arranged as a means of preparing the youth of the

[2] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith: Selected Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976), p. 378.

South Kivu province for the Holy Year (1992-93), the festival generated much enthusiasm, with some groups composing and performing more than twenty songs.

The Bahá'ís of Transkei held a National Music Festival in 1989 in Umtata which was attended by about one 100 people from seven communities. The festival generated considerable publicity in the press and on radio. That same year, the National Music and Drama Committee of Zambia organized a competition on the use of the Faith's principles in music. Annual music and drama competitions were held in rural areas of Zimbabwe during the Plan, and the Spiritual Assembly of Botswana called its International Music Festival in Gaborone "one of the most significant achievements of the Plan". In Mauritius, the Bahá'ís organized cultural activities for non-Bahá'í guests to mark World Music Day.

At a cultural festival held in Uganda in August 1991, the Bahá'ís of Mbale came first in the competition for composed songs. The National Assembly noted that the festival provided a great opportunity for proclaiming the Faith, and opened new avenues of collaboration with rural women's organizations.

The festivals provided just one forum for local music groups to perform. Local singing groups were also active in teaching and community life in the Central African Republic, Chad, Mauritius, and Rwanda. In Kenya, eight choirs performed at a Holy Day celebration in 1988 attended by more than 900 people. The group Kwayera Mbee, which formed in Malawi, sang at youth conferences in Botswana and Zimbabwe and was invited to tour in Europe. The National Assemblies of Equatorial Guinea and Sierra Leone reported that a number of local songs were composed on Bahá'í themes during the Plan.

A film about the role of music in bringing about racial integration was awarded a special prize by the National Spiritual Assembly of Burkina during the 12th Panafrican Film and Television Festival in 1991. The National Assembly joined other African National Assemblies taking part in the biannual event. The awards ceremony was held before an audience of approximately 300 film-makers, writers, and journalists from three continents and was broadcast on radio and television.

Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds

Africa stood out for the number of Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds which were acquired or built on the continent during the Plan. Particularly in areas where individual houses were insufficient for gatherings, Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds provided crucial meeting places for the believers. Inauguration ceremonies for the local, regional, and national centres provided opportunities to share the Faith with surrounding communities.

Local centres were built or acquired or the land obtained in at least fifteen African countries, including the war-ravaged Angola, Liberia, and Mozambique. An estimated thirty-five local centres were established in Uganda. The believers in a Local Spiritual Assembly area of Burundi whose members were all Pygmies finished building their own local centre by Riḍván 1992. The Local Spiritual Assembly of Gamma Koni Koni in Guinea also constructed a local centre without any outside assistance. Local initiative in Guinea-Bissau resulted in the purchase of a local centre. At the inauguration ceremony for the centre of Agboville, Côte d'Ivoire, three dignitaries were presented with cassette tapes of the Peace Statement in the local dialect.

Inauguration ceremonies for regional centres were regularly attended by prominent people who praised the establishment of such institutions. The first regional Bahá'í centre in Sierra Leone was dedicated at Pujehun at a ceremony in January 1987 attended by the Paramount Chief, a member of Parliament, and the Inspector of Schools. When the Regional Centre of Tabligbo, Togo, was inaugurated in June 1987, a representative of the regional prefecture spoke hopefully about how the centre would serve

the interests of both the area and Togo in general. When a new regional Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds was opened at Curepipe, Mauritius, in November 1986, the Mayor of Curepipe, who was formerly Minister of Health of the Mauritian government, praised the Faith in a speech which concluded with the hope that the new centre would "dispel social and spiritual darkness in this region". His talk was heard on radio and television.

The first regional centre in Burundi was inaugurated in January 1989, on a road leading out of Bujumbura which is widely travelled by people bringing products to market. Regional centres were also established in places such as Cape Verde, Ghana, Mali, and Transkei.

In September 1987, Mauritius dedicated a new national Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds in Port Louis in a ceremony that included participation of the Governor-General of the nation, and was publicized in newspapers and on radio and television. In November 1987, the Bahá'ís of Mozambique acquired their first national centre, and in 1990, Ciskei opened its first national Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds. At Riḍván 1992, the National Centre of the Central African Republic was inaugurated in Bangui.



The Bahá'ís of Manzini, Swaziland, laying the cornerstone for their Regional Bahá'í Centre during a ceremony held on 15 October 1990.

Women

The emancipation of women, the achievement of full equality between the sexes, is one of the most important, though less acknowledged prerequisites of peace. The denial of such equality perpetrates an injustice against one half of the world's population and promotes in men harmful attitudes and habits that are carried from the family to the workplace, to political life, and ultimately to international relations. There are no grounds, moral, practical, or biological, upon which such denial can be justified. Only as women are welcomed into full partnership in all fields of human endeavour will the moral and psychological climate be created in which international peace can emerge.[3]

The National Assemblies of a number of African countries noted that women participated in Bahá'í activities to a greater degree than previously, and they used their creativity and energy to initiate projects which would lead to their further emancipation.

[3] Universal House of Justice, *The Promise of World Peace*.



Left: Participants in a Family Life Conference held in Limbe, Cameroon, on 17 February 1991.

Below: Participants in the National Bahá'í Women's Conference held at the Nakuru Bahá'í Centre in Kenya; February 1989.



Below: This group of Bahá'ís walked 800 kilometres from their village to attend a Bahá'í conference held in the Fizi Zone of Zaire in July 1989.





Some of the new Bahá'ís in Lwefeu, Senegal, who embraced the Faith during the Viera Teaching Project in 1988.

New national women's committees and family committees were born in various countries, and regular meetings among women were instituted, from the national to the village level.

Conferences were the most common type of activity organized both by and for women. Regional and national gatherings were held in many countries. Among the most noteworthy were: the International Women's Conference held in Nigeria in November 1991 which was attended by more than 200 people coming from sixteen countries and representing 44 ethnic groups; the National Women's Conference in Mauritius in August 1987 which drew members of seven National Assemblies and participants from Réunion, Madagascar, Côte d'Ivoire, and France; and the first Bahá'í Women's Conference in the Western Region of Ghana, held in a mud-walled centre filled with bamboo benches arranged for the 78 Bahá'ís attending.

Women comprised the majority of participants at three consecutive conferences in Zaire, each of which devoted a special session to women. Held in July 1989 in Fizi, Mwenga, and Bukavu, the conferences drew thousands of people, some of whom had to walk 800 kilometres to reach the gathering. The final conference in Bukavu was covered by four radio and newspaper journalists and attended by the Regional Secretary for Women's Affairs.

Some of the conferences focused on development projects related to the advancement of women. Following one conference in Cameroon in the summer of 1986, literacy classes were established for women in nine communities. At Kenya's annual women's conference in 1989, a presentation was made on income-generating projects, and participants visited a hospital and heard a talk called "Spiritual Life, Immunization, and Nutrition". An interview with a panel of Bahá'í women was recorded for broadcast on a television programme called "Women and Development".

Bahá'ís in Cameroon and Nigeria participated in the project 'Traditional Media as Change Agent' supported by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). In cooperation with various National Assemblies, Bahá'í agencies, consultants and UNIFEM, Bahá'ís used traditional means, such as music and dance, to stimulate discussions about men's and women's roles in society. In Liberia, a Bahá'í woman was recognized by the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism for starting the first magazine in the country dedicated to advancing the status of women. A Bahá'í villager from Zaire organized the Mothers' Committee of South Kivu with the goals of liberating women from the back-breaking labour of grinding maize; teaching literacy; establishing crèches for the care of infants whose mothers work in the fields; supplying pure drinking water; forming local stores for the sale of their products; and protecting pregnant women from hard field labour.

Bahá'í involvement in development projects led to education of the public on the status of women in the Bahá'í teachings. Interaction with other women's groups and participation in special events also served this purpose. In Uganda, a written statement on the Bahá'í perspective on women was presented to religious leaders during a national seminar organized by the government in July 1989. In December 1989, a discussion-debate on "The Rights of Women and Social Progress" was held in Côte d'Ivoire under the patronage of the Minister of Primary Education and the President of the Federation of African Jurists. Bahá'ís fully participated in activities marking National and International Women's Days in Cameroon, Nigeria, and Uganda.

Youth

The endurance of youth under arduous conditions, their vitality and vigour, and their ability to adapt themselves to local situations, to meet new challenges, and to

impart their warmth and enthusiasm to those they visit, combined with the standard of conduct upheld by Bahá'í youth, make them potent instruments for the execution of the contemplated projects. Indeed, through these distinctive qualities they can become the spearhead of any enterprise and the driving force of any undertaking in which they participate, whether local or national.[4]

The quotation above was reprinted in a compilation called *Youth Can Move the World* prepared by the National Youth Committee of Nigeria and published in 1991. By this time, the youth of Africa had already demonstrated the truth of these words by their actions during the Six Year Plan. Increasingly, they took the initiative to organize conferences, teaching campaigns, and children's classes, and accepted responsibility for their own Bahá'í education.

The youth of Botswana organized several international youth conferences which were well attended and received media coverage. The 1987 conference, which included participants from seventeen countries, was opened by a member of Parliament and closed by Chief Seepapitso IV. Eighteen countries were represented by the 130 youth attending the conference in 1988, and most of the sessions were conducted by African youth. During the 1989 conference, called "A New Spirit, A New Generation—Peace", eighteen indigenous youth accepted the Faith.

The international youth conference held in neighbouring Zimbabwe in August 1991 was completely organized by youth between the ages of thirteen and eighteen. More than seventy youth from eleven countries studied their role in the community, learned about the Youth Year of Service, and prepared for the coming Holy Year. In Gabon, youth presented the entire programme of workshops and talks at a national youth conference in December 1988.

[4] From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, 25 May 1975.



Bahá'í youth participating in the "Star 88" teaching project in Botswana; June 1988.

National and regional youth conferences were organized in Mauritius, Senegal, and Togo. "The Role of Bahá'í Youth" was the theme of two regional conferences held in Malawi in 1990. A number of conferences took place at the National Centre in Sierra Leone, and the youth of Kenya held annual conferences.

Conferences stimulated youth to increase their service to the Cause, and often this took the form of joining or creating teaching projects. Following the success of the 1987 European Youth Third World Teaching Project in Botswana, which involved eleven young Bahá'ís from five countries who each served at least one month in the Kalahari Desert communities, a series of summer teaching projects was born. "Star 88" began with a two-week orientation programme at the University of Botswana which acquainted the international participants with aspects of traditional African culture and provided an

opportunity to learn from experienced teachers. The youth were also educated about how to begin village development projects. The Star projects continued throughout the remainder of the Six Year Plan.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Zambia reported that the youth of Lusaka organized themselves to participate in all the country's teaching plans. One example comes from 1989, when the youth created a large book display at the Lusaka Public Library and placed banners and posters all over the town announcing the exhibit. Local radio and television stations broadcast interviews with the Bahá'ís associated with the display, and newspapers carried stories on it. As a result of the proclamation, at least eighteen people enrolled in the Faith.

Zambian youth also played a major role in a proclamation project organized by the Bahá'ís of Ndola in November 1988. They helped distribute more than two thousand pamphlets to government offices, banks, schools, hospitals, shops, newspaper offices, and private industries, while inviting people to a public meeting. A report from the Local Spiritual Assembly of Ndola said, "The reception of the public was overwhelming", and the meeting was covered in the *Times of Zambia*.

The Spiritual Assembly of Malawi reported that the country's strong National Youth Committee planned and carried out the Collis Featherstone Project which brought the healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh to refugees from Mozambique.

In February 1988, more than two hundred people attended a round-table conference in Cameroon called "The Challenge to the African Youth in the Modern World". Organized by the Yaounde University Bahá'í Club, the conference was held to inspire the Cameroon youth to higher ideals and to provide a sense of direction for all young people. The programme included addresses by three university lecturers from different departments. A thirty-minute interview with a Bahá'í speaker was broadcast three times by the national radio station.

In addition to helping Bahá'í communities grow, African youth contributed to community development by organising deepenings, assisting with children's classes, and undertaking service projects. The youth of Mizpah, Zimbabwe, built a Bahá'í Youth Library out of tree branches, plastic sheets, fence wire, and thatch for the roof. A seventeen-year old girl was elected librarian. A youth library was also established by the National Youth Committee of Malawi, news of which was reported in the first issue of *Malawi Bahá'í Youth Newsletter*, published in July 1990.

The youth of Zimbabwe also produced their own publication, *The Bahá'í Star*, through which they encouraged their friends



Counsellor Lally Warren (standing on the far left), visiting with friends in the village of Kabwafu, Malawi, during August 1990.

throughout the country. The National Spiritual Assembly commented at the end of the Plan that "It has been very encouraging to witness the involvement of Bahá'í youth in the work of teaching, administration, translation of the Bahá'í books in vernacular languages..."

Such initiative was also seen in the Seychelles, where the Youth Task Force, born in 1991, demonstrated its capacity to move quickly on assignments. Representatives assisted with deepening classes, visited the Bougainville community to discuss maintenance of the future regional Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds of South Mahe, and visited the Takamak community to discuss the formation of a formal programme for the friends. The youth of Gabon were reported to be holding regular deepening classes in four cities, and in South Africa regional and local youth committees were formed.

In March and April 1992, a six-week-long development institute for youth was held in Côte d'Ivoire. This was the first attempt in West Africa to give youth specific training, both practical and spiritual, to prepare them for a year of service in their countries.

Teaching

Formally planned projects and individual efforts to attain personal goals complemented the teaching achieved through all the activities summarized in the previous sections.

The teaching projects held in Africa during the Plan—many dedicated to Hands of the Cause of God or outstanding teachers in Africa's history—are too numerous to recount. However, a few examples drawn from the dramatic story of the Nigerian community's expansion illustrate the readiness of many Africans to accept the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

During the first week of the Enoch Olinga Project in Eket, Nigeria, in 1987, twenty dedicated Nigerian teachers brought fourteen new Local Assemblies into being and raised up 353 new believers. In the same area in 1988, twenty-eight Local Assemblies and 643 enrolments were the result of the Olinga-Akwa Ibom Teaching Project. During the first three years of the Plan, at least five large-scale teaching projects were carried out in Nigeria.

In December 1988, 414 new believers, including ten chiefs, embraced the Faith and ten new Assemblies were formed during the two-week Behin/Calabar-Mamfe Road Teaching Project. The teachers involved were all native believers. The Kay Wilson Teaching Project held in Nnewi, Anambra State, and the Elizabeth Gibson Project, both held in 1989, together were responsible for more than 1,400 enrolments. The projects in Nigeria were carried out in a wide variety of settings, bringing the Faith to Christians, Muslims, and traditional village elders. Over and over, success was attributed to the unity among the teachers.

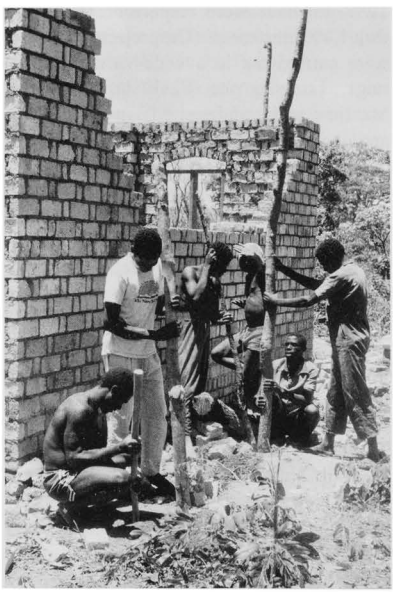
Teaching projects led to almost 18,000 enrolments in Kenya and almost 16,000 in Chad.

National Assemblies reported noticeable increases in the number of individuals taking responsibility for the teaching work outside of projects organized by the institutions of the Faith. Greater awareness of the teaching needs and commitment to fulfil them were noted in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Transkei. The National Assembly of Tanzania could only attribute approximately 35 per cent of the new believers to formally planned and funded projects, suggesting that much individual teaching took place. In Zimbabwe, a corps of travelling teachers was trained whose members were continuously active; an average of six to ten teachers were in the field at any given time.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Uganda wrote: "As evidenced by the increased communication between the Assembly and individual believers, there was quite an increased number of individuals who dedicated themselves more to serve the Cause, especially the youth. The result of it all is



Teaching institute held at the William Masehla Bahá'í Institute in Zambia; 1986.



Bahá'ís working on the construction of their new Teaching Institute at Titye, Kasulu, Kigoma,Tanzania in 1990.

Participants in a deepening seminar held in Guéckédou, Guinea, from 26–31 December 1990, included two members of the Auxiliary Board and seven members of the National Spiritual Assembly.



that there are now more workers for the Cause than before."

Local Spiritual Assemblies

> With increasing public attention being focused on the Cause of God, it becomes imperative for Bahá'í institutions to improve their performance, through a closer identification with the fundamental verities of the Faith, through greater conformity to the spirit and form of Bahá'í administration and through a keener reliance on the beneficial effects of proper consultation, so that the communities they guide will reflect a pattern of life that will offer hope to the disillusioned members of society.[5]

In order to further educate members of Local Spiritual Assemblies about their duties and foster greater maturation of these crucial institutions, a variety of methods were used to overcome obstacles in Africa such as the difficulty of travel, poor systems of communication, and low levels of literacy.

In Chad, believers used bicycles to travel thousands of kilometres to visit, encourage, and deliver mail to Local Assemblies. In Tanzania, twenty Assemblies were reached by the Travel Deepeners Programme. In Togo, an illustrated booklet on the major tasks of the Local Assembly was published and distributed to all the delegates at the National Convention in 1988.

In Rwanda, some Local Assemblies were invited to send two representatives to a deepening institute and teaching project, which so stimulated participants that they helped to form fifteen new Assemblies and were able to elect their own Assemblies the following year without assistance.

The National Assembly of Zimbabwe sent a letter to every member of a Local Assembly along with deepening material, and distributed information on elections and officer duties. The Spiritual Assembly of Bophuthatswana organized a fruitful seminar in 1989 to generate ideas on maintaining Local Spiritual Assemblies.

As Assemblies gained experience and increased their understanding of the institution, they took more initiative and responsibility, sometimes collaborating with neighbouring Assemblies. One example comes from Burkina Faso, where in 1989, about thirty members of the eight Local Assemblies of the Zecco region organized a teaching project in the village of Nibrogo. On the third visit to the village, 100 people embraced the Faith and a new Assembly was formed. The same group of Assemblies later launched projects in Ziou and Arrombissi.

In 1990 and 1991, the Local Assembly of Nabou, Burkina Faso, carried out two phases of a successful teaching campaign called 'El Báb' which opened fifteen localities, resulted in the formation of ten new Local Assemblies, and enrolled more than three hundred people.

In Transkei, eleven Local Assemblies adopted twenty-four extension teaching goals, visiting the areas at least once a month and some as often as weekly. The National Spiritual Assembly wrote: "One of the encouraging points about these campaigns is that they have all been organized by the respective Local Spiritual Assemblies and supported by the whole nation".

One example is the cooperation between the Local Assemblies of Umtata and Polini to teach the Faith in Mngamnye. Their continuous collaboration to organize numerous trips, proclamation events, and deepenings resulted in the re-formation of the Assembly of Mngamnye.

Of the many new Local Spiritual Assemblies that were formed in Africa during the Plan, several examples are noteworthy. In 1987, due to the efforts of the Bahá'ís of Batalimo in the Central African Republic, that country formed its first Local Assembly made up of Pygmy believers. Two members were later able to attend the National Convention.

[5] From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, Riḍván 1990.



On the island of Rodriguez, in the Indian Ocean, some of the Bahá'ís of La Ferme pose with Counsellor Gilbert Robert, shown fourth from left, and his wife, Daisy Robert, on far right, during the couple's visit to the island in October 1990.



In Sierra Leone, Bahá'ís in Yikandor, Pujehun District, work together to make mud bricks for a new Bahá'í Primary School. In addition to labour, the friends contributed cash, wood, stones, and sand for the construction; 1987.



A Teaching Institute being held in Bamako, Mali, on 19 and 20 December 1987.

Liberian refugees held fast to the importance of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, establishing a Local Assembly in a camp in Nigeria and virtually transferring the membership of three Assemblies from Liberia to Côte d'Ivoire. There the community expanded to include twenty-five Local Assemblies and nearly one thousand believers, both Liberians and Ivorians.

The Bahá'ís of Ethiopia rose to the challenge of replacing the one Assembly of Addis Ababa with twelve new ones when the government sectored the city into districts, each with its own municipal seat. The National Assembly considered the community's response to this opportunity to be the single most important achievement of the Plan, as it increased the base of the work-force in the area. Deepening courses were provided for the urban Assemblies, which in turn strengthened the believers under their jurisdiction who increased their participation in the activities of the Faith.

Literature Translation

In a letter to all National Spiritual Assemblies dated 10 July 1989, the Universal House of Justice wrote:

> The Holy Word has been extolled by the Prophets of God as the medium of celestial power and the wellspring of all spiritual, social and material progress. Access to it, constant study of it and daily use of it in our individual lives are vital to the inner personal transformation towards which we strive and whose ultimate outer manifestation will be the emergence of that divine civilization which is the promise of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

During the Plan, efforts continued to be made to provide the greatest access to the Sacred Writings by translating the Holy Word into as many languages as possible. Among the African languages into which the Writings were translated were: Kwangali in Namibia, Kirundi in Burundi, Kinyarwanda in Rwanda, Bambara in Mali, Tigrinya in Ethiopia, and Fang in Equatorial Guinea. Translations were made into multiple local vernaculars in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa, and Uganda.

In order to bring the Creative Word to illiterate seekers, the Writings were recorded on audiotape in languages such as Portuguese Creole in Guinea-Bissau and Santiago Creole in Cape Verde.

The Central African Republic, Transkei, Malawi, and Zambia reported great strides forward in the area of translation, with the latter increasing its production by using professional translators whose work was then reviewed by Bahá'ís.



Dr. Bahman Sadegzadeh, an Auxiliary Board member, handing medicine to Liberian Bahá'í refugees in Côte d'Ivoire during a conference held in March 1991. He also addressed the friends on the subjects of hygiene and the use of natural remedies.



O ye friends of God!
Exert ye with heart and
soul, so that association,
love, unity and agree-
ment be obtained
between the heart...
Should success crown
your enterprise, America
will assuredly evolve into
a center from which
waves of spiritual power
will emanate...
—'Abdu'l-Bahá

B. THE AMERICAS

MOST of the countries of North and South America share important commonalities in relation to the Faith, such as relative freedom of worship and freedom to teach. However, any summary of activities in the vast area of the Americas must be read with an awareness of the significant cultural, economic, and political differences between the United States and Canada on the one hand and the region of Central America, South America, and the Caribbean on the other.

The Bahá'í communities in each area tended to capitalize on their strengths. Thus when it is reported that large numbers of individuals enrolled in the Faith in the Americas, many of them indigenous peoples who then arose themselves to share the Message, it is Latin America which provides this news. In this region, a general openness to religion, increasingly active native believers, and good relations with governments combined with severe economic crises to create an environment in which people searched for deeper solutions to their immediate problems and found them in the Bahá'í Faith.

In the United States and Canada, where material and political conditions were much more stable but where there are many groups working to solve social problems, the believers spread understanding of the Faith to a large extent through deepening their relationships with service organizations, high government officials, and the media. Using their resources in communications, the fine arts, and the academic realm, the Bahá'í communities of the United States and Canada generated more widespread awareness of the Faith and greater respect for its activities than ever before.

Greater Involvement with Society

In its Riḍván message of 1988, the Universal House of Justice wrote that a new stage had been reached in the external affairs of the Cause. This stage was 'characterized by a marked maturation of National Spiritual Assemblies in their growing relations with governmental and non-governmental organizations and with the public in general'. Contacts with government officials and professional and community affairs organizations were particularly notable in the Americas, where they continued to develop throughout the Plan, increasingly leading to invitations for Bahá'í participation and advice.

One of the most outstanding examples of this trend comes from Brazil, where the Bahá'í community responded to the needs of its nation at a unique historical moment. Possessing a strong national administration, a diverse community, and an ample amount of translated literature, the Bahá'ís were ready to seize the opportunities presented by Brazil's transition to democracy which virtually coincided with the beginning of the Six Year Plan. Before the Plan began, the Bahá'ís reported that few prominent people were aware of the teachings of the Faith. By the end of the Plan, contacts with government officials were so extensive and consistent that the country's Federal Chamber of Deputies had announced its intention to commemorate the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh with a special solemn session.

After twenty years of military rule, a civilian president took office in Brazil in April 1985, and in February 1987 a Constitutional Assembly was installed to draft a new constitution. This political change transpired amidst economic turmoil, including high foreign debt, more than two hundred per cent inflation and a steadily widening gap between the wealthy and the poor. In 1987 the National Spiritual Assembly presented twenty proposals concerning law, human rights, international relations, education, the economy, the rights of indigenous peoples, the rights of women, and other subjects to the 559 Congressmen writing the country's new constitution. Each Congressman also received a folder including *The Promise of*

World Peace, information on the Faith, and a letter from the National Assembly stating the basic contributions the Bahá'í Faith could give to the new constitution. More than one hundred cables and letters and many telephone calls were received expressing gratitude for the suggestions provided.

In 1992 the Brazilian Government selected the Bahá'í report "Religions and Environment—A Specific Approach for the World Ecological Crisis" to be included in its report for the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (also known as the "Earth Summit"), at the request of the Brazilian Forum of Spiritual Traditions and Environment. And then, just a few days following the close of the Six Year Plan, the President of Brazil's Federal Chamber of Deputies spoke to forty-five federal deputies about the magnitude of the Personality and Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, quoting from His Writings on the establishment of a new world order.

Involvement of Brazilian Bahá'ís in the social issues facing their country went beyond contact with government officials to include sponsorship of and support for organizations working toward Bahá'í principles. Through these activities, the believers were able to simultaneously proclaim the Faith's teachings, form relationships with like-minded people, and work toward social change.

In August 1986 a group of Bahá'í physicians established the Brazilian Society of Physicians for Peace to awaken professionals in medicine to the importance of their contributions to peace. The Society was also to serve as a forum for studies on scientific, ethical, psychoaffective, educational, social, and spiritual aspects of peace. A decision was taken by the Brazilian Society of Physicians for Peace to work for the elimination of prejudices of race, class, nationality, and belief, promoting unity among peoples, and to avoid any involvement in political or ideological disputes.

The Society's inaugural ceremony was attended by 120 doctors, the presidents of the Medical Association and the Medical Councils, professors of medicine in universities, and the most outstanding authorities in medicine and health of the region. Hundreds of cables and letters of support came from physicians and hospitals. These included special messages sent by the Brazilian Office of the United Nations Organization and the international entity Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War, whose founders, Drs. Lown and Chazov, were awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace.

The inauguration included lectures about the role and the influence of physicians in securing peace, preceded by the announcement that the initiative was launched by a group of Bahá'í physicians. The Peace Message of the



The bronze plaque reads: "The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens. —Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892)." The group is shown with one of three such plaques presented, along with copies of The Promise of World Peace, *to the Brazilian Society of Educators for Peace. 1989.*



Members of the Raúl Pavón Teaching Project held in Peru in 1989 are shown with members of the Mothers' Club in Puno.

Universal House of Justice was presented in an audio-visual programme by a member of the Auxiliary Board.

Later in the Plan, the Brazilian Society of Educators for Peace was formed which began organizing seminars for teachers. Then in 1990, the Brazilian National Assembly sponsored the first International Exposition on Education for Peace with the participation of twenty-three embassies and educational institutions. Displays featured the efforts of various countries to reach peace through education.

Permanent monuments to peace bearing quotations from Bahá'u'lláh were erected in 1986 and 1991. The first stands near the spot where the borders of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay touch, in Foz do Iguaça, and it is inscribed with the symbol of the Greatest Name, the symbol of the UN International Year of Peace, and the words, "*The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens.* Bahá'u'lláh (1817–1892)". The second monument was erected in the city of Florianopolis, Brazil, in December 1991, bearing quotations related to the disintegration of the old world and the emergence of the new.

Bahá'í communities in other nations of the Americas also contributed to their governments' efforts to bring about positive social change. Written statements offering Bahá'í perspectives were presented in Paraguay and Haiti to individuals responsible for writing or approving new constitutions. Presentations were made on behalf of the National Assemblies of Barbados and Guyana to the West Indian Commission Preparing the West Indies for the Future, a body established to study the future of the Caribbean community and regional unification. In El Salvador, the Central American Institute for Business Administration invited Bahá'ís to participate in a seminar on a Post-War Reconstruction Plan.

In some countries authorities recognized the importance of the Faith by including Bahá'ís in official proceedings or sending officials to Bahá'í events. In January 1987 the Bahá'ís of Trinidad and Tobago were the first presenters during an inter-faith service following the formal opening of Parliament. In Barbados, the Prime Minister opened a Caribbean Peace Conference sponsored by Bahá'ís in October 1986. In Guyana, the Vice President requested a meeting with the National Assembly to discuss Bahá'í participation in the "Social Impact Amelioration Program". By the end of the Plan, Guyana's then-Prime Minister Hamilton Green had become so familiar with and respectful of the Faith, that he addressed the National Convention of the Bahá'ís of the United States at Riḍván 1992.

Bahá'ís also tried to contribute to the communities in which they lived by working with existing organizations concerned

with community affairs and organizing or co-sponsoring events of benefit to the wider society. As their contributions came to be known, Bahá'ís were increasingly invited to share their views and experiences. Bahá'í perspectives on the topics of the environment, race unity, and world peace were particularly sought out.

The National Assembly of the United States co-sponsored two Global Structures Convocations on Environment and Development, in 1989 and 1992. The Assembly also continued to contribute to the work of the Global Tomorrow Coalition, an organization of more than 150 members involved in issues related to resources, the environment, and sustainable development. Just prior to the end of the Plan, a member of the National Assembly's Washington, D.C., staff became part of a working group to draft suggestions for the United States Government's position paper to be presented at the Earth Summit.

Bahá'ís in Mexico participated in a public forum in Mexico City in March 1991 called "Preservation and Improvement of the Environment", joining representatives of several Latin American countries. The Latin American Council of Churches invited the Bahá'ís of Ecuador to collaborate on a round table discussion called "The Churches and Ecology". Bahá'ís in Canada were invited by the Saskatchewan Environmental Society to help plan education programmes for schools after the Local Assembly of Saskatoon created an environment desk.

Racial unity was a major focus of the work undertaken by believers in the United States. The long-standing involvement of Bahá'ís with commemorations honouring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., continued to expand. In 1988, Coretta Scott King invited the Bahá'ís to co-chair the National Religious Involvement Committee of the Martin Luther King Federal Holiday Commission, and in 1992 a member of the National Assembly was invited to serve as co-grand marshall of Atlanta, Georgia's King Day Parade, speaking to a rally of one hundred thousand people. In June 1991, the National Assembly issued the statement *The Vision of Race Unity—America's Most Challenging Issue*, which by the end of the Plan had sold approximately two hundred thousand copies.

The Bahá'ís in the United States increasingly received requests for support and consultation from organizations wanting to improve race relations. As early as 1987, for example, a governor's aide in Kansas requested that the Bahá'ís help train local law enforcement officers in racial issues and collaborate with the state Boards of Education to develop local programmes dealing with racial problems in schools.

Bahá'ís throughout the Americas contributed extensively to the promotion of world peace. The Presidents of seven Central and



In the United States, Bahá'í singers Seals and Croft participate in the Martin Luther King Day Parade held in Atlanta, Georgia, on 21 January 1991. The Parade was televised, and the reporter spoke of the Bahá'í principles of race unity.

South American nations received *The Promise of World Peace* during an intergovernmental meeting in Uruguay in October 1988. A milestone was reached in Cuba when, in 1986, the Bahá'ís were able to distribute the Peace Statement to a number of prominent people for the first time. The same year, the President of Dominica, His Excellency Sir Clarence Seignoret, quoted from the Statement during a radio message he delivered on the International Day of Peace.

In July 1987, five outstanding Bahá'í professionals visited Costa Rica to give presentations at a Seminar on Family Education for Peace held at the University for Peace in San José. During the Plan, Costa Rican Bahá'ís were honoured by Peace Radio, of the University for Peace, with a certificate of thanks for support and collaboration; the believers worked with the University in various activities, including a large peace conference and a series of forums on educating children for peace. In Venezuela, four believers spoke at the First International Encounter for Peace, Disarmament and Life, and an exposition of photographs and quotations was displayed at the site. A course based on the Peace Message was prepared for schools in Haiti, and annual peace fairs were held in Belize City, Belize. In both 1990 and 1991, the Bahá'ís of Guatemala participated in the Congress for Peace which involved representatives of all the religions being practiced in the country.

Celebrations of United Nations Days and Years and public meetings held to discuss UN-related issues occurred regularly in a number of countries. In the United States particularly, the National Assembly increased its support of United Nations initiatives—such as the International Year of Peace and International Literacy Year—and worked to support ratification of UN human rights conventions on torture, the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, and the rights of children.

Early in the Plan, an ad hoc group of organizations working for U.S. Congressional ratification of the United Nation Genocide Convention invited the Bahá'ís to participate, and the National Spiritual Assembly took a leading role; within one year, the convention was ratified. The National Spiritual Assembly's representative to the United Nations also became heavily involved in UN Association activities, serving as Chair of the UNA-USA Executive Committee of the Conference of United Nations Representatives in New York and later as a member of the Board of Governors of that body.

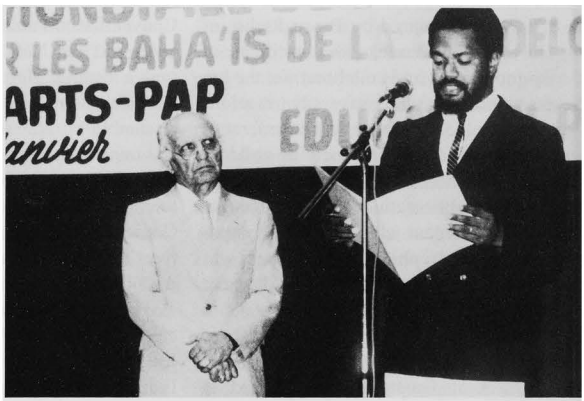
The UN International Year of Peace was celebrated in the United States with an International Peace Conference held in San Francisco in August 1986 and attended by 7,800 people. In Bolivia, the Ministry of



Bahá'ís of Havana, Cuba, welcome the visit of Mrs. Carmen de Burafato, member of the National Assembly of Mexico (seated centre), and Miss Teresa McGregor, a member of an Auxiliary Board in Mexico, (second from left) in November 1986.



In the United States, First Lady Barbara Bush welcomes the Bahá'í International Community Representative, Daniel Wegener, to the White House during a reception held on 20 June 1990 for delegates to the United Nations' "World Conference on Education for All".



In Guadeloupe, Mr. Louis Luce reads the Bahá'í statement "Education for Peace", while Mr. Kamran, chairman of the World Religion Day activity, looks on; 18 January 1987.



In Trinidad and Tobago, friends gather to commemorate the United Nations' Human Rights Day on 10 December 1988 in Port of Spain.

Foreign Affairs and Religions invited the Bahá'ís to be part of a commission responsible for the International Year of Peace activities. Bahá'ís in Grenada supported the International Literacy Year, 1990, by hosting a Literacy Conference which included a panel of experts and was opened by the Governor General. Other support of United Nations activity included participation by the Venezuela Bahá'ís in a meeting of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, following which the National Assembly helped form the Association of Non-Governmental Organizations. Canadian Bahá'ís worked with a team at the University of Ottawa's Human Rights Research Centre over a two-year period to mount a nationwide campaign of activities for the 35th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Bahá'ís in Bermuda sponsored regular commemorations of Human Rights Day, which eventually became government-sponsored events.

Greater involvement in society also meant that Bahá'í professionals in the Americas formed new relationships with colleagues and contributed to their fields by forming associations and sponsoring seminars and conferences. In Guyana, for example, dinner receptions were held for visiting professionals to introduce them to their colleagues; visitors included artists, an ophthalmologist, and an expert in the area of drug abuse prevention who gave presentations to social workers, health professionals, doctors, and medical students during a seven-country tour of Central and South America.

An Association for Bahá'í Studies conference on science and religion held in October 1987 in the United States provided opportunities for Bahá'ís to make valuable connections with eminent members of the scientific community. A conference entitled "The Architecture of the Bahá'í Edifices" held in Uruguay in July 1988 attracted thirty non-Bahá'í professionals. A Bahá'í with expertise in computer science opened many doors to professional circles in Colombia in 1987 when he visited and spoke about computers and about world peace to professors, students, and prominent people. The creation of the Association for Bahá'í Studies in Chile led to interaction with experts in many fields.

Efforts to contribute to the field of education included co-sponsorship by the Bahá'í community of Bucaramanga, Colombia, and the Latin American Language Centre of a forum in October 1988 called "Excellence in Education", which attracted 70 people; distribution of the monograph *Educación Moral* to educators in the Dominican Republic; and organization of a seminar on education by the Center for Bahá'í Studies in Ecuador, which was followed by Bahá'í participation in national consultation organized by the Ministry of Education. In March 1987 the Bahá'ís of Manizales, Colombia, held their first Peace Encounter with non-Bahá'ís in the field of education. Participants analyzed issues such as the principles governing peace, the nature of man, and the dynamics of consultation, and worked to define their own attitudes and decide on actions to take toward achieving peace.

Mass Media

The instruments of mass media were widely used to foster awareness of the Faith in the Americas. As in other areas of the world, opportunities greatly increased for Bahá'ís to share the principles of Bahá'u'lláh and to announce their events through radio, television, and newspapers, and media coverage of the Bahá'í community's activities was unprecedented.

Radio was the medium through which the widest variety of people in the Americas heard about Bahá'u'lláh, given its unique ability to reach remote areas and transcend the barrier of illiteracy. In addition to the regular programming on Bahá'í-owned radio stations in Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, and the United States, weekly programmes were aired in Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and the West Leeward Islands.

Chile provides an example of the use of radio as a strong force for teaching and community development, particularly among the Mapuche Indians. Given the expense of travel relative to the income level of much of the population, limitations on travelling to teach in Chile made the advantages of radio particularly welcome.

For five years preceding the launching of the Six Year Plan, Bahá'ís participated in a weekly programme reaching the entire country, creating the basis for a regular listening audience. And for a brief period in 1986, selections from The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh were read every hour all day on twenty-eight stations. Then, having obtained approval for their own frequency a few months before the Plan, the Bahá'ís launched Radio Bahá'í de Chile on 20 December 1986.

The station was established in Labranza, Commune of Temuco, in the heart of Mapuche Indian territory. Radio Bahá'í Chile both contributed to the preservation of Mapuche culture and welcomed the contributions of the native population to its mission.

In July 1988, six Mapuches attended the station's first institute held in part to train community members to support the work of the station. Early in 1989, Radio Bahá'í Chile was chosen by the Government as the prime vehicle for a development project involving bilingual literacy classes in Spanish and Mapuche. Two rural Mapuche Bahá'í schools were among ten selected to serve as liaisons between the station and the students for the project, for which the Regional Ministry of Education provided materials, scripts, and planning, and Radio Bahá'í taped and transmitted broadcasts. The project, according to the National Assembly, indicated the recognition accorded by the Ministry of Education to the status and capacity of Radio Bahá'í.

The initiative of an individual believer in Santiago, Chile, also resulted in unprecedented radio proclamation for the Faith and a positive contribution towards peace and community health. Francisco Amenábar, a well-known media personality, created a radio programme transmitted from 10 p.m. to midnight from Monday to Friday, designed to create a meditative atmosphere each evening using selected poems, stories, legends, and writings from different sacred scriptures, accompanied by specially selected music. The popularity of the programme grew rapidly, and by early 1989 it was estimated that between 10,000 and 15,000 listeners in the metropolitan area of Santiago and nearby small towns were enjoying it each evening.

As phone calls and letters arrived, the owner of the station approached Mr. Amenábar, commending him on his initiative and offering to repeat the same programme on co-owned stations in three other centres. Mr. Amenábar began making increasing use of the Writings of, and literature about, the Bahá'í Faith, always mentioning the source of the work, creating a wide public awareness of the Faith. Many people appearing at firesides and public talks first heard about the Faith through this programme.

Further tribute to the positive effects of the programme was accorded by the Ministry of Telecommunications when it awarded the owner of the station a free frequency in the Valparaiso area (where previously it was impossible to obtain a frequency), in recognition of the "special programme dedicated to peace and unity".

Special broadcasts in other parts of the Americas also reached large audiences. In June 1986, the official government shortwave in Cuba, Radio Havana, invited Bahá'ís to be on a show called "Religion in Cuba". An interview with the chairman of the National Assembly about the principles, history, and current development of the Faith was broadcast at intervals for a total of six hours in seven languages. In January 1987, the Bahá'ís of Guadeloupe received wide radio coverage of their activities for World Religion Day. For the nine days surrounding the event, eight different radio stations broadcast various interviews and programmes,

and on the day itself, the most popular commercial station aired a two-hour phone-in show with a prominent Bahá'í. In Peru, the Bahá'ís produced an educational radio series, broadcast in Aymara and Spanish, which addressed subjects such as rural family life, prayer, consultation, and the value of native languages. During December 1991, public service announcements about peace were aired twenty times a day on two stations in El Salvador.

In late 1991, the Bahá'í community of Argentina reported a great increase in its opportunities to proclaim the Faith through radio broadcasts and interviews. In Almirante Brown, the five-to-ten minute slot originally given to the Bahá'ís on the local FM radio was increased to an hour-and-a-half every Saturday during which the diverse themes of the Cause could be discussed. In La Rioja, the Faith was proclaimed for fifteen minutes after the presenter of the programme "Cantares del Litoral" ("Songs of the Littoral") left the radio booth and handed the microphone to the Bahá'ís to talk about the Faith and its principles. During an interview with the Bahá'ís by Radio Nacional in Mendoza which lasted one hour and fifteen minutes, the interviewer showed great enthusiasm and receptivity towards the Faith and Bahá'u'lláh. This programme prompted calls from listeners who expressed their happiness at hearing such a message of peace.

One sign of the movement toward more sophisticated use of radio was the holding of several Radio Bahá'í Seminars in Latin America during the Plan. The second seminar, held in Lima, Peru, in 1988, was attended by more than fifty radio experts, six members of the Continental Board of Counsellors, all the members of the International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Centre, and representatives of seven Bahá'í radio stations (five of them indigenous peoples). Reporting on the fourth seminar, held in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in 1991, the Latin American Radio Advisory Committee commented that signs of increasing maturity within the radio family were evident from the active participation of indigenous friends, mostly youth, and greater participation by women.

One of the exciting developments in the use of television in the Americas came in Puerto Rico in early December 1989, when the Bahá'ís were asked by the local television station whether they would produce a ninety-minute holiday special programme, featuring guests from different religious backgrounds speaking on the theme of peace. The station offered to pay for the production crew and to donate studio and air time, if the Bahá'ís would build the set, obtain the hosts and guests, and write the script. The programme was transmitted on various cable services reaching fourteen localities. It was shown on six consecutive days at various times. Publicity for the Bahá'í-sponsored programme included radio spots on two stations a thirty-second television announcement shown frequently, street banners at major intersections and the shopping mall, and almost one thousand flyers handed out by the television station's personnel.

In 1988 the Bahá'í Office of Public Affairs for the Greater Milwaukee, Wisconsin, area in the United States was given the Community Access Award for Religious Programming by Viacom, the cable television service for the Milwaukee suburban area. The Bahá'í Broadcast Media Task Force used "The Spiritual Revolution", a series consisting of thirteen half-hour interviews with a number of knowledgeable Bahá'ís about the Faith, and adapted it for local use by adding an introduction and an ending which explained how viewers could obtain further information about the Faith.

Another regular television programme aired in El Salvador: a weekly show of fifty-four episodes called "Journey Towards the Future". Also in El Salvador, fifty-two interviews used to promote public meetings were aired free of charge.

In 1987, the Public Information Office at the United States National Bahá'í Center was asked by two television enterprises to



Left: All of the resources of Radio Bahá'í, Bolivia, being used in a campaign to fight cholera in 1991.





Above: The staff of the Bahá'í radio station WLGI Hemingway, South Carolina, U.S.A. November 1987. Left: A staff member at Radio Bahá'í, Panama, in Boca del Monte, preparing to broadcast music; 1987.



Exterior view of the Bahá'í radio station in Labranza, Chile, in February 1988.



Below: Bahá'ís teach the Faith during a radio interview held in Colima, Mexico, in 1987.



Above: A staff member of Radio Bahá'í Ecuador (left) interviews a villager as part of the "Walking Together" project; 1987.

Right: The first weekly Bahá'í radio programme in the Guajiro language aired on 2 September 1990 in Maracaibo, Venezuela.





Left: Exterior view of Radio Bahá'í on Lake Titicaca, Peru; 1988. This, like all Bahá'í radio stations, is community-based and participatory.

supply Bahá'í public service announcements for a cable channel to use on its satellite service to cable television systems throughout the United States, and for the Max Media organization to distribute to thousands of cable system operators for regular local use. In 1988 the Global News Network also requested Bahá'í public service announcements to be telecast over its new satellite and cable television channel.

In May 1988, the Bahá'í community of Alaska received an award from the Interior Alaska Ecumenical Peace with Justice Council, in Fairbanks, for the "Peace Talks" television campaign. "Peace Talks", developed in 1987, comprises four sixty-second public service television and radio announcements, using ideas adopted from the Peace Statement. Each announcement focuses on a different aspect of the theme, "Peace is More Than Just an End to War", and conveys the overall concept that achieving real peace involves change in many areas of human interaction. At least 35,000 households in the Anchorage area and more than 240 villages in Alaska regularly received the announcements. They were also aired on radio and television all across Canada in English, French, and Inuktitut, as well as on local television in the Arecibo region of Puerto Rico.

In Canada, at least 66 hours of the programme "Bahá'í Perspective" were broadcast on cable television during the Plan. In February 1992, the new season began with a thirty-minute talk about Bahá'u'lláh based on the Statement on Bahá'u'lláh, which had been prepared by the Office of Public Information at the request of the Universal House of Justice. According to the report, "The programme is not only excellent for Bahá'ís studying the Statement on Bahá'u'lláh, but it also is perhaps the most complete half-hour summary of Bahá'u'lláh's life and teachings that exists on video".

Bahá'í videotapes, such as those showing highlights of the International Convention, provided another vehicle for sharing the teachings with television audiences. The International Convention video was broadcast in Bolivia and St. Lucia in 1988, and the Canadian music video "Mona" was shown nationwide in Paraguay in October 1986.

Newspaper coverage of the Faith increased and broadened its focus from the persecutions in Írán to Bahá'u'lláh and His Teachings. The National Assembly of the United States reported that during the Plan the number of articles on the Faith increased from an average of 2,000 per year to 3,800. Regular quotations from the Writings appeared in papers in Guyana and Haiti, and special features included a full page summary of the Peace Statement in Ecuador and an eight-page supplement in El Salvador's *Diario El Mundo*, which was sold to 40,000 people.

The Public Relations Committee of the National Assembly of Guatemala achieved extensive press coverage of the Faith in the first few months of 1987. In early January, the most widely read newspaper in the country, *Prensa Libre*, published an article on the inauguration of the House of Worship in India. A few weeks later the Committee arranged a press conference with Counsellor Arturo Serrano of Mexico during one of his frequent visits to Guatemala. In early February two leading newspapers interviewed Mr. Hassan Sabri, head of the Office of Social and Economic Development at the Bahá'í World Centre. All newspaper articles included photographs, and the interviews often quoted the Bahá'ís.

In the Bahamas in 1988, the National Assembly answered charges made against the Faith by delineating Bahá'í principles and providing a comprehensive history of the Faith in a long letter which appeared in the *Nassau Guardian*.

An overall increase in media coverage of Bahá'í activities was reported in a number of countries, including Chile and the Dominican Republic. The Bahá'ís of Bermuda reported that their Public Relations and Communications Committees were in regular contact

with representatives of all types of media, and it became commonplace for visiting prominent Bahá'ís to be interviewed. Friends travelling to teacher in St. Lucia were also subjects of television and radio interviews, and a reporter was sent to cover regional consultation between Caribbean National Spiritual Assemblies. Newspaper articles about the Faith multiplied in Argentina, and at the end of the Plan the National Assembly said "the doors of radio stations are completely open..." Proclamation via media was called a "strong suit" in Belize, where teaching teams often found people who were ready to become Bahá'ís after listening to weekly radio programmes. Television broadcasts featuring Bahá'í travelling teachers also reached nationwide audiences in that country. The National Assembly of Suriname stated that because of the mass media, "the Name of Bahá'u'lláh is well-known to the population."

The Bahá'ís in the Arecibo region of Puerto Rico established such a friendly relationship with the local media that they began having difficulty keeping up with the publicity opportunities presented to them. By early 1990, the newspapers were regularly publishing articles, photographs, and publicity for the twice-monthly Bahá'í television programme. One of the local radio stations invited the Bahá'ís for a two-hour interview on the Faith. The interview was aired "live", and also taped to be repeated in the future.

A wave of publicity for the Faith occurred in Mexico in early 1990 during the first phase of an intensive cross-border teaching project, held in Ensenada, Baja California. As a result of continuous contact with the media, supplying key individuals in television, newspapers, and radio with information on the Faith and regular news releases about the different activities of the project, there were more than fifteen articles, eleven radio interviews, numerous thirty-second "spots" and several announcements on the local evening television news programme.

In an exchange of "war toys for peace toy", the children of Ensenada were invited to exchange their rifles, swords, toy soldiers, etc. for other toys suggesting peaceful activity. Most of the new toys were donated by the Bahá'ís of several communities near San Diego, California, in the United States. The public and media response to this particular event was extremely positive.

During the weeks preceding the El Salvador Bahá'í community's celebration of the Anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh and its own fiftieth anniversary in 1989, the Bahá'ís enjoyed extensive television exposure and excellent publicity in newspapers, including three major dailies, two of which contained full-page articles featuring verses of Bahá'u'lláh. The Bahá'ís were able to speak for two hours on the Bahá'í approach to peace during a special television interview, responding to generally helpful and friendly questions from the moderator and the television audience. During a second showing the following Sunday, the moderator phoned one of the Bahá'ís to say that it had been one of the most significant programmes he had ever produced. He asked whether the Bahá'ís, though removed from political contention, could teach the spirit and methods of Bahá'í consultation to the adversaries in the nation's conflict.

The Arts

The arts were used to proclaim the principles of the Faith, to directly teach about the Cause, and to celebrate the diverse cultures represented in the Bahá'í community of the Americas. The media used included music, drama, dance, slide shows, painting, video, and puppetry.

The Canadian Bahá'í community stands out for its use of virtually all these artistic media to proclaim the Faith. Finding itself, at the beginning of the Plan, with good resources in the arts, and noting a growing openness to diverse forms of cultural expression in the country, the community particularly moved to fulfil its Six Year Plan goal "to make use

of drama and singing in the teaching and deepening work".

In order to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas on how best to achieve this goal, the Bahá'í Arts Council, Canada, sponsored "Invitation 88: A Festival of the Human Spirit". Held at the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, during the summer of 1988, the festival attracted approximately 1,000 participants at various times to its programme of workshops, exhibits, and performances.

A report reads: "During the course of the festival we recognized in each other diverse and previously undreamed of capacities for creativity and expression of the Faith". The festival impressed both Bahá'ís and the general public with the excellent quality of performances, talks, workshops, and displays and reflected the words of the Universal House of Justice: "New prospects for teaching the Cause at all levels of society have unfolded".

That same year the Canadian youth troupe Let It Be This Generation won the hearts of youth in high schools, colleges, universities, and community centres across the country during a nationwide, 150-performance, peace-promoting tour. The presentation, based on the inevitability of peace and the steps to attain a united global community, communicated its ideas through dance, slide shows, music, theatre, and movement. The troupe performed in high schools, junior high schools, elementary schools, and public places, and estimated that about 12,000 people saw the show, aside from television audiences. The team also gave away between six and eight thousand copies of the Peace Statement.

The Sacred Writings, along with music and dance, were used to tell the story of the spiritual and social revolution of the Faith of the Báb at an international theatre festival in Canada in 1990. The production, named "Badasht", drew audiences totalling nearly 450 people.

Bahá'ís in Vancouver, Canada, organized a "Peace of Art" concert in May 1991 to provide opportunities for sharing the Faith with different groups in the community. Held in the city's Centennial Theatre, the event included dance, theatre, readings, music, and visual arts from different cultures dedicated to the promotion of unity through diversity. More than seven hundred people attended the concert, including local authorities and representatives of the media.

In many regions of the Americas, music was used for proclaiming the Message, either through the songs themselves or through the musicians speaking of the Faith in between numbers and during publicity interviews. Reporting on the "Concert for Peace" given in July 1987 by Bahá'í pianist Alfredo Speranza at the Solis Theatre, Montevideo, Uruguay, the National Assembly called it "an important success which attracted almost a thousand spectators to...the principal hall in the country". Invitations were sent around the country through Local Spiritual Assemblies, schools and universities, and the media. The artist, an Italian citizen born in Uruguay, was interviewed by reporters from television channels, radio stations, and newspapers, with mention made of his Bahá'í beliefs and his worldwide service on behalf of the Faith. In addition, Maestro Speranza spoke at two public meetings at the National Bahá'í Centre on the subjects of music, unity, and the Bahá'í Faith.

Starting in October 1986, the Louis G. Gregory Bahá'í Institute in Hemingway, South Carolina, U.S.A., held annual one-week Peace Feasts: four-day programmes of jazz, gospel, and contemporary music, dance, and addresses by distinguished speakers. In 1987, the Governor of South Carolina, Carroll Campbell, Jr., issued a proclamation designating the week of 14–20 September as Peace Week in the State.

In March 1987, the small Bahá'í community of the city of Araguari, Brazil, (population 30,000) organized a big public musical show called "A Chance for Peace" performed by Bahá'í musicians from a larger neighbouring community. The show

attracted an audience of a thousand and received wide press and radio coverage. Hundreds of pamphlets were given to the public. The same show was later sponsored by another small community, where five hundred attended.

A singing group from Guyana called The Carmel Minstrels performed throughout the country and completed a Caribbean tour in 1987. The group was included in several national and governmental events and performed fund-raising concerts for social and economic development projects.

In Puerto Rico, at least five concerts were presented to audiences of more than a hundred people. All of these included presentation of the Faith and distribution of literature.

Theatre groups capitalized on the inherent drama of the Faith, presenting its history and principles on stage. In Brazil in 1988, a theatrical production relating the life of Muná Maḥmúdnizhád, the youngest of the ten women martyred on 18 June 1983 in Shíráz, Írán, received official authorization after government review, to be presented anywhere in the country. It marked the first time a production by Bahá'ís, using a cast of both Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís, received such recognition.

Bahá'ís in Arequipa, Peru, formed a group in 1986 called Universal Peace Theatre which attracted favourable notice from the Director of UNESCO clubs in Arequipa. After hearing a radio interview with the group, he invited their participation in the December celebration of Human Rights Day at the National Cultural Institute. They were heard on radio stations and performed for students in schools of Arequipa "teaching the concept of world citizenship in support of the International Year of Peace".

Bahá'í Youth Workshops—youth groups using dance and drama to convey the principles of the Faith—multiplied in the United States, forming in dozens of cities. One example of their power comes from Georgia. What began as an invitation by the Milton High School in Alpharetta, Georgia, for the Atlanta Bahá'í Youth Workshop to give a single performance of a programme entitled "Barriers to Peace" in October 1989, resulted in the youth giving a number of repeat performances and remaining all day in the school.

During the week before the scheduled performance, the high school had experienced an increase in racial tension among the students. After consultation with a Bahá'í youth attending the school, the principal and the Board of Education decided to use the Atlanta Bahá'í Youth Workshop as a tool to help defuse the tensions. The Workshop's four performances of song and dance were arranged with ninety-minute breaks in between to enable students to meet with members of the Workshop and to consult about racism. Much of the discussion led to proposed solutions from the Bahá'í perspective. Enthusiasm about the programmes quickly spread. Students encouraged others to participate and many students and teachers attended more than once.

Slide shows were used in several countries to present the main points of *The Promise of World Peace*. A slide show based on excerpts from the Statement was shown to about five thousand students and teachers in seventeen primary-secondary schools of Colombia in 1986. The programme was first conceived as a deepening tool for Bahá'ís, but its use as a teaching aid was discovered when a group of Bahá'ís in a teaching campaign decided to present the slide show in a school, and it was well received. Bahá'ís were invited to return to one of the schools until they had shown the audio-visual presentation to nearly thousand students.

Two other slide shows based on the Peace Statement were shown widely throughout Brazil. "From War to Peace" was directed toward adult audiences and "The Peace Pigeon" was aimed at children. In 1989, the Secretary for Education and Cultural Matters of the State of Espirito Santo authorized the Bahá'ís to give talks about the Peace

Statement in all the public schools in the state, opening the way for a great number of students to see the slide shows.

The Promise of World Peace was also the inspiration for an art exhibit shown for six days in 1986 and co-sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of Belize and the country's National Arts Council. The "Peace Exhibit" was arranged around excerpts from the Message and quotations from the Writings in beautiful calligraphy by a Bahá'í artist. The art gallery was filled with works in a variety of media—painting, drawing, graphics, sculpture, needlework, and stained glass—all on the theme of peace. A poetry competition for children and youth from several schools and colleges was publicized on radio, and winners were announced at the exhibition, where gifts were awarded by the Committee.

At the opening ceremony for the exhibit, the Mayor of Belize City, who is himself an artist, spoke briefly, and then the wife of the President of Belize cut the ribbon starting the event. It is estimated that three hundred to four hundred people saw the exhibit and received pamphlets on peace.

In 1989, the video production "Peace...the Promise" won an award as a finalist among more than three thousand entries from more than thirty countries at the International Film and Television Festival in New York.

Some performing groups used a wide variety of artistic media to teach the Faith. An idea put forward at the Bahá'í International Youth Conference in Brazil in 1991 became a reality: a performing arts group calling itself Planeta Paz (Peace Planet) was formed, with five members from Argentina, one from Uruguay, and four from Brazil. The show consisted of music with Bahá'í themes, folk music, dancing, and a slide show conveying the principles of the Faith. A display about the Faith was also put up at each venue.

Each Planeta Paz concert began with a tribute to Bahá'u'lláh, stating that He gave His life for peace and unity. At the end of the show, the performers would tell their audience that Bahá'u'lláh is the Messenger of God for our time, and they would invite those who identified themselves with His Message to embrace the Cause. During the first two months of its performances, the group presented twelve shows in the Brazilian states of São Paulo, Parana, and Santa Catarina. During this time, 150 people embraced the Faith through the group's presentation. In the four following months, Planeta Paz, assisted and guided by the Auxiliary Board members in each country, performed in more than ten cities in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay.

A support group travelled ahead of Planeta Paz and organized institutes to prepare local communities for mass teaching. Local youth were deeply involved in the consolidation of those who enrolled in the Faith as a result of the performances. Several articles in newspapers, some radio and two television interviews helped bring the musical group to the attention of the general public. The final result was more than 500 new believers and proclamation to thousands.

Carrying on a tradition of cultural exchange among indigenous peoples from divergent parts of the Americas, begun by a group called Trail of Light in 1982, a four-person Garifuna (Carib) team from Honduras and Belize shared dances, music, and legends from their culture, as well as describing how the Bahá'í teachings of unity and diversity have encouraged them to be proud of their heritage. Among the teaching activities of this new Trail of Light was the presentation of cultural performances at five schools in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 1988. It was reported that at one school a teacher became so enthusiastic about the team's presentation that he closed the programme with a summary of the Faith's teachings on unity and diversity. The history of the Garifuna people is intimately linked with St. Vincent, which, in their folklore, is the place of their origin and the most beloved of all places to them.

"Play Jazz for Peace" was the name of a concert organized by a travelling teacher in June 1989 in Caracas, Venezuela. More than four hundred people attended the concert at which a group of professional musicians played tunes inspired by the ideal of peace. At the same time, the Bahá'í community of Caracas mounted an exposition of Sacred Writings and photographs related to the peace theme, which was viewed by several hundred people.

From June 1989 until the end of the Plan, Bahá'ís in El Salvador sponsored seven musical and art festivals in cooperation with other local organizations. Audiences ranged from sixty to three hundred people. An arts festival was also organized in Nicaragua by the National Bahá'í Youth Committee in 1989. About three hundred people attended the three-hour event which both proclaimed the Faith and raised funds for the pediatrics ward of a hospital in the city of Jinotepe.

Puppetry also served as an effective vehicle for teaching. The People of Paradise Puppets of Barbados performed before hundreds of children at Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í functions, using puppetry to address issues of social concern, such as the use of illegal drugs. In Guyana, about thirty-five believers took part in four puppet workshops in three regions of the country during 1991, learning how to use this art to proclaim the Faith.

In January 1989, the Bahá'ís of Argentina reported that the Bahá'í Cultural Centre of Buenos Aires, named the May Maxwell Centre, was running a puppet show for the children of the district every fifteen days, and an average of fifteen children not from Bahá'í families were attending. The show, presented by El Retablo del Mosquito (The Mosquito's Retable), a group made up of Bahá'ís and their friends, was also being taken to events arranged by other organizations.

Large-scale Enrolment

Special focused teaching projects involving cooperation among various institutions, full-time teams, Bahá'í radio broadcasts, and enthusiastic youth all played important roles in bringing about large-scale enrolment in Latin America and the Caribbean. A variety of projects—some with very few teachers and a short amount of time—met with success, demonstrating the great receptivity of the souls in these areas.

The most outstanding example of large-scale enrolment came from Guyana, where during the first year of a three-year pilot teaching project, more than 20,000 enrolments were reported. This more than doubled the number of Bahá'ís from two to five per cent of the country's population of 750,000. The first 5,000 Bahá'ís embraced the Faith during the project's initial six weeks.



A Garifuna Bahá'í (right) travelled to teach the Faith in the Carib Territory of Dominica during January and February 1991.

Conceived at the Bahá'í World Centre by the International Teaching Centre in consultation with the Universal House of Justice, the project was launched in October 1989 under the direction of the enthusiastic National Spiritual Assembly. It had two goals: large-scale expansion and consolidation to help raise the number of Bahá'ís in Guyana to an appreciable percentage of the entire population, and the training of existing human resources and an ever-increasing number of new believers to become dedicated workers for the Faith.

Guyana was chosen for the project because of the success Bahá'ís had had in teaching projects there, the continuous support given to teachers by the National Spiritual Assembly, the Bahá'ís' good relationship with the authorities, and the fact that the community had a significant number of deepened and dedicated youth. The size of the community was also deemed suitable for a pilot project, and Guyana's racially diverse population seemed to be the most receptive in South America.

Twelve experienced Bahá'ís from Brazil, Canada, Peru, the United States, and Venezuela were selected by the Continental Board of Counsellors to serve as resident teachers for the project. Selection was based on a number of spiritual and material considerations, but primarily on each individual's capacity to be obedient to the institutions and to reach a unified vision with their fellows. The overseas teachers were joined by twenty-six local Bahá'ís who gave from six to twelve months to the project. Small full-time teaching teams spread over six different areas of Guyana, with a goal of establishing teams in all regions of the country.

The teaching work was carried out using various methods: proclamation events, market displays, use of the media, presentations to schools, and service projects. Bahá'í Information Centres were established throughout the country to coordinate teaching activities and make Bahá'í literature available.

Several of the teaching groups found that someone accepted the Faith in every home they visited, and sometimes whole families became Bahá'ís. One of the teams was based in the village of Crabwood Creek, which subsequently enrolled a thousand believers, or about twenty per cent of the village population. The community held its Nineteen Day Feast in the park, as no house was large enough to accommodate all who arrived.

A visit in March 1990 by two Counsellors from the International Teaching Centre helped to clarify the importance of the project's second goal of consolidation: to raise up ten to fifteen per cent of the new believers as dedicated workers, primarily through "good teaching" and a mature, systematic approach to deepening through the Institute Programme.

The Institute Programme involved new Bahá'ís in basic deepening courses to help each develop a spiritual identity. Intensive study of the Creative Word was put into action through various paths of service, confirming the believers in their newly found Faith, and preparing them for more specialized Institute courses such as teacher-training and children's education. More than a thousand new believers participated in the programme during the project's first year.

Children's classes were also held in all of the teaching areas, and deepening was pursued through radio; the National Assembly increased its radio time from three programmes per month to two per week and added a devotional programme every day. In addition, the concept of revisiting newly enrolled believers soon after their enrolment and providing deepening on prayer and teaching became part of the method used by the resident teams.

One consequence of this attention to simultaneous expansion and consolidation was the significant involvement of new believers in service and teaching. Hundreds of new believers in the eastern part of Guyana arose to carry out community service projects developed at Feast consultations.

They worked in a spirit of cooperation and service to humanity to design and construct a children's playground, build a seventy-foot bridge to link two villages, and improve the condition of a local hospital. A series of literacy programmes was also developed in different parts of Guyana, and a three-day Bahá'í Peace Festival sparked invitations for the Bahá'ís to speak to a community service group and make similar presentations to students in sixteen schools in the area.

When the National Assembly, in February 1990, called for an increase in the number of believers involved in teaching, the number quadrupled. This broader base of participation in the teaching field contributed to the success of the pilot project; at its conclusion, Guyana had approximately 36,000 new believers.

Teaching teams (see next subsection) also met with success in Ecuador, where a year of teaching dedicated to the memory of the Hand of the Cause Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir brought at least 2,300 people into the Faith. Beginning in January 1990, teachers from seven countries supplemented the full-time Ecuadorian teams in visiting each of the five goal areas targeted by the National Spiritual Assembly. Four week-long teacher-training institutes were held as part of the project, as well as several weekend training seminars.

The effectiveness of radio in preparing large numbers of people to accept the Faith was demonstrated repeatedly in Bolivia. Following a two-day training course at the Firdawsi Institute in November 1988, forty of the sixty participants volunteered to visit communities in listeners' range of Radio Bahá'í. During nine days, more than a thousand people embraced the Faith. The project, designed by the National Teaching Committee in collaboration with a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors and of the National Assembly, continued, and by the end of February 1989, it had attracted and confirmed more than 2,000 believers. In addition, fifty communities were opened to the Faith, some of which became entirely Bahá'í.

A five-day teaching campaign in February 1992, which constituted one element of the ongoing Muhájir Project begun in September 1991, also focused on areas reached by Radio Bahá'í broadcasts. During the five days, more than five hundred people recognized Bahá'u'lláh, five new Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed, and thirty-eight localities were opened.

The important role played by youth in large-scale expansion also deserves special mention. Just one example comes from Colombia, where a team composed of an Auxiliary Board member and seven youth brought 1,245 new believers into the Bahá'í community during the initial three-month phase of an ongoing project.

During the period between September and December 1988, the team travelled to fifteen communities in the departments (states) of Atlantico, Bolivar, and Sucre. Each day began with prayer, study, and the memorization of the Holy Writings. A slide show based on the Peace Statement was shown in high schools and some public places, and a correspondence course was offered to interested people. The team then visited homes teaching the Faith directly, using the booklet *Let's Get to Know the Bahá'í Faith*.

Two special aims of the project were the formation of youth groups and finding youth capable of carrying out regular children's classes. Youth were also encouraged to focus on service and develop community projects. One teacher later returned to the community of Santa Catalina and found youth group members had already initiated a children's class and were teaching a group of thirty students how to read, using the Bahá'í literacy training booklet, *God Illumines Us*.

While large-scale enrolment was taking place in South America, numbers were also dramatically increasing in the Caribbean. A report from the National Spiritual Assembly of Haiti in September 1988 relayed news of the large-scale enrolments occurring in that country: It wrote: "Joyously inform results first phase Summer Teaching Campaign.

[Two thousand, three hundred and seventy-one] adults, youth, children accepted Bahá'u'lláh. [National Teaching Committee] planning second phase emphasis consolidation new believers. [Eight]-Day Deepening Institute planned ... for new Bahá'ís."

In 1991, 34 people took part in a teaching institute held to prepare believers for entry by troops in Haiti. As a result, two teaching teams were formed and they visited Bainet, Blockhaus, Lavalée, and Musac during July and August. The role of the teams was both to teach and deepen new believers, and by the end of the four-week campaign, more than 3,300 people had embraced the Faith and some 135 localities had been opened.

A three-week teaching activity in Trinidad and Tobago in the beginning of 1989 brought five hundred new believers under the banner of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. The activity was part of the ongoing Covenant Project, carried out in memory of the esteemed Mr. H. Borrah Kavelin, late member of the Universal House of Justice. In June and July of that year, 850 new believers were enrolled in Chaguanas in the central part of the country, after the visit of a special teaching team aided by three members of the National Teaching Committee, two full-time teachers, one travelling teacher and a few other Bahá'í friends.

An important part of the Covenant Project was the consolidation process; simultaneous with the teaching, deepening meetings were organized and Bahá'í children's classes formed. A large amount of Bahá'í literature was distributed, along with prayers and pictures of the Indian Bahá'í Temple. During regular visits to the new believers, the project members showed films and conducted deepening sessions.

Even very short-term projects brought in hundreds or even thousands of believers, strikingly demonstrating the receptivity of souls in Latin America to the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

In just two days in February 1990, 228 souls embraced the Cause in the Southern Teaching Project in the town of Alvorada, Brazil. The joint efforts of an Auxiliary Board member, four Local Spiritual Assemblies, travelling teachers from three states, and pioneers resulted in this exciting campaign. For fifteen years Alvorada had had a Bahá'í school, so many of the new Bahá'ís were long-time friends of the Faith and were already quite familiar with its teachings.

The unified efforts of a member of the International Teaching Centre, a member of the Board of Counsellors, four Auxiliary Board members, and members of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Peru and Bolivia rekindled the Lake Titicaca region of Peru in September 1988. A two-day mass teaching workshop attended by sixty teachers was followed by a five-day teaching



Participants in the second Regional Youth Conference for the Caribbean, held in Grenada from 12 to 14 August 1988.

project in which 1,764 new believers embraced the Cause of the Blessed Beauty—738 youth and 1,026 adults, almost half of whom were women.

A one-day strike and demonstrations which blocked roads did not hinder the progress of the Bahá'í teachers, who succeeded in their efforts. One historical highlight was the teaching carried out at a high school in Villa Quebrada, where the principal, all the teachers and students enrolled in the Faith. The project culminated in a two-day conference where results were evaluated and future directions suggested. Ten volunteers offered to continue with consolidation work.

Teaching Teams

The large-scale enrolment experienced in Guyana was intimately linked with the use of teaching teams in that country. The work of teams, both full-time and permanent (long-term) also contributed to the rapid growth of the Bahá'í community in a number of other countries in the Americas. In addition to the advantages of concentrated resources and continuity provided by teams, such a method of organization allowed new believers to work with more experienced teachers and native believers to join with travelling teachers. This diversity demonstrated the principles being taught, and the variety of talents represented on the teams allowed greater attention to be paid to the consolidation component of large-scale teaching.

Honduras began the Plan with a relatively large Bahá'í population and freedom to teach, but faced the challenge of developing strong Bahá'í communities following mass enrolment. Throughout the Plan, teams were used to continue proclaiming Bahá'u'lláh's Message to the large, receptive audiences while simultaneously working to establish the foundations for self-sustaining communities.

One of the goals of the Plan for Honduras was "to ensure mass teaching and the entrance of troops in the Garifuna areas". One step in accomplishing this goal was Project Muhájir, the first phase of which was the formation of a permanent team of five members in January 1989. The team visited Bahá'í Garifuna communities for approximately seven days at a time to proclaim, teach, and deepen. They worked to enrol new Bahá'ís, establish children's classes, ensure the celebration of the Nineteen Day Feasts, and train several key Bahá'ís to carry on these activities. An important aspect of the plan was to make return visits to each village to reinforce previous efforts and continue the consolidation process.

The team worked under very arduous physical conditions: all transportation was by foot or dugout canoe and food was critically scarce even for the indigenous population. However, in the first five months



Participants in a youth conference held in Barbados in August 1990.



On the island of Cayemite, off the coast of Haiti, a member of a teaching team (right) shares the Message of Bahá'u'lláh in the village of Anse-à-Macon during a project held in November 1989.



The Bahá'í teachers who participated in a five-day orientation as preparation for the second phase of the Mírzá Mihdí Project in Belize from 15–19 June 1990. As a result of this phase of the Project, 327 people enrolled in the Faith.

of the project there were about a hundred new enrolments, and the team felt a firm foundation was being established for entry by troops. By the end of its first year, Project Muhájir reported more than 1,300 new believers, many from the Garifuna area.

On 1 January 1990, Project Olinga was launched in the same area, bringing into the community 1,419 new believers in the first eight weeks. During the rest of 1990, more than 7,000 men, women, and children were enrolled in the Faith in Honduras, largely due to the efforts of teaching teams.

Under the inspired guidance of Counsellor Hidáyatu'lláh Aḥmadíyyih, one team grew during a six-month period into five teaching teams composed of old and new Garifuna believers working in different areas of the coast developing weekly adult study groups and children's classes. The project carried on following Counsellor Aḥmadíyyih's death in August, and by November, nearly one hundred weekly study classes involving more than five hundred new Bahá'ís in twenty-five communities were being held, as well as some thirty children's classes.

Five-day training sessions were held on five occasions to inspire more believers to participate in the work of the teams. More than fifty Garifuna believers at one time or another were involved in the teaching work.

In December, under the guidance of the National Teaching Committee, a teaching team composed of three Garifunas, two Latin-Hondurans and one pioneer travelled to three different areas of the country to assist the mass teaching efforts.

In the first area, Santa Rosa de Copan, the group attracted 254 men, women, and children to the Faith during a five-day period. Joined by youth and two pioneers in Santa Rosa de Copan, the group also helped to organize four evening meetings, and participated in an Entry by Troops Institute sponsored by the National Teaching Committee.

"The spirit of love and fellowship among the Santa Rosa believers and their outstanding level of service to the Cause, as well as to the team, was a continual source of inspiration for all", the National Spiritual Assembly reported. By the Institute's end, the local believers had committed themselves to hold four firesides every Bahá'í month, and to establish and carry out at least seven study groups and four children's classes weekly.

From Santa Rosa, the team went to Flor de Campo, a neighbourhood of the nation's capital, Tegucigalpa, to help that Assembly's teaching campaign. Over the next week another three hundred souls were enrolled in the Cause. Many of the earlier new Bahá'ís were visited in their homes, and meetings were held to inspire the new believers.

From Tegucigalpa the team journeyed to El Tular, a small town in the south of the country. After four days, more than 400 more people joined the Faith, including two policemen, four school-teachers, the Post Office chief, and other prominent people in the community. Nightly meetings were well attended, and hundreds of pamphlets, booklets, and prayer books were distributed.

The work of teaching teams in Honduras continued in 1991. On 24 June of that year, a teaching team of nine youth and one adult, from Honduras, Canada, Írán and the United States, enrolled 99 people in Tegucigalpa. The National Spiritual Assembly reported that the total number of enrolments in the capital in the preceding year had reached one thousand.

The ninth permanent teaching team was formed in the State of Santa Barbara in 1991. A member of the National Spiritual Assembly who arose to serve full-time in the teaching work coordinated the team's efforts. In the period between January and July 1991, five thousand people embraced the Faith in Honduras.

Success with full-time and permanent teams was also experienced in Belize during 1988 and 1989, after which the Mírzá Mihdí Teaching Project was launched in February 1990 by a group of twelve teachers from Belize, Canada, Jamaica, Mexico, and the

United States. The first nine-week phase of the project, which concentrated primarily on the Garifuna people, resulted in more than a thousand souls being enrolled in the Faith.

The town of Dangriga, in Stann Creek district, was chosen as the main base for the project. Two houses were rented—one for female and the other for male members of the team—with one of the homes being used also as a teaching centre for deepenings and evening programmes. For the first six weeks the teachers stayed only in Dangriga, during which time 450 people embraced the Faith. Then for the last three weeks of the project the twelve teachers, plus a few Bahá'ís who were on spring vacations from schools, went to villages in the district and to Punta Gorda in neighbouring Toledo district.

"One man in Punta Gorda knocked on the door of the Bahá'ís", it was reported. "He had come in from a village especially looking for them. He told them that he had heard about Bahá'ís on Radio Bahá'í Ecuador and he wanted to join the Faith. Several times, both in Dangriga and Punta Gorda, Bahá'ís were stopped in the street by receptive souls asking if they could join the Faith."

The project's successes, in addition to the team's original goal of bringing three thousand Garifuna people under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh, inspired a second phase of the Mírzá Mihdí Project. Phase two of the project was held for nine weeks beginning on 15 June 1990. More than thirty teachers, building on the successes of phase one, enrolled 327 new believers.

"We have received reports full of joy from the teaching field", began an article in a newsletter from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Dominican Republic in 1990. It referred to the full-time work of five Bahá'ís teaching the Faith in a special project dedicated to the memory of Dr. Aḥmadíyyih. Their efforts were supported by other Bahá'ís who were able to serve for varying lengths of time, from one week to more than a month.

"The latest news is that there are 46 new believers in the province of San Juan, and 36 new Bahá'í adults plus 36 children in Barahona. The key is to instruct and integrate these believers at once to achieve the transformation which is the purpose of the Faith of God. With this in mind, the project teams are incorporating the new believers in the teaching work, and deepening institutes are being planned."

The work of permanent teaching teams was also reported in El Salvador, where members participated in national teaching projects under the supervision of the National Teaching Committee and coordinated by the Regional Committees. In the United States also, approximately one thousand teaching teams were formed, with members committing themselves to regularly teach a certain



Children perform traditional Guaymí dances as part of the closing ceremony of the Bilingual Training Seminar, held on 21 April 1989 in the Bahá'í Guaymí Cultural Centre in Panama. The training was in Spanish and Guaymí literacy.

segment of the population for a period of at least five years. Several full-time teams composed of youth also met with success in that country.

Indigenous Peoples

A particular strength of the teaching work in the Americas was the attention given to sharing the Cause with indigenous peoples and incorporating the positive aspects of their cultural traditions into Bahá'í community life. Increasingly indigenous peoples from all parts of the continent arose to spread the Faith themselves.

The efforts made by the Bahá'ís of Panama to contribute to the preservation of Guaymí culture exemplify this trend. In February 1987, the Guaymí Cultural Centre was inaugurated in Boca de Soloy (Chiriqui Province), Panama, to become the focus of a Guaymí tutorial school network as well as cultural, health, and agricultural activities. The inauguration was attended by well over two thousand people, including the general Chiefs of three provinces, representatives of the national government and members from nine indigenous tribes of six countries.

During the Plan, the Centre sponsored regular deepening institutes for groups of twenty-five live-in students at a time. The institutes combined study with service, such as making recordings for Radio Bahá'í Panama and preparing Centre land for the planting of beans and yucca. The Centre also hosted special events such as a Health Day in June 1988 which brought together twenty-two Guaymí women to study nutrition and preventive medicine in honour of the fortieth anniversary of the World Health Organization.

The work of the Cultural Centre included the work of Radio Bahá'í Panama, also established with the goal of cultural preservation and education. For example, in 1989 Radio Bahá'í Panama began broadcasting public service messages six days a week to help provide a means of communication in the Guaymí area. The messages, sent in by listeners, included reports of lost animals, requests for transportation, announcements of classes, medical services available, and other topics of general interest.

Also in 1989, the radio station sponsored the Sabanero Festival in Boca de Soloy, attracting over two hundred participants. Sabanero, the original language of the Guaymí, embodies and preserves both the culture and the religion of the people. It has come to be spoken only by the older generation. A special guest who had been invited to sing traditional Sabanero songs and promote Guaymí culture, commented that his participation in the Festival was due to the sincerity of the Bahá'ís and their awareness of the importance of preserving the Guaymí culture. He presented three gifts to the Bahá'í Guaymí Cultural Centre.

That same year, the personnel at Radio Bahá'í's transmitter link in Soloy participated in a bilingual (Spanish-Guaymí) seminar on education and literacy held at the Cultural Centre. Staff members also took an active role in a teaching campaign in the Guaymí area of Tolé and helped with elections of Local Spiritual Assemblies.

The work of the Faith in preserving Guaymí culture was noted by the director of a Guaymí dance group during its performance at the Twelfth National Craftsmanship Fair held at Atlapa Convention Centre in August 1989. The group of sixteen Guaymí Bahá'ís, who called their presentation "Traditions of Guaymí Dances", came from Boca de Remedio, an indigenous community whose population is entirely Bahá'í.

During a seminar on the development of the Faith among the Indian peoples of Latin America held in Bolivia in July 1989, the case of the Guaymí of Panama was cited as one example of a people who decided to recreate their own culture in relationship to the Faith, drawing upon the Creative Word to strengthen their culture's positive characteristics. Some of these characteristics include religious devotion, courtesy, hospitality, cooperative work, education in traditional

values, strong family life, and a love for nature.

The importance of our demonstrating appreciation for indigenous cultures was eloquently emphasized by the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum in a telegram she sent from the heart of Canada's Blackfoot Indian area in 1986: "Feel very strongly world-wide community Bahá'ís especially pioneers, teachers, must learn show proper respect profound customs and spiritual associations indigenous peoples if we desire share bounties Bahá'u'lláh's Message with them. All too often, alas, we neglect follow beloved Master's footsteps who showered deep love and understanding, sincere praise and respect on those of different backgrounds. Such loving respect other people's way and deep feeling essential if we intend pass healing cup this Revelation to other lips."

Amatu'l-Bahá's extensive travels in Canada and the United States visiting with Native American leaders and participating in traditional gatherings powerfully demonstrated the truth of her words. In Montreal, she spent time on the Kahnawake Mohawk Reserve with Grand Chief Joseph Norton and Chief Eugene Montour, and in Regina, Saskatchewan, she had lunch with prominent Indian leaders, including a number of women. In Frobisher Bay, she attended part of Spirit North Council, a gathering of one hundred believers and guests, approximately sixty per cent native Eskimos and Indians. Amatu'l-Bahá reported that a moving commemoration of the Martyrdom of the beloved Báb was "held outside on hill overlooking unbelievably beautiful Frobisher Bay full of scintillating pack ice, touched all hearts, and I was able share petals from Threshold Bahá'u'lláh's Shrine in Bahjí with friends...."

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum was also the special guest at a ceremony on the Peigan Reserve which was presided over by Chief Crowshoe, the only surviving chief of five chiefs who had given her the name Natuocist during her visit in 1960. Over three hundred were present from all parts of Canada, including some members of the Canadian National Spiritual Assembly. The Naat owa'pii Centre in Brocket, Alberta—the heart of Blackfoot Indian area—was officially dedicated in a special ceremony.

At the end of her trip she crossed the border into the United States and visited the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota where a concentrated teaching plan was underway. "We slept at the Oglalla Community College", Amatu'l-Bahá wrote, "and held a large potlatch and powwow in this important centre in the heart of Sioux Indian territory. Sioux believers and others from as far away as Navajo Reservation [Arizona] ensured a most happy and memorable evening for us all. This important reservation now has nineteen Local Assemblies, one of the all-Indian ones showering me with special gifts."

In August 1988, also in South Dakota, native men and women, Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í, representing fifty tribes, gathered under a giant red and white tent surrounded by tepees, near the sacred burial site of Chief Sitting Bull at Standing Rock Reservation, in Indian Memorial Park, Mobridge, to attend the Fifth Continental Indigenous Council. A telex describes the gathering: "We...assembled beneath a canopy of unity, on a plain surrounded by the Missouri River, today audaciously pledge our warrior peace-making spirits to win the foremost objective of the Six Year Plan—to carry the healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the generality of Mankind." Written pledges to serve the Cause and carry the Faith to Africa, Europe, and South America were received by the National Spiritual Assembly on the last night of the Council.

The Council was attended by distinguished visitors including a member of the Universal House of Justice, for whom an Honor Dance was performed; a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre; four Continental Counsellors; and members of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Alaska, Canada, and Mexico.

On the closing day the National Spiritual Assembly visited the Looking Horse family, keepers of the Sacred Pipe of the Lakota people. The Assembly presented the family with gifts including a framed photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The National Spiritual Assembly members then met with the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Council in Eagle Butte where they presented individual copies of the Peace Statement. The Council members also received copies of *The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys*, this book having special significance as the numbers seven and four have great importance in their traditions.

"Native Americans and the Promise of Peace" was the theme of a Unity Council Fire held in August 1986 at the Native American Bahá'í Institute in Arizona, U.S.A. Mr. Maynard Eakan, an Inuit Bahá'í, had travelled to several Reservation communities to invite the Navajo, Hopi, and Pueblo friends, more than one hundred of whom attended.

Highlights of the Council Fire were a Saturday evening performance by the Pine Springs Singers, a group of children who had become popular performers of Navajo traditional songs and dances under the guidance of the Pine Springs Bahá'í community; a talk explaining to the group the symbolism of the beautifully carved and decorated "talking stick" given to him in Alaska; and Saturday afternoon prayers at the grave of Gordon Tong, one of the original group that had worked to found the Institute.

In September 1986 it was announced that *The Promise of World Peace* had become available in summary form in the Navajo language on cassette tape. The publication was one result of a translation institute which served the double purpose of producing new translations of the Creative Word and deepening the thirteen participants.

Throughout the Plan, the Native American Bahá'í Institute addressed the educational needs of the local population, initiating a tutoring programme in conjunction with a nearby school and holding classes on Navajo culture.

The education of young Indians was also addressed by Bahá'ís in Brazil, where the Polytechnical Rural Institute Djalal Eghrari entered into an agreement with FUNAI (National Foundation of the Indian) to serve the Indians of the Amazonas region.

The significance of the teaching work among indigenous peoples was also featured at the International Indigenous Believers' Seminar held in Sucre, Bolivia, in July 1989. Seventy Bahá'ís representing nine distinct indigenous groups from eight countries, seven Counsellors, eight Auxiliary Board members, members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Bolivia, and pioneers discussed the participation of indigenous peoples in building an ever-advancing civilization.



Friends gathered at the Peigan Bahá'í Institute in Alberta, Canada, in December 1989.

This seminar was followed by a National Teaching Conference attended by more than two hundred Bahá'ís. Following the conference, nineteen teams went out "in search of souls ready to accept the Faith". This one-week-long teaching project resulted in five hundred enrolments and the opening of ten new communities.

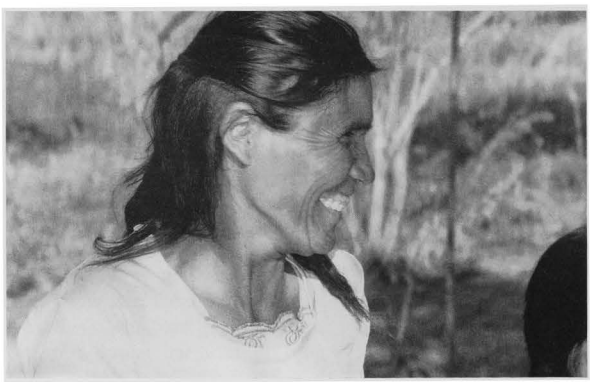
The results of teaching work among the Toba people of northeastern Argentina over a period of more than fifteen years were demonstrated when the Toba inaugurated a District Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds in May 1986 in Puerto Tirol, a small town near the provincial capital. At the time, the Tobas numbered 54,000, making them the second most numerous tribe in Argentina. The first teaching teams into the Toba region in 1970 had been headed by Hooper Dunbar (then a pioneer in Argentina), and fittingly, Mr. Dunbar was present for the inauguration of the Toba District Centre. Sixteen years after the first contact, there were thirty-five localities and twelve Local Assemblies; three local centres had been acquired and a Bahá'í tutorial school had begun operating.

Many Bahá'í teachings were found to be compatible with Toba custom, including the importance of music and of dawn prayer. New Bahá'ís among the Toba began making songs from the Writings and even revived their old tribal songs again. Two members prepared their native instruments and songs in order to participate in a teaching project in Paraguay and Argentina. It is also an old Toba custom for the women to chant a prayer for the dawn to wake the family in the morning; the chant is said to be "from the Maid of the Heavens".

A substantial increase in enrolments took place among the Amerindian and Bushnegro populations of Suriname, and Guatemala finished the Plan with twenty-two Local Assemblies counting indigenous members in the majority. The first Local Spiritual Assembly of the Mura Tribe in Amazonas State, Brazil, was formed at Riḍván 1990 after a tribal village, located twelve hours by boat from the village of Beruri, was visited by some of the friends. The Mírzá Mihdí Projects in Belize attracted an estimated 1,200–1,500 Garifuna people into the Cause.

Teaching among the Garifuna people in Honduras (see also p. 284) also bore fruit. In 1989, the National Assembly reported the enrolment of more than 1,300 new believers in the Garifuna area, and between January and September 1990, a total of over seven thousand people accepted the Faith. One project, carried out by twenty-four women, men, youth, and children who organized meetings in thirteen different communities on the north coast of Honduras, resulted in new enrolments reaching 1,170 in their area.

In Ecuador, full-time teams spent several months teaching the Quechua-speaking



A Toba Bahá'í woman from the Chaco Region of northern Argentina; 1989.



Left: Students of violin at the School of the Nations in Brasilia, Brazil. The School was opened on 1 September 1980, and in December 1987 was officially inaugurated at its new permanent headquarters.



Above: The exterior of the Maxwell International Bahá'í School near Vancouver, Canada; 1992.



Right: A Bahá'í tutorial school in Colorado in the Guajira region of Colombia, in 1987.

Right: In Nicaragua, young Bahá'ís meet with Costa Rican youth who offered teacher training classes in January 1992. The young travellers are working with believers who want to learn how to give children's classes in their own communities.



Indians in Imbabura Province, their efforts resulting in 250 enrolments during this period. Also in that country, the Peace Statement was presented to the Chief of the Saraguro Indians and the governor of the Colorado Indians, both of whom then gave authorization to teach among their people.

A significant sign of the teaching work's success came when greater numbers of indigenous believers arose to become teachers of the Cause themselves. In Costa Rica, indigenous believers were reported to have participated in large numbers of teaching projects. Interchanges took place between the Bribrí and the Guaymís, including joint visits to the Bahá'í Guaymí Cultural Centre in Soloy, Panama, and to the International Native Council in June 1991. Teams of Bribrí teachers actively collaborated in teaching projects in Honduras for a number of months. A teaching team which worked in four Garifuna villages of Honduras in 1990 included two Belizean Garifunas, two Costa Rican Bribrí, twelve Honduran Garifunas, one Misquito Indian, two Latin-Hondurans, and others. This effort was dedicated to the late Counsellor Aḥmadíyyih, and resulted in 1,207 new souls embracing the Faith.

The first week of a teaching project launched on the eve of Naw-Rúz 1989 in Quintana Roo, Mexico, was significant for the leading role played by the Mayan believers. The campaign resulted in ninety-four adults, forty-seven youth, and seventy-nine children embracing the Faith.

In the summer of 1990, new Bahá'ís contributed greatly to a teaching project on Canada's Peigan Reserve, being responsible for half the enrolments. By December of that year, the total number of enrolments had reached eighty-five since the summer effort began, and registration cards were coming into the National Centre from Peigan at the rate of twelve or so every week.

The four-person Carib (Garifuna) Bahá'í music and dance team Trail of Light from Belize and Honduras made a memorable one-week visit to their fellow Carib people in Dominica during September 1988. This visit corresponded with the annual celebration of Carib Week. The Carib Chief, Irvince Auguiste, whose council acted as host to the group during its stay, received the group at the airport. On arrival at Bataka in the Carib Territory, a local television team was waiting, wishing to make a feature on the Carib language. The dance team was interviewed and an impressive five-minute feature was aired on cable television. The group's activities were also mentioned several times on the national radio station and in the weekly newspaper.

At the gala cultural show held for Carib Week, the group presented a twenty-minute performance of drumming and dancing to the 500-strong audience, as special guests of the Carib Council. At the close of the programme the Carib Council presented gifts of baskets and carved calabashes to each team member. This was reciprocated by a presentation from the team to the Council. In addition, presentations of the Peace Statement were made to other officials and the Kitáb-i-Íqán was presented to the Carib Chief.

During their stay the team members also visited local craftspeople and elders to discuss aspects of their culture, and further performances were given. A local historian remarked that this was the first time a cultural exchange of Garifuna-speaking people had taken place in Dominica.

Academic Circles

In its Riḍván 1990 message to the Bahá'í world, the Universal House of Justice praised efforts that had been made to reach such a wide variety of indigenous peoples, stating "we have achieved a marvellous diversity in the large numbers of ethnic groups represented in the Faith..." Then it called on the believers to increase the community's diversity in yet another direction, by striving to share the Message with "people of capacity, including persons of accomplishment and prominence in the various fields of human

endeavour". One avenue of this pursuit led to the world of academia.

Efforts to relate the Bahá'í teachings to the thoughts and problems of the wider society led to greater interaction between Bahá'ís and educators from the university to the primary school. As understanding of the principles of the Faith grew, so did inclusion of the Faith in curricula.

In the United States, strong relationships had been forged with members of the academic community before 1990, but in January of that year a milestone was reached when a Memorandum of Understanding was signed to establish the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace at the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management. Proposed by a non-Bahá'í professor in response to the Peace Statement, the Chair was created to conduct and publish research, design courses and lead seminars in the field of Bahá'í studies and world peace within an interdisciplinary context; to initiate public forums for discussing the issues proposed in *The Promise of World Peace*; and to establish academic links with, and provide technical assistance to, Bahá'í institutions in the fields of peace education and international development. The creation of the Chair marked the first initiative by a prestigious institution of higher learning to formulate a serious programme of Bahá'í studies.

A variety of contacts between Bahá'ís and university professors had preceded this momentous event. For example, in December 1987, the New England Regional Committee of the Association of Bahá'í Studies in North America held a conference on the relationship between the Bahá'í Faith and Christianity at Harvard Divinity School. A number of prominent non-Bahá'í speakers joined the Bahá'í speakers to address many current theological issues.

During the same month, a Bahá'í seminar was held as part of the conference of the American Academy of Religion in Boston, Massachusetts. The Conference provided an excellent opportunity for Bahá'í as well as non-Bahá'í academics to discuss common questions of scholarship and to engage in an in-depth discussion of the points raised in the broad range of presentations.

"Vast changes on the international scene have prompted talk of the emergence of a 'New World Order', began the description of a course offered by the Faculty of Part-time and Continuing Education at the University of Western Ontario, Canada, in the spring of 1992. The subject had been suggested by the Association for Bahá'í Studies Campus Club at the University.

The course description in the Faculty's catalogue continued: "The phrase 'new world order', coined by the Bahá'í Faith in the 1800's, articulates a vision of a new, unified world order, and its premises serve as a point of departure for this series of informal lectures and discussions on the world as it might be." The class topics were "Moral Foundations of a New World Order", "The International Economy: New Disorder", "Political and Legal Dimensions of World Order", "Feminism: International Movements Towards Equity", "Environment: Global Directions in Education", and "Racial Dimensions of a New Social Order".

The Association for Bahá'í Studies, with its headquarters in Canada, continued to sponsor annual conferences on themes from the Writings, and published some of the proceedings, such as *Unity: The Creative Foundation of Peace*; *Racial Unity: An Imperative for Social Progress*; and *The Bahá'í Faith and Marxism*. In 1988, the quarterly, trilingual *Journal of Bahá'í Studies* was inaugurated to create a forum for all researchers of the Bahá'í Writings. (See also sub-section on the Associations for Bahá'í Studies, pp. 461–470.)

Other universities in the Americas also offered opportunities to study the Faith. A course on the Faith was established in Brazil's Federal University of Santa Catarina, and lectures were given in comparative religion courses at Bermuda College. In

Guatemala, the booklet *Education for Peace* was studied with a group of three hundred student teachers at a college for twenty periods of forty minutes each. In the United States, a document called "A Curriculum Guide to the Bahá'í Faith" was drafted to help college professors include the Faith in their courses. The National Assembly of Suriname reported that a number of non-Bahá'í individuals had written theses related to the Faith. The Bahá'í Club at the University of California, Santa Cruz, helped design a course called "The Economics of a World Commonwealth" for an Elderhostel programme in 1988.

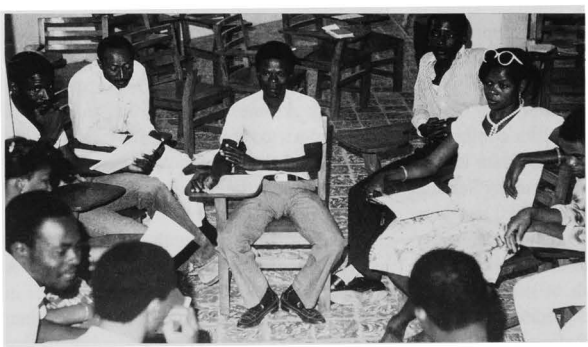
In 1991, the Bahá'í community of João Pessoa, in the State of Paraiba, Brazil, succeeded in having study of the Bahá'í Faith included in the curriculum of the Ecumenical Institute of Theological Sciences. The Institute, which was founded in March 1990, offers undergraduate studies in theology for high school teachers of religion.

The efforts of Bahá'ís to have the Faith included in primary and secondary curricula also bore fruit. Study programmes about the Bahá'í Faith for basic general education in public schools in Chile were approved by the Ministry of Education in June 1989. In response to this, the National Spiritual Assembly's Department of Education held several training courses for teachers of the Faith. Topics of study included geography of the Middle East, the history of the Faith, the Covenant, group dynamics, children's rights, race unity, prayers, the creative power of the Word of God, and the subject of peace.

In 1988, the National Spiritual Assembly of Jamaica was asked to prepare a detailed curriculum for a chapter on the Bahá'í Faith in the first year compulsory Caribbean Examination Council Course on comparative religion. The Assembly, working in conjunction with the National Assembly of Trinidad and Tobago, submitted the material for consideration.

The Faith was also included in the curriculum of at least one government primary school in Bermuda. In Peru, high school teachers assigned research of the Faith, referring to Radio Bahá'í as a resource.

In 1991 the Ministry for Education for British Columbia, Canada, approved study of *The Hidden Words* and *The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys* as valid for meeting poetry requirements. At Maxwell International Bahá'í School, students memorized an extract from *The Hidden Words* each week as part of their English literature programme. On weekly work sheets they recorded their understanding of the metaphors and symbolism used, and they sometimes compared the metaphor or symbol with a previously studied extract. Teachers found that this exercise stimulated students' use of their reflective and contemplative powers.



Participants in a workshop that was part of the Bahá'í winter school held in Haiti in March 1987.



Left: In Martinique, the ninth National Convention was held at Fort-de-France; 1992.

Right: In Panama, members of a Bahá'í Regional Native Council taking a break from their meeting in Soloy to visit the House of Worship on 27 June 1991.





Left: In Bermuda, friends gathered for a winter school held in February 1987.



How good it would be... that through this going and coming they [Bahá'í travelling teachers] may establish the oneness of the world of humanity, summon the people to the Kingdom of God and spread the teachings.
—'Abdu'l-Bahá

C. ASIA

DURING the Six Year Plan, more than one million souls embraced the Cause in Asia. Although such large-scale enrolment in the Faith provided a special energy and excitement to the work on the continent, it was not new to the region, which boasted a number of devoted fourth-generation believers. Thus the believers were also able to focus their energies on the major challenge of channelling this widespread love and belief into knowledge and action that would transform communities.

Several Bahá'í principles, identified at the beginning of the Plan as needing attention if communities were to truly develop, were given particular focus. Extreme conditions of inequality between men and women, for example, and lack of full participation by women in Bahá'í activities were addressed with education and encouragement. Illiteracy among much of the rural population was confronted by ever-expanding development projects. Believers were trained for their work in the administrative order with seminars and educational materials. Efforts were made to reach individuals with formal education and prominence so that their expertise could be called upon during this complex process of social change.

"It is not enough to expand the rolls of Bahá'í membership, vital as that is", wrote the Universal House of Justice in its Riḍván message of 1989. "Souls must be transformed, communities thereby consolidated, new models of life thus attained." The Bahá'ís of Asia reached out in a variety of directions to pursue this noble goal.

Large-scale Enrolment

Dramatic teaching campaigns that led to large-scale enrolment were certainly among the most striking of all the activities carried out on the continent of Asia. In an area of the world with firmly rooted traditions of social separation based on religion, gender, education, and cultural background, Bahá'í teachers found hundreds of thousands of people eager to embrace Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings about the oneness of mankind.

In India, where the legal abolition of the caste system had not eliminated long-standing attitudes which support it, the Bahá'í community more than doubled its membership, reaching well over two million believers. The State Bahá'í Councils, created in 1986, launched approximately three hundred teaching projects, and the number of believers participating in teaching and consolidation activities multiplied ten times. Groups of Bahá'í teachers followed in the footsteps of the late Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir, often carrying out their teaching in his name.

In the state of Uttar Pradesh, an estimated 100,000 people enrolled during one month of teaching organized by the State Bahá'í Council. Three simultaneous projects held in June 1988 focussed on women, youth, and families. The percentage of women accounting for enrolments was impressive compared to previous experience in India.

A variety of methods were used to pursue the enormous task of consolidation in Uttar Pradesh. Audio-cassettes with a talk in the Hindi language, the *Words of God*, Bahá'í prayers, and Bahá'í Temple dedication music were prepared. On another audio-cassette, information on the history of the Faith, the Covenant, the administration, and the principles were all woven into a folk song sung in typical village style which was taped by one of the village groups. In addition, typical village-style dramas using various Bahá'í subjects were being prepared for video-taping and mass distribution. A puppet show was also being developed.

Late in 1988, the State Bahá'í Council of Uttar Pradesh arranged for nine people—members of the Continental Board of Counsellors, the Auxiliary Board, the National Spiritual Assembly, and development project staff—to visit six villages. The village of

Rajja-ka-Purwa of Panchayat Bamnouti—a full Bahá'í village—was holding regular Local Spiritual Assembly meetings, Nineteen Day Feasts, Fund collections, children's classes, tutorial school sessions and socio-economic development programmes. The Continental Board of Counsellors reported that because of the visitors, "for the first time, the village women dressed in their finery and sat on the same ground as the menfolk". In another village, "because of a large number of women guests, the village women came shyly forward to sit alongside the menfolk for the first time. Usually for any video film they sit on the roofs so the men can't see them. At every village the women were encouraged to respond and did so."

Teaching projects dedicated to the late Hand of the Cause Dr. Muhájir were carried out in the states of Tamil Nadu, Orissa and Karnataka.

The success of the Muhájir Project in Tamil Nadu—more than 5,000 enrolled during a six-month period—inspired a second phase which then outstripped the first in its achievements. In a nine-week period, 14,000 people embraced the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Near the closing of the first part of the project, a Counsellor, three Auxiliary Board members, three State Council members and about thirty-five of the teachers involved in the project gathered in high spirits to evaluate its success. It was determined at this conference that the project consisted of three movements.

The first movement was a series of teaching campaigns. The process consisted of a teaching conference, a call for volunteers followed by an institute for the volunteers, and finally, the launching of the teaching campaign. During the campaign, five days were spent teaching and enrolling new believers, and on the sixth day the teachers returned to the areas where the teaching had taken place and invited the new believers to a deepening class in a nearby village. The seventh day was spent praying and meditating upon the Word of God and attending deepening classes. Following this, the teachers were expected to maintain contact with the new believers through visits and correspondence.

The second movement involved the creation of a task force for permanent teaching activities. Members travelled to the new areas, conducted deepening classes and invited the more enthusiastic new Bahá'ís to institutes at central locations. In every village a teaching committee was formed to organize Feasts, children's classes and youth activities, establish literacy classes where possible, hold deepenings, and communicate with the State Bahá'í Council. The committee also encouraged as many believers as possible to attend the election of the Local Spiritual Assembly for the area.

The third movement was intended to create strong Local Spiritual Assemblies from the very outset. Assistants to the Auxiliary Board members were appointed in all areas. The task force, along with the local committees and the assistants, carried out local teaching projects. Thus, teaching campaigns, activities to strengthen local communities, and expansion at the local level were all being carried out simultaneously.

The dynamic example of Dr. Muhájir was also the inspiration for a teaching and consolidation project in Orissa held from May to November 1990. Earlier in the Plan, Orissa had experienced large-scale enrolment, including 2,600 declarations in October 1988, a number which rose to 5,150 by early December. The Muhájir Project of 1990, which itself brought 1,750 people into the Faith, gave particular attention to consolidation.

Of the newly enrolled Bahá'ís, 95 were particularly encouraged to attend Permanent Teaching Institute courses, to work with the Mobile Deepening Institute, to go to local conferences, and to participate in Assembly teaching activities. As a result of this immediate involvement in the Faith, sixty of these new Bahá'ís immediately began assuming

responsibilities in their home communities by assisting in the conducting of Nineteen Day Feasts, Holy Day programmes, and children's classes.

One goal of this Muhájir Project was to revisit the mountainous west of Orissa and to deepen the many tribal people who had accepted the Faith out of love but whose understanding of its teachings was relatively limited. This goal was vigorously pursued and resulted in a good number of believers with deepened understanding and knowledge of the Faith.

The Muhájir Project launched in Karnataka in July 1988 won the support of the District Assistant Commissioner and the Chairman of the town municipality and brought wide media coverage. Five district-level newspapers reported all the Bahá'í activities, and one paper agreed to publish "Bahá'í Views" as a regular weekly feature. The project attracted more than three hundred people from colleges and offices to embrace the Faith.

Professionals and more formally educated people became Bahá'ís in other regions of India as well. A significant percentage of the 20,000 people who joined the Cause in the Morena District of Madhya Pradesh in 1988 were doctors, engineers, schoolteachers, and other professionals.

In remote Gumla, India, approximately 7,000 people in villages scattered among the hills and valleys in thick forests were also touched by the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. The people had never embraced any established religion before.

Successes like those in India were also experienced by its northeastern neighbour, Bangladesh. The Bahá'í community there increased five-fold, with one hundred villages becoming almost completely Bahá'í.

A public gathering on peace held in the District of Khulna, Bangladesh, at the beginning of the Plan created a great deal of interest in Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings. A part of the talk given by an Auxiliary Board member before 150 people was broadcast on Radio Pakistan, and the meeting was reported in six newspapers, mostly on their front pages. The National Assembly reported that following this event, "Every day, both morning and evening, editors and reporters have been visiting to contact the Bahá'ís in their houses! They come to collect information for their papers as well as for themselves."

In August 1986, the first Bahá'í press conference in the history of Bangladesh was organized by the Local Assembly of Mymensingh, with all twenty-four invited representatives of national and local newspapers attending. Focusing on the International Year of Peace, the presentation drew praise from the audience. When questions were invited from the members of the press, an editor said, "We have nothing to say except to appreciate the Bahá'í Faith, and these goals are our hearts' wishes...please say what kind of help we can offer."

Positive public relations and intensive teaching activity caused the total number of Bahá'ís in Bangladesh to almost double between September 1988 and September 1989. Much of the activity took place in Khulna. The Quddús Project, which began in that district in November 1988, had brought 7,500 seekers into the Cause by October 1989. A highlight was the enrolment of two entire villages of the Monda Adibashi tribe and the formation of its first Local Assembly.

Bangladesh surpassed its Six Year Plan goal for Local Assembly formation, raising the number from 143 to 630. In the Rajshahi District, Assemblies were formed despite considerable obstacles, such as communication problems, lack of books in the local language, illiteracy, and the extreme poverty of the tribal people. About twenty youth contributed to the formation of sixty Assemblies during five months of a special project in 1991. During this time, three of the villages in Rajshahi—Galimpur, Bahanpur and Fulkuri—were named "model Bahá'í villages" by the Regional Teaching Committee.



Bahá'ís consulting during the Vajdi Memorial Teaching Project held on Great Nicobar from 21 February to 9 March 1990.

All over Asia, Bahá'í communities dramatically expanded. In the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, one of the community's Six Year Plan goals was fulfilled when three hundred people enrolled and fifteen localities were opened during a four-week period, allowing the establishment of twenty-five Local Assemblies. The number of Bahá'ís in the Philippines increased by 37,000. The Hong Kong community more than doubled during the Plan. The Pakistani community tripled. And in Taiwan, the increase was more than seven hundred per cent.

The power of the performing arts in stimulating large-scale enrolment was demonstrated in Hong Kong and Thailand. One of the tours of the Wildfire Theatre Group, composed of youth from Australia and New Zealand, generated unprecedented media coverage for the Faith in Hong Kong, in both Chinese and English-language newspapers and on television and radio. As the first entertainment group ever to enter nine Vietnamese Refugee Camps and Detention Centres, they won the admiration and praise of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and local Social Service Agencies. The National Assembly credited the five talented youth with advancing entry by troops in the territory "through their untiring and noble efforts".

During Wildfire's tour of southern Thailand in November 1989, more than 8,000 students and teachers saw the dynamic performances of the Bahá'í youth. After the shows, held in universities, schools, colleges, public parks—and even one benefit for the flood victims of Chumpon Province—850 young people became Bahá'ís. The Thai youth contributed much to the teaching work of the seven-day tour and added their beautiful Malay and Indian classical dances to the shows. The tour helped to raise the total of new believers in the south of Thailand to 1,900 (between June and November).

People of All Backgrounds

> The Cause of God has room for all. It would, indeed, not be the Cause of God if it did not take in and welcome everyone—poor and rich, educated and ignorant, the unknown, and the prominent—God surely wants them all, as He created them all.[1]

In accord with this counsel, efforts to bring the healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh to large numbers of people were not limited by focus on certain geographic areas or particular populations. Believers in Asia particularly expanded their efforts to share the Faith with individuals from a wide variety of geographic, cultural, and religious backgrounds.

[1] From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 10 December 1942.



Presentation of the Peace Statement to Mrs. Dissanayake, the wife of the Minister of Lands and Development of Sri Lanka, on 7 June 1988.

In the Philippines, the number of localities with resident Bahá'ís rose from 5,500 to 7,300. This included the opening of 38 islands located near strong Bahá'í communities, some of which accounted for the 38 new tribal areas opened to the Faith. The people on ten islands of Myanmar heard of the Faith for the first time.

Teaching in Taiwan resulted in all nine major tribes being represented in the Faith, with Local Assemblies established in six of the tribal areas. Assemblies made up entirely of tribal peoples were formed among the Tsao, Bunung, and Peinan. Also in Taiwan, the number of localities reached rose from 130 to 275. This included the opening of three islands which previously had no Bahá'ís.

Increases in localities were also achieved in Japan, where the goal of having Bahá'ís in all the country's prefectures was reached for the first time; in Korea, where the goal of 300 localities was surpassed by more than 200; and in Pakistan, where the number of localities rose from 270 to more than seven hundred. The last remaining territorial goals named by Shoghi Effendi in his Ten Year Global Plan were fulfilled during the Six Year Plan when Sean Hinton opened Mongolia in 1988 and Abbas and Rezvanieh Katirai settled in Sakhalin in 1990.

The teaching in Pakistan reached people from a variety of religious backgrounds. The Saeed Hindi Teaching Project, carried out in lower Punjab in February 1990, resulted in more than five hundred new believers from Muslim, Hindu, and Ahmadi backgrounds, and teaching among the Hindus in Sindh resulted in several thousand souls entering the Faith.

New tribes gaining representation in the Faith in Asia included the Monda and Arakan in Bangladesh, the Dhimal and Sherpa in Nepal, the Phuket Sea Gypsies in Thailand, and thirty-two ethnic groups in India. In Myanmar, members of the Eikaw, Insa, Naga, and Lwalla tribes were introduced to the Faith.

Prominent People

In a Tablet to an individual believer, 'Abdu'l-Bahá advised:

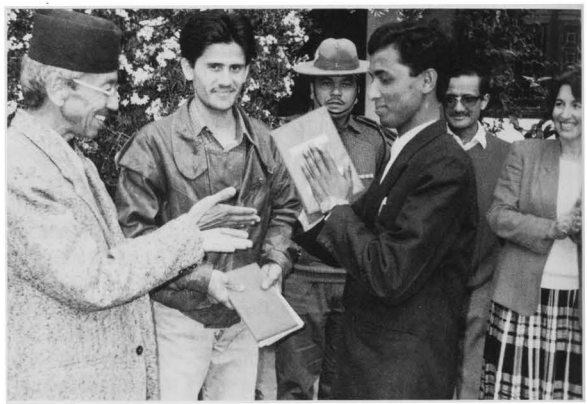
> *You should always seek to guide prominent people inasmuch as once such a person is regenerated he is likely to bring about the quickening of a thousand souls. Thus the spirit of truth would flow forth unimpeded into the veins and arteries of a multitude.*[2]

By Riḍván 1988, the Universal House of Justice noted "a remarkable display of interest" in the Bahá'í community by prominent

[2] Translated from the Persian, in *Prominent People*. Compiled by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice; 1990.



In Thailand, the Crown Prince receives the winning art piece made by a youth during the country's National Youth Week in 1989. The gift is being offered by a youth representative of the Spiritual Assembly, which had been invited to make the presentation to the Prince.



In Nepal, the Minister of Tourism, Ram Hari Joshy (left), awards a prize to one of the winners of the Bahá'í youth song contest. The occasion was a Naw-Rúz party held in Kathmandu which was attended by more than 80 people, including 20 non-Bahá'ís.



In Bangladesh, Prime Minister Begum Khadela Zia presents Counsellor Jabbar Eidelkhani (left), with the "Young Scientist Award 1990" during a ceremony in Dhaka on 5 July 1991. The award was in recognition of Mr. Eidelkhani's work on computers in the Bengali language.

personalities, and by Riḍván 1992, it was able to share the news that "the drive of the ramified proclamation campaign has produced a public resonance about the Faith, which can be said to be known to the most significant public institutions and prominent persons on earth".

In Asia, the Mother Temple of the Indian Sub-continent, dedicated in New Delhi in December 1986, undoubtedly provided the greatest number of opportunities for prominent people to come in contact with the Faith (for details, see article on Indian Temple). However, persistent efforts by the believers in a variety of Asian countries to bring Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings to the attention of people of capacity were also rewarded.

As occurred on other continents, many government authorities were introduced to the Faith through *The Promise of World Peace*. In addition to being distributed to ministers, ambassadors, and local officials, this Statement was presented to the President of Bangladesh in December 1991; the Governor of Macau in April 1989; and the President of Singapore. In Korea, the Statement was given to 2,000 notables throughout the Plan.

The presentation to the President of Bangladesh took place when a group of Bahá'ís was invited to the annual general meeting of the Society for the Rule of Law at which the President and the Finance Minister were the prominent guests. At the end of the meeting the two officials also received *Call to the Nations* and *The Bahá'í Faith: An Introduction.*

Bahá'ís invited in 1987 to attend birthday celebrations for Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand had the great honour of presenting the Peace Statement into the hands of Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn on 11 August at the Chitrlada Palace. Over 3,000 people were present, representing a whole range of business, cultural, social, and other organizations. Copies of the Statement were later presented to the King and Queen and the Prime Minister, through their secretaries.

The Spiritual Assembly of Hong Kong reported that significant progress was made in developing relationships with prominent people in that country. Meetings were arranged and the Peace Message presented to 80 religious leaders, consuls general, educators, business leaders, and press agencies. In 1991, the Anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh was celebrated in Hong Kong with a banquet attended by 82 people, including the Consuls General of Israel, Panama and Chile, representatives of the Xin Hua News Agency, and the Director of Environmental Protection for Hong Kong. The statement *Bahá'u'lláh* and the Peace Statement were presented as gifts.

Members of the Bahá'í community of Thailand consulted with hundreds of people of capacity during the Plan, including representatives of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the UN High Commission for Refugees, the National Women's Council, city mayors, college professors, and labor union representatives. The Constitution Drafting Committee of Thailand became aware of Bahá'í views when the Spiritual Assembly submitted selected Bahá'í Writings to that body for its consideration in writing the new national constitution.

Prominent Bahá'ís visiting Taiwan were introduced to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Interior, and Communication; the Director of the Government Information Office; the Deputy Director of the Council of Agriculture; and the mayors of six cities. Contacts were established between Bahá'ís and lawyers, judges, and teachers. Opportunities for interacting with professionals increased after the Bahá'í Office of the Environment for Taiwan was established in 1989.

Between 1988 and 1990, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, accompanied by Mrs. Violette Nakhjavání, visited mainland China four times. She met with numerous prominent people, particularly in Beijing and Dalian,

showing slides of her trip to the Amazon entitled the "Green Light Expedition" to various distinguished guests, and addressed students and staff at Nankai University in Tianjin, where both Martha Root and Agnes Alexander had spoken during their visits to China. Her four visits included a one-month trip, in summer 1988, to Guangzhou (Canton), Urumqi, Beijing, Shanghai, Suzhou and Guilin, as well as a one-week trip to Tibet in 1990.

In the fall of 1989 she made a five-week trip to Taiwan, during which she "circumambulated" that island, travelling over 2,000 kilometres and visiting some of the mass-teaching areas, as well as its major cities; during this visit she presented a special copy of the Peace Statement in Chinese to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Taiwan, was received by the Minister of the Interior and the Secretary-General of the National House of Representatives, and had interviews with several major newspapers.

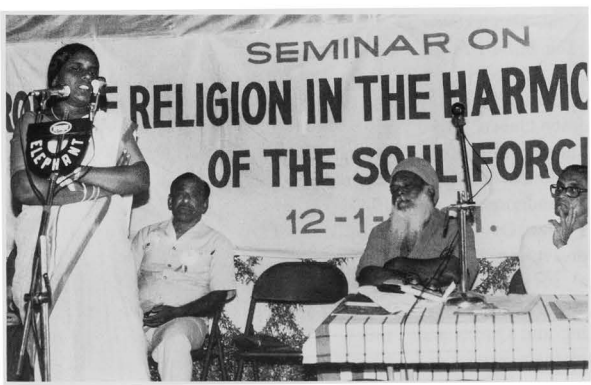
While in the Far East she also attended a large formal banquet organized by the Spiritual Assembly of Hong Kong in honour of the passage, by the Legislative Council, of "the Bahá'í Ordinance" Act, and visited Ulaan-Baatar in Mongolia for one week, in 1989.

In addition to presenting Bahá'í views through meetings with prominent people and presentations of the Peace Statement, the believers made contact with individuals and organizations working to solve problems which the Bahá'í Writings address.

The National Assembly of the Philippines submitted two proposals to the Constitutional Commission in August 1986 for possible inclusion in the new constitution. The proposals concerned the provision of free education and the principle of inculcating a consciousness of the essential unity of the human race as the only viable standard for social and economic justice. In Taiwan, the Ministry of the Interior organized a special seminar called "Resolving Social Ills through the Teachings of the Bahá'í Faith".

In Singapore, after a White Paper on the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Bill was published in 1990, the Government asked for feedback from the public, and the Spiritual Assembly submitted a statement. The Assembly presented another statement on the core values the nation should be embracing after the government requested opinions on this subject.

Respect for Bahá'í contributions was demonstrated in Macau when the Basic Law Consultative Committee invited the Spiritual Assembly to send three representatives to its first meeting with the Basic Law Drafting Committee from China in 1990. After providing written documents on the history and status of the Faith, the Assembly was asked to submit its views to the Committee in a formal paper.



Auxiliary Board member V. Thamil Chelvi speaking about individual transformation during an inter-faith seminar on "The Role of Religion in the Harmonious Blending of the Soul Force" held at Coimbatore, India, on 12 January 1991.

Good relationships were also established with religious leaders in Asia. In October 1987 the Bahá'ís of India co-sponsored a seminar called "Religion in the 21st Century" with the World Conference on Religion for Peace. During the 1991 gathering of the Asian Conference on Religion and Peace in Nepal, Bahá'ís participated in workshops, read prayers at the interfaith service, and prepared a statement on the Faith for publication in the conference magazine. A representative of the Bahá'í International Community was the only non-Buddhist speaker invited to address a public meeting in conjunction with the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace in Mongolia in 1990.

Social and Economic Development

Asia stands out among the continents for its progress in the area of social and economic development, with more than 530 projects operating during the Plan. Tutorial schools, academic schools, literacy projects, and health care projects accounted for the majority of the undertakings.

The Philippines operated a very successful programme of tutorial schools, each involving one or more teachers conducting classes in reading and writing, character training, and other elementary subjects under the auspices of a Bahá'í administrative institution. In 1992 it was reported that twenty such schools in the Philippines were serving more than five hundred students, over half of whom were girls.

The National Bahá'í Development Institute in Bangladesh, which assumed responsibility for coordinating development programmes in the country in 1987, oversaw nineteen tutorial schools serving approximately three hundred students. In 1991 the New Garden School, operating from the National Bahá'í Centre, reported an enrolment of 56 students.

The National Assembly of India oversaw the largest system of tutorial schools in the Bahá'í world, with nearly two hundred programmes and more than 10,500 students. Training courses for teachers enabled many of the schools to expand their activities beyond mere functional literacy and numeracy to include a range of primary classes.

Fourteen tutorial schools operated under the auspices of the Rabbani School Rural Development Project in Madhya Pradesh, India. The Project served twenty villages in the area of Gwalior. The schools taught the government curriculum plus moral education, personal health, and hygiene, each administered by the local community it served.

The Bahá'ís encouraged a number of educational initiatives at refugee camps in Thailand. In 1986 it was reported that a school at the Vietnamese "Site Two" camp had opened and was serving three hundred students in eight classes. Courses were taught in English and Chinese. In July 1986 a second school to teach English was opened with 90 students. Other schools existed at Khao 1 Dang and Khao 1 Dang Annex. Teachers at each of the schools contributed their services voluntarily. In 1989 the school at Ban Vinai refugee camp was reported to have 150 students.

Academic schools—formally established institutions which had or were seeking official accreditation from government authorities—also operated, employing full-time staff, using rented or specially built facilities, and offering traditional academic subjects. With over 1,300 students, India's Tadong Bahá'í School was the largest full academic school operated by institutions of the Faith during the Plan. The school offered classes from nursery school through grade 10, having earned the reputation as one of the best schools in Sikkim.

The New Era High School in Panchgani, India, continued to successfully translate the ideals of Bahá'í education into notable achievements. Having started operation in 1945, New Era is one of the longest-established Bahá'í schools in the world. By the close of the Plan, it was offering schooling for over 550 boarders and 130 day students from kindergarten through grade 12.



The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum visiting with students from the School of Nations in Macau on 4 May 1989.



The Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi (left), presents the "Indira Gandhi Friends of Trees Award—1986" to the Rabbani School.



Above: Pupils during one of their classes at the Tadong School in Ranipul, Sikkim, in 1991.



Left: Participants in the Bahá'í Children's Institute held in Larut Matang, Malaysia, from 7 to 13 December 1987.

In 1986 half of the grade 12 students at New Era passed their examinations with distinction. In 1989 the grade 10 results helped place the school in the "merit" level among the schools in India. The School's academic programme was recognized by London University as able to conduct GCE "O" and "A" level examinations, and the school was recognized by the Central Board of Secondary Education in New Delhi. The Junior College was also recognized by the Maharashtra Board of Education. During 1990 the science stream of the Junior College was begun, and a one-year kindergarten was re-established.

The Santitham School in Thailand, which the Bahá'ís began operating in 1971, embarked on a large-scale programme of capital development over the period 1982–1992. In 1991 it was reported that the school had 50 students enrolled in the nursery school, 242 in the kindergarten, thirteen in the newly opened first primary grade class, and 35 in the commercial section.

Bahá'í principles were also incorporated into the curriculum of the privately-operated School of the Nations in Macau, which began operating in 1988. Offering a bilingual programme in English and Chinese, the school was serving 270 students representing thirty-four nationalities by the end of the Plan.

Bahá'í efforts to promote literacy, both through assisting with established programmes and developing new ones, received added stimulus when the Universal House of Justice sent a letter to all National Spiritual Assemblies in July 1989 emphasizing the critical importance of giving people access to the Holy Word. The House of Justice urged the believers to support the United Nations International Literacy Year 1990 and to continue to seek opportunities to make progress in this area. National Bahá'í literacy programmes evolved during the Plan, with the development of appropriate literacy materials being given greater priority. Nowhere was this process more noticeable than in India.

In 1991 the National Spiritual Assembly outlined the first phase of the National Bahá'í Literacy Mission, which was developed in consultation with the Indian Task Force for International Literacy Year. The programme was proposed to take place in seven Hindi-speaking states, and to later expand to include Marathi-speaking states. Classes would be conducted by volunteers chosen by their State Bahá'í Council in consultation with their Local Assembly and the Auxiliary Board members.

The Department of Social and Economic Development of India assumed responsibility for coordinating the training and arranging for the production and distribution of literacy materials. The proposal emphasized the importance of involving the State Bahá'í Councils, the Local Spiritual Assemblies, and the Auxiliary Board members and their assistants in monitoring the programme.

The first training session was held in Delhi in March 1991. The last two days were devoted to the preparation of literacy materials in Hindi, which were soon field tested and made available to all Hindi-speaking areas of the country. In November 1991 literacy materials began being developed in the Marathi language. Both the Hindi and Marathi materials offered a philosophical background, teachers' notes, and practical lesson plans.

By 1992 it was reported that literacy classes, using the materials developed through the programme, had commenced in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. At the same time, literacy classes were also being sponsored regularly by the New Era Development Institute, the Rabbani School, the Bahá'í Vocational Training Institute for Rural Women, and a number of local communities.

In Bangladesh, courses in literacy and vocational training were offered by the Bahá'í Hostel to teenage boys from tribal villages. The students were also deepened in the Faith so that they could assist with teaching, deepening, consolidation of Spiritual

Assemblies, and teaching children's classes. All the graduates from the first year's course achieved full literacy, and were expected to return to the villages to assist with teaching in the tutorial schools.

The third major type of development project undertaken in Asia, besides schools and literacy projects, involved health education and medical services.

A Health Awareness Project was launched in 1989 by the National Bahá'í Women's Committee of Malaysia, in response to requests from women from different areas of the country. The objective of the five-year programme was to assist women to be more self-reliant by providing education in health and child development.

The programme was implemented in three rural areas of the country at Bukit Tunggal Estate, Bintasan in Sabah, and Kampong Bugudiyan in Sarawak. The initial response was enthusiastic and other villagers also participated. The medical officers began regularly visiting the villagers to check on common problems, and the villagers themselves, with the assistance of selected volunteers, learned about hygiene.

The willingness of Bahá'ís to reach these remote communities brought much admiration and positive publicity for the programme, and the committee was invited to extend the project. This second phase involved ten low-income areas throughout Malaysia with seven different ethnic groups, and was successfully completed in 1990. Education in health and child development was offered, and mothers were helped to create an improved learning environment for the children and to develop resource centres for their communities.

The impact of the project was evident in the improved cleanliness of the communities involved and in the increasing number of health-related questions posed. Very often in the more remote and conservative areas, women would ask questions related to myths, fallacies, and superstitions about health. Women in the ten communities were surprised at how much they could teach their children through games and discussion. The women themselves seemed also to feel more aware of their own potential. They began to come forward to participate, offer ideas, organize, and most significant of all, to lead. In this aspect the project was a definite success in training more women local managers and developing the status of women.

The project also stimulated other development activities in the area. Community members became aware of their need to do more for themselves and thus to take on other development projects such as the paving of a dirt track, literacy classes, and educational activities for children.

A variety of medical services was offered in Bangladesh, one of the most extensive being medical camps to serve the needs of people who could not otherwise afford health care. These were organized under the auspices of the National Bahá'í Development Committee, and many were held in memory of Hands of the Cause of God and the martyrs of Írán. The programme began in mid 1986, offering treatment to over 2,400 people in its first year. During 1987 and 1988 more than 1,000 people were treated annually, and in a single month, May 1991, more than 1,000 people received assistance at Khulna and in cyclone-ravaged areas of the country. A further 475 people received treatment at six camps held during September 1991.

The Glory Clinic, which began operations in February 1985, continued to provide free or low-cost medical services to the people of Rajshahi, Bangladesh. By 1992, the clinic was serving about 2,000 people annually.

Another health care service project commenced in Bangladesh in June 1990 to provide primary health care to people in villages near the site of the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. The programme included medical check-ups and the provision of medicines for minor ailments. One doctor visited the site every two weeks, and complicated cases were referred to the nearest hospital.

In July 1991, a health project started as an outreach programme of the New Garden School in Bangladesh. The purpose of the project was to provide basic health education on personal and environmental hygiene to children attending the school and to their mothers.

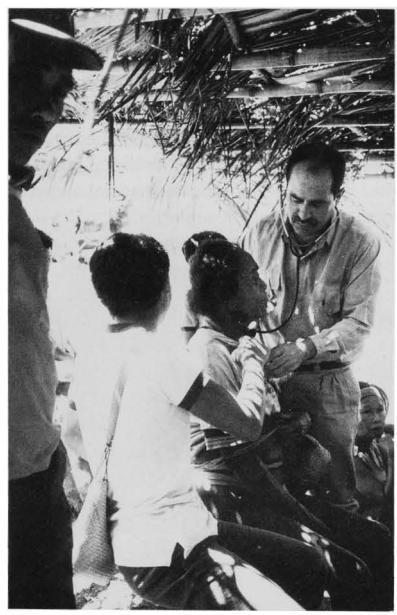
Bahá'í communities throughout India also offered medical treatment to isolated populations or communities without access to formal health care services. The extensive health programmes offered by the Rabbani Community Development Project included sponsorship of medical camps, distribution of Vitamin A and iron tablets, participation in immunization programmes, and education on topics such as the importance of pure drinking water and of keeping the village environment clean. Hygiene, disease transmittal, infant care, nutrition for pregnant women and nursing mothers, control of malaria, use of oral rehydration techniques, and an understanding of different types of fever were also addressed. Many of the activities conducted were in collaboration with regional medical departments.

The New Era Development Institute in Maharashtra, India, sponsored a primary health care education programme which focussed on prevention. The programme's three elements were: a) training courses for voluntary community health workers, b) in-service training in which the community health workers returned each month for a one-day programme, and c) health education programmes in which films were shown and discussion groups conducted in the communities.

For many years before the Plan, volunteer doctors in India staffed medical camps which successfully provided treatment to a large number of people. During 1990 and 1991 it was reported that approximately ten medical camps were being conducted every year. In neighbouring Pakistan also, more than twenty medical camps were held annually between 1988 and 1992, organized by the Local Spiritual Assemblies of Karachi, Quetta, and Rawalpindi. As a result, thousands of people received medical care.

In August 1986, it was proposed that a health education programme be started for the Mangyan people in the Philippines. The Bahá'í community focused on improving the health of the children in Mansalay through immunization, and by helping the existing health service centre. It also sought to provide health education to the mothers of the immunized children.

The project strategies included: training tutorial school teachers in basic health education, conducting education campaigns, bringing the drugs from Metropolitan Manila to Mansalay, establishing centres for immunization, and making home visits. The project was supported by the Department of Health which provided some basic medicines and vaccines and, in 1988, a formal



Dr. Saeed Takizadeh during a three-day medical clinic sponsored by the National Assembly of the Philippines in 1987.

Bahá'ís and a government agency unit on malaria control.

In Laos, 45 Bahá'í village health volunteers were trained in 1991. The programme emphasized communication skills and education techniques designed to encompass local health customs and conditions and seven elements of primary health care: health education, promotion of good nutrition, maternal and child health care, immunization, basic sanitation, treatment of common diseases and injuries, and prevention and control of locally endemic diseases.

A training session was also conducted at a university for 25 government health leaders, which resulted in Bahá'ís receiving official letters of recognition from the government.

Nearly all Bahá'í development projects involved some form of education, but a few focused intensely on educating local people to direct the course of their own community development. In India, the New Era Development Institute (NEDI) conducted a programme to train community development facilitators. This one-year course was designed to train the students to encourage and advise rural communities in planning and implementing their own social and economic development activities.

The programme began in 1989, serving fifteen to twenty volunteers each year. Both spiritual and practical components were included in the programme, and during the three trimesters the following subjects were covered: the spiritual and ethical basis for development, communication and community, women in development, afforestation, adult education, community health, administration and management, rural technology, agriculture, children's education, and public speaking. The students also spent significant amounts of time in host villages.

At the same time, NEDI's rural technology training programme worked to provide vocational skills and knowledge to rural youth and thus enable them to earn an income while providing services needed in rural communities. Students were trained, encouraged, and assisted to establish service centres in their home communities. As with the community development programme, the basis of this programme was the application of high moral and ethical concepts in a practical way oriented towards human dignity, self-reliance, and service to the community.

India's Rabbani School also oversaw an extensive community development programme. The school farm offered agricultural training to the students, and enabled the school to attain self-sufficiency in food production. Farmers from surrounding villages were welcome to attend training courses held on the school property, assisting them to achieve higher productivity.

The school initiated extensive waste land reclamation activities which provided a valuable model for local communities. This aspect of the Rabbani programme was conducted in collaboration with the Government Department of Waste Land Reclamation, with the ultimate result that all available land became usable, and productivity was substantially improved.

Other community development activities conducted at the school included village health education, adult literacy classes, the founding and support of fourteen village schools, the promotion of the use of appropriate technology in villages (including the promotion of smokeless, energy efficient cooking stoves), and vocational training both for students and for unemployed village youths.

One innovative project in the area of rural development in India, conducted in April 1988, used the medium of drama to motivate tribal villagers in self-development. The project was organised by the Jhabua local centre of the Bahá'í Vocational Institute for Rural Women, Indore, and sponsored by CAPART (Ministry of Rural Development Government of India).

The project operated in five villages in the Jhabua district. Five organizers from

each of these villages were chosen and trained in the need for rural development at a village level, deepening their own understanding of the problems, needs, and demands of village life and how to take initiative to resolve them. Then these women created plays using local costumes and folk music to highlight issues relating to health, child care, hygiene, water sanitation, forest development, education, self employment, family planning, and many other important development issues.

Maturation of Institutions

The Universal House of Justice, in its letter of Riḍván 1987 to the Bahá'ís of the world, stated that when the Six Year Plan began, the administrative institutions of the Faith were already beginning to show signs of increasing maturity—enough, in fact, to prepare them for the task of formulating their own objectives. In its Riḍván 1989 message, the House of Justice asked, "Have we not witnessed the increasing strength of National and Local Spiritual Assemblies in their ability to conceive and execute plans, in their capacity to deal with governmental authorities and social organizations, to respond to public calls upon their services and to collaborate with others in projects of social and economic development?"

By Riḍván 1992, the Universal House of Justice cited advances in the consolidation of the Bahá'í administrative system as one of the major indicators of progress in the Bahá'í community.

One sign of institutional flexibility in Asia was the establishment in both India and Malaysia of State Bahá'í Councils under the National Assembly, due to the special conditions which applied in both countries. India established its State Councils at the beginning of the Plan while Malaysia's first Council was elected in October 1991.

Increased communication and cooperation among Assemblies of various regions also signified greater administrative maturity. Joint regional meetings of the Spiritual Assemblies of Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan were established in 1987 and continued throughout the Plan. Joint meetings and institutes were held between the Spiritual Assemblies of Thailand and Laos. On the local level, annual inter-Assembly conferences were conducted in Pakistan, in addition to regional conferences of Local Spiritual Assemblies and members of appointed institutions.



The Local Bahá'í Centre at Ban Vieng Kham Tai, Laos, was dedicated 2 May 1986.



The Local Bahá'í Centre of Mandalay, Myanmar, was dedicated 4 January 1991.



In Tokyo, Japan, Bahá'ís participated in a World Religious Book Exhibition, which was held from 19 to 23 July 1990. Bahá'í books in Japanese, English, and German were displayed. The official attendance number for the exhibition was 153,467 persons.



In Beijing, China, Bahá'ís participated in the third International Book Fair, which was held from 1 to 7 September 1990. Bahá'í books in Portuguese, English and German were displayed. Fair organizers estimated that there were about 70,000 visitors during the week.

As Local Assemblies became stronger and more self-sufficient, they took on greater responsibilities. In Singapore, incorporated Local Assemblies began handling their own annual administrative work associated with maintaining incorporation, and several Assemblies took on responsibilities which had previously been carried out at the national level, such as organizing Holy Day celebrations, marriages, and funerals. Thailand reported that the number of actively functioning Local Spiritual Assemblies tripled, and four developed to the extent that they created their own plans, became financially self-sufficient, and supported activities of the surrounding communities. The National Spiritual Assembly of Nepal wrote, "No doubt the greatest progress during the Six Year Plan has been registered in the area of the maturation of local communities."

Distribution of Literature

The sacred task of bringing all humanity into contact with the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh was pursued in Asia largely through participation in book fairs and contributions to public and university libraries, and through the establishment of book depots and lending libraries.

Bahá'í publishers attended three annual International Book Fairs in Beijing, China. In India, the Bahá'ís participated in some 38 book fairs and held nearly two hundred book exhibitions during the Six Year Plan. In Hong Kong, thousands of people visited the Bahá'í booth at the International Book Fair held in August 1991; more than 10,000 copies of pamphlets and other free literature were distributed, and a substantial number of books were sold.

Bahá'í books were donated to universities in Korea, Nepal, and Macau, and in Laos the Ministry of Culture granted permission for Bahá'í literature to be placed in the Lao PDR National Library. In one Indian state the Bahá'ís received a request from the Director of Public Libraries for three thousand copies of Bahá'í books to be distributed among the 1,500 public libraries throughout the state.

In the state of Karnataka, India, Bahá'ís placed literature in four major libraries: the Legislative Library, used by members of the State's Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council; the Secretariat Library, for the use of government officials working in the Secretariat building; the State Library, which is open to the general public; and the City Central Library, which serves the people of Bangalore City. Most of the books were in the local Kannada language.

A set of twenty-four books was also presented to Karnataka's State Librarian, who was so impressed with the volumes that a request was made for another two sets of the same books to be distributed to the State Library, the Library's copyright section and the Parliament Library of New Delhi.

Singapore Bahá'ís reported that the turnover of Bahá'í books in public bookstores indicated a demand for this literature. Commercial outlets in Malaysia and Thailand were also selling Bahá'í books.

To make the Sacred Writings more readily available to believers, regional libraries, bookshops, or book depots were established in Bangladesh, Malaysia, Nepal, Thailand, and Taiwan. In India, 110 book depots were set up in 17 states, and 865 lending libraries were created.

The Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Hong Kong was established in April 1992.

Women

On a continent where women have traditionally not been permitted to be full participants in all fields, and have not received encouragement to think independently or to openly speak their minds, great efforts were made to help women overcome barriers to investigating the Bahá'í Faith and to address the needs of women in their communities.

A dramatic departure from traditional women's roles occurred when 62 women in India attended a deepening conference given by the State Bahá'í Council of Uttar Pradesh

at the Malhousi Bahá'í Centre in November 1987. They came from thirteen villages, transported to and from their homes by jeep. Some were attending such a conference for the first time, and their enthusiasm was notable. In reporting on the event, the director of Bahá'í Tutorial Schools for Uttar Pradesh, Mr. P.C. Agnihotri said, "...Very often you ask about miracles in the Bahá'í Faith. This gathering itself was a miracle, where ladies had come outside of their homes to discuss the evils of society and to give their views." He called the event "a unique occasion for enlightening the women of this area", suggesting that a women's winter school in the region could help to "activate the other half of India's strength, the ladies, who have been imprisoned within four walls for...so many centuries".

Large numbers of women were reported to be taking up responsibilities in the Faith in Rajasthan, India, according to a report from Counsellor Zena Sorabjee in March 1991, who saw this activity as one sign of the emergence of the Faith in this state. The community encouraged this participation by having a bulletin for women printed in the Hindi language.

The first Training Institute for Bahá'í women in Uttar Pradesh attracted 29 participants from thirteen villages. The event, held in May 1991, took place at the Narayan Rao Vakil Institute in Malhousi. "Women were able to participate practically in every lesson that was conducted," it was reported, "and they asked many questions, giving an idea of the social conditions prevalent in their villages, how they could be improved, and what the women could do for the betterment of their own lives and those of their families.

"The principle of justice was emphasised. Some of the women had not gone anywhere outside their own village.... The evenings were spent in singing and folk dancing.... It was an extremely loving and united atmosphere.... No-one thought twice about Bahá'í women from different backgrounds meeting together and enjoying each other's company. There was a great spirit of camaraderie present among all the women."

Women's conferences were also held in Bangladesh, Japan, and Korea. More than 200 women participated in a national women's conference held in Myanmar in May 1988. In Malaysia, three women made a four-day journey to attend a women's conference held in the village of Kg. Belimbing Besi in February 1989, which attracted fifty-five other participants from six communities.

In addition to working toward making the Bahá'í community fully reflect the principle of equality, Bahá'ís made efforts to promote equality in the wider community.

In Singapore, the Bahá'í Women's Committee worked with the Singapore Council of Women's Organizations, an umbrella body of thirty-four affiliated women's groups. Two Bahá'ís served on the Executive Board for a total of four years. The Bahá'í Women's Committee also organized a "Women for Peace" conference in 1988 which had fifty participants.

On International Women's Day in 1988, Mrs. Shirin Fozdar of Singapore was given a plaque of appreciation for her work supporting equality and women's rights. More than one hundred people attended the celebration organized by the Singapore Council of Women. Mrs. Fozdar was described as an ardent champion of women's rights, an influential leader, an idealist, and a well-known social worker. She founded the Singapore Council of Women, through which she worked to bring discrimination and maltreatment of women to the attention of the public and campaigned against the practice of polygamy. Her activities included leading delegations to international conferences, lecturing by invitation in various countries, and starting schools for rural children in both Thailand and India.

In Malaysia on 25 August 1988, National Women's Day and the Silver Jubilee of the National Council of Women's Organizations were celebrated, with the Bahá'ís playing a prominent role. The Malaysian Bahá'í

Women's Committee was an affiliate of the NCWO and one of its most active supporters. The occasion was attended by Her Majesty, the Queen of Malaysia, Sultanas of different states, the wives of governors, prominent women leaders, and 1,000 guests. The Bahá'í Women's Committee was involved in the organization of the celebration and was entrusted with the production of souvenir programmes for each function. A Bahá'í was one of three women selected to represent the women of Malaysia in a pledge-taking ceremony.

International Women's Day 1989 was commemorated by the Bahá'ís of Bangkok, Thailand, with a two-hour programme in a popular shopping mall. Hundreds of people heard readings from the Bahá'í Writings concerning women. Many pamphlets on peace and women were distributed, and staff at the mall invited the Bahá'ís to propose future activities which would promote peace.

The State Minister for Religious Affairs of Bangladesh was among the dignitaries who attended the conference "Equality of Men and Women—a Prerequisite for World Peace" held in Dhaka in September 1991. In addition, the president and general secretary of the Bangladesh Women Writers' Association and journalists from several national newspapers attended the talks. Annual seminars promoting equality and special courses for vocational training of women and girls were also sponsored in Bangladesh.

Just after the Plan began, the Madhya Pradesh Council of Science and Technology, Government of India, Bhopal, requested the Bahá'í Vocational Institute for Rural Women in Indore to conduct a workshop on the socio-economic development of tribal women in Madhya Pradesh and appropriate technology. Many representatives from government agencies attended. This was the first workshop sponsored by a government agency at a Bahá'í Institute.

The work of the Bahá'í Vocational Institute for Rural Women in India continued during the Plan. The Institute offered a variety of residential training courses, and staff members from the Institute travelled frequently to villages to stimulate interest in the programme, to support those women who had graduated from the Institute, and to consolidate the gains which the women had achieved. At the end of the Plan, the Institute began seeking funds for a three year training programme designed to train two hundred young women as community workers in rural communities around Indore.

The activity of the women of the villages in the Bastar tribal area clearly indicates the type of fundamental changes which the Institute endeavoured to promote. Among the prevailing social customs which they challenged were child marriages, the dowry system, wearing of the veil, and the use of drugs and alcohol.

Strengthening Families

> A truly Bahá'í home is a true fortress upon which the Cause can rely while planning its campaigns.[3]

The need to continue the work of creating families based on equality between women and men and respect for the rights and responsibilities of all family members led to a focus on this topic during conferences and special seminars.

Five regional Bahá'í family conferences were organized in Bangladesh and ten marriage seminars held in Malaysia. The subject of marriage and family life was also included in all national and regional conferences of both countries and in winter schools and training institutes held in the former.

All the State Council/State Teaching Committees of India introduced the topic of marriage and family life at least once a year during summer schools and conferences. Twenty-five family conferences were held in ten states and special material for guiding parents was produced.

[3] From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 6 November 1932.



A Mangyan Bahá'í family on its way to a teaching conference held in Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines, in 1986.

Workshops on family life were conducted in Singapore and Thailand, and one national and two local family conferences were held in Korea. Also in Thailand, a Bahá'í doctor wrote and published a book called *Bahá'í Family Life* and produced two cassette tapes which were broadcast on the radio.

In the Philippines, the Bahá'í Mothers' Deepening Project of the Bahá'í National Teaching Committee provided guidance on the care, education and training of children; on maintaining a Bahá'í atmosphere in the home; and on cultivating rapport with husbands and extended-family members. The intensive project began in February 1988 with the holding of twenty-one Mothers' Deepening Classes in different parts of the country.

In Pakistan, at least ninety women attended classes on health, hygiene, and feeding of infants which were held as part of free medical camps run by Bahá'ís in the summer of 1986.

The Spiritual Assembly of Singapore reported that one of its community's strengths was its relatively large number of strong Bahá'í families. An increase in the number of identifiable Bahá'í families was also reported by the Spiritual Assembly of Sri Lanka, which credited special conferences, deepening materials, and individual visits to families.

The Environment

Bahá'u'lláh taught that nature reflects the names and attributes of God and is the expression of God's Will in the contingent world, and a number of Bahá'í communities in Asia acted on this understanding by contributing to the work of environmental protection agencies and initiating projects of their own. In a number of countries, Bahá'ís became known as supporters of environmental education and protection.

After the National Spiritual Assembly of Taiwan established the Office of the Environment in Taiwan in 1989, the Council of Agriculture of the Executive Yuan (Senate) agreed to co-sponsor a series of teacher training workshops on environmental education. During a twelve-week period in 1990, the Bahá'í community conducted 36 workshops on environmental education for more than 750 kindergarten and elementary school teachers. Following this success, a second series of twenty-seven workshops was held in 1991. The Bahá'í Environmental Protection Education Programme was the first of its kind of co-sponsorship between the National Assembly and a major Taiwanese governmental agency.

An article on the Office of the Environment, published in Taiwan's largest evening newspaper, resulted in the Bahá'ís receiving over two hundred requests for participation

in a correspondence course they had developed on the environment. The Council of Agriculture also asked the Office to assist it in formulating its plan for protecting and building up Taiwan's ecological resources.

The Office of the Environment in Taiwan also produced a radio series on the environment, called "Only One World", which was funded by the Ministry of Education. The fifteen-minute programmes began broadcasting to 2,400 elementary schools across the country in March 1992.

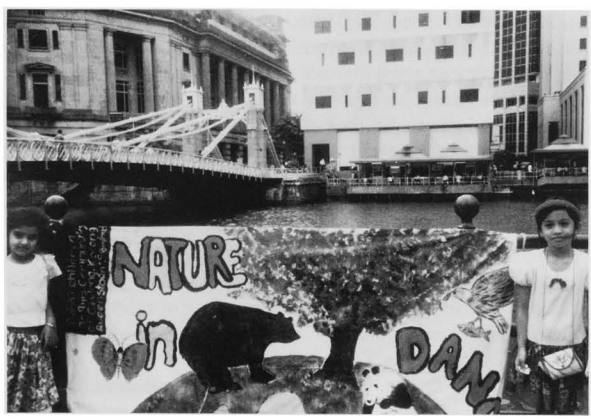
An exhibition involving more than sixty pieces of artwork related to the environment was organized by the Bahá'í Women's Committee of Singapore in 1990. The "Arts for Nature" display caused the Bahá'í community to be recognized by the Ministry of the Environment and the Singapore Council of Women's Organizations as a major proponent of environmental protection.

Bahá'ís in Singapore also carried out the "Grow With Nature Banner Project" in 1991, organizing pupils from thirty-five schools to send eighty banners on environmental themes which were then displayed along a river.

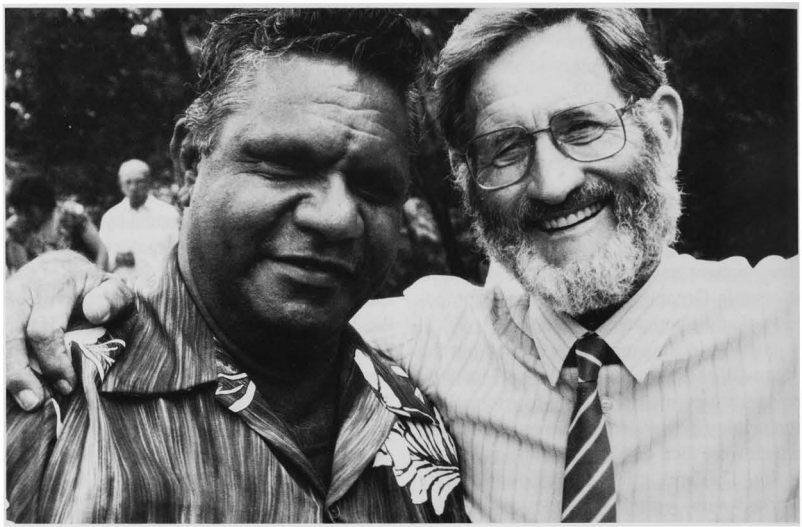
In Thailand, the Bahá'í community worked with various agencies to organize seminars, exhibits, displays, and contests about the environment. Bahá'ís in Malaysia and in Singapore spoke to Rotary Clubs about uniting efforts to confront environmental problems.

In 1986 the Rabbani School in India was awarded the "Indira Gandhi Friends of the Trees Award" for its service in the field of reforestation. An extensive effort had been launched in 1985 which included the planting of trees and the development and maintenance of plant nurseries, both at the school and in surrounding villages.

Recognition of Bahá'í initiatives led to invitations to participate in various projects related to the environment. Singapore's Bahá'í community was invited by the Ministry of the Environment to gather signatures for the Earth Pledge to be presented at the Earth Summit in 1992. Representatives of the World Wide Fund for Nature in Hong Kong invited a Bahá'í to visit a nature reserve and a conservation studies centre. The Friends of the Earth in Hong Kong invited Bahá'ís to participate in an event called "Ecology in the Light of Religion" which then resulted in another invitation to speak on the issue.



Bahá'í children support Singapore's Green and Clean Week in November 1991 by displaying banners about the environment they had designed and put up along the river.



Know ye of a certainty that in whatever meeting ye may enter, in the apex of that meeting the Holy Spirit shall be waving and the heavenly confirmations of the Blessed Perfection shall encompass all.
—'Abdu'l-Bahá

D. AUSTRALASIA

DURING the Six Year Plan, there were a number of highly significant developments in Australasia, which reflected the growing maturity of the various national Bahá'í communities in that vast region of the planet, and the increased receptivity of its peoples to the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

One of the most heartening features was the emergence into the forefront of Bahá'í activity of the indigenous believers in the Pacific Islands. The services rendered by the valiant pioneers are unforgettable, and are yielding their fruit in the full involvement of the islanders in the teaching and administrative work of the Cause. This welcome development provides a striking example of the practice of the oneness of mankind, and offers the promise of the even more prodigious achievements of the peoples of the Pacific Islands in the construction of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh in the future. Associated with this development has been the great participation of the indigenous Bahá'ís of such countries as Australia, New Zealand and Hawaii in all aspects of Bahá'í community life.

Amidst cultures which have traditionally not accorded to women the freedom to participate as equal to men in the activities of society, the Bahá'í community in Australasia has attracted favourable attention for the involvement of women in its affairs at all levels, including service in its international and administrative institutions. Educational programmes, training institutes and conferences have aimed to encourage and prepare Bahá'í women and girls to fulfil their ordained role as full participants in community life, and to encourage men and boys to give their total support to such vital endeavours.

The Australasian region is composed largely of island states, which have relatively small populations and which are separated from each other by vast expanses of ocean. While this presents unique challenges to the development of the Faith, it also offers opportunities the like of which may occur nowhere else in the world. In many small countries of Australasia, the Bahá'í community has become a substantial and visible proportion of the total population, and the character of its community life is readily perceived by all; thus its unity and harmony, the diversity of its composition, its commitment to the process of change, its respect for indigenous culture, and its openness to new ideas are evident, and are attractive to seekers.

These circumstances have also made it possible for the Faith to be proclaimed to the highest levels of government and to people of influence in the society, with the result that the Bahá'ís have won the friendship and respect of heads of state and of government in a number of nations, and Bahá'í concepts and perspectives have been offered to the solution of the issues arising as these nations seek to find their place in a fast-changing and interdependent world.

In the light of these considerations, the future for the Bahá'í Faith and its community in Australasia must be regarded as extremely bright. It must surely build on the impressive strength it has now acquired, and proceed to victories of a magnitude which will astonish both admirers and adherents, and will propel it forward to the attainment of its high destiny.

Indigenous Peoples

> Great as are the services rendered by pioneers, and unforgettable as are the deeds they accomplish, they cannot take the places of the indigenous element which must constitute the bed-rock of the Community, carry on its own affairs, build its own institutions, support its own funds, publish its own literature, etc. A mother gives birth to a child, but the child then



A group of traditional dancers, Bahá'ís from Kimama Village in the Western Province of Papua New Guinea, involved in a teaching project in 1989.

has to grow for itself. The older it gets, the more responsible it is for its own acts.[1]

As teachers of the Cause reached a more sophisticated understanding of how to share the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh in its purest form without adding their own cultural biases to the Message, methods of teaching indigenous peoples evolved and greater numbers responded. Native peoples took the initiative to teach their kin, and added their unique perspectives to the consultative process through greater participation in the administrative order.

The Aborigines of Australia enrolled in the Faith in large numbers during the Six Year Plan, mainly in the relatively isolated region of the northwest. Several prominent Aborigines embraced the Cause, and the respect and attention they commanded in their communities induced greater numbers to listen to the Message. In July 1986, Jack Malardy, tribal leader of the Karradjarrie people, and his wife, Lilly, became the first Aboriginal believers in the region of Bidyadanga, Western Australia. In the spring of 1988, when Mr. Malardy was 90 years old, he was elected as a delegate to the National Convention of Australia. He took advantage of the trip from his home to the Convention in Melbourne to devise a 6,500 kilometre route, visiting Bahá'ís and teaching along the way. When he met with the believers in northeast Australia in June 1988, it marked the first meeting between Aboriginal Bahá'ís from the far-flung northwest and northeast regions.

On the south coast of New South Wales, a tribal elder of the Yuin people enrolled in the Faith in 1989. Well-known throughout the country, Mr. Gubboo Ted Thomas was a keynote speaker at the "Earthwalk Conference" in April 1989, a major gathering at Ayers Rock which was attended by indigenous people from North America, Africa, New Zealand, and parts of Australia.

Bahá'ís expanded their knowledge of Aboriginal culture and provided opportunities for public education during several peace-related expositions they sponsored. At one peace festival co-sponsored by Bahá'ís in Caboolture, Queensland, in October 1986, an Aboriginal pavilion displayed artifacts from a museum, story-tellers recounted traditional legends, craftsmen demonstrated their skills, and video presentations educated viewers about Aboriginal culture. When Bahá'ís held an exposition in conjunction with a local annual festival in Herberton Shire, north Queensland, the same month, the Jittabul Aboriginal tribe of Ravenshoe strongly supported them.

[1] From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assemblies of Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela, 3 July 1957, in *The Importance of Teaching the Masses*, p. 12.



Bahá'ís from all around Samoa converged on their National Centre in Apia in July 1991 for a National Teaching Conference. Many of the friends danced, providing an opportunity for the children to see and learn cultural traditions.

Following the "Tablelands Peace Expo" in May 1986, which was attended by 4,500 people, the Office of the Premier of New South Wales, Special Advisor on Community Relations, wrote a letter to the organizing committee, saying that "yours is so far one of the most successful peace initiatives in the whole of the Commonwealth of Australia. You can also proudly take the title that you have involved more Aboriginal people than any other peace initiative in any State or Territory."

One of the first teaching trips initiated and undertaken by Aboriginal believers occurred in July 1991 when two Bahá'ís from Queensland travelled to Kowanyama in the remote "Gulf Country", where they enrolled six more Aborigines. When added to the existing community, this provided enough believers to form the Local Spiritual Assembly there.

Also in 1991, Aboriginal men, women, youth, and children from eight areas in northern Queensland, the Northern Territory, and Western Australia, formed a group called The Storytellers as a means of sharing Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings with other Aborigines. The shows included traditional dances, singing, playing of the traditional wind instrument, the didgeridoo, and a play about the connection between traditional laws and laws suited to new times. A report on several of their first performances stated: "Aborigines in the audiences said they were delighted that they, and especially their children, could catch a glimpse of the beauty of their cultural heritage".

In a report about the activity taking place among the Aborigines of northwest Australia during the Plan, one observer commented on the intangible aspects of the changes occurring. "It is of qualities like gentleness and of emotional and spiritual bonds between people, that a revolution is being forged in the northwest. It is no media event. The profile stays low, but the roots of faith, without which no civilization can long endure, go deeper into the soil."

The Bahá'ís of New Zealand named Maori teaching a priority for the Six Year Plan. The growing commitment of Maori Bahá'ís to teaching contributed noticeably to an increase in enrolments. More and more, Bahá'í activities incorporated elements of Maori culture.

Early in the Plan, a delegation of Bahá'ís led by Maori Elder Ephraim Te Paa presented copies of *The Promise of World Peace* to the first Maori Governor-General of New Zealand, the Most Rev. Sir Paul Reeves. Copies of the statement in both the Maori and English languages were presented after an exchange of Maori greetings, and at the end of the visit, the Governor-General bade farewell with a traditional Maori embrace.

In 1987, New Zealand's National Convention was held on a marae—a traditional Maori meeting place—for the first time in the thirty-one years since the establishment of the National Assembly. A call to unity in the Maori language was sent from the gathering to the Bahá'í World Centre, the message stating that the momentous decision to hold the Convention on a marae had tapped the spiritual reservoir of the indigenous culture.

Another first occurred when a marae was chosen as the venue for a major National Teaching Conference in October 1987. Counsellor Lisiate Maka of Tonga was given a customary welcome with full Maori protocol, to which he responded in his mother tongue. The National Assembly called the gathering a "hallmark conference" symbolizing a transition the New Zealand community was passing through. "There was a strong sharing of cultures and a welding together of groups in an atmosphere of joy and empathy", the Assembly reported.

The National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand acted to deepen understanding of the relationship between Maori culture and Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation by establishing a Whare Wananga (School of Learning) for Maori Bahá'ís in June 1987. The Whare Wananga took the form of intensive courses held on maraes at least twice a year in different parts of the country to study the history and teachings of the Faith in conjunction with study of Maori culture. Seventeen believers attended the first course at the Kearoa Marae.

In 1988, a Maori carving became a highly significant symbol of the power which Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation possesses to unite and yet still preserve diverse cultures. The carving, a long spear-like Maori weapon converted into a digging tool, was given as a gift from New Zealand's Bahá'í community to the Bahá'ís of India to mark the first anniversary of the opening of the Bahá'í House of Worship in that country. It was unveiled during a moving ceremony in Whangarei, at the workshop of its creator, Master Carver of the Tai Tokerau people, Mr. Wallace Heteraka. The participation of some of the country's prominent Maori leaders and local dignitaries contributed to the stirring blend of tradition and change. From Whangarei, the carving was taken to the Bahá'í World Centre and then to the Indian Temple.

The participation of Maori believers in Bahá'í community life steadily increased. The first Maori family pioneered during the Plan, and in early April 1992, a large percentage of the Maori Bahá'ís attended a national *hui* (gathering) at Tanuwhara Marae to discuss initiatives of the Maori friends and to consult on teaching and deepening. An Auxiliary Board member reporting on the event said, "Nearly every believer stood



Wallace Heteraka (centre), a Maori Bahá'í from New Zealand, converted a long spear-like Maori weapon into a digging tool as a gift from New Zealand's Bahá'í community to the Bahá'ís of India; 1988.

and spoke from the heart without feeling intimidated. It was wonderful to see friends who had never spoken before at any *hui* I have attended, speak quite freely."

The Bahá'í population of the Mariana Islands, which grew from approximately 250 to 1,400 during the Plan, was reported to have become noticeably more representative of the ethnic groups on the islands. On Guam, a grassroots institute devoted to teaching and deepening among Micronesians met with unprecedented success during the final year of the Plan. More than 90 new believers, mostly youth, became very active in the teaching work. On Saipan, substantial enrolments took place among the Carolinians and Trukese, largely as a result of gatherings at the National Centre where Trukese believers shared the Faith and celebrated their cultural traditions with their relatives.

In Tuvalu, all the teaching in the outer islands during the Plan was carried out by local believers.

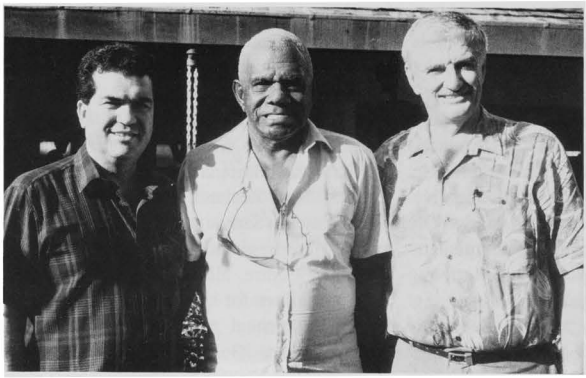
Near the end of the Six Year Plan, the initiative demonstrated by Australasia's indigenous peoples rose to an entirely new level with the inauguration of the Ocean of Light teaching campaign. Inspired by the Trail of Light project in the Americas, this campaign in the Pacific sought to support the efforts of indigenous Bahá'ís to express the Faith within the context of their own traditions and to draw on their particular strengths as teachers. The name of the ongoing project was suggested by indigenous Counsellor Betra Majmeto.

In June 1991, about fifty Bahá'ís representing Australia, Fiji, the Hawaiian Islands, Kiribati, the Mariana Islands, the Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga, and Tuvalu met in Samoa to prepare for the campaign. A representative of the International Teaching Centre, all members of the Board of Counsellors for the region, members of National Spiritual Assemblies in Australasia, Auxiliary Board members, and the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Samoa, Mrs. Lilian Alá'í, were present. "We marvel at the power of the Holy Spirit which has instantly created a Pacific family in an intimate atmosphere of joy, empathy and genuine love," participants reported. "The Pacific Ocean will be set ablaze, turning the 'water hemisphere' into an ocean of light that will illuminate the earth with Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation."

This preparatory meeting motivated a group of four Samoan women, headed by Her Highness Tosi Malietoa, to visit the Cook Islands for one week. It marked one of the first times a group of women from Samoa had travelled overseas to teach the Faith. The women visited the President of the House of Ariki and Pa Ariki, and the Queen's Representative and his wife. They



In response to the call for travelling teachers to arise during the Ocean of Light project four Bahá'í women from Samoa travelled to the Cook Islands in September 1991. A welcoming friend from the Cook Islands is second from right.



Mr. Peter Kaltoli (centre), the first local believer in Vanuatu, shown with members of the Continental Board of Counsellors Bruce Saunders (right) and Sírús Naráqí; 1991.

were given a Polynesian-style official welcome by one of the local Queens, and they travelled to the island of Mangaia, which never before had been visited by royalty.

During this visit to the Cook Islands, Tosi Malietoa was interviewed by radio, television, and newspaper reporters. To each of these she explained that the main purpose of her journey was to promote peace and unity among mankind.

The Bahá'ís of Efate Rural, Vanuatu, exemplified the initiative being taken by indigenous believers when they organized a teaching project to celebrate the Anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh in 1991. Two groups of about twelve Bahá'ís each walked from the picnic site where the community was commemorating the Holy Day to neighbouring groups of houses to share the Faith. "Today is a Bahá'í Holy Day," one of the friends would begin, and after a brief explanation of the Faith, the teacher would say, "In honour of the occasion we would like to give you a gift". Then the listeners would be presented with copies of *The Promise of World Peace* in either Bislama or English, as the recipient preferred.

Bahá'í men, women, youth, and children all participated in this activity, and all of the adults and youth took turns giving the talks. If a male spoke, then a female presented the Peace Message, and vice versa. There was one youth who, according to the report, was very quiet and stood at the back, but when it was his turn to speak, it was as though a light bulb had been turned on inside him. He seemed to radiate from his love for Bahá'u'lláh.

A traditional Maori welcome began a meeting held in New Zealand in January 1992 to examine the role of the Maori and Pacific Island believers in the Ocean of Light campaign. Organized by the National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand, the gathering was attended by 600 people, including Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre Joy Stevenson, the Australasian Counsellors, and Auxiliary Board members. Talks were interspersed with singing and dancing by Maori, Tongan, and Samoan friends, and participants reported that "awareness of special forces set in motion by the Ocean of Light campaign was heightened".

Just before the close of the Six Year Plan, the spirit of the Ocean of Light project touched the community of Vanuatu in a significant way. The events of March 1992 dramatically demonstrated how hearts were opened when Pacific Island Bahá'ís presented the Faith to their peers in a traditional manner.

As part of the campaign, Counsellor Afemata Moli Chang of Samoa, a traditional High Chief, re-enacted the landing of his ancestors at Port Resolution, this time bringing the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. Samoans

had brought Christianity to Vanuatu in the 1800s.

The people on the island of Tanna had been eagerly awaiting a special message, believing that 1992 would be significant for them. They happily greeted Mr. Chang, who wore his traditional dress as a High Chief of Samoa.

One of Tanna's most respected chiefs, Chief Fangota, honoured Mr. Chang by presenting him with a kava root, a highly valued cultural symbol. He said, "I give you the key of my life", a statement which, according to custom, means that he and his people will follow the teachings given to them.

Another chief told of a dream he had of a person coming to his village bearing aloft a bright light. This happened a few days before Mr. Chang arrived on Tanna. He later had a dream of two horses racing towards him. He put out his arms and was able to stop one of them. On Tanna, horses represent courage and power: the fact that he could stop a horse confirmed to him that the light that he saw in the first dream had the power and that he must now join the Faith.

By the time of National Conventions at Riḍván 1992, several countries had been touched, inspired, and challenged by the Ocean of Light and mentioned its influence in their convention messages. This shining example of indigenous peoples making the Cause their own and arising to serve in their own unique ways crowned the achievements of Australasian communities during the Six Year Plan.

Activities Among the Chinese

The friends of Australasia also reached out to the Chinese population in their midst. The Bahá'ís of Hawaii reported that their efforts to share the Faith with the Chinese population of the islands resulted in much greater diversity at Bahá'í-sponsored events. "By the end of the Six Year Plan it was not uncommon to witness public events at the Bahá'í National Centre filled to capacity with Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, African-Americans, Tongans, Hawaiians, Caucasians, Fijians, Persians...".

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands presented more than 100 Chinese community leaders with the Peace Message during the first year of the Plan and regularly distributed fifty copies of the Chinese edition of *One Country*. When the International Society for Chinese Philosophy brought 200 scholars together in July 1989 in Hilo, a Bahá'í presented a paper on the evolution of Chinese and Western philosophies toward a universal philosophy for world peace and unity. The Bahá'ís were granted permission to have a book and pamphlet display during the conference, and conference officials requested sufficient



Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre Donald Rogers (back row fourth from right) visiting Bahá'ís in Perth, Western Australia, in 1990.

copies of the Peace Statement to give to each participant upon registration.

The Local Spiritual Assembly of South Hilo established an annual Gordon Tong Award, named after a believer of Chinese descent from Hawaii who was killed while serving the Cause. That Assembly also sponsored welcoming parties for Chinese students entering the University of Hawaii at Hilo.

In 1992, interaction between the National Assembly of Hawaii and the Worldwide Farmers Association resulted in co-sponsorship of a China Peace and Friendship Tour. Participants constituted the first large group of Bahá'ís to visit China under co-sponsorship of a Bahá'í community.

In Australia, several cultural evenings provided forums for Chinese artists and speakers to share their traditions with Bahá'ís and the general public and to learn about Australian culture. Distinguished Chinese scientists, physicians, academics, and students attended such an event organized by the Bahá'ís of Sydney in April 1987. The evening, titled "Dragon Night", included music, demonstrations of classical painting, and screenings of cultural films.

In 1988, a multicultural evening in Australia attracted more than 500 people, 300 of whom were Asian guests from China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand. Highlights of the evening included an address by the Deputy-Chairman of the Ethnic Affairs Commission for New South Wales, musical presentations, demonstrations of classical Chinese painting and cultural dances, and an explanation of the geographic significance of Australia with translations in Mandarin.

In New Zealand, an unusual cross-cultural event allowed Chinese and Maori people to learn about each other's customs. More than 100 Chinese people met with Bahá'ís in a traditional Maori gathering organized by the Local Spiritual Assembly of Hamilton in consultation with the Waikato Chinese Association, the Chinese Heritage Society, and the International Student Association at Waikato University. Most of the Chinese people had never been in a Maori meeting hall before so their primary goal was to learn more about Maori culture and to teach people about Chinese culture. Additionally, there was extensive discussion of the Bahá'í Faith and its principles.

Weekly firesides, Sunday afternoon talks, and English classes held at the Cabramatta Centre in New South Wales, Australia, attracted many Asian visitors to the warm atmosphere, with regular announcements of activities made on the radio. Bahá'í study courses presented in Chinese were held several times at the Yerrinbool Bahá'í School.

Articles and advertisements about the Faith appeared in the *Chinese Herald*, Australia's Chinese weekly newspaper with a circulation of 9,000 in all the major cities of the country.

Peace Activities

Following the release of *The Promise of World Peace* in October 1985, Bahá'ís around the world increased their involvement with organizations and events promoting peace, sharing the message of the Universal House of Justice as widely as possible. Thus when the Six Year Plan began, in the middle of the International Year of Peace (IYP), Bahá'í activity in this area was in full swing. A number of significant and well-attended events took place in Australasia.

Numerous peace expositions, festivals, and fairs met with stunning success in Australia. More than 4,000 people attended a "Festival of Peace" organized by the Local Spiritual Assembly of Fremantle, Western Australia, in September 1986. The two-day event included forty stalls, twenty-two workshops, live entertainment, a programme for children, an art exhibit, and a film festival. In August 1988, a second peace festival took place in Western Australia, this time commemorating the 25th anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous "I have a dream" speech, delivered in Washington,

D.C. All the exhibitors, entertainers, and speakers who participated in "Celebration of a Dream" were presented with copies of the Peace Statement. A report on the event, which was attended by 4,500 people, said: "The unity and devotion of the Western Australia Bahá'í community...has demonstrated in undeniable terms the power of the Bahá'í message and this has been clearly recog- nised in the comments from non-Bahá'ís praising the spirit and organization of the Festival and noting the diversity of the Bahá'í community."

Also in Australia, a Peace Garden was dedicated in Toowoomba in 1987. The garden is circular to symbolize the gathering of the races, nations, classes, and religions, and has nine pathways leading to the centre.

The Bahá'ís were recognized for their efforts by the Australian Government. In 1986, the Foreign Affairs Department of the International Year of Peace Secretariat asked the Bahá'í community of Tasmania to deliver peace kits to all the schools in the State. Direct praise of the efforts made by Bahá'ís came from Mrs. Stella Cornelius, Director of the International Year of Peace for the Government. She wrote: "The Bahá'í participation in the International Year of Peace has been inspirational. I know this to be true both nationally and internationally. Bahá'í expositions in 1986 have brought together dozens of seemingly diverse themes, and thousands of seemingly diverse people.... All over Australia, I have noticed with joyous acknowledgement, how members of the Bahá'í Faith have made themselves part of other IYP programmes. With impeccable objectivity they have brought reconciliation to factions in the cause of peace-building. The history of the year must include how much we owe to the Bahá'ís.... To all the participants I say: 'Your work for IYP will go far beyond the confines of this year. It is a blessing for all times.'"

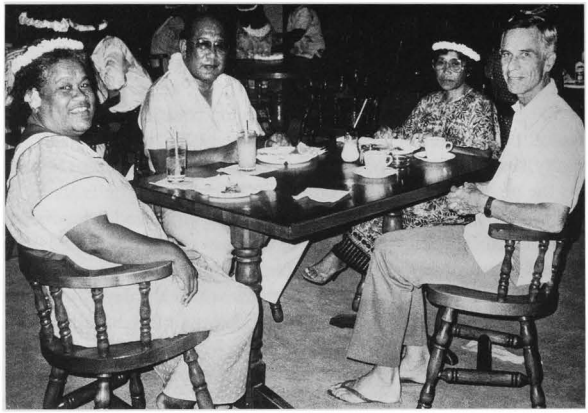
In 1987, the United Nations Secretary-General designated the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Australia as a "Peace Messenger", one of only 300 organizations worldwide to be so named.

Significant peace-related activities took place all around the Pacific. The Bahá'ís of Fiji made major contributions to Peace Week in November 1988, held to mark the 20th anniversary of the National Council of Women in Fiji. The Bahá'í National Women's Committee organized a devotional programme, which was highly praised, and the believers participated in a peace march, carrying a banner which displayed a quotation from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. An article submitted by the Bahá'í National Council of Women on the contributions of women to peace was published in the *Fiji Times*, and a group of Bahá'í youth performed a musical drama before an audience of 900 people.

In Papua New Guinea, 1,000 people attended a highly successful peace festival held in Lae in July and August 1986. The festival was opened by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Technology and attended by the Premier of the Province. Panellists representing many professions and several religions led seven seminars on peace. An opening concert was attended by 700 people.

A peace exposition initiated by the National Assembly of Papua New Guinea garnered the enthusiastic support of Port Moresby Bahá'ís and prominent community members. Held at the end of August 1986, the exposition attracted 2,000 visitors. A high point of the event was a peace forum attended by 250 university students, professors, and government officials. Counsellor Tinai Hancock presented a Bahá'í perspective, and eight other distinguished speakers—including the Governor-General of the country—delivered talks.

In the latter months of 1986, several more major peace-related activities took place in Papua New Guinea. On 2 September, the Bahá'ís of Port Moresby presented *The Promise of World Peace* to the Central Provincial General Assembly and the Government of the Central Province. The



In the Marshall Islands, President Amata Kabua (second from left), and First Lady Emaline Kabua (second from right), join Bahá'ís during dinner to commemorate the International Year of Peace; 24 October 1986.



The Bahá'í float entered in the parade held in Apia, Western Samoa on 3 June 1987 to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Independence of Western Samoa. The Bahá'í float won third place in the competition.



Bahá'í youth with the float they created to help celebrate the 10th anniversary of the independence of the Solomon Islands. About 20,000 spectators saw it in a parade held in July 1988.

Deputy Premier requested the presentation after he had received the Peace Statement in a private presentation the day before.

On 24 October, the Bahá'ís of Lae hosted seventy people, including leaders of the Government, the University of Technology, and the community, at a peace luncheon to observe United Nations Day. At the same time, the Bahá'ís of Goroka began a three-day celebration of the International Year of Peace which included the dedication of a Peace Park and an inter-faith prayer meeting in the new park.

In Hawaii, a Bahá'í float with a world peace theme won the first place Mayor's Award, non-commercial category, in the annual Aloha Week parade in 1986. Multi-coloured flowers displayed the earth with two doves, and floral flags of many nations encircled the float. Parade observers and television audiences equalled approximately half a million people.

To celebrate World Peace Day in Hawaii in 1986, the Bahá'ís took part in a Candle-light Peace Walk and released more than 11,000 copies of *The Promise of World Peace* through publication as a local news-paper insert. On the same day in Honolulu, the Local Assembly achieved publication of the Peace Statement in the combined Sunday edition of the *Advertiser Star-Bulletin* with an approximate circulation of 300,000.

Other peace-related events sponsored by Bahá'ís included: a Peace Symposium held on Guam which exposed the community "to the public as never before"; an inter-religious observance of the 40th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights at which the Governor of Guam gave the primary address; and a national peace conference in the Marshall Islands, co-sponsored with the Peace Corps, called "What is the meaning of world peace to me?"

As these events were occurring, a group of eight young Bahá'ís was sailing the Pacific in the *Iron Butterfly* to promote world peace. The youth—two Tongans, four New Zealanders, one Iranian, and one American—stopped to speak in schools, before community organizations, and on radio and television, always emphasizing the oneness of mankind. The ship's captain was quoted in the *Samoa News* of 7 August as saying, "Once this is universally recognized, humanity will then be able to develop a system that is fair for everyone".

Prominent People

Courtesy calls paid to government officials, public events organized to commemorate special days, and awards banquets honouring outstanding community service provided some of the opportunities for prominent people in Australasia to become better acquainted with the Faith.

The Deputy Prime Minister of the Cook Islands received the Peace Statement in October 1990 during a courtesy call paid by Mrs. Violette Haake. It was reported that he was most appreciative and stated that he was very happy with the Bahá'ís of the Cook Islands and their loyalty to the Government. When Counsellor Haake returned to the islands in April 1991, she met with the Prime Minister, the Queen's Representative, and a number of other prominent people.

An Auxiliary Board member wrote in a report about Mrs. Haake's visit that a notice-able change had occurred in the attitudes of leaders toward the Bahá'í Faith. "Every dignitary visited by the Counsellor was aware of the Bahá'í teachings and knew some of the Bahá'ís," Auxiliary Board member Teata Makirere wrote. On the Twelfth Day of Riḍván, the Queen's Representative, his wife and an attendant, the Speaker of the Parliament, the Minister of Health and his wife, the Ombudsman, and the former Prime Minister, Sir Thomas Davis, attended a Unity Feast. The Speaker of the Parliament commented during the evening that "I can feel from your prayers, readings, and the talk by the Counsellor that your thinking and my own thinking are the same".

Toward the end of the Six Year Plan, Sir Thomas Davis, who had visited the Bahá'í

World Centre and consulted with the Universal House of Justice in August 1986 (see pp. 152–153), referred to "the new world order perceived by Bahá'u'lláh" in a paper written as his contribution to the Pacific Islands States and World Peace Project.

In August 1990, all thirty-one members of the Constitutional Convention of the Federated States of Micronesia were presented with copies of *The Promise of World Peace* by members of the National Assembly of the Eastern Caroline Islands. The presentation was made during a brief recess in a convention session, called by the President who announced the purpose of the pause. Three Bahá'ís came forward bearing copies of the Peace Statement, each gift-wrapped, personally addressed to a delegate, and accompanied by a letter from the National Assembly. The Constitutional Convention is held every ten years to review and make amendments to the country's constitution, with the delegates representing the highest ranks of elected officials of the nation—state governors, senators, and congressmen.

Welcome gifts were presented by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Eastern Caroline Islands to members of the South Pacific Forum during its meeting in Ponape in 1991. Dignitaries visiting Hawaii—including United States President George Bush, former presidents Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter, and Marshall Islands President Amata Kabua—were welcomed to that State with flowers or fruit baskets sent on behalf of the Hawaiian Bahá'í community.

Earlier in the Plan, in September 1986, a delegation of seven members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Samoa met with the Prime Minister of Western Samoa, His Excellency Afioga Vaai Kolone. The delegation presented the Peace Message and called attention to the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Írán, spoke of the principle of loyalty to government, and assured the Prime Minister of the Assembly's willingness to sponsor a special service in the House of Worship in honour of the 25th anniversary of Western Samoa's independence, inviting representatives of all religions and strata of society to participate.

In the Western Caroline Islands, the President of the Republic of Palau, seven members of his cabinet, and the Attorney-General all received copies of the Peace Message in 1991. The National Spiritual Assembly of New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands met with one of the Melanesian High Chiefs from the South Province of New Caledonia after he had received the Peace Message. In French Polynesia, tribunal presidents, mayors, military personnel, and members of the Senate received *The Promise of World Peace* during a 42-day intensive campaign conducted by a team of local believers in November and December 1991.



Photo of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Eastern Caroline Islands taken in 1987. That Assembly presented copies of the Peace Message to participants in the South Pacific Forum in 1990.

The Bahá'í Faith became quite well-known among prominent people in Hawaii, as evidenced by the invitations the Bahá'í community received to be represented at important gatherings. In December 1988, the Director of the Bahá'í Office of External Affairs was among the 200 delegates and observers invited to consult on Hawaii's future role in the Pacific at the "Governor's Congress on Hawaii's International Role", convened by Governor John Waihee. Bahá'ís were appointed to the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women, the Governor's Task Force on AIDS, and the Permanent Commission for the Commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Week. Two members of the National Assembly were the only representatives of a religion among sixty-two environmental groups to be invited to participate in the Governor's statewide Earth Day planning session.

The Governor of Hawaii invited the director of the United States Commission on Civil Rights in Hawaii and the head of the state's Affirmative Action programme to attend a presentation by the Bahá'ís of the statement, *The Vision of Race Unity*.

In Tonga, 200 copies of *Complete Obedience to Government* were published and distributed to government leaders to familiarize them with the Bahá'í teachings on this subject. The National Assembly of Tuvalu reported that Bahá'ís were well represented in non-governmental agencies and at government functions during the Plan.

Bahá'ís created opportunities to meet community leaders by organizing public celebrations of Naw-Rúz and by sponsoring special gatherings to commemorate events related to the teachings of the Faith.

One celebration of Naw-Rúz in Auckland, New Zealand, in 1991 became an occasion for sharing the Faith with community leaders. The Local Spiritual Assembly invited about 140 guests to join 100 Bahá'ís for a special dinner at one of the city's leading hotels. Many of Auckland's city councillors, district court judges, high school principals, university professors, doctors, lawyers, media people, United Nations personnel, ethnic council leaders, and consul-generals from overseas legations attended. The programme featured musical performances, the reading of a passage from Bahá'u'lláh's Writings, and a ten-minute talk. All guests were given a copy of *The Promise of World Peace* and a red rose as they left.

The Bahá'ís of the Hawaiian Islands celebrated Naw-Rúz 1990 with an International Literacy Year Banquet which included the presence of fifty special guests. The Governor of the State of Hawaii, a State Senator, a State Representative, the managing director of a television station, and the head of the University of Hawaii Institute for Peace were among those attending.

A special dinner in honour of International Year of Peace was hosted by the National Assembly of the Marshall Islands in 1986. President Amata Kabua, cabinet members, and other high officials were present. A similar occasion for local and traditional leaders was held on the island of Milli.

President Kabua visited the Bahá'í World Centre during his trip to Israel in June 1990 (see also p. 129 and p. 153). In January 1992, the National Assembly of the Marshall Islands worked with the Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia to host a reception for the President, members of the cabinet, foreign ambassadors, and the President of the Chamber of Commerce.

When the Bahá'ís of Australia held a special service at the House of Worship in 1986 to commemorate United Nations Day and celebrate the International Year of Peace, the Governor-General made an official visit and read one of the selections for the programme. It appears to mark the first time a Head of State participated in a service at a Bahá'í House of Worship.

Through the Human Rights and Minorities Portfolio of the Office of External Affairs in Hawaii, the National Assembly hosted at the National Centre numerous dignitaries concerned with racial unity. Among

those visiting the Centre were the founder of CORE (Congress of Racial Equality), the president of the Hawaiian chapter of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), and the publishers of the *Afro-Hawaii News.*

In Hawaii, numerous prominent people were introduced to the Faith when they attended awards banquets sponsored by the Bahá'ís. The Agnes Baldwin Alexander Award for Service to Humanity was bestowed biannually, honouring individuals such as a chairman of several organizations in Honolulu devoted to self-help housing projects, and the head of the University of Hawaii Institute for Peace. Presentation of the Award in December 1986 was carried out in conjunction with the presentation of a special International Year of Peace Award to United States Senator Spark Matsunaga.

Bahá'ís also worked to create links with fellow professionals and religious leaders. In New Zealand, a series of symposia called the Auckland Forum included speakers from a variety of backgrounds. In Australia, the Bahá'í Business and Professional Association held regular functions with speakers on business-related topics. The Bahá'ís of Hawaii sent representatives to professional gatherings such as the State Conference on Global Education in 1988–1989, the Pacific Rim Lawyers Conference, and the Pacific Educational Conference. A Bahá'í also participated in the Asia Pacific Dialog.

At a special "Prayers for Peace" gathering in Hawaii in 1991 honouring visiting Pope Shenouda III, head of the Coptic Christian Church, Bahá'í prayers were chanted and the Peace Message was presented to the Pope. Also in Hawaii, Bishop Joseph Ferrario received the pamphlet "What is the Bahá'í Faith?" (see pp. 242–244 for the full text of the pamphlet) and then requested 250 copies to be distributed among his church's leaders. More than 200 professionals attended a talk by a Bahá'í at a seminar held during the International Conference of the Council of Churches in Canberra, Australia.

Women

In a letter to all National Spiritual Assemblies dated 23 January 1985, encouraging the Bahá'ís to plan for the International Year of Peace, 1986, the Universal House of Justice wrote: "Calling upon local and national Bahá'í communities to sponsor a wide range of activities which will engage the attention of people from all walks of life to various topics relevant to peace, such as: the role of women..." This challenge was taken up by the Bahá'ís of Australasia.

Throughout the International Year of Peace, the Bahá'ís of Hawaii organized conferences on "The Role of Women in Peace". During the following two years, "Especially for Women" conferences were held on each of the major islands. A Pacific women's conference called "Empowering Women to Achieve" was co-sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of Hawaii, the Local Spiritual Assembly of South Hilo, the Hilo College Club and the University of Hawaii at Hilo in the final year of the Plan. More than seventy people representing seventeen countries participated in activities designed to help women develop leadership skills.

The Bahá'ís of Papua New Guinea organized a number of women's conferences and weekend institutes, and sessions on equality were incorporated into youth conferences. One national conference, co-sponsored by the Bahá'í community and the Morobe Women's Association in July 1989, received significant attention from the media when several prominent people attended. Among the participants were the President of the National Council of Women, the President of the Morobe Women's Association, the Regional Member for Morobe Province in the National Parliament, and the wife of the Prime Minister.

To meet one of the goals of the Six Year Plan, the National Assembly organized a regional women's conference which was held at Moreguina Station, Cape Rodney, in September 1991. Attended by over 200 people from four provinces, the conference gave

many participants their first opportunity to stand up and address a large gathering. A highlight of the event was the performance of a drama portraying the life of Ṭáhirih which was written and produced by the Port Moresby Bahá'í Women's Literacy Group.

Reports from a number of conferences in Papua New Guinea mentioned that contrary to traditional custom, the men took care of the cooking, washing, water-fetching, and child-minding during the gatherings, thereby leaving the women free to focus on the discussions. In some remote villages, this was considered a major achievement. Non-Bahá'í visitors were impressed by witnessing such examples of principle in practice.

In New Zealand, more than 100 "handmaidens of all ages" met in the heart of the tribal area of Ngati Tuwharetoa in February 1987, for the first women's *hui* (traditional gathering). Members of the National Spiritual Assembly, members of the National Teaching Committee, and immigrant women from the Pacific Islands sang, prayed, laughed, and confronted difficult issues together.

Participants in another women's *hui,* held in May 1991 at the Tutanekai Marae in Rotorua, reported the following: "We addressed, with courage, conviction and audacity, the diverse, frightening, challenging and thrilling matters affecting us, our homes, our families, our work, our intellect and our souls.... The result is that we leave here with our vision clear, our purpose unshaken, our zeal undiminished, our hopes undimmed. We know we are destined to achieve great things for our beloved Cause".

Bahá'ís were among those who helped organize the first International Indigenous Women's Conference, called "Finding Common Ground". Held in Australia in July 1989, and funded by UNESCO, the conference was attended by more than 1,000 women. The gathering began with a two-day celebration of the arts of indigenous peoples. Topics discussed during the conference included women and racism, education, and domestic violence.

A series of women's conferences was also organized in the Solomon Islands by the National Women's Committee, and women's conferences took place every few months at the beginning of the Plan in Tonga. Bahá'í consultation was the topic of one conference for sixty women in Tonga, held in October 1986; the topic was new to the women of Ma'ufanga, who responded with enthusiasm.

One particularly successful women's conference in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands highlighted the lives of Ṭáhirih and Bahíyyih Khánum as models for present-day women.

Bahá'ís served as representatives to various women's organizations, sharing their viewpoints and contributing to the work already under way to raise the status of women. A major breakthrough for Bahá'í women in the Pacific took place when, after years of involvement between the Bahá'í International Community and the South Pacific Commission, the Commission invited Bahá'í women from around the Pacific, as members of a non-governmental organization, to attend a Regional Women's Affairs meeting in Fiji in September 1988. The South Pacific Commission is made up of twenty-seven member nations from the Pacific region, as well as France, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Two members of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Australasia and thirty-six Bahá'í women from nineteen Pacific countries attended the conference, which was organized to assist Pacific women policy-makers and trainers to review the programmes for women. Recommendations from the conference to the South Pacific Commission reflected a weighty contribution from Bahá'í participants.

The Commission also invited three Bahá'í women to serve as resource people on a panel discussion addressing health and education, economic planning, and rural development, in relation to women.

Following the gathering, the Bahá'í participants met for three days to discuss the



Two members of the Continental Board of Counsellors, representatives of the Bahá'í International Community, and Bahá'í women from 19 Pacific countries attend a meeting sponsored by the South Pacific Commission and held in Fiji in September 1988.

relationship between the conference and the Six Year Plan, particularly in regard to promotion of equality in the Bahá'í community.

When the six delegates from the Mariana Islands returned home, the Bahá'í Public Affairs Committee sponsored a post-conference forum at the Hilton Hotel on Guam. The delegates, all featured speakers at the conference, shared experiences and impressions of the conference, as well as their recommendations for the next Women's Affairs Conference.

Other recognition of Bahá'í work on women's issues came in New Zealand when the Bahá'í Women's Committee was invited to become affiliated with the National Council of Women. The speaker who proposed the admission during the Council's annual conference in September 1986 spoke appreciatively of her branch's good relationship with the Bahá'í community. The vote of acceptance was unanimous.

In Papua New Guinea, Bahá'ís achieved representation on the National Council of Women in 1989, fulfilling one of their goals for the Six Year Plan. At the time of this achievement, the Bahá'ís were already collaborating with other women's organizations of East New Britain to prepare for celebrations of National Women's Day.

In the town of Rabaul, Papua New Guinea, Women's Day was celebrated with a music festival, at which a well-known band performed songs about peace, women, and a safe and happy home. When four judges presided over a competition among thirteen groups for best songs and performances, the winning group was the Bahá'í Dawnbreakers from New Ireland. Bahá'ís also set up a bookshop for the event and handed out flyers with songs, prayers, and Bahá'í Writings.

In Port Moresby, two Bahá'ís were invited to participate in planning the Women's Day events, and one of them was chosen to be Mistress of Ceremonies. The Bahá'ís took part in all the activities—reading Bahá'í prayers, serving as judges for several events, presenting a short drama, performing traditional dancing, and singing in a choir. Bahá'í books, posters, and pamphlets were on display at a stand. "The word 'Bahá'í' seemed to be on everybody's lips through the day", one participant said.

In 1986, the National Women's Council of Vanuatu asked two Bahá'í women to help set up a non-political, non-denominational women's committee for the Port Vila municipal area. The two women were subsequently elected President and Vice-President of a committee of twelve. Eventually, a place was reserved for a Bahá'í representative. Two Bahá'í women also served for several years on the National Women's Council.

Bahá'í women of the Solomon Islands contributed to Women's Week in 1988, which was sponsored by the Honiara Council of Women. Bahá'ís marched in a parade; a Bahá'í prayer was chosen as the first prayer for the official opening following the march; and the President of the Honiara Council—a Bahá'í and the only female lawyer in the Solomon Islands—was chosen to deliver an address.

For National Women's Day in Samoa in 1990, the Bahá'ís created a float in the shape of a bird completely covered with fresh flowers and a sign that read "Equality of Men and Women". The Bahá'í women walking in the parade with the float sang, "With two wings, we will fly..."

The Bahá'í Women's Committee of Fiji was represented at a national "Women in Development" conference held in July 1986. A Bahá'í stall displayed pamphlets and handicrafts. In July 1991, the Bahá'ís of Australia were represented at the "Recognition for Women in Australia" seminar hosted by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Office of the Status of Women and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

In March 1989, United Nations' International Women's Day was celebrated in Australia with a special service at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Sydney. Eminent community leaders were among the readers at the service, including the President and Vice President of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

In 1989, the Bahá'í women of Guam formed a Bahá'í Women's Association—a step towards achieving some of their goals for the Six Year Plan. The purpose of the Association was defined as "promotion of the role of women in working for peace in the family, the community, and the world through education, spiritual enrichment, investigation of the true significance of the equality of men and women, and through appropriate philanthropic and social service activities".

As efforts were made by Bahá'ís all over Australasia to raise awareness of women's potential and seek ways to remove barriers standing in the way of women's progress, signs emerged of greater participation by Bahá'í women in the areas of teaching and the administration of the Cause.

At the 1990 National Convention of Kiribati, two indigenous women were elected to the National Spiritual Assembly, for the first time in the history of Kiribati. In 1991, a Gilbertese woman was elected as chairman of the Assembly. In relation to this occurrence, Counsellor Ben Ayala said, "When I was assigned to work in Kiribati over five years ago, the women were subdued—they kept quiet. Gradually, with the constant encouragement of the Auxiliary Board members, they came out of their shells and began to speak up. At the Convention all women delegates very actively participated in the consultation."

In 1989, the Bahá'í women of the island of Yap in the Western Caroline Islands were reported to be holding regular weekly meetings at the Bahá'í Centre in Colonia. Invitations to the public to join these gatherings were being broadcast over radio repeatedly on Monday and Tuesday mornings. Eleven women from American, Palauan, Ulithian, and Yapese backgrounds attended the first meeting and discussed the role of women in working for peace in the family, the village, and the world.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Marshall Islands reported that an "increase of women's participation in the teaching work is witnessed in all Bahá'í communities throughout the Marshalls".

A report from the Continental Board of Counsellors in November 1988 relayed news of the active involvement of Papua New Guinea women in the administrative channels of the Faith, with the proportion of women on national and regional committees close to fifty per cent. The report also noted the full support for women's initiatives being demonstrated by men.



In Tonga, the Bahá'í kindergarten Kolofo'ou Nuku'alofa *is located in the National Bahá'í Centre and is run by the National Children's Committee. Only four of the twenty-one students of this English-language school are Bahá'ís; 1990.*

Education of Children

> We prescribe unto all men that which will lead to the exaltation of the Word of God amongst His servants, and likewise, to the advancement of the world of being and the uplift of souls. To this end, the greatest means is education of the child. To this must each and all hold fast.[2]

One of the most outstanding achievements in the area of Bahá'í education in Australasia came when in 1988 the Department of Education in New South Wales, Australia, granted permission for Bahá'í religious instruction to take place in state schools. Classes in primary schools in New South Wales grew to such an extent that parents asked for classes to continue in the high schools. Later, the State Department of Education of Queensland invited a Bahá'í representative to be present at meetings of the Curriculum Development Committee, and the State Religious Education Advisory Committee voted to offer membership to the Bahá'í Faith.

In Kiribati, a preschool project initiated by a small group of local women and coordinated by the National Child Education Committee gained recognition from national and international organizations, such as the University of the South Pacific and UNICEF. The project began in August 1991, and by the end of the Plan, at least seven Bahá'í preschools were being operated by local communities, with demand for more continuing to grow. Integral to the programme was the involvement of mothers.

Progress was made around Australasia in the area of developing curricula for children's classes. The National Child Education Committee in Hawaii created a standard curriculum for Bahá'í education and sent teams to meet with Local Assemblies and present model classes. In Samoa, a children's curriculum was developed, translated into various vernaculars, and distributed to all Local Assemblies holding classes. Systematic lesson plans were also developed in Fiji.

In Papua New Guinea, the Child Education Committee prepared a curriculum for primary classes. A resource centre for child education material and teacher training operated in the town of Goroka. In the Marshall Islands, a manual written in Marshallese was distributed to all Local Assemblies holding classes. New materials for children's classes were developed in Australia, including five textbooks and audiotapes of songs and stories.

Regular children's classes were held in virtually all Local Spiritual Assembly areas in New Zealand, the Marshall Islands, and Tuvalu. Regular activities for junior youth, such as special camps, were organized in

[2] Bahá'u'lláh, from a Tablet translated from the Persian, in *Bahá'í Education*, p. 3.

Australia and Hawaii, and an institute for pre-youth to study the Peace Statement was established in New Caledonia.

Performing Arts

Music, dance, and drama acted as powerful links between the various cultures of Australasia and the wide range of people waiting to hear Bahá'u'lláh's Message of unity.

In Samoa in 1987, Bahá'ís were involved extensively in Arts Fiafia, a celebration honouring both traditional art forms and modern creative expressions. Bahá'ís helped erect and paint displays, performed in the International Folk Dance Troupe, and displayed original paintings. Interest in artist Duffy Sheridan's portrait of 'Abdu'l-Bahá led to a ten-minute television special on the painter and his art.

In the Marshall Islands, a number of people were introduced to the Faith when they participated in a multicultural variety show to celebrate Naw-Rúz in 1991. Music and dance played important roles in conferences of Australian Aborigines, and they helped to attract many people from the surrounding communities.

Several performing groups went on tour, using their talents to spread the teachings. The Wildfire Theatre Group from Australia toured every year of the Plan, offering a programme of music, dance, and comedy on peace themes. Their performances were seen all over Australia, in Eastern Europe, and in parts of Asia. Youth for One World formed in New Zealand and toured throughout the country and in Eastern Europe, Australia, and the Cook Islands. The Storytellers formed and toured among the Aborigines of Australia.

The Rainbow Dancers, a twenty-person theatre group composed of Aborigines, Australians, Chinese, Maoris, Persians, and Tongans received extensive publicity on television, radio, and in the press for its performances around Australia of ethnic songs and dances. New Caledonia's music group Tcho Era toured New Zealand.

Several musical performances drew quite large audiences. "Peace Child", a musical drama produced in Hawaii by the National Spiritual Assembly's International Year of Peace Committee, had an average of 900 people at each of three performances, in addition to a special presentation for more than 500 school children. A major television network also produced a prime-time news feature on the drama.

Also in Hawaii, a musical drama called "On the Road to Montgomery"—written, produced, and directed by a Bahá'í—was given a major performance at the War Memorial Convention Hall for Martin Luther King Week.

About 1,000 people attended a musical history of New Zealand hosted by the Bahá'ís of Lower Hutt in November 1990 and held in Wellington's Michael Fowler



Posing on a playground in Masterton, New Zealand, members of Youth for One World, a group which formed in 1990 to use music to proclaim the Faith.

Centre. Called "New Zealand Panorama", the production was an official project for the celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of New Zealand's founding document. Proceeds from the show benefited the Child Cancer Foundation. The Assembly reported it was the first time so many non-Bahá'ís had gathered in such a prestigious venue and heard the principles of the Faith.

Mass Media

Press coverage of Bahá'í activities increased in a number of Australasian nations. The National Assembly of Australia reported that media achievements were "remarkable", with newspaper articles escalating from ninety-five in the second year to 400 in the last. More than 1,100 articles were printed during the Plan. Radio programmes in Australia increased from seven to a final count of 100. At one point the Australian Broadcasting Commission requested a half hour interview with a member of the National Assembly to discuss basic information about the Faith. The number of television programmes rose from four in the first year to thirty during the final year. In July 1987, a seven-minute story on the Faith was broadcast in prime time.

To facilitate use of radio, the National Assembly of Australia prepared an introductory Bahá'í radio manual and distributed it to all Local Spiritual Assemblies and groups with public stations in their areas. A database was also created listing all public stations accessible to Bahá'ís, and a large number of scripts and sample cassettes were dispatched to institutions and individuals.

In Samoa, the involvement of Bahá'ís in any conference was published in local papers. Radio Vanuatu featured news items and interviews about the Faith on a number of occasions. Local communities in Hawaii were provided with public information kits on special events and Holy Days to use when contacting the media.

Bahá'í news was also of increasing interest to the media of Papua New Guinea, where the International Convention of 1988 and several women's conferences during the Plan were reported on television. In the Eastern Caroline Islands, the text of *The Promise of World Peace* was read in English six times on Ponape radio.

Bahá'í-produced programmes were heard on radio and seen on television. "Practical Peace" was the title of a four-programme series based on *The Promise of World Peace* and aired over the National Radio network of New Zealand. Produced by a Bahá'í for Radio New Zealand's Continuing Education Unit, the series was broadcast in September and October 1986. Also in October 1986, a 45-minute documentary about the making of the music video "Mona with the Children" was shown on New Zealand National Television.

In the Western Caroline Islands, after previous unsuccessful attempts to have Bahá'í videos shown on television, permission was granted in August 1988 to show "Mona with the Children". Subsequently, four additional Bahá'í films were televised. The Bahá'í media staff in Yap reported: "It has been generally observed that the airing of these videos has created a...respect for and acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith and the Bahá'ís in Yap".

In the Cook Islands, a thirty-minute musical fireside which aired in September 1990 began a series of four locally produced Bahá'í television programmes broadcast on Cook Islands Television. Other educational and informative programmes followed. Weekly radio programmes were aired for several months in 1989 in Ponape, Eastern Caroline Islands. In the Solomon Islands, the National Assembly was offered a fifteen-minute programme on Radio Solomon beginning in August 1988. It marked the first time Bahá'ís were given time on this station, which reached 5,000 villages throughout the islands.

Radio Bahá'í Hawaii, a weekly one-hour talk show on the Faith, began in 1990. This led to an invitation for the Bahá'ís to join the Olelo Project, a programme to train

community organizations in the use of television. Bahá'í programmes were featured at least four times a year on statewide television, and a thirty-minute Bahá'í programme on public access cable television was shown every Sunday morning.

Excerpts from the Writings appeared in the sole local newspaper of New Caledonia almost weekly during the whole Plan. For two years, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Mariana Islands placed selected Writings in the region's major newspaper, *Pacific Daily News*. Toward the end of the Plan, a Local Assembly in Samoa sponsored daily radio programmes which included prayers and readings in the mornings and at midnight.

Hawaii's Office of External Affairs officer was invited to write a monthly column on "Unity in Diversity" for *Afro-Hawaii News*, in which he regularly quoted from the Bahá'í Writings.

Houses of Worship

> The world of existence may be likened to this temple and place of worship. For just as the external world is a place where the people of all races and colors, varying faiths, denominations and conditions come together—just as they are submerged in the same sea of divine favours—so likewise, all may meet under the dome of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and adore the one God in the same spirit of truth; for the ages of darkness have passed away, and the century of light has come.[3]

The Bahá'í Houses of Worship in Australia and Samoa continued to serve as meeting-places where members of the diverse human family could worship together in peace. In addition to regular weekly services, a variety of special services were devoted to various themes, such as the environment, children, and peace.

The House of Worship in Sydney, Australia, was the site of numerous special services which provided opportunities for new visitors to enjoy the beauty and peace of the Temple and for Bahá'ís to meet people from different community organizations working toward similar aims.

The Governor-General of Australia, Sir Ninian Stephen, and Lady Stephen, attended a service held in October 1986 in celebration of the International Year of Peace. These special guests were escorted into the House of Worship by the Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone. At least 300 of the 850 attending were guests of the Faith, including political and community leaders, media representatives, and a high-ranking Tibetan Buddhist monk. A programme for 200 children was simultaneously held in a large tent on the Temple grounds. Afterwards, 1,000 people were served lunch on the lawns.

The main service included the performance of a choir which deeply moved the guests. Following the service, a member of Parliament wrote: "I felt that only in heaven would I enjoy such peace and beauty."

Several special services spoke to the Asian population of Australia. In October 1987, approximately 170 people, forty-five of whom were of Chinese origin, attended a service with readings in various Chinese dialects, Vietnamese, Khmer, and English. On the Chinese New Year in February 1989, more than 350 attended a service conducted in Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and English. In June of that year, prayers for China and world peace were offered at a service attended by 250 people.

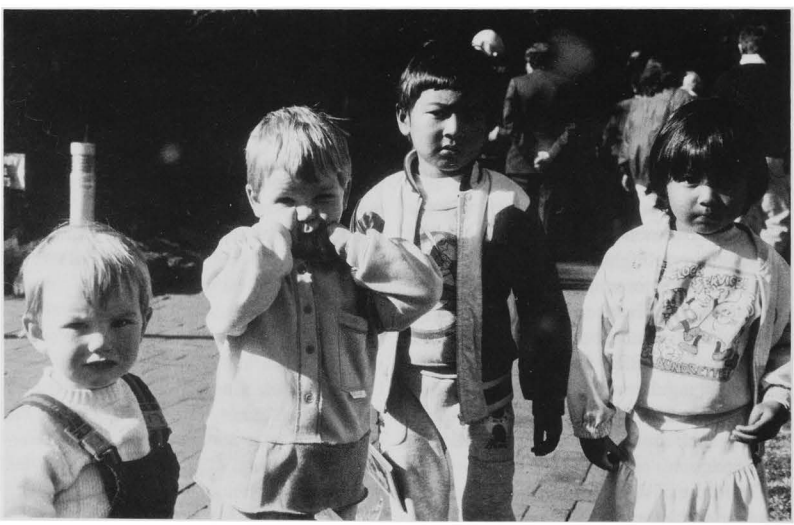
Other special days commemorated by services in Australia's House of Worship included World Environment Day and United Nations International Women's Day Eminent community leaders were among the 400 people who attended services for International Women's Day in March 1989. World Environment Day was observed in June 1991 with a completely filled auditorium.

National Refugee Week, 18–24 June 1989, sponsored by the Refugee Council of

[3] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 65–66.



A special prayer service held at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Samoa during the summer school in January 1987.



A day-long gathering for Bahá'í families and their friends held at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Sydney, Australia, in 1988.

Australia and by Austcare, was marked with a service attended by representatives of the Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs; the National Refugee Council; Austcare; UNICEF; and the Australian Council of Churches.

Annual events at the Australian House of Worship included United Nations services attended by a range of prominent people, and celebrations of United Nations Children's Day. For the latter event, invitations were sent to local schools and organizations and advertisements were placed in local newspapers. At the celebration in 1992, twenty-five children read during the programme.

Children also played major roles in services at the House of Worship in Samoa. Universal Children's Day was celebrated in October 1987 with the participation of Scouts, Cubs, Rangers, Guides, Brownies, and Pathfinders. Altogether, 122 children and youth were present, and twenty-two readings were presented by children ranging from a four-year-old Bahá'í to a teenage Scout. The celebration of this day in 1989 included 200 participants and focused on "The Rights of the Child". The ancillary building was decorated with the artistic creations of ninety Bahá'í children who had gathered for a conference just prior to the service.

When a National Youth Conference called "Youth for Peace" took place in Apia in October 1986, a special service for youth was held at the Temple.

The Temple was honoured several times with the presence of Samoan royalty. In October 1986, His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II and members of his family attended a special service held to mark the culmination of a year of activities in support of International Year of Peace. Among the 400 people present were the Prime Minister and his wife, the Speaker of the House, members of the Parliament, and members of the diplomatic corps representing many races and religions. Readers for the service included United Nations officials; staff from government offices, the University of the South Pacific, and the Peace Corps; and individuals from Japan, Tonga, and New Zealand. A programme on peace took place at the ancillary building following the service.

His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II was also present for a service in May 1987 commemorating the 25th anniversary of the independence of the state of Western Samoa. More than 400 people heard a beautiful choir and listened to readings given by a variety of government officials. After the service, the ancillary building was filled with guests who witnessed the presentation of a gift to His Highness: a large portrait of the Malietoa rendered in oils by a Bahá'í artist, Duffy Sheridan.

Samoan Independence Day was commemorated annually with a special service in the Temple.

In 1990, following a parade to mark the 50th anniversary of the service of His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II to the people of Western Samoa, guests filled the House of Worship to commemorate the event.

The Government of Western Samoa issued four new postage stamps of religious buildings in December 1989, one of which featured the Bahá'í House of Worship.



...the breaths of the Holy Spirit [should] be diffused to all parts of...Europe, that the call of the Kingdom of God may exhilarate and rejoice all the ears, the divine principles bestow a new life, the different parties may become one party, the divergent ideas may disappear and revolve around one unique center...
—'Abdu'l-Bahá

E. EUROPE

THE drama of God's unfolding Plan played itself out with special poignancy in Europe where, for the first time in many decades, the Faith was allowed to be openly spread in the countries of the former Eastern Bloc. Although Bahá'ís had continued to live behind the Iron Curtain during the long period of prohibitions against religion, and individuals had been able to quietly lay the foundations for acceptance of the Faith in these regions over many years, it was not until the period of the Six Year Plan that pioneers and travelling teachers gained the freedom to openly teach about Bahá'u'lláh. One by one, the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union lowered the barriers that had separated them from the West, and Bahá'ís responded to this opportunity.

Such a challenge stimulated activity in Western Europe. Europeans were foremost among the teachers who answered the call to share the Faith with their formerly isolated neighbours, and the excitement created by responding to this urgent need could not help but affect the ongoing work in the West. Particular strides forward were made in the areas of teaching minorities, gaining legal recognition of the Faith, and advancing Bahá'í scholarship.

Teaching

Sharing the Message of Bahá'u'lláh in Europe during the Six Year Plan was characterized by increasing collaboration among the institutions of the Faith and by renewed individual dedication to winning goals, both of which prepared the believers in Western Europe for the unprecedented challenge of responding to the opening of Eastern Europe. (For a more detailed account of the history of the Faith in Eastern Europe and its progress up to 1992, see the article on the Two Year Subsidiary Plan, pp. 196–225.)

From the beginning of the Six Year Plan, National Spiritual Assemblies in Western Europe arranged meetings to consult on common goals and to plan joint teaching projects. Such gatherings were coordinated among the communities of Finland, Norway, and Sweden; the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom; and Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. In April 1988, seventy believers from twenty-five localities in Belgium, France, and the United Kingdom met to consult on ways the countries could collaborate more closely in their Bahá'í work. Representatives of European National Teaching Committees met in Paris in January 1990 to consult on the final phase of the Six Year Plan.

Collaboration and unity among Counsellors, a National Spiritual Assembly, Auxiliary Board members, and teaching committees bore sweet fruit in Portici, Italy, where a long-term project led to more than a 100 enrolments in the first year. The initiative began in 1989 and quickly galvanized the community, as enrolments stimulated greater enthusiasm for teaching. Counsellors, Auxiliary Board members, and the National Teaching Committee organized systematic deepening and consolidation, immediately involving new believers in the consultative process and the teaching work.

Yet even close cooperation among the institutions of the Faith would not have led to teaching success without the commitment of individuals to arise and play their roles. In reporting on the successes of reaching goals of the Six Year Plan, numerous National Spiritual Assemblies in Europe noted an increased commitment to individual teaching, and a trend toward setting and working toward personal teaching goals. As the National Spiritual Assembly of Iceland, for example, reported: "...the friends are stronger Bahá'ís, more knowledgeable Bahá'ís, more dedicated Bahá'ís, and more vigorous, more eager Bahá'í teachers than at any previous time".



Some 800 Bahá'ís attend the Great Eastern Conference held in Dieburg, Germany, in March 1987—shortly before the opening of countries of the former Eastern Bloc.

In March 1987, two significant conferences bore witness to the important roles played by both institutions and individuals in spreading the Cause. Both conferences were organized as forums for consultation on the situation in Eastern Europe. The first gathering, held in Langenhain, Germany, comprised representatives of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Europe, the European Continental Pioneer Committee, and the National Spiritual Assemblies involved in the work in the East. It helped bring about a common understanding of the situation in Eastern Europe, of the wide differences among the various countries, and of the need for the closest collaboration among the Assemblies and Committees involved. The second conference, held in Dieburg, Germany, and called the "Great Eastern Conference", was directed to the mass of believers in Germany and Austria. It included prayers, talks, consultation, and music, impressing the 800 participants with the urgency of the teaching work and its importance in relationship to the development of the Faith in the world as a whole. Both conferences were important enough to be attended by a representative of the Universal House of Justice.

Because of such cooperation and commitment, when the barriers separating Western and Eastern Europe began to come down, the Bahá'ís were ready to reach out with the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. The Spiritual Assemblies of Austria, Finland, Germany, Italy, and Sweden were each given key responsibilities for directing the teaching work in these newly-opened countries.

When the Berlin Wall crumbled in 1989, the Bahá'ís of Germany responded with speed and imagination, distributing thousands of copies of *The Promise of World Peace* and sending almost twenty pioneers into East Germany. The National Assembly of Germany also organized large-scale teaching projects in Bulgaria beginning in 1990.

When the twenty-three-year ban on religion in Albania was lifted in 1990, Bahá'ís from Austria, Italy, and Germany began making regular teaching trips to this country. Starting in 1991, Italy virtually blanketed Albania with travelling teachers in an organized campaign. In October 1991, Italy arranged the first National Teaching Conference in Albania.

Bahá'í teachers from Germany, Ireland, and the United Kingdom were among those who developed the Faith in Poland. Participants in Poland's first summer school in 1990 worked together on a service project which they reported knit together pioneers, native believers, and travelling Bahá'ís from the various Western European countries.

The first pioneers to Central Asia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania came from

Western Europe. Among the individuals who contributed to the growth of the Faith in the former Soviet Union were members of the Promise of World Peace Tour which travelled to the area in December 1989 under the auspices of Youth Ambassadors International in the United States and the Foundation for Social Innovation in Moscow. The idea for the tour was born when fourteen Soviet youth were hosted by Bahá'ís at a summer camp in Hawaii in 1988. In December 1989, a group of sixty-two Bahá'ís led by Annette Donner spent five days in Moscow and four days in Kazan, becoming responsible for the birth of the Bahá'í community in the latter city. The Peace Statement was distributed during home visits by youth and presentations to various institutions such as a university and a hospital. Millions of Soviet citizens heard of the Faith during television and radio interviews with members of the Tour.

Numerous other Americans and Canadians helped spread the Faith in the former Soviet Union during dozens of teaching trips organized by individuals as soon as this opportunity presented itself.

Cross-border cooperation among European nations continued with an Eastern European Teaching Conference held in Hofheim, Germany, in March 1990. The event was attended by 950 Bahá'ís from at least twenty-five countries, including Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Romania, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia.

One of the greatest teaching tools in Europe proved to be music, as exemplified by the dramatic impact of the singing group, El Viento Canta (see also p. 444). Formed while its members were serving at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, the group performed traditional Latin American music and taught the Faith following concerts. Toward the beginning of the Plan, El Viento Canta dazzled large audiences in Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. When it became possible to perform in Eastern Europe, the group undertook a three-month tour of this vast region, delighting audiences and stimulating teaching which led to many declarations.

Also contributing to the progress of teaching in Eastern Europe were the musical groups Light in the Darkness from Italy, the Dawnbreakers from Austria, Turning Point from Ireland, and Dulcamara from Spain.

Youth

Before the countries of Eastern Europe began opening their doors in 1989, and Western European Bahá'í youth flooded these areas bearing the precious gift of Bahá'u'lláh's Message, education had been taking place and systems of communication had been established to prepare this Army of Light. In fact, the energy, dedication, organization, and cooperation demonstrated by the youth of Europe throughout the Six Year Plan made possible the historic formation of the European Bahá'í Youth Council in August 1989, which in turn stimulated youth activity to rise to an entirely new level. (For a full account of the events leading to the formation of the Council and the activities initiated by that body, see p. 432.)

As early as July 1986, 150 youth from fifteen countries, meeting at the Landegg Conference Centre in Switzerland for a youth school, resolved to share plans, projects, and reports of successes as they launched a Bahá'í Youth Movement in Europe. They were inspired and edified by the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Akbar Furútan and 'Aṭá'íyyih Furútan.

A European Bahá'í Youth Movement Information Centre was established in the Netherlands to serve as a channel for regular communication. A newsletter called *Bahá'í Youth Movement—Europe* began publication in August 1986.

Just three months later, in October, representatives of the National Youth Committees of Europe met in Strasbourg, France, to "forge lasting links of understanding that

will bind the Bahá'í youth of Europe for years to come" and to make practical plans of action for the next six years. The twenty-eight youth from eleven nations who were gathered requested the Continental Board of Counsellors in Europe to consider creating a body that would provide direction and coordination to European youth activities.

Representatives of the National Youth Committees of nineteen European countries took part in the first European Youth Seminar, held at the Landegg Conference Centre in Switzerland in May 1987. Three members of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Europe participated, as did members of nine National Spiritual Assemblies.

Following one international youth conference in August 1987, nine mini-buses filled with dedicated youth left Manchester, England, for service and teaching projects throughout the United Kingdom. The conference had been attended by 1,300 youth from forty-two countries, and included nearly fifty challenging workshops led by experts on topics related to careers, the contemporary world, the arts, and correlation of the teachings with current thought. Significant features of the event included the eager participation of many ethnic minorities of the Manchester area, an art exhibit, a Bahá'í film festival, and the debut performance of a Bahá'í choir which was a Six Year Plan goal for the youth.

In October 1987, Irish youth and their Bahá'í friends from four other countries walked sixty-four miles, from Cork to Limerick, on a March for World Peace. Several hundred copies of the Peace Statement were distributed along the route, including one each to the Lord Mayor of Cork and the Mayor of Limerick. Participants said the example of recent martyrs in Írán and the unifying effect of the cross-section of humanity the group represented eclipsed the physical strain of the long walk. The National Assembly commented that the march signalled a change in the youth of Ireland, who showed themselves to be ready and eager to carry the healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh to a waiting world.

Exhilarated by the success of a national youth school held in the Canary Islands in April 1988, fourteen young Bahá'ís offered their services for projects in four towns. Substantial financial contributions were offered to support a travelling theatre group to teach the Faith in the towns of Fuerteventura, one of three inhabited islands lying off the coast of Morocco. The next month Bahá'í youth were given permission to paint a large wall mural in front of a university campus which led to a number of inquiries and a repeat of the mural in two other cities. The mural depicted representatives of different races and the words, "The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens".



Mural painted by Bahá'í youth on the wall of a university campus in La Laguna, Tenerife, in the Canary Islands in 1988.

Nineteen Bahá'í youth from eight countries were among the 700 participants at the 44th World Esperanto Youth Congress held in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, in July 1988. It marked the first time an official delegation of Bahá'í youth was invited by the World Esperanto Youth Organization to attend the Congress as observers. Bahá'ís presented two lectures (one on consultation and the other on the Faith, accompanied by a slide programme); participated in an International Evening; comprised half the audience of an inter-religious meeting during the Congress; and were the subject of an article in the Congress newspaper.

International gatherings continued: in August 1988, the first Iberian Youth Conference was held in Lisbon, Portugal, with more than 120 participants from nine European countries. The same month, a European Bahá'í Youth School was held at De Poort Conference Centre in the Netherlands, with participants coming from twenty-four countries. A distinct feature of the school was the support demonstrated by the national institutions, the Counsellors, and the Auxiliary Boards. All nine members of the National Assembly of the Netherlands attended, as did Assembly members from Belgium, Canada, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. A special sub-committee set up teaching projects during and after the conference.

Also in the summer of 1988, the youth of Norway experienced great success using a variety of teaching methods. In late June and early July, a series of service projects carried out by twenty Norwegian youth and two Swedish guests attracted much attention from local people and tourists, and resulted in a newspaper article. Activities included painting the exterior of a museum, cleaning a beach, entertaining with music at five institutions, and co-organizing, with a local group called SOS Racism, an international feast.

In July and August, a four-week intensive proclamation and teaching effort in the area chosen to be the focal point of teaching in Norway received extensive media coverage. The project began with a peace march led by a horse-drawn decorated wagon carrying youth who distributed invitations for firesides and visited social institutions to entertain with music. The march led to the site of a summer school which attracted 230 Bahá'ís and guests from twelve countries. Following the school, youth spent two weeks teaching. First they used a questionnaire to interview people about peace and held multicultural events in the evenings, one of which drew sixty non-Bahá'ís. Then youth spent a week studying the environment and cleaning a main river in the city of Trondheim.

A new nation-wide enthusiasm for teaching in Sweden was generated by the Eskil



The Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Ugo Giachery (third from left) celebrates his 90th birthday during the summer school held in Filipstad, Sweden, in July 1986.



More than 500 balloons being released from San Marino's main square during the European Bahá'í Youth Conference held in San Marino in July 1989.

Ljungberg Project, based in Uppsala and initiated in January 1989. A team of six youth greatly assisted the project by moving to Uppsala, some to work full time on the activities. Newspaper articles on two major events—a World Religion Day celebration and a cultural evening—were among at least ten items to be printed about the Faith in the first two months of the campaign. Almost all high schools and junior high schools in the area welcomed visits by the Bahá'ís, and weekly meetings in a rented centre attracted a steady flow of interested people.

The youth of the Netherlands reached out to their teachers in March 1989. All 319 teachers at the Technical University in Delft received a copy of the Peace Statement and a letter from the Delft Bahá'í Student Circle containing a plea for the coming together of science and religion as a necessary prerequisite for world peace. The project was reported in the *Delftse Post*.

Also in March 1989, 300 Bahá'í youth profoundly impressed the eminent scholar Professor Ervin Laszlo when they attended his series of lectures on evolution presented in Viserbella, Italy. Professor Laszlo was reported to have remarked on the maturity of the Bahá'í youth and the pertinent questions posed during a debate on the Laszlo theory. A guest of Professor Laszlo, Professor Mazulli of Bologna University, also expressed his amazement at the capacity of the youth.

The spirit and participation of the youth was still strong by the summer of 1989. Five major regional "Peace Moves" conferences, held days apart, drew large crowds and further galvanized the youth. The first of the gatherings, which took place at De Poort, attracted participants from fifteen countries. After intensely studying the writings of Shoghi Effendi during the seven-day conference, the youth committed themselves to honour their brethren in the Cradle of the Faith by proclaiming and teaching the Faith on an unprecedented scale.

Significant public recognition was granted the approximately 600 youth from twenty countries who gathered for the regional conference in San Marino at the same time. The conference was held under the patronage of the Ministry of Education and Culture of San Marino, with the collaboration of the State Tourist Bureau. It was officially inaugurated by the Minister of Education and Culture in the presence of the Minister of Transport and Communications, Tourism and Sports, who also gave a speech. Other guests included the Ambassador of Italy in the Republic of San Marino, government authorities, journalists, and television reporters. The opening ceremony was broadcast on San Marino state television.

A delegation composed of one representative for each country taking part in the conference, accompanied by the Minister of

Education and Culture and by a representative of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Republic of San Marino, went to the Government Building where they were granted an official audience by Their Excellencies the Captains Regent (Heads of State) of the Republic of San Marino. During the course of the audience, a proclamation was read by the Italian Bahá'í representative on behalf of the whole group.

Six articles were published before and during the conference in the most important newspaper of San Marino, thus increasing significantly the publicity already started when 7,700 invitations were sent to heads of families residing in the Republic. Also, a number of copies of the Peace Message were distributed among the citizens of the Republic during a very joyful afternoon which began with the release of over 500 balloons from San Marino's main square.

With high spirits, the conference participants joyfully announced the initiation of an Arc Project Fund for youth in the name of the beloved Hand of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery, who had just passed away. "It has motivated the participants to return to their home communities as ambassadors of the Cause in order to obtain outstanding goals for the Arc Fund, and to be the spearheads of the maturation of the Bahá'í local and national communities and to wholeheartedly invite their peers to join them and become spiritual revolutionaries determined by teaching His Cause to break loose from the manipulation of the old world order", the youth wrote. The campaign eventually raised close to $200,000.

The 700 youth from twenty-six countries who met in Madrid, Spain, for the third regional conference constituted the largest group of Bahá'ís ever to have gathered in that country. The reading of a soul-stirring message from the youth of Írán and the active presence of youth from North Africa posed a challenge to the European youth to seize their abounding opportunities to teach the Cause. Among the immediate results of the conference were the enrolment of seven new believers, the dispersal of 100 volunteers to a dozen cities to carry out projects organized by the National Teaching Committee, and contributions to the Arc Fund.

The remaining two Peace Moves conferences were held in Sheffield, England, and Thorshavn, Faroe Islands.

These five conferences in 1989 marked a turning point in the European youth movement. Participants reviewed the many teaching activities undertaken by the youth during the first half of the Plan, rejoiced over the successes achieved, and eagerly anticipated the appointment of the first European Bahá'í Youth Council. After the Youth Council was formed in August 1989, it acted to further stimulate and coordinate the teaching activity, particularly in the newly-opened Eastern Europe. (See also chapters on the Two Year Plan and on the European Bahá'í Youth Council.)

Beginning in January 1990, the Council began sponsoring annual conferences for representatives of European National Bahá'í Youth Committees to consult on the future direction of the continent's youth. In April 1990 the first issue of the *European Bahá'í Youth Newsletter* was published.

During the summer of 1990, the Youth Council organized teaching projects in five Central and Eastern European countries. The projects constituted the first formal Bahá'í youth teaching enterprise in the formerly communist countries of Europe.

Youth from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and the former Soviet Union were among those attending the 1991 conference for members of Youth Committees, held at De Poort. Also attending was a representative of the newly-formed Turkish National Bahá'í Youth Committee, and just two months later that body organized two Regional Youth Seminars reaching more than 100 youth. The participants discussed the Mission of Bahá'u'lláh, transformation, individual initiative, and the meaning of having vision.



Participants in the National Bahá'í Youth Conference held in Sete, France, in 1989.

In the summer of 1991, the European Bahá'í Youth Council organized regional conferences in Estonia, France, Germany, and Romania, and launched sixteen major teaching projects. During the course of the year, teaching projects organized by the Council in collaboration with national institutions were carried out in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain, and Turkey.

In January 1992, the first European youth conference on Bahá'í activities in universities was held in Brno, Czechoslovakia. Twenty-four delegates from twelve nations consulted on how to improve efforts in this vital area.

One of the main functions assigned to the European Bahá'í Youth Council by the Universal House of Justice was to represent, on a continental basis, the European Bahá'í youth with non-Bahá'í youth groups and other agencies. This was done, while on a national level, a number of Youth Committees also successfully forged links with other youth organizations in their countries.

In December 1988, the Peace Moves Committee (the precursor of the European Bahá'í Youth Council) was represented at a meeting of the Council of Europe's European Youth Foundation in Strasbourg, France. Soon after its formation the European Bahá'í Youth Council participated in the Second Annual Conference on Intolerance held in Strasbourg, in December 1989, under the auspices of the European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe. In 1992, the European Bahá'í Youth Council appointed a Representation Committee responsible for further developing relations with European youth organizations and other agencies on its behalf.

Signs of cooperation between National Youth Committees and their non-Bahá'í peers included the following: the National Youth Committee of Ireland became an associate member of the country's National Youth Council; the Youth Committee of Luxembourg was invited by Luxembourg's National Office of Youth to participate in a Youth Festival; and youth in Norway helped members of the Youth and Environment organization and the World Wildlife Fund to clean a river. Bahá'í youth in the United Kingdom were active in the British Youth Council. A national youth conference held in Germany to commemorate the 75th anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to that land included an inter-religious service attended by 280 people.

In addition to the workshops and seminars organized for youth by Auxiliary Board members, National Youth Committees, and organizers of summer schools, Landegg Academy in Switzerland contributed significantly to the education of European youth, providing a venue for their meetings and sponsoring forums that spoke to their

particular needs. Among the offerings were forums for young adult Bahá'í professionals on topics such as "Reaching People of Capacity" and "Alternative Futures: the Bahá'í Model in Perspective". Annual symposia provided opportunities for youth to explore critical social issues in consultation with experienced adults.

Minorities

Minorities in Europe—including ethnic groups traditionally excluded from power—received special attention from the Bahá'ís. The groups which responded with the greatest enthusiasm to the Faith were the Gypsies[1] and the Sami[2] people.

At the beginning of the Plan, Spain had two small groups of Romani believers in two towns. By the end of the Plan, Romani and other Gypsy Bahá'ís resided in at least twenty-three localities, and accounted for the membership of five Local Spiritual Assemblies. Several national consultative meetings were held on the subject of sharing the Faith with Gypsies, including an international conference in May 1987. The National Spiritual Assembly sent a compilation on the topic to all local communities.

Romani artists in Spain, both Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í, participated in a Flamenco Festival organized by the Spiritual Assembly of Málaga to mark the end of the International Year of Peace, 1986. Original songs were performed before an audience of 200. The Málaga Assembly reported that it was "the first time that Romani Bahá'ís have presented themselves in public to sing in honour of Bahá'u'lláh. We consider this to be an outstanding event...."

[1] The term "Gypsies" is sometimes used interchangeably with the terms "Romani people" or "Roma people"; however in some cases the term "Romani" refers to a particular sub-group of Gypsies.

[2] The term Sami refers to indigenous people of a region known as Lapland which comprises northern Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Kola Peninsula of Russia. It is sometimes used interchangeably with the term "Lapp".

By 1987, a Bahá'í not of Romani descent, Eliane A. Hopson, had been given the honour of representing the Romani Union, a non-governmental organization, at the United Nations. That year a Bahá'í delegation participated in the First World Romani Congress in Spain, where the leader of the Romani Union mentioned the Bahá'ís favourably. The representative to the United Nations reported that the Romani leadership was outspoken in its praise of the activities of the Bahá'ís in the interests of the Romani people. She observed that the Romani Union leaders "hope to channel their ancestral resiliency toward the social evolution needed at this time for their survival in a new civilization", and some of them look toward the Faith "for spiritual guidance and confirmation of their own hope for unity and progress".

Good relations between the Bahá'ís and the Romani Union were established early in the history of the organization when its founder, Dr. Jan Cibula, a Swiss physician of Gypsy origin, accepted the help of a Bahá'í in drafting the group's by-laws. The Bahá'í, a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Bern, also helped the Romani Union obtain accreditation with the United Nations, since the group's aim is to preserve the cultural heritage of the Gypsies and to unite their various organizations worldwide.

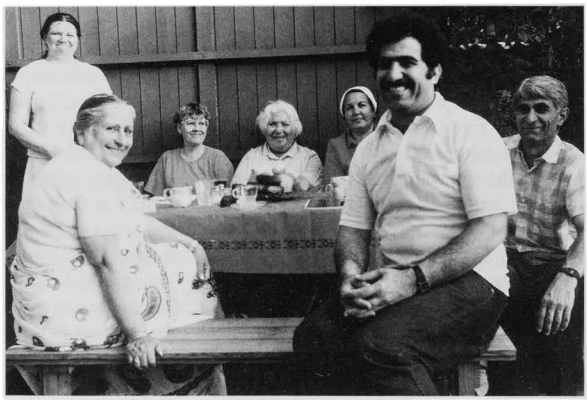
The Austrian Bahá'í community actively supported an International Roma Summer School organized by the Romani Union in July 1990. Held in Vienna, the school drew participants from all over Europe. The Bahá'ís were invited to give talks about the Faith. Also in Austria, a Roma Club was formed by a Bahá'í in Burgenland to assist Romas in that area.

Gypsies in Cyprus also showed interest in the Faith, and enrolments occurred among them.

Many members of minority groups responded most enthusiastically to the Bahá'í teachings when they were shared by a member of another minority group, sometimes from across the world. When a



Romani (Gypsy) Bahá'ís of Torrevieja, Spain, celebrate Naw-Rúz in 1987.



Mrs. Meherangiz Munsiff (seated left) with a Gypsy family she met during her trip to Lappeeranta, Finland, in July 1987.



Participants in a teaching project held in Cyprus in 1991.

Peruvian Indian woman and her children settled in Spain, the Gypsy Bahá'í community in her area began steadily growing. The pioneer family had a special way of transmitting the Message from heart to heart and inspiring the Gypsies to further share the Message with their relatives.

The Sami people of Lapland enthusiastically received travelling Native American Bahá'ís. When an American Lakota Sioux Indian, a renowned hoop dancer and flute player, visited Lapland in 1986 and performed in Sami villages, his artistry and stories of the Native American peoples powerfully affected the Sami people.

In 1987, two more Native Americans travelled and taught the Faith in Lapland for five weeks, carrying their love and the American Indian culture to the Sami people of Finland, Norway, and Sweden. The teachers represented the Bahá'í community at the annual meeting of one of the major Swedish Sami organizations in Kiruna, above the Arctic Circle. Then they continued to touch hearts during their participation in the annual Arctic Bahá'í Midsummer Camp in Karesuando, where one of them conducted a peace pipe ceremony at the riverside. At one of the many firesides and public meetings held in Finland, a Sami youth choir performed, and Indian dancing was demonstrated. During the visit of one of the friends to a Lapp cultural centre in Sweden, a Sami flag, adopted the year before for use by all Sami people, was raised for the first time in history, in honour of the visiting Bahá'í.

Three Native Americans continuing the tradition of the Trail of Light visited Finnish and Swedish Lapland in 1988. Their visit developed into a mutual sharing of cultures. The highlight was reported to be the day six village women, five of whom were Sami, came to a handicraft circle, and the conversation lasted from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 a.m., covering such topics as the role of women in the family and the world today, establishing a nurturing atmosphere in the village, cultural minorities and their role, and world peace.

In Sweden, contact was made with a number of Sami cultural agencies, and teaching among the Samis generally increased. A teaching project among the Samis of Finland, Norway, and Sweden took place for three weeks in April 1990. When the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Inari, Finland, was formed that year, north of the Arctic Circle, two of its members were Sami people.

Other examples of Bahá'ís reaching out to minority groups include: the enrolment of large groups of Turkish workers in Germany and in Austria after the Bahá'ís organized language courses, special unity Feasts, and opportunities for cultural exchange; the creation of a Regional Committee for the Basque People in Spain; and the enrolment of individuals from Ireland's Travelling People.

Recognition

During the Six Year Plan, governments, public figures, people in positions of authority, and religious leaders publicly and legally recognized the independence of the Bahá'í Faith and the importance of the contributions made by the Bahá'í community. These achievements signified ever-growing public awareness of the unique nature of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and the relevance of His Teachings to modern life.

One of the most significant breakthroughs occurred in Germany, where the Federal Constitutional Court, the highest legal authority in the country, affirmed the legality of Local Spiritual Assembly by-laws. In February 1991, the Court upheld the constitutional appeal made by the Local Assembly of Tübingen after a series of lower courts challenged the validity of its incorporation. The lower courts had based their decision on the grounds that the authority granted to the National Spiritual Assembly in the by-laws of the Local Assembly violated the legal principle requiring all legally incorporated associations to be autonomous. With its decision in favour of the Local Assembly, the Federal Court affirmed the right of the Bahá'ís to organize as a hierarchically



Counsellor Louis Henuzet (left) receiving the "Peace Messenger Award" on behalf of the Bahá'í community of Belgium from the director of the United Nations Information Office in Brussels; 1987.

structured legal community according to the revealed Law of God.

Because the German Court's decision was based partially on the constitutional right to freedom of religious practice, the Court declared its recognition of the Faith as an independent religion, stating that "the character of the Bahá'í Faith as a religion and the Bahá'í Community as a religious community is evident, in actual everyday life, cultural tradition, and in the understanding of the general public as well as of the science of comparative religion". The Court even took the rare step of issuing a statement to the press explaining its decision. (For the full text, see p. 571)

The independence of the Bahá'í Faith was also affirmed in Belgium. In 1986, the following paragraph appeared in the official government publication, *Impôts sur les Revenus*: "It is accepted that the Bahá'í World Faith is a religion; its aim is to spread the ideal of Bahá'í life based on principles of brotherhood, unity of mankind, and peace among peoples, as proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh, Founder of the Bahá'í World Faith, and on the development of Bahá'í institutions in the world...."

A number of milestones in the area of official recognition occurred in Turkey in 1987. For the first time, the Government granted official permission for the National Spiritual Assembly to hold its National Convention. The National Assembly also obtained a post office box in its name and a telephone registered in the name of the Bahá'ís of Turkey. Also during the Plan, the religion section of the birth certificates of about fifty friends were changed from Islam to Bahá'í. These were significant developments in this officially secular but largely Muslim country.

In Austria, Bahá'í credentials became accepted as essential documents for refugees by Ministry and Police authorities for the issuing of visas. In Sweden, the National Spiritual Assembly was fully recognized by the immigration authorities as the proper authority for deciding who is a Bahá'í. In the United Kingdom, the chairman of a Local Spiritual Assembly was given the authority to validate passport applications. Contributions to the National Bahá'í Fund of Denmark were declared tax-deductible in November 1988, and contributions to the Local Bahá'í Fund of Geneva, Switzerland, were granted the same status that year. In Germany, the Bahá'í House of Worship was classified as a cultural monument under the Historical Monument Preservation Law, and a four-page article on the Faith accompanied by photographs was included in a public school textbook. It was the first extensive reference

to the Faith to appear in a book officially approved for use in German public schools, according to the knowledge of the National Assembly.

Bahá'í Holy Days were recognized in several countries and students granted permission to be absent from school. In Germany, the Bavarian State Ministry for Education and Culture sent a circular letter to educational authorities in January 1987 explaining a new policy to excuse Bahá'í students from school on the nine Holy Days. In the Republic of Ireland, three inter-denominational "Project Schools" closed on 12 November in observance of the Anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh. In Switzerland, the cantonal authorities in Bern delivered a seven-page decision in favour of the right of Bahá'í children to be excused from school on the Holy Days.

In addition to being legally recognized, the increasing status being accorded the Faith was demonstrated by the actions of public figures and institutions. This included invitations to participate in important inter-faith gatherings on an equal basis with representatives of other major religions.

A news story by United Press International on 28 October 1986, reporting on the Prayer Summit for Peace sponsored by Pope John Paul II in Assisi, Italy, stated that "John Paul exhorted the Bahá'í, Buddhist, Hindu, Moslem, Jewish, Jainist, Shintoist, Sikh, Christian, Zoroastrian, and African and American Indian leaders to take a more active role in promoting world peace". A year later, the Bahá'í community of Prato, Italy, was recognized for its outstanding activities in support of peace with an invitation by the Municipality of Prato to collaborate on an international meeting on peace. Two Bahá'í speakers were among the eminent scientists and physicians from many countries who conducted two days of seminars.

A representative of the Bahá'í International Community met with the Pope in July 1991 as part of a delegation from the International Council of the World Conference on Religion and Peace. The World Conference on Religion and Peace represents about ten religions.

Bahá'ís in the United Kingdom were invited to send a representative to an historic meeting of the Houses of Parliament in July 1988. The secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly joined representatives of Buddhist, Christian (Franciscan Catholic), Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, and Sikh groups at a gathering in the House of Commons organized by the International Consultancy on Religion, Education, and Culture. Called the "All Party Conservation Group of both Houses of Parliament and the World Wide Fund for Nature, United Kingdom", the meeting marked the first time speakers of Faiths other than the Anglican Church were allowed to



In Koyuslukow, Sivas, Turkey, a group of women who have just become Bahá'ís are meeting to establish their Local Spiritual Assembly. January 1992.

meet in the House of Commons and present their views to both Houses. Each participant submitted a statement giving brief details of what his or her Faith was doing, or proposing to do, with regard to conservation, and why it was involved in the movement. The texts of the presentations were reproduced in U.K. parliamentary journals circulated to the parliaments of Australia, Canada, India, and New Zealand.

In 1989, the Netherlands' Council of Churches invited the Bahá'ís to attend the country's first Churches Day. The series of meetings and workshops was attended by about 16,000 people, including Christians, Hindus, and Muslims, the majority of whom had never heard of the Faith before.

On 23 May 1986, representatives of religions other than the Bahá'í Faith joined devotional services for peace in the European House of Worship for the first time. During the rest of the Six Year Plan, a number of inter-faith services were held in the Temple.

In a calendar distributed throughout the Republic of Ireland by major companies in 1988, the National Centre of the Bahá'í Faith was listed first among seven religions, under the heading "Major Religious Denominations".

In Iceland, the trustworthiness of the Bahá'ís was recognized when the Ministry for Forestry gave the Bahá'ís 3,000 saplings of three different kinds of trees to be planted on the endowment land which the believers had been cultivating. The Ministry said that the Bahá'ís were the only recipients of this kind of gift, as other groups had not handled government help in such a responsible way.

Bahá'í Scholarship

By establishing and improving programmes for the systematic study of the Bahá'í Faith, and sharing the Faith with scholars at academic gatherings, the Bahá'ís of Europe advanced Bahá'í scholarship and enhanced its reputation in the academic community.

The Landegg Conference Centre in Wienacht, Switzerland became the home of Landegg Academy in 1988, and began offering a series of seminars, conferences, and forums for Bahá'ís interested in serious study of the Cause and the development of Bahá'í scholarship. Annual symposia for youth, on such topics as conflict resolution and the global environmental crisis, provided opportunities for participants to explore critical social issues. In September 1990 the historic first "International Dialogue on the Transition to a Global Society", organized by Landegg in cooperation with the Vienna Academy for the Study of the Future and the University of Maryland, brought together eighty leaders of thought from around the world to present papers and discuss the changing world order.

In August 1989, Landegg launched the "Certificate Programme in Bahá'í Studies"



The first International Dialogue on the Transition to a Global Society held at Landegg Academy in Switzerland in September 1990.

(see also p. 457.) Designed to foster systematic Bahá'í scholarship as called for by Shoghi Effendi, the three-year independent study course required participants to spend one month each year at Landegg and to submit papers throughout the rest of the year. The programme began with twenty-eight students from eleven countries.

In November 1991, Landegg Academy's efforts to share the fruits of Bahá'í scholarship with a wider audience brought the Academy into contact with educators in the formerly isolated Eastern Europe. Landegg's Institute of International Education and Development collaborated with the Albanian Ministry of Education to organize a national symposium in Tirana called "A New Framework for Moral Education". Described as "successful beyond all expectations", the symposium was conducted by a team of fourteen Bahá'ís from six countries who had been invited by the organizers from Landegg Academy. More than 300 university professors, teachers, educational administrators, and students from around Albania attended. A group of fifty participants travelled every day from the city of Durrës on a bus put at their disposal by the local authorities.

The main part of the programme consisted of presentations by Bahá'ís: "Living in a Rapidly Changing Society: Transition to Maturity"; "A New Frame for Moral Education: A Discussion of Guiding Principles"; "Moral Capabilities"; "Spiritual Qualities"; "A Pedagogy for Moral Education"; and "The Role of Consultation". The plenary sessions were chaired by the Vice-Minister of Education. Albanians and members of the Landegg team participated in panel discussions.

"Discussion groups were lively", according to the report. "At the beginning, the Albanians were timid about participating in the discussions, but gradually they began to express their own views. By the end, there was no doubt that the majority had accepted the framework presented to them and were eager to apply it to their own individual situations."

As an extension of the symposium, the Ministry of Education arranged for two smaller symposia to take place at the universities of Gjirokastër and Elbasan. The meeting at the University of Gjirokastër was attended by over 200 professors, educators, and students, and the meeting in Elbasan attracted 100 participants. In addition to the symposium and its satellite meetings, a number of other activities were conducted by the Landegg team. These included discussions with faculty members of Tirana University working to develop a curriculum on the philosophy of religion; a meeting with Ministry of Education officials about pre-school education; and consultations with the editors and staff of a textbook publishing house who wanted to discuss ways moral education could be incorporated in school books.

In June 1987, the Dutch Bahá'í community officially opened the doors of De Poort ("the gate"), a new conference centre built to become "a centre of Bahá'í scholarship and a beacon for seekers, not only for the areas in which it is established, but for the Netherlands and the greater part of northwest Europe". During the remainder of the Plan, this venue was used for a variety of forums, seminars, and conferences.

Annual conferences of European chapters of the Association for Bahá'í Studies continued to be held, including regional gatherings for English-speaking, German-speaking and French-speaking Europe. The Association for Bahá'í Studies for French-speaking Europe established contacts with institutions of higher education and scholars, and organized conferences devoted to themes of general interest. The proceedings of these meetings were published.

A new ABS chapter was formed in Spain, and its first conference was held in Barcelona in September 1988. Thirty of the 150 participants were not Bahá'ís, including prominent people from the academic realm and the world of art. At least four newspapers published articles about the gathering.

The Association for Bahá'í Studies chapter in Austria established relations with the Vienna Academy for the Study of the Future. Also in Austria, four public lectures were held at the University of Innsbruck.

A course on the Bahá'í Faith was taught in the faculty of comparative religions at Belgium's University of Antwerp in 1989. Dr. Suheil Bushrui taught the course while serving as a visiting professor in the Department of English Literature.

Bahá'í scholars took part in a number of academic conferences. In October 1986, Bahá'ís from several countries attended a "Physis" conference in Florence, Italy, held under the official sponsorship of the Ministry of Culture and the City of Florence with participation of the General Evolution Research Group, the Club of Rome, and the United Nations University. Physis is described as a new science, integrating the living and the non-living, arising out of recent thinking among scientists on the nature of man. Connected with the conference, Bahá'í scientists and academics hosted a reception for the twelve members of the General Evolution Research Group, headed by Dr. Ervin Laszlo. A member of the New York Office of Public Information explained to the guests that the reception had been arranged to make known the Bahá'í attitude of the harmony between science and religion, and to acknowledge the effort by scientists to re-examine scientific thought, attempting an interdisciplinary approach that included moral and social factors.

Several Bahá'ís participated in a scientific conference organized by the International Society for General Systems Research in Budapest, Hungary, in June 1987 (see also p. 459). At the request of the Universal House of Justice, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum headed the Bahá'í delegation which included Mrs. Violette Nakhjavání and Dr. Janet Khan from Haifa, and Dr. Ingeborg Franken and Dr. Udo Schaefer from Germany. The conference, held in a city visited by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and much admired by Him, attracted some of the foremost systems scientists from Eastern Europe and the West. They were drawn from such disciplines as mathematics, physics, engineering, economics, management, and the biological and social sciences. A featured speaker was the President of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.

Dr. Ervin Laszlo, a renowned scientist and member of the Club of Rome, had encouraged the Bahá'ís to participate in the Budapest meeting during a visit to the Bahá'í World Centre. He also requested that a paper on the Bahá'í Faith be presented during the section of the conference arranged by his General Evolution Research Group. This provided a rare opportunity to respond to an invitation to make a presentation on aspects of the Bahá'í teachings at an international scientific conference.



Representatives of the Local Assembly of Inverness receiving copies of the commemorative stamp issued by the Post Office of the United Kingdom to honour the famous potter and Bahá'í, Mr. Bernard Leach. 19 November 1987.

Dr. Janet Khan delivered a paper entitled "The Bahá'í Community as a Model for Social Change" which described the society-building processes of the Bahá'í community and the operation of the Administrative Order, using the language and concepts of general evolution and systems theories. The paper was very well received and elicited many questions about the Faith, its teachings, its relationship to science, and its manner of functioning in the world.

Dr. Franken, a physicist, and Dr. Schaefer, a public prosecutor, participated in a workshop on peace organized by a special interest group of the Society. During the discussion periods, they were able to describe the elements of the Bahá'í peace programme and the activities of the world-wide community in sensitizing humankind to the need for and the inevitability of peace.

When the Post Office of the United Kingdom issued a commemorative stamp honouring the famous potter and Bahá'í, Bernard Leach, in October 1987, Bahá'ís made special efforts to inform the academic community of the spiritual aspect of Mr. Leach's work. In Northern Ireland, the Bahá'í Information Office sponsored two lectures by potter and arts academic, Victor Priem, himself a Bahá'í. One lecture was held at the University of Ulster's Art College, and the other at Queen's University of Belfast. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland undertook major distribution of publicity.

In Switzerland, exhibitions were organized by the University of Zurich to honour Professor August Forel, a famous researcher in medicine and natural science and a social reformer who became one of the first Bahá'ís in that country. One exhibition, held in 1986, was attended by a number of scientists, government representatives, and members of Dr. Forel's family. Quotations about the Bahá'í Faith from Forel's testament were displayed, as were books, including *For the Good of Mankind—August Forel and the Bahá'í Faith* by Dr. J.P. Vader. The media covering the event paid tribute to Forel's greatness as a scientist, thinker, social reformer, and dedicated servant to humanity. Another exhibit was displayed in the Centre Médical Universitaire in the spring of 1989.

Also in Switzerland, Bahá'í scholar Hafez Sabet delivered a presentation on his book *Die Schuld des Norden (The Debt of the North)* at the prestigious World Economic Forum in January 1992.

Four representatives of the Bahá'í Faith participated in an international conference on science and religion in March 1988 called "One World—Changing Perspectives on Reality". Held at the University of Twente in the Netherlands, the conference attracted 150 people. During workshops held to supplement the main presentations, a German Bahá'í physicist, Dr. Ingo Hofmann, presented the concept that progressive revelation is the spiritual parallel to the role of "time" in the evolution of modern physics. He also proposed that the role of "creativity" as the propelling force in physical evolution finds its parallel in the spiritual and religious development of human nature.

At the New University in Lisbon, Portugal, Bahá'ís participated in a special week set aside in June 1989 to examine the ethnology, anthropology and sociology of religions. A large display of Bahá'í books, pictures, and posters was arranged as part of a book fair related to the religious studies week. Speakers for the event were also presented with the Peace Statement.

The New University in Lisbon was also the venue for a Congress on Religious Studies in which the Bahá'ís participated in January 1992. A member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Portugal delivered a lecture on the Faith, a Bahá'í book exhibition was arranged, and several books were presented to university professors.

In 1990, a French university requested a review copy of a Bahá'í book to include in a bibliography used by religious scholars in 80 countries. The Université des Sciences Humaines de Strasbourg asked the National



A Bahá'í staffing a book exhibition which was part of a Congress on Religious Studies, held at the New University in Lisbon, Portugal, in January 1992.

Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom for a copy of *The Seven Candles of Unity*. The same university previously had requested *Unless and Until: a Bahá'í Focus on the Environment.*

Just prior to the end of the Six Year Plan, twelve scholarly articles reviewing works of Bahá'í literature were accepted for publication in volume III of the *Encyclopédie philosophique universelle*. The purpose of the articles was to inform philosophers, theologians, and university students about the philosophical implications of Bahá'í teachings. This significant achievement marked the first time the Bahá'í Faith was represented in terms of philosophy in such a prestigious publication.

Distribution of Literature

The Sacred Writings of the Bahá'í Faith were increasingly made accessible to the public in Europe as Bahá'ís participated in book fairs or exhibitions and signed contracts to make Bahá'í literature available in bookstores.

From the Canary Islands to Yugoslavia, from Latvia to Portugal, major book exhibitions included Bahá'í material. In the Canary Islands, books such as *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, Thief in the Night,* and *Religion for Mankind* were found to be the most popular at book fairs. In October 1990, Belgrade, Yugoslavia, was the site for an International Book Fair in which Austria's Bahá'í Book Distribution Service participated. The fair was attended by approximately 400,000 people, and in addition to Bahá'í books being seen at the Bahá'í booth, five Bahá'í books were selected for display at the booth of a commercial English-language distribution service "because they were expected to sell well in Yugoslavia", the company representative said.

Extensive publicity about the Faith was stimulated in Riga, Latvia, where hundreds of Bahá'í books were exhibited at the Latvian Central State Library in October 1990. The books were in nineteen different languages, including Latvian, Lithuanian, Armenian, and Moldavian. The exhibition led to three broadcasts on national television news of a brief interview with a Bahá'í; an interview on a very popular radio programme for youth; and a ten-minute radio interview on a Swedish broadcasting station.

The Bahá'ís of Funchal, on the island of Madeira in Portugal, began participating in an annual local book fair in 1990. After the second year, the community experienced greater receptivity to the Faith, being interviewed by three different radio stations, and seeing two local newspapers publish articles on the Faith.



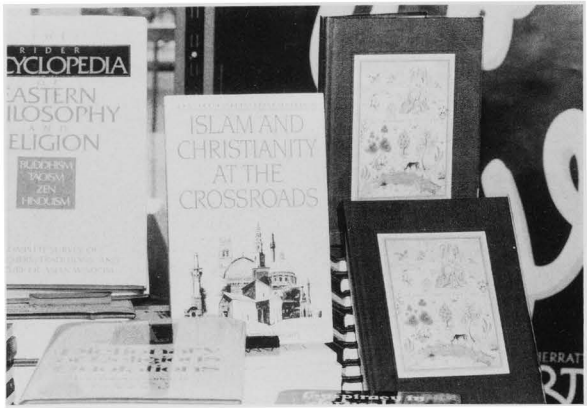
The Bahá'í Book Distribution Service of Austria participated in the International Book Fair held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, from 24 to 31 October 1990. About 400,000 people visited the Fair, of whom some 2,000 took introductory literature about the Faith.

Twelve Bahá'í publishers from four continents were represented at the first Geneva International Fair for Books and the Press, held in May 1987. The Bahá'í stand, which was visited by 40,000 people, was dominated by a large colour photograph of the House of Worship in India. More than a hundred titles in eight languages and *The Promise of World Peace* in thirty languages were displayed under the headings: Peace, Family, Education, Religion, and History. During the inauguration, the official cortège stopped at the Bahá'í stand while the president of the Fair introduced the Faith to the guests of honour and dignitaries who followed him. Five Bahá'í authors signed their books during two special events, and constant contact was maintained with dozens of journalists present at the Fair.

The long-standing participation of the German Bahá'í Publishing Trust in the Moscow Book Fair continued during the Plan, as did involvement of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of the United Kingdom in book fairs in Budapest, Hungary. The Bahá'ís of Belgium, Spain and Sweden also displayed Bahá'í literature at book fairs in their respective countries.

More bookstores in Europe began stocking Bahá'í books during the Plan. Several bookstores in Greece carried *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* and *The Promise of World Peace* in Greek, and one store also sold *The Hidden Words* and *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*. Bahá'ís in the Canary Islands increased their distribution of books to commercial bookstores; at least thirteen stores carried Bahá'í titles. In Sweden, a contract was signed with a company to distribute Bahá'í publications to bookstores. In the United Kingdom, trade representatives were trained in selling Bahá'í books to commercial outlets, which led to increases in trade accounts and sales. In 1989, Oneworld Publications' edition of *The Hidden Words* was among thirty books selected by a major book chain in the United Kingdom, Sherratt & Hughes, to participate in a nationwide promotion on the theme of comparative religion. A quotation from *The Hidden Words* was used to adorn the banners hung across the shop and window displays, and Sherratt & Hughes acquired a large quantity of the books to meet the expected demand.

In the Netherlands, Bahá'í literature in Frisian was accepted for sale by the General Frisian Teaching Commission, the official body responsible for education in the Frisian language and culture. The *Frysk en Frij*, the only weekly publication in the Frisian language, also published an extensive article outlining the work of the Bahá'ís' National



Oneworld Publications' edition of The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh (right) was exhibited in the windows of the book chain Sherratt & Hughes, in the United Kingdom, for three weeks in July 1989, among other books on the theme of comparative religion.

Translation Committee and providing information about the Faith.

When the Iron Curtain separating the Eastern Bloc from the West came down, Bahá'ís in Western Europe moved quickly to translate the sacred literature into the needed languages. Selections of basic Bahá'í literature were printed and distributed in large quantities in many Eastern European languages.

The Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Portugal was established during the Plan.

Strengthening Families

While Bahá'ís were endeavouring to share with an increasingly despairing public the solutions they had found in the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, they also strove to move closer to His ideal in their own lives. In an age of dissolving families, they worked to strengthen this fundamental unit, recognizing the critical link between family unity and world peace.

Seminars, workshops and lectures on family life were held in Austria, the Canary Islands, France, Luxembourg and Spain, among other countries. In Germany, a National Committee for Marriage and Family was established and offered many conferences on the topic. In the Republic of Ireland, a sub-committee on parenting produced a series of deepening packets which were used throughout the country. One year the Irish summer school was devoted to the subject of marriage and the following year to family life.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Iceland gave particular attention to the development of Bahá'í families, organizing weekend institutes with Icelandic and visiting experts. Summer schools and youth gatherings focussed on the subject, and local communities sponsored deepenings. The compilation *Bahá'í Marriage and Family Life* was translated into Icelandic.

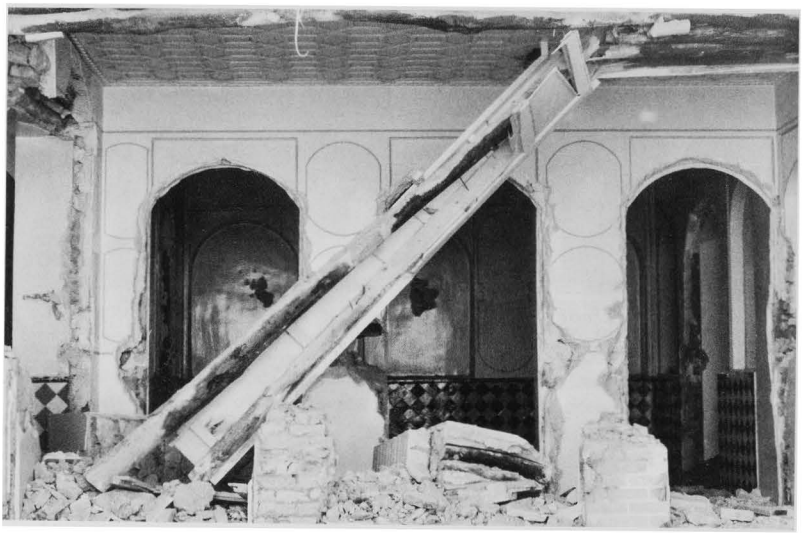
Landegg Academy established a Department of Education and Family Life to develop projects related to this vital area.



The Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone, Mrs. Madge Featherstone, and Counsellor Adib Taherzadeh were among the participants in the Bahá'í summer school held in Iceland in August 1987.



Participants in the opening of the first Bahá'í School in Vejle, Denmark; 3 September 1989. The school has classes every second Sunday for children between the ages of 5 and 14.



The House of the Báb, in Shíráz, Írán—one of the holiest sites in the Bahá'í world—was destroyed by revolutionary guards in 1979.

3. THE PERSECUTION AND DEFENSE OF THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY OF ÍRÁN 1986–1992

A. THE BAHÁ'Í QUESTION

Írán's Secret Blueprint for the Destruction of a Religious Community

An Examination of the Persecution of the Bahá'ís of Írán 1979–1992*

INTRODUCTION

For more than a century, the Bahá'ís of Írán have continually been persecuted for their religious beliefs. With the triumph of the Islamic revolution in 1979, the persecution of Bahá'ís intensified as the government embarked on a systematic campaign to eradicate the Bahá'í community of Írán. Despite the fact that Bahá'ís are committed to non-violence, tolerance, and loyalty to government, they came to be classified as "unprotected infidels" with no rights under the constitution.

Between 1978 and 1988, nearly two hundred prominent Bahá'ís were executed by the Iranian government. The majority of them were members of the community's democratically elected governing councils. Hundreds more Bahá'ís were imprisoned, while tens of thousands were deprived of jobs, pensions, businesses, and educational opportunities. Bahá'ís faced these persecutions solely because of their religious beliefs.

In the face of intense international pressure, the most notable example of which was a series of United Nations resolutions against Írán, the Iranian government in the late 1980s reduced the rate of executions and the number of Bahá'ís held in prison. However, the government did not give up on its goal of destroying the 350,000-member Bahá'í community, Írán's largest religious minority. In March 1992, Bahman Samandarí, a well-known Bahá'í businessman in Ṭihrán, was summoned to Ivín Prison and summarily executed.

By the end of the period covered by this volume, the Bahá'ís of Írán remained in a precarious state. They were denied the right to practice their faith freely, a right guaranteed under international human rights instruments, such as the International Bill of Human Rights, to which Írán was a party. The administrative institutions of their Faith were dismantled in accordance with a government edict. They lived each day knowing that their government sought to block their development as a community, and that even the slightest infraction could result in the deprivation of their livelihood, imprisonment or worse.

Yet the Bahá'í community in Írán posed no threat to the Iranian authorities. The Bahá'í community in Írán was not aligned with any government, ideology, or opposition movement. Indeed, the principles of the Bahá'í Faith require Bahá'ís to be obedient to their government and to avoid partisan political involvement, subversive activity and all forms of violence.

The Bahá'ís in Írán sought no special privileges. They sought only their rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the right to life, the right to liberty and security of person, the right to education and work, and the right to profess and practice their religion.

*Adapted from a paper by the United Nations Office of the Bahá'í International Community.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The status of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Írán cannot be fully understood without taking into account the historical background of persecution against the Bahá'í community.

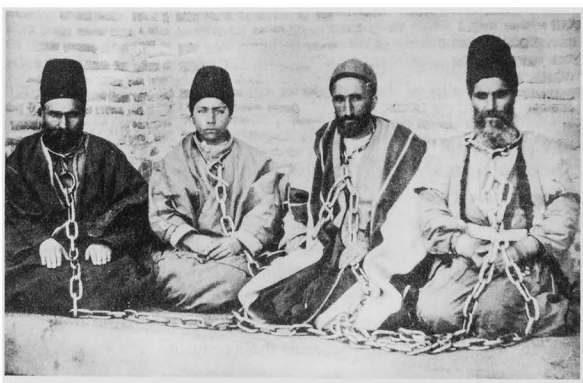
Persecution of the Bahá'í Faith in Írán began with its founding there in the mid-1800s. Bahá'ís understand that the pattern of oppression experienced in the cradle of their Faith is a manifestation of the misunderstanding and fear that often occur when a new religion emerges from the matrix of a well-established orthodoxy. The pattern has been repeated through the ages; indeed, virtually all of the world's great religions have faced intense persecution at their birth. There can be no doubt that the claims of the twin Founders of the Bahá'í Faith, especially when viewed through the lens of traditional Islám, are as bold as those of any Prophet in ancient times.

An initial wave of persecution came in response to the claims of a young Iranian merchant, known as the Báb, who announced in Shíráz in May 1844 that He was the bearer of a new revelation from God. This new revelation, He said, fulfilled Islamic prophecies for the coming of "the Twelfth Imam". His primary mission, the Báb said, was to prepare humanity for the advent of "Him Whom God Shall Make Manifest", the universal divine Messenger anticipated in the scriptures of all the major religions.

The teachings of the Báb, which were embraced by thousands of followers, were seen by both secular and religious authorities as a threat to their power. Widespread persecutions followed, and some 20,000 followers, who were known as Bábís, paid with their lives. The Báb Himself was executed by the government.

Among the followers of the Báb was an Iranian nobleman named Bahá'u'lláh. In 1863 He announced that He was the Messenger the Báb had heralded, founding the Bahá'í Faith. The central theme of Bahá'u'lláh's message is that humanity is a single race and that the day has come for its unification into one global society. "The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens", He wrote.

Bahá'u'lláh also taught that there is only one God, and that all of the world's religions are expressions of a single, unfolding Divine plan, "the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future". Bahá'ís understand that God has revealed religious truth to humanity progressively, through a series of Divine Messengers, each of Whom has founded a great religion. The Messengers have included Abraham, Krishna, Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Jesus, and Muḥammad. The latest of these Messengers are the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.



In a photograph taken around 1896, a Bahá'í father and son (at left) are shown in chains after being arrested with fellow Bahá'ís. Both were subsequently executed.

The idea that the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh are new Messengers of God was viewed by many Muslims as heresy. In the Qur'án, Muḥammad referred to Himself as the "Seal of the Prophets", and most Muslim scholars interpreted this to mean that He would be the last Messenger of God.

Bahá'ís, however, believe that the coming of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh pose no contradiction with Islám. Bahá'ís understand, in fact, that Muḥammad did indeed end or "seal" the prophetic cycle; then, with the advent of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, a new era of religious fulfillment was entered. Bahá'ís understand that this is all in accordance with the prophecies of Islám and the world's other major religions.

Other aspects of Bahá'í teachings also aroused opposition among some followers of Islám. In outlining His vision for a new world civilization, Bahá'u'lláh advocated a series of highly progressive social principles. These principles include: the elimination of all forms of prejudice; equality between the sexes; recognition of the essential oneness of the world's great religions; the elimination of extremes of poverty and wealth; universal education; the harmony of science and religion; a sustainable balance between nature and technology; and establishment of a world federal system, based on collective security.

Some Muslims viewed the progressive nature of these teachings, such as the equality of men and women, and acceptance of the scientific method, as antithetical to the traditions of Islám.

The persecutions continued intermittently in the twentieth century, coinciding most often with some need of the government to shore up its support with certain elements of the Islamic leadership in Írán.

Sometimes outbreaks of violence against Bahá'ís were directed by local or regional authorities. In 1903, for example, some 101 Bahá'ís were killed in the city of Yazd after the populace was incited by hostile Mullás.

At other times the oppression of Bahá'ís was an official part of the government's national policy. For example, during the early years of the Pahlavi Regime (1927 to 1979), the government formalized a policy of discrimination against the Bahá'ís as a concession to the clergy. Beginning in 1933, Bahá'í literature was banned; Bahá'í marriages were not recognized; Bahá'ís in public service were demoted or fired; and eventually Bahá'í schools were closed.

Another round of persecutions was undertaken in 1955, when the government allowed the nationwide broadcast of a series of incendiary sermons against the Bahá'ís by a leading Shí'ih preacher in Ṭihrán. A wave of anti-Bahá'í violence swept the country, with murders, rapes and robberies reported in many areas. Government officials joined in the seizure and destruction of the national



Members of the Sháh's army and Muslim leaders join in the destruction of the National Bahá'í Centre in Tiḥrán, Írán, in May 1955.

headquarters building of the Bahá'í community, and the government announced it had ordered the suppression of all activities of "the Bahá'í sect".

It is important to understand that the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Írán was in no way related to some underlying issue of ethnicity or political involvement. The overwhelming majority of Iranian Bahá'ís came from the same Persian and Azerbaijani ethnic stock as the rest of the population, and they represented a cross section of Írán's social classes.

Only their religious beliefs distinguished them from their fellow countrymen—beliefs which Bahá'ís are forbidden from imposing on others, and which are, paradoxically, virtually unknown among Muslims in Írán. Despite the fact that the Bahá'í Faith originated in Írán, there persisted an almost universal ignorance of the religion's nature, teachings, and history. The Iranian Bahá'í community was consistently denied the use of any means of mass communication, including radio, television, newspapers, films, the distribution of literature, and public lectures.

Instead, ignorance of the true nature of the Bahá'í teachings was cultivated by the ecclesiastical authorities into a full-blown and deeply ingrained prejudice.

Recent Persecutions

With the establishment of the Islamic Republic in 1979, a new chapter in the persecution of the Bahá'ís of Írán was opened.

Even before the Ayatollah Khomeini returned from exile to assume power in February that year, an increase in attacks on Bahá'ís presaged the wholesale persecution that was to come. In 1978, at least seven Bahá'ís were killed, most as a result of mob violence.

While many Iranians hailed the revolution as the dawn of a long awaited era of political liberty and national reconstruction, it was clear from the start that the Bahá'ís would be unjustly reviled for their beliefs.

When the Republic's new constitution was drawn up in April 1979, the rights of the Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian minorities in Írán were specifically mentioned and protected. The rights of the Bahá'í community, the largest religious minority, however, were not mentioned.

Under Írán's concept of an Islamic government, this exclusion came to mean that Bahá'ís enjoyed no rights of any sort, and that they could be attacked and persecuted with impunity. Courts in the Republic denied Bahá'ís the right of redress or protection against assault, killings or other forms of persecution—and ruled that Iranian citizens who killed or injured Bahá'ís were not liable for the damages because their victims were "unprotected infidels".

Without any claim to civil rights, the position of the Bahá'í community within Iranian society deteriorated rapidly. In March 1979, the House of the Báb, the holiest Bahá'í shrine in Írán, was turned over by the government to a Muslim cleric known for his anti-Bahá'í activities. Then, in September, the House was destroyed by a mob led by Mullás and officials of the Department of Religious Affairs.

In November 1979, an edict from the Ministry of Education required not only the dismissal of all Bahá'í teachers, but also held them responsible for the repayment of all salaries they had previously received.

At least seven Bahá'ís were killed in 1979. Two were executed by the government and one was hanged in prison. Others were beaten to death or simply killed in local incidents.

Executions

Buoyed by their growing influence over all aspects of Iranian life, in 1980 the clergy moved "to cut off the head" of the "heretical" Bahá'í movement by destroying its leadership, believing that the majority of the Bahá'ís would then succumb to social pressures to recant their Faith.

This policy is reflected in the fact that well over half the Bahá'ís executed in Írán

after 1979 were members of national and local governing councils of the Bahá'í community, known as Spiritual Assemblies.

Among the first aimed at Bahá'í leadership was the execution on 10 June 1980 of Yúsuf Subḥání, a highly regarded member of the Ṭihrán Bahá'í community. This was followed by the executions of the chairman and another member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tabríz on 14 July 1980, a member of the Spiritual Assembly of Rasht on 16 July 1980, and two prominent Bahá'í spokesmen in Ṭihrán on 30 July and 15 August 1980.

On 21 August 1980, all nine members of the national Bahá'í governing council, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Írán, were arrested and disappeared without a trace. It seems certain that they were executed.

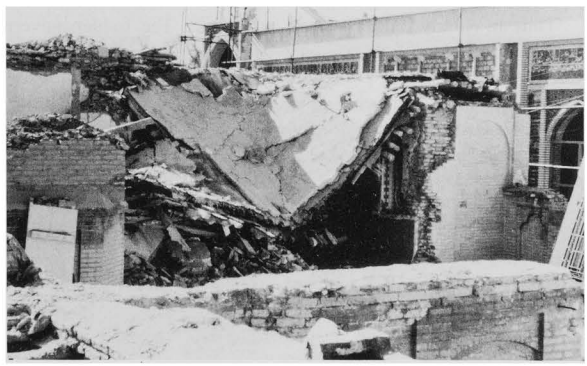
During 1980 at least 24 Bahá'ís were killed in Írán; 20 were executed by the government and the rest were stoned, assassinated, or burned to death.

Despite a growing international outcry, the rate of executions continued to grow through 1981. By late summer that year, revolutionary courts were openly sentencing Bahá'ís to death on purely religious grounds and announcing the fact in Iranian media. The Attorney General, Siyyid Mussavi-Tabrízí, stated: "The Qur'án recognized only the People of the Book as religious communities. Others are pagans. Pagans must be eliminated." Under Islamic law in Írán, "People of the Book" included only Muslims, Jews, Christians and, by special dispensation, Zoroastrians.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Írán was reconstituted through new elections but was again ravaged by the execution of eight of its members on 27 December 1981. In all at least 48 Bahá'ís were killed in Írán during 1981; of those, all but two were executed by the government.

Executions continued apace through 1982, 1983, and 1984. At least 32 Bahá'ís were executed or killed in 1982, 29 were executed or killed in 1983, and 30 were executed or killed in 1984. And, again, the targets of these executions were often members of Bahá'í governing councils. Four members of the National Spiritual Assembly, which had once again been reconstituted through fresh elections, were executed in 1984, although by then the institution had been disbanded in accordance with a government decree, and the individuals held no official position in the Bahá'í community. (See pp. 390–396 for a complete list of those who have been killed or executed.)

One of the most dramatic groups of executions came in June 1983, when 10 Iranian Bahá'í women, including two teenage girls, were hanged. The primary charge against them: teaching Bahá'í children's classes—the equivalent of Sunday School in the West.



The House of the Báb, a place of pilgrimage for Bahá'ís, was destroyed by Revolutionary Guards in 1979 and later razed by the Government. The House was located in Shíráz, Írán.

The women were subjected to intense physical and mental abuse in an effort to coerce them to recant their Faith—an option that was almost always pressed upon Bahá'í prisoners. Yet, like most Bahá'ís who have been arrested in Írán, they refused to deny their beliefs. Nevertheless, the fact that so many Bahá'ís were given the option of recanting, with the promise of release if they did so, is among the strongest proofs that the persecutions were based on religious beliefs.

Imprisonment and Torture

Since 1979, nearly 1,000 Bahá'ís have been arrested and imprisoned. At one point in 1986, some 747 Bahá'ís were being held in prisons throughout Írán. In most cases, they had no trials.

The torture of Bahá'ís in Iranian prisons—and particularly of those who had been members of Bahá'í governing councils—was routine and systematic. Again, according to Bahá'ís who survived, the purpose of the torture almost invariably was to make the Bahá'ís recant their Faith or confess to some treasonous activity.

Torture included sustained beating and flogging, the bastinado (whipping the soles of the feet), the pulling out of fingernails and teeth, and the deprivation of food and water for days at a time.

Bahá'ís were also subjected to psychological torture, including mock executions and being forced to witness the torture of family members and friends.

Thus an elderly Bahá'í woman, who was a member of a local Bahá'í council, was tortured in front of a dozen other Bahá'ís in an effort to persuade her and them to deny their Faith. The woman's jailer took her by her hair and continually banged her head against the wall. She was beaten about the head for a long time, until her body was covered with blood. After two years of imprisonment, she was summarily released, with no recourse against the abuse she had received.

At least thirteen Bahá'ís who died in prison are believed to have been tortured to death. In these cases, the bodies were buried by the authorities before the families could view them.

Social and Economic Intimidation

The authorities also conducted a campaign of economic, social and cultural intimidation against the Bahá'í community of Írán. The objective, it is clear, was to deprive Bahá'ís of their rights to education, to a job and to a home of their own—once again with the intention of forcing them to recant.

Beginning in the 1930s, the Bahá'ís of Írán were forbidden to run their own educational establishments, therefore forcing them to educate their children at state-run schools and universities where they often suffered discrimination and persecution. The level of discrimination and persecution in schools rose sharply following the Islamic revolution in 1979. In 1981, an official decree was issued barring Bahá'í students and professors from admission to or employment at any university in Írán. Universities published new prospectuses in 1981 requiring that applicants belong to one of the four religions recognized in the constitution, namely the Muslim, Jewish, Christian or Zoroastrian religions.

Admission to primary and secondary schools was refused to those who identified themselves as Bahá'ís, and hundreds of students were expelled.

Deprivation of Employment

The Iranian government also sought to intimidate Bahá'ís by making it impossible for them to earn a living. In 1979 the government started dismissing all Bahá'í civil servants without compensation. By July 1982, all Bahá'í public servants had been dismissed and the pensions of all retired Bahá'í civil servants had been terminated.

In late 1984, the Attorney General started issuing summonses demanding that all those Bahá'í civil servants who had been dismissed repay all the salaries they had received during their employment. They

were threatened with imprisonment if they did not comply. Obviously, repayment of a lifetime's wages was beyond the means of most victims. Many were imprisoned as a result of failure to meet this absurd demand.

The government also systematically sought to drive Bahá'ís in the private sector to economic ruin. In the early 1980s, the trading licenses of most Bahá'í businessmen were revoked, the assets of businesses run by Bahá'ís were confiscated, and bank accounts of most Bahá'í businessmen were frozen. In addition, the authorities intimidated private employers into dismissing many Bahá'í employees.

Almost every dismissal notice served on a Bahá'í employee, whether in the public or the private sector, stated that the reason for dismissal was membership in the Bahá'í Faith and that the person's job would be restored if he or she would recant his or her faith.

In addition to depriving Bahá'ís of a livelihood, the government in the early 1980s sought to deprive arrested Bahá'ís of many of their possessions, including their homes.

Through its takeover of the major Bahá'í savings company, Nawnahalan, the government in one move swept away the life savings of its 15,000 Bahá'í shareholders and investors. In addition, thousands of Bahá'ís, rich and poor alike, had their homes and personal possessions confiscated by the government, and thousands more had their homes destroyed by arson and looting. In rural areas, the authorities encouraged the plunder and destruction of the livestock and crops of Bahá'í farmers.

Confiscation of Community Assets

The Bahá'í community in Írán was not allowed to hold community property in its own name. As a result, all community property had to be held in the name of a non-profit company created for this purpose. This body, the Umana Company, was allowed to administer such properties without undue interference until the change of government in 1979.

One of the first acts of the new government was to confiscate the Umana Company and all its holdings. This meant that in one stroke all Bahá'í community properties were arbitrarily transferred to the state without compensation. The government also confiscated the assets of all Bahá'í welfare agencies, which provided services to people of all religions on an equal basis.

Among the government's next steps were to desecrate and in many cases destroy Bahá'í holy places throughout Írán. As noted, these properties included the holiest Bahá'í shrine in Írán, the House of the Báb in Shíráz, which was confiscated and then destroyed. The House of Bahá'u'lláh in Takur, where the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith spent His childhood, met a similar fate: it was demolished and the site was offered for sale to the public.

In Ṭihrán and other cities throughout Írán, Bahá'í buildings were looted and burned,



Shortly after the Islamic Revolution, the National Bahá'í Centre in Tihrán was confiscated by authorities and turned into a "Temporary Islamic Propaganda Centre" and an "Open Muslim University."

Bahá'í cemeteries were bulldozed and Bahá'í graves were broken open. In the Ṭihrán area, the Bahá'ís were forced to bury their dead in a barren stretch of land reserved by the authorities for "infidels". Having access to their own cemeteries is especially important to Bahá'ís because, as might be expected, Bahá'ís were not allowed to bury their dead in Muslim cemeteries.

"JUSTIFICATIONS" OF THE PERSECUTION

Despite the overwhelming proof that the Bahá'í community in Írán was being persecuted solely because of its religious beliefs, the Iranian government continued to justify this persecution by charging the Bahá'í community with a variety of offences. All such charges demonstrated an ignorance of the basic principles and history of the Bahá'í Faith. No evidence was ever brought forward to support any of these accusations. The principal charges advanced by the government were:

- *That Bahá'ís were supporters of the Pahlavi regime and the late Sháh of Írán; that they collaborated with SAVAK, the secret police; and that the Bahá'í Faith was a political organization opposed to the Iranian Government.*

Bahá'ís are required by the basic principles of their faith to show loyalty and obedience to the government of the country in which they live. The Bahá'í community in Írán thus did not oppose the Pahlavi regime, just as it did not oppose the government of the Islamic Republic of Írán. Indeed, members of the community obeyed every law and instruction of the government, including the instruction to disband all Bahá'í administrative institutions in Írán.

Bahá'í principles also require the avoidance of any form of involvement in partisan politics. Accordingly, Iranian Bahá'ís were precluded by membership in their faith from accepting cabinet posts or similar political positions under the Pahlavi regime. They did not collaborate with SAVAK. On the contrary, the Pahlavi regime consistently persecuted the Bahá'í Faith, and SAVAK was one of the main agencies of this persecution. For Bahá'ís in Írán, the idea of collaborating with SAVAK would have been unthinkable.

The Iranian government alleged that certain SAVAK officials were Bahá'ís. These allegations are completely untrue, fabricated to mask the religious nature of the persecutions.

- *That Bahá'ís are heretics or enemies of Islám.*

Both charges are false. The Bahá'í Faith is widely recognized as an independent world religion—even by Islamic scholars. As long ago as 1924, a Sunni appellate court in Egypt recognized that the Bahá'í Faith was an independent world religion in its judgement that: "The Bahá'í Faith is a new religion entirely independent.... No Bahá'í therefore can be regarded as Muslim or vice versa, even as no Buddhist, Brahmin or Christian can be regarded as Muslim." Accordingly, no charge of heresy can be made.

Bahá'ís revere Muḥammad and His book, the Qur'án, as they do Jesus, Buddha, and the founders of the other great religions. Indeed, alone among the followers of the world's other major independent religions, only Bahá'ís recognize the station of Muḥammad as a Prophet of God.

- *That Bahá'ís are agents of Zionism.*

This charge is based solely on the fact that the Bahá'í World Centre is in Israel. The Bahá'í World Centre was, however, established on Mt. Carmel in the last century, long before the State of Israel came into existence, in accordance with the explicit instructions of Bahá'u'lláh, Who was exiled there from Írán.

- *That Bahá'ís are involved with prostitution, adultery and immorality.*

This charge, like the others, is utterly without foundation. Bahá'ís have a strict moral code and attach great importance to chastity and to the institution of marriage.

The Bahá'í marriage ceremony was not recognized in Írán and no civil marriage ceremony existed. Consequently, Bahá'ís were faced with the choice of denying their faith in order to be married according to the rites of one of the religions recognized in Írán, or of marrying in accordance with the rites of their own faith. They consistently chose to be married in accordance with Bahá'í law. The government did not recognize these marriages and denounced Bahá'í wives as prostitutes.

The other charges of adultery and immorality against Bahá'ís were based solely on the fact that, in accordance with the Bahá'í principles of the equality of men and women, there is no segregation of the sexes at Bahá'í gatherings.

THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The international community responded to the persecution of the Bahá'í community in Írán with overwhelming sympathy and concern for the Bahá'ís and condemnation of the Iranian government. The Bahá'í community believes that this outpouring provided a strong restraining force against the government, preventing a pogrom on a much greater scale.

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights passed eleven resolutions expressing concern about reports of human rights violations in Írán. Each resolution made specific mention of the situation of the Bahá'í community there. The specific reference to a religious community was quite unusual for the Commission, which normally confined itself to expressions of diplomatic concern and general references to charges of human rights violations and discrimination.

Following the lead of the Commission on Human Rights, the United Nations General Assembly itself approved six resolutions since 1985 which specifically mentioned the situation of the Bahá'ís in Írán and expressed concern over reports of human rights violations there.

Among the most salient features of the United Nations attention to the Bahá'í case was the continuing investigation into the human rights situation in Írán by Reynaldo Galindo Pohl, a human rights specialist from El Salvador. He was appointed in 1986 by the Commission on Human Rights as its Special Representative on Írán. Mr. Galindo Pohl produced a series of reports on human rights in Írán. In the course of his work, he visited Írán three times.

Although his reports were in many ways constrained by the diplomatic language required within the United Nations system, Mr. Galindo Pohl nevertheless over the years managed to catalog the whole range of abuses and persecutions which the Bahá'í community in Írán had experienced.

For example, Mr. Galindo Pohl's 1990 report to the General Assembly noted that he had received extensive documentation that provides "evidence of discrimination, confiscation, rejection by universities, suspension of pensions, demands for the return of pensions earned and paid, denial of passport and other irregularities."

The report added that "it would seem that the attitude towards the Bahá'ís and their situation depends on the temperament and personal convictions of individual officials. This keeps the Bahá'ís in a perpetual state of uncertainty about their activities."

Írán's responses to the United Nations were always less than satisfactory. As noted, they produced a wide range of unsubstantiated charges against the Bahá'ís—from accusations of spying to being Zionists—aimed at justifying their persecution.

In addition to efforts by the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies and agencies, numerous national legislatures, as well as regional bodies, spoke out against Írán's treatment of the Bahá'í community over the last decade. Expressions of concern for Írán's Bahá'ís came from the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, the United States Congress, and from the legislatures of Australia, Brazil, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom, among others. Many heads of state and

government leaders also voiced their dismay over Írán's treatment of the Bahá'ís.

International and national non-governmental organizations also rose to the defence of Írán's Bahá'ís. Amnesty International, the Minority Rights Group, and Middle East Watch, among others, closely monitored the situation of the Bahá'ís in Írán and published extensive reports which confirmed the persecutions there.

The world's mass media, as well, reported extensively on the persecution of Írán's Bahá'í community. Major articles and editorials which detail, confirm and condemn the persecutions appeared in *Le Monde, The Times* of London, *The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Economist, The Times of India*, among others. Associated Press, Reuters, and Agence France Press also carried numerous dispatches on the persecution of Bahá'ís in Írán and the response of international organizations and agencies.

Indeed, in many respects the Bahá'í case became a model for how international human rights machinery can be used to protect an oppressed minority. International support for the Bahá'ís prevented wholesale genocide of the community in Írán.

The Situation at Riḍván 1992

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, there were signs that the government had begun to feel the weight of the international outcry against its actions and had reconsidered its policies towards the Bahá'ís.

In 1987 and 1988, for example, most of those Bahá'ís being held in prison were released and the number of executions dropped sharply after 1985.

During this period, Bahá'í children were allowed to re-enrol in primary and secondary schools in most parts of the country. Some Bahá'ís were allowed to obtain new business licenses, while restrictions on other forms of economic activity appeared to lessen.

Nevertheless, there were indications that these improvements were cosmetic at best, and that the government remained bent on destroying the Bahá'í community of Írán as a viable entity.

Among the most egregious and worrisome signs of Írán's continued efforts against the Bahá'ís was the execution in March 1992 of Bahman Samandarí, a Ṭihrán businessman. The killing of Mr. Samandarí came as a shock, both to the worldwide Bahá'í community and those in the international community who follow human rights issues. After three years during which no Bahá'ís were executed by the government, Mr. Samandarí, who had run a well-known Ṭihrán travel agency, was summoned to Ivín Prison by authorities on 17 March 1992, ostensibly to receive a document from them. The next day, he was secretly executed.

Mr. Samandarí's family—and the world at large—learned of the execution two weeks later when Mr. Samandarí's widow, who had visited the prison frequently to inquire about her husband, was handed a copy of his will, dated 18 March, the day of his execution. Although no death certificate was issued, inquiries at the offices of the Ṭihrán general cemetery confirmed that Mr. Samandarí's name had been entered in its records. Upon requesting that his clothes be returned, family members were told that he had been buried in them.

No charge or verdict was announced and inquiries by family members produced vague indications that Mr. Samandarí's execution was related to his previous arrest over four years earlier when he and four other Bahá'ís were arrested for having a prayer meeting in his home.

At the time of this arrest on 21 October 1987, charges were laid against him because of his membership in the Bahá'í community. He and his fellow prisoners were released on 18 December 1987, after the title to his home had been turned over to the authorities along with a large sum of money as bail.

During 1992, the arbitrary arrest and detention of Bahá'ís in Írán continued, as did

the economic oppression. Many of the 10,000 Bahá'ís who had been dismissed from government and education positions in the early 1980s remained unemployed and received no unemployment benefits. The retirement pensions of Bahá'ís dismissed on religious grounds had been terminated.

As of the spring of 1992, Bahá'ís still were not officially allowed to open their own businesses, and Bahá'í farmers were denied admittance into farmers' cooperatives which often were the only source of credit, seeds, pesticide and fertilizer.

Bahá'í property rights were not protected. Over the years, large numbers of private and business properties, including homes and farms, had been arbitrarily confiscated from Bahá'ís. Bahá'í cemeteries, holy places, historic sites, administrative centers and other assets, seized mostly in 1979, remained confiscated or had been destroyed. Bahá'ís were not permitted to mark the graves of their fellow Bahá'ís, making it almost impossible to identify the graves of loved ones.

Bahá'ís continued to be denied access to institutions of higher learning. They also experienced difficulties in circulating Bahá'í books among themselves and in holding classes to instruct their own children in spiritual and moral values.

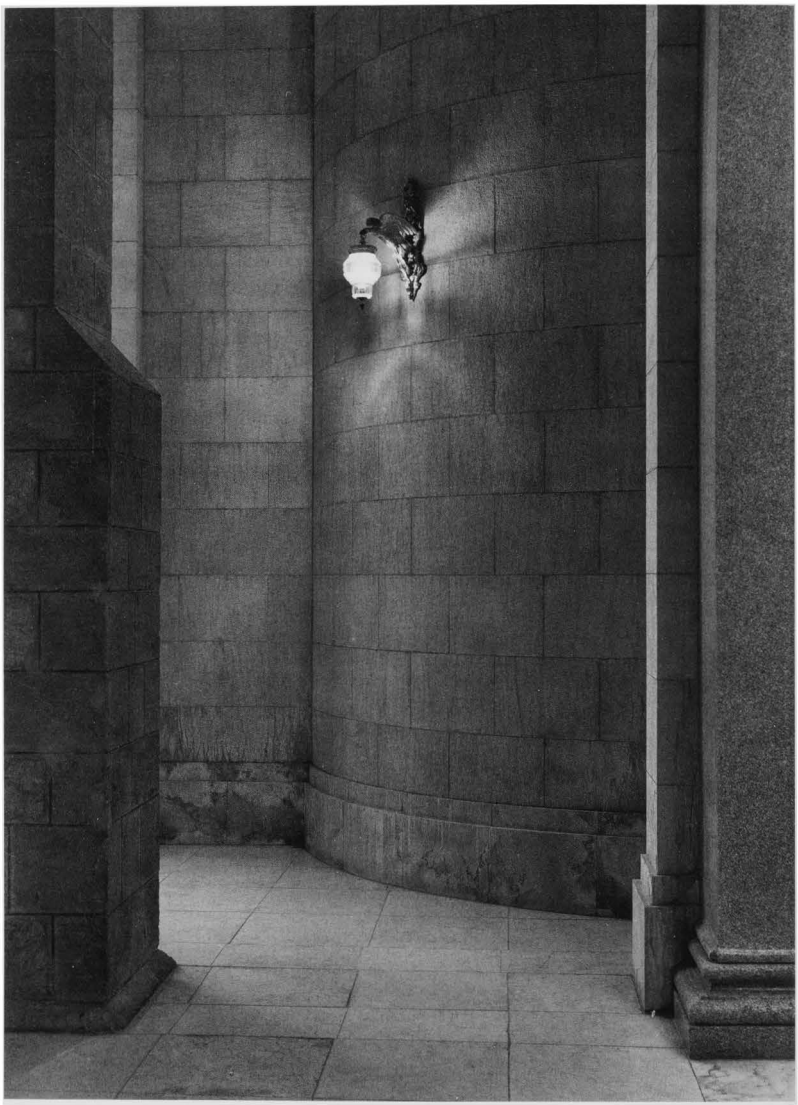
As individuals, Bahá'ís remained officially "unprotected infidels", and their rights were often ignored. The non-recognition of their religion manifested itself in various ways, including the denial of the right to freely express their religious beliefs, a right upheld by international law. Bahá'ís continued to be deprived of inheritance rights, and Bahá'í marriages and divorces remained without legal recognition.

Bahá'ís were not free to travel outside Írán, as it was almost impossible for them to obtain passports.

The Bahá'í community did not have the right of assembly and the right to elect and maintain its administrative institutions. Because there is no clergy in the Bahá'í Faith, these institutions constitute the sole source of organization and guidance of religious community life. Without them, the very existence of the Bahá'ís as a viable religious community was endangered.



Destruction at a Bahá'í cemetery in Shíráz, 1979.



Light fixture on the colonnade of the Shrine of the Báb.

B. BAHÁ'ÍS KILLED IN ÍRÁN BETWEEN RIḌVÁN 1986 AND 1992

1986

Mr. Sirru'lláh Vaḥdat-Niẓámí, 4 May 1986, Ṭihrán, Executed

Sirru'lláh Vaḥdat-Niẓámí was born in 1930 into a Bahá'í family. His parents gave him a spiritual education, and his eagerness and effort to pursue his studies in school and under Bahá'í teachers made him an exemplary Bahá'í youth.

He used to tell stories about the persecutions suffered by his parents for being Bahá'ís; he also had bitter memories of his own harassment during his childhood and youth. The annoyances and afflictions continued after the passing of his father. For example, the family's one piece of land was confiscated and no matter how they tried to recover through legal channels it they could not get it back because they were Bahá'ís.

Upon finishing high school, Vaḥdat enrolled in the Officers' College in Ṭihrán to begin his military service. After graduation he served at various administrative posts in the army, both in Ṭihrán and in the provinces. His honesty and diligent service were appreciated by his associates and superiors and he reached the station of full Colonel. He went out of his way to be helpful to his subordinates, solving their problems if he could.

Vaḥdat was known to be a Bahá'í; from the beginning of his army service he never concealed his faith. Often during his trips to the provinces, the enemies of the Bahá'í Faith complained against him to the authorities and asked to have this Bahá'í officer discharged because, they said, he spread the Bahá'í religion among the officers under him. Fortunately, these complaints were ignored or, if on occasion Vaḥdat was called to explain the matter, he, while confessing to be a Bahá'í, refuted the accusations to the satisfaction of his superiors.

Vaḥdat rendered valuable service to the Bahá'í community, mostly through membership on various committees and Spiritual Assemblies. Once, the Local Spiritual Assembly of Shíráz decided to acquire a house for a pioneer but faced difficulties from neighbours. About that time Vaḥdat was sent to Shíráz by the army, and he assisted in the purchase of the property.

Mr. Vaḥdat applied for retirement from service in the army six months after the Revolution began in Írán, and his application was approved. However, five months later his pension was cut off on the grounds that he was a Bahá'í. About this time he became sick and was hospitalized. His illness grew worse every day until the doctors gave up treatment. In this condition he told his wife and friends that he did not wish to die because of illness: "I beseech the Blessed Beauty to help me accomplish the duties He has assigned to me, and sacrifice my life in the path of exalting His Cause."

Vaḥdat's illness lasted six months, but he finally recovered and left the hospital. He was, however, pursued by enemies who wanted him arrested because he was a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Ṭihrán. He and his wife had to abandon their home and for more than a year they stayed with friends. In one of his letters to his daughter he wrote: "You don't know how delightful it is to be wandering about in the path of the Beloved. Your mother and I spend each night in a different home!"

Shortly after the Government banned the Bahá'í institutions in Írán, the National Spiritual Assembly ordered all of the Local

Spiritual Assemblies to dissolve. Mr. Vaḥdat, however, continued to serve the friends. Often he visited them and, as much as possible, provided means for their comfort and consolation. He expressed his feelings, and what he observed during his visits, in the letters he wrote to his relatives:

> How the old mother prayed in silence at the memorial for her young son, and the young spouse smilingly consoled us and glorified the heroism of her husband! Messrs. Masiḥ Farhangí, Alavián and Vafá'í, seated at the memorial for their lost ones, seemed to be sitting on the throne of glory and splendor! Friends kept arriving to visit them but did not dare to console them! Silence prevailed; only the sound of chanting prayers could be heard, not moaning and groaning! They felt honoured because their dear ones had courageously given up their lives and taught us the lesson of sacrifice. You should pray for us that in preserving every drop of their pure blood we may not be afraid of any trial, and learn the lesson of love and sacrifice from them so that when our turn comes we may remain steadfast.

On 13 February 1983, Vaḥdat went to visit a Bahá'í, Miss Manṣúr, who was being closely watched by government agents. Miss Manṣúr's brother, Ata'u'lláh, was also in the house. A few minutes after Vaḥdat arrived government agents invaded Miss Manṣúr's home and arrested all three. They asked the names, and were glad to have found Vaḥdat by chance. Ata'u'lláh was released after six months in prison, but Miss Manṣúr was condemned to ten years imprisonment.

Vaḥdat was placed in solitary confinement for some time; the place of his confinement was kept secret and God knows how much torture and torment was inflicted upon him. Later the place of prison was changed; he was taken out of solitary confinement and placed in one of the two rooms where forty Bahá'ís were imprisoned. He endured tests and trials four times with complete firmness and perseverance.

In the early days of Vaḥdat's imprisonment, his wife, Sudábih Vaḥdat, went to the prison authorities and demanded to be told where her husband was. In response, the authorities arrested and put her in prison too. She remained in prison for 45 days, and had a chance to meet her husband twice during that time; each time she was taken blindfolded to the room in which he was kept; then the blindfold was removed and the couple had a few minutes to see each other.

Sirru'lláh Vaḥdat-Niẓámí spent 27 months in prison. Finally he was executed by hanging on 4 May 1986.

Mr. Fidrus Shabrukh, 9 May 1986, Záhidán, Executed

Fidrus Shabrukh was born in March 1945 in Zábul, a remote town in the southeast of Írán. His parents had pioneered to that homefront goal during the Forty-Five-Month Plan of the National Spiritual Assembly of Írán.

As a young man, Fidrus moved from Zábul to Záhidán where he pursued his family business, operating a print shop and stationery store which served most of the province of Baluchistán. He married a Bahá'í, Eláhih Matín, and they had two sons, Shamín and Shirvín.

In Záhidán, Mr. Shabrukh devoted his life to the service of the Faith and soon became a central figure in the Bahá'í community. He was elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly, serving as its secretary for many years.

He was well-known among the people of Záhidán as an active Bahá'í. When the persecution by the Revolutionary regime was intensified a mob broke into his home and plundered its contents in front of his wife and children, then threw them out of the house. The print shop and stationery store were confiscated, and Mr. Shabrukh was arrested. He was among the first group of Bahá'í friends who were arrested and imprisoned in Záhidán; but that time he was released on bail after three months.

He was forced to leave Záhidán with his family but refused to leave Írán although there was no doubt he would be arrested again. He repeatedly said: "How can I abandon the front line of our spiritual battle and leave my friends and co-workers at the mercy of the enemy?"

For more than one year he wandered about destitute and homeless. Finally, in Ṭihrán, he presented himself to the authorities and was arrested and put in Ivín prison, where he remained for 23 months. Later he was transferred to Záhidán prison, where he was kept for six months under very severe conditions of compulsory labor and the agony of separation from his dear wife and children. However, to his wife he used to say: "I love you and the children very much, but above you and the children there is another Being which I love much more!"

Fidrus Shabrukh was finally executed by hanging on Friday 9 May 1986.

Mr. Faríd Bihmardí, 10 Jun. 1986, Ṭihrán, Executed

Faríd Bihmardí, son of Isfandyár and Ṭal'at, was born in Tiberias, Palestine, in 1939. His family moved to Írán, where he graduated from high school. He worked in the National Bank in Yazd, but later, because he knew English and was interested in music, he started his own business importing musical instruments.

After the Revolution in Írán, Mr. Bihmardí had to close his business. He then became very active in Bahá'í activities, dedicating himself to serving the friends and the community and spending all of his time helping others. He was appointed to different committees and served as an Auxiliary Board member, then was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly.

As a member of the National Assembly he was under constant pressure and lived in many different places until he was arrested in a street in Ṭihrán. He was imprisoned in Ivín Prison, was tortured, and spent nine months in solitary confinement. During his 22 months in prison, he never was allowed to have visitors. He was executed on 10 June 1986, probably by hanging but none of his family or friends ever saw his body. He was buried in Khátún Ábád without his family being informed until later.

Mr. Ḥabíbu'lláh Muhtadí, 27 Aug. 1986, Ṭihrán, Killed

Ḥabíbu'lláh Muhtadí, the son of Hassan and Furúghíyyih, was born in 1916 in Ṭihrán. In 1957 he married Parídukht Farzám, and together they had two daughters and one son. He graduated from law school in Ṭihrán, and served in the Iranian Air Force.

When he retired from the military he began to work in the construction business. He was arrested for being a Bahá'í on 2 May 1981, and was held in prison for four-and-a-half years. He was released on 28 October 1985, but after ten months, on 27 August 1986, he was killed in the streets of Ṭihrán. The actual cause of death was trauma due to head injuries.

Mr. Bábak Ṭálibí, 2 Sep. 1986, Karaj, Beaten

Bábak Ṭálibí was born in 1969, in Kan, a village near Ṭihrán. He was a student when his father was arrested after incitement by the clergy, and later his father died. To help support his family, Bábak gave up school and found a job.

Bábak moved to Shíráz where he worked and studied at the same time. In September 1986, while visiting his family in Ṭihrán, he went for a bicycle ride. When he did not return, his family searched for him and 24 hours later found his body in a garden. He had been beaten to death. The authorities refused to take any action against the murderers because Bábak was a Bahá'í.

Mr. Íraj Mihdínizhád, 3 Sep. 1986, Bandar-'Abbás, Mobbed

Íraj Mihdínizhád, a prominent Bahá'í in Bandar-'Abbás, was stabbed to death by a small group of people on 4 September 1986.

He was 49 years old. Sixteen knife wounds were seen on his body.

Mr. Mihdínizhád, like thousands of Iranian Bahá'ís, had been dismissed from his job as a civil servant because of his faith and so, out of necessity, had become a street vendor.

Following the murder, his son and son-in-law were detained for questioning by the police for 48 hours. Later, the murderers were arrested. They belonged to a family that had been angered when one member had studied the Bahá'í Faith and accepted it. Mr. Mihdínizhád had been targeted because he was a prominent and active Bahá'í.

The police assembled a file of evidence on the crime and sent it to the Attorney-General. However, the Attorney-General was apparently notified in advance that the matter involved the murder of a Bahá'í. As a result, before the file reached his desk he left his office, instructing his subordinate to refuse to accept the file on the pretext that the Attorney-General had gone on leave. In the meantime, the police who had initially prepared the file suddenly changed their approach to the case. When the file was returned to them, the police indicated that no action would be taken and even advised Mr.Mihdínizhád's family to drop the matter.

1987

Mr. Aḥmad Kávih, 26 Jan. 1987, Iṣfahán, Executed

Aḥmad Kávih was born in a village near Lanján, Iṣfahán, in 1935. He graduated from high school and worked for banks, several companies, and a newspaper. He married, and he and his wife had five children.

Mr. Kávih was not born into a Bahá'í family; he accepted the Faith on his own, and was a very active Bahá'í teacher. After the Revolution, he was forced to leave his home and his house was looted. He moved from place to place for several years, but finally he was arrested in Ṭihrán in November 1984. He suffered imprisonment until he was executed on 26 January 1987.

Mr. Surúsh Jabbárí, 3 Mar. 1987, Ṭihrán, Executed

Surúsh Jabbárí was born into a Bahá'í family in 1942, in the village of Saysán, near Tabríz. His father was Jíbrá'íl Jabbárí and his mother was Aṣlí Sháhbáziyán. When he was four years old his family pioneered to the town of Míyánih. There, his father had to accompany him to school to protect him from assault by his fellow-students because of the family's belief in Bahá'u'lláh.

At 16 years of age, Surúsh went to Ṭihrán to finish high school, and after graduating got a job as a draftsman in a construction company. He continued working for the firm, becoming director of the drafting section. At the same time, he was very active in the Bahá'í community, serving on the National Youth Committee and in other administrative capacities.

Surúsh married Mahnáz Khusrawání in 1976, and the couple had three children. At the beginning of the Islamic Revolution he was discharged from his job for being a Bahá'í, and was out of work for three years. Finally in 1983 he found a job with a private company.

On 15 September 1984, Revolutionary Guards climbed the walls to his house at midnight and arrested him. For a long time his family was not allowed to visit him in the prison in Gawhardasht, Karaj. Later he was transferred to Ivín Prison in Ṭihrán, where he was executed along with Abu'l-Qásim Sháyiq on 3 March 1987.

Mr. Abu'l-Qásim Sháyiq, 3 Mar. 1987, Ṭihrán, Executed

Abu'l-Qásim Sháyiq was born in 1940, and studied history at university. He worked for the government for a number of years, but was dismissed after the Revolution because he was a Bahá'í.

Mr. Sháyiq was imprisoned on 13 February 1984, and held without trial. In early 1987 the authorities promised his family that he and the other Bahá'ís in the prison would be released, but a few days later, on 3 March

1987, Abu'l-Qásim Sháyiq and Surúsh Jabbárí were both executed, and their deaths were kept secret until after they were buried.

Mr. Ardishír Akhtarí, 28 Sept. 1987, Ṭihrán, Executed

Ardishír Akhtarí was born in September 1937 in Tabríz, but his family moved to Ṭihrán while he was still a baby. When he was about 15 years old he lost his father and had to leave school to work for a living. He was employed in a factory while continuing his studies and eventually received his master's degree in accounting.

In 1965, Mr. Akhtarí married Vajihih Ẓaríf-Zádih and the couple had two children. He still kept up his Bahá'í administrative work, however, and became well known for his diligence. He was also known for his lack of pretension, and for his straightforwardness. He would not do things he thought were incorrect in order to please others, nor say things that he did not intend to do. Also, he had a reputation for never doing anything for personal gain that would hurt or cause discomfort for someone else.

Mr. Akhtarí had a good job in the National Insurance Company, as the head of the Aviation Department, but was fired after the Revolution for being a Bahá'í. He was intelligent and hard working, with a pure and kindly heart who served his family, community, and country all his life.

He served on different local and national Bahá'í committees and as a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Ṭihrán. He was a member of the last National Spiritual Assembly when it was dissolved in September 1983. He was arrested in early September 1984 in Ṭihrán. He spent three years and fifteen days in prison, then was executed on 28 September 1987.

Mr. Amír-Ḥusayn Nádirí, 28 Sept. 1987, Ṭihrán, Executed

Amír-Ḥusayn Nádirí was born in Yazd in 1934, into a very distinguished Bahá'í family. His father was Janáb-i-Siyyid Maḥmúd Nádirí from the descendants of Vaḥíd, and his mother was Qudsí Malakútíyán, the granddaughter of Ákhúnd Mullá 'Abdu'l-Ghaníy Ardikáni. During a period in Írán when there was great opposition to the Faith, the Local Spiritual Assembly of Yazd asked his family to be the custodians of the extensive facilities of the local Bahá'í Centre, so from a very young age Amír helped with its upkeep and related endeavours.

Amír-Ḥusayn was a talented student, both in school and in Bahá'í classes. He studied in Ṭihrán and later in Beirut, then worked for the government as an engineer with the Ministry of Health.

In 1969 he married Parí Gulzárí, and at the same time started to study accounting. He excelled in this field, and later was hired as a teacher in the accounting college. Next he took a position as Budget Specialist in the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. He was a respected senior staff member of the Ministry when the Revolution broke out but he was fired because he was a Bahá'í.

Mr. Nádirí was known for being a knowledgeable teacher, as well as for being an active member of the Bahá'í Faith. In 1982 he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly, and served under very difficult circumstances. He was arrested on 11 September 1984 with several others who had been members of the last National Spiritual Assembly. He suffered torture and imprisonment until 28 September 1987, when he was executed in the Ivín Prison in Ṭihrán.

Mr. Íraj Afshín, 26 Nov. 1987, Ṭihrán, Executed

Íraj Afshín was born in 1933 in Ardistán, and was persecuted there as a child because his family was Bahá'í. He attended the Military Academy in Ṭihrán, where he was a distinguished student much admired by his fellow students and appreciated by the authorities. After graduation he served in the Iranian Army, being promoted to the rank of Colonel.

Mr. Afshín was a faithful and intelligent officer, a talented painter and musician, and

a dedicated member of the Bahá'í community. He was arrested on 29 January 1986 in Ṭihrán, suffered imprisonment for nine months, and was executed on 26 November 1987.

1988

Mr. Mihrdád Maqṣúdí, 6 Feb. 1988, Urúmiyyih, Killed

Mihrdád Maqṣúdí, son of Faḍlu'lláh and Ṭáhirih, was born into a Bahá'í family in Míyán-Duáb on 11 June 1964. He was a high school student when the persecution of Bahá'ís started in Míyán-Duáb, so his family sent him to Urúmíyyih to continue his education where he gained distinction in his work and studies.

During one of his school religion classes, his teacher started to denigrate the Bahá'í Faith so Mihrdád arose to defend it, thereby making himself the target of ridicule by the teacher and students. When he arrived home he received a note from the Revolutionary Guard demanding that he go to their center for questioning. Shortly thereafter, on 1 January 1986, he was arrested in the house of his uncle.

He was put in the political section of the prison in Urúmíyyih, then was taken to the prison in Tabríz. He was martyred on 6 February 1988, and his body was prepared for burial by the guard in the presence of his family. The guard burned Mihrdád's clothes.

His family pursued the case through the Justice Department, and on 10 April 1988 they were informed that the charges against him had been dropped under verdict No.31–35/67.

Mr. Bihnám Páshá'í, Autumn 1988, Ṭihrán, Executed

Bihnám Páshá'í was born in Ṭihrán in 1940, the son of Mokhtár from Ardibíl, one of the Ádhirbáyján Revolutionaries who later became a devoted Bahá'í. When he graduated from high school, Bihnám worked for the government in the Ministry of Health. He was a dedicated, loyal and trustworthy employee and also was very active in the Bahá'í community. He was very friendly and kind, sincere and patient. He lived a very simple life, but his whole being was faith in Bahá'u'lláh.

Mr. Páshá'í pioneered to Simnán and other difficult areas and suffered a great deal. At the beginning of the Revolution his house was set on fire and he was imprisoned for about a month in Sangsar. He lost his job for being a Bahá'í.

He was elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Simnán, and in 1983 he was arrested again with other Bahá'ís from that city. He was kept in Simnán's prison for seven months, five-and-a-half of these spent in solitary confinement, and then was transfered to the Ivín prison in Ṭihrán.

The Bahá'ís had a very hard time in Ivín prison and were transfered to a prison in Karaj. One year later, Mr. Páshá'í and other Bahá'ís were returned to Ivín. Although he suffered from poor health, he served everybody—especially the aged and sick prisoners. His other love was study of the Bahá'í Writings.

Mr. Páshá'í was imprisoned for almost five years, during at least one year of which he was forbidden to have visitors. He was martyred in prison during the autumn of 1988. The news was received on 3 December 1988.

1989

Mr. Gulvirdí Qandíyán, 7 Sept. 1989, Quruq/Gurgán, Killed

Gulvirdí Qandíyán was born in Sangsar in 1912, the son of Aḥmad and Máhbánú. He was educated in the old system and was a dairy farmer all of his life. He married Ḍíyá'iyyih Íqáníyán and they had eight children.

Mr. Qandíyán accepted the Bahá'í Faith when he was 23 years old, for which he was constantly reproached by his brothers and

other family members. In addition to this persecution from his family, Mr. Qandíyán became subject to public persecution from 1958 when, in response to the Ten Year Plan, he pioneered to Quruq, near Gurgán, and helped to establish the first Local Spiritual Assembly of that village. He was always confronted with problems regarding his work and the education of his children, but he never complained and persevered at his post.

After the Islamic Revolution in Írán, when all the Bahá'ís were faced with difficulties, Mr. Qandíyán's daughters begged him to leave his pioneering post, but he objected, stating that the worst that could happen would be for him to be killed, which he would accept gladly.

During the evening of 7 September 1989, a group of strangers came into his home, tied up his wife with a piece of rope, then strangled Mr. Qandíyán while he was asleep in his own bed.

1992

Mr. Bahman Samandarí, 18 March 1992, Ṭihrán, Executed

Bahman Samandarí was born on 8 November 1939 in Karaj, near Ṭihrán. He was a descendant of two distinguished Bahá'í families who had been closely associated with the history of the Faith from its earliest days.

Mr. Samandarí received his primary and most of his secondary education in Ṭihrán between 1945 and 1954. He graduated from college and completed the first two years of university in the United States of America. In 1969 he obtained a degree in economics and management from the American College in Ankara, Turkey.

He spent most of his professional life (from 1962 to 1965 and from 1969 to 1977) with the Samandarí Travel Agency in Ṭihrán. In 1991, he was engaged as the accountant of a modest elementary health centre in Ṭihrán. Later he joined the trading department of a textile company in the same city.

On 21 October 1987, Mr. Samandarí and four other Bahá'ís were arrested for meeting in his home. At that time the charges leveled against him stemmed from his membership in the Bahá'í community. He and his fellow prisoners were released on 18 December 1987, after the title to Mr. Samandarí's home had been turned over to the authorities along with a large sum of money as bail.

On 17 March 1992, Mr. Samandarí was summoned by the authorities, ostensibly to receive a document from them. When he did not return home his wife went to look for him. Two weeks later the authorities finally handed her his last will and testament, dated 18 March 1992. He is survived by his wife, Roza, their son 'Azízu'lláh, and their daughter, Nidá. No reason for his execution has been given by the judicial or prison authorities, nor have they disclosed the location of his grave.



BAHÁ'ÍS KILLED IN ÍRÁN
(1978–20 APRIL 1992)

ALL praise be to God Who, from every drop of blood shed by His chosen ones, hath brought forth a vast creation whose number none but Himself can reckon. He hath raised them to be the embodiments of His love and the manifestations of His tender affection. It is they who are the hands of His Cause amongst men. It is they who have rendered aid unto God in every age and have arisen to promote that which He hath purposed in such wise that the majesty of the kings and their dreadful might have failed to affright them, nor have they been hindered from following the path of truth by the clash of arms and the furious clamour of battalions. They have raised their triumphal cry amidst all that dwell in the heavens and on the earth, summoning everyone unto the Lord of all mankind, He Who is the Ruler of this world and of the next, the God of the throne on high and of the earth below.

He is God – Blessed and Exalted is He

ALL praise unto the Almighty the Sanctified—glorified be His power—Who hath ordained that the tyranny of the unjust and the violence of the oppressors should become the means whereby the true lovers draw nigh unto the glorious habitation of the Best Beloved and the sincere among His servants attain the Paradise of communion with Him Who is the Desire of all men, and that sufferings and tribulations should serve as the instrument whereby His Word of command is spread abroad and the standards of His praise are unfurled in all regions.

How great is His transcendent power, how immensely exalted His all-embracing Will, inasmuch as He produceth light from fire and joy from sorrow.

They that are sunk in heedlessness fondly imagine that massacre and crucifixion cause the fire of the Word of God to be extinguished, and regard martyrdom as a devastating injury. They are utterly oblivious of the truth that through such afflictions the Cause of God is exalted, its fame is blazoned far and wide, and the martyrs themselves are enabled to attain the boundless retreats of nearness unto God. Immeasurably exalted is the Lord of Wisdom who doeth that which He willeth and ordaineth whatsoever He pleaseth.

Blessed is he who hath laid down his life in My path and hath borne manifold hardships for the sake of My Name. —Bahá'u'lláh

Note: This list, based on information received at the Bahá'í World Centre subsequent to the publication of *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVIII (1979–1983) and *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIX (1983–1986), corrects and supersedes that which appeared on pages 291–293 of the first volume, and 229–234 of the second.

The gathering of biographical and other information about the martyrs, and their photographs, is an ongoing process of vital interest to the Bahá'í World Centre. Although many of the martyrs served at various times as members of Bahá'í institutions, an effort has been made to identify the kind of services they were performing at the time of arrest and execution, as indicated by the following key:

- •• denotes member of the Continental Board of Counsellors, an appointed leadership position which oversees the Auxiliary Board members.
- • denotes member of the Auxiliary Board, an appointed leadership position within the Bahá'í administrative framework.
- ** denotes member of the National Spiritual Assembly, an elected leadership position at the national level.
- * denotes member of the Local Spiritual Assembly, an elected leadership position at the local level.

No.	*Name/Role*	*Date*	*Place where martyrdom occurred*
		1978	
1.	Mr. Aḥmad Ismá'ílí	1978	Ahram, Búshihr
2.	Mr. Ḍíyá'u'lláh Ḥaqíqat	13 Aug.1978	Jahrum, Fárs
3.	Mrs. 'Avaḍ-Gul Fahandizh	14 Dec.1978	Shíráz, Fárs
4.	Mr. Ṣifátu'lláh Fahandizh	14 Dec.1978	Shíráz, Fárs
		1979	
5.	Mr. Khusraw Afnání	1 Jan.1979	Míyán-Duáb, Ádhirbáyján
6.	Mr. Parvíz Afnání	1 Jan.1979	Míyán-Duáb, Ádhirbáyján
7.	Mr. Ibráhím Ma'naví	early 1979	Ḥiṣár, Khurásán
8.	Mr. Ḥájí-Muḥammad 'Azízí	9 Jan. 1979	Khurmúj, Bushihr
9.	Mr. 'Alí-Akbar Khursandí *	12 Apr.1979	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
10.	Mr. Shír-Muḥammad Dast Písh	9 May 1979	Buyr-Aḥmad, Iṣfahán
11.	Mr. Bahár Vujdání	27 Sep.1979	Mahábád, Ádhirbáyján
12.	Mr. 'Alí Sattárzádih	24 Oct.1979	Búkán, Ádhirbáyján



Blessed is he who hath laid down his life in My path and hath borne manifold hardships for the sake of My Name. —Bahá'u'lláh

No.	*Name/Role*	*Date*	*Place where martyrdom occurred*
13.	Mr. Ḥusayn Shakúrí	5 Nov.1979	Ushnavíyyih, Ádhirbáyján
14.	Mr. 'Aẓamatu'lláh Fahandizh	27 Nov.1979	Shíráz, Fárs
	1980		
15.	Mr. Ḥabíbu'lláh Panáhí	4 Feb.1980	Urúmíyyih, Ádhirbáyján
16.	Mr. Ghulám-Ḥusayn A'ẓamí	6 May 1980	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
17.	Mr. 'Alí-Akbar Mu'íní	6 May 1980	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
18.	Mr. Badí'u'lláh Yazdání	6 May 1980	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
19.	Mr. Parvíz Bayání	11 May 1980	Píránshahr
20.	Mr. Mír-Asadu'lláh Mukhtárí	18 May 1980	Andrún, Khurásán
21.	Mr. Ḥasan Ismá'ílzádih	Jun.1980	Sanandaj, Kurdistan
22.	Mr. Yúsuf Subḥání	10 Jun.1980	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
23.	Mr. Yadu'lláh Ástání *	14 Jul.1980	Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján
24.	Dr. Farámarz Samandarí *	14 Jul.1980	Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján
25.	Mr. Muḥammad Akbarí	16 Jul.1980	Rasht, Mázindarán
26.	Mr. Yadu'lláh Maḥbúbíyán	30 Jul.1980	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
27.	Mr. Dhabíḥu'lláh Mu'mení	15 Aug.1980	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
28.	Mr. Núru'lláh Akhtar-Khávarí •	8 Sep.1980	Yazd, Yazd
29.	Mr. 'Azízu'lláh Dhabíḥíyán •	8 Sep.1980	Yazd, Yazd
30.	Mr. Firaydún Farídání •	8 Sep.1980	Yazd, Yazd
31.	Mr. Maḥmúd Ḥasanzádih	8 Sep.1980	Yazd, Yazd
32.	Mr. 'Abdu'l-Vahháb Káẓimí-Manshádí	8 Sep.1980	Yazd, Yazd
33.	Mr. Jalál Mustaqím *	8 Sep.1980	Yazd, Yazd
34.	Mr. 'Alí Muṭahharí *	8 Sep.1980	Yazd, Yazd
35.	Mr. Riḍá Fírúzí	9 Nov.1980	Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján
36.	Mr. Muḥammad-Ḥusayn Ma'ṣúmí	23 Nov.1980	Núk, Bírjand
37.	Mrs. Shikkar-Nisá' Ma'ṣúmí	23 Nov.1980	Núk, Bírjand
38.	Mr. Bihrúz Saná'í	17 Dec.1980	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
	1981		
39.	Dr. Manúchihr Ḥakím **	12 Jan.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
40.	Mr. Mihdí Anvarí	17 Mar.1981	Shíráz, Fárs
41.	Mr. Hidáyatu'lláh Dihqání	17 Mar.1981	Shíráz, Fárs
42.	Mrs. Núráníyyih Yárṣháṭir	Apr. 1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
43.	Mr. Sattár Khushkhú	30 Apr.1981	Shíráz, Fárs

Blessed is he who hath laid down his life in My path and hath borne manifold hardships for the sake of My Name. —Bahá'u'lláh

No.	*Name/Role*	*Date*	*Place where martyrdom occurred*
44.	Mr. Iḥsánu'lláh Mihdí-Zádih	30 Apr.1981	Shíráz, Fárs
45.	Mr. Yadu'lláh Vaḥdat •	30 Apr.1981	Shíráz, Fárs
46.	Mr. Muḥammad (Suhráb) Ḥabíbí *	14 Jun.1981	Hamadán, Hamadán
47.	Mr. Muḥammad-Báqir (Suhayl) Ḥabíbí *	14 Jun.1981	Hamadán, Hamadán
48.	Mr. Ḥusayn Khándil *	14 Jun.1981	Hamadán, Hamadán
49.	Mr. Ṭarázu'lláh Khuzayn *	14 Jun.1981	Hamadán, Hamadán
50.	Mr. Ḥusayn Muṭlaq *	14 Jun.1981	Hamadán, Hamadán
51.	Dr. Fírúz Na'ímí *	14 Jun.1981	Hamadán, Hamadán
52.	Dr. Náṣir Vafá'í *	14 Jun.1981	Hamadán, Hamadán
53.	Mr. Buzurg 'Alavíyán *	23 Jun.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
54.	Mr. Háshim Farnúsh •*	23 Jun.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
55.	Mr. Farhang Mavaddat *	23 Jun.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
56.	Dr. Masíḥ Farhangí ••	24 Jun.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
57.	Mr. Badí'u'lláh Faríd	24 Jun.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
58.	Mr. Yadu'lláh Pústhí	24 Jun.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
59.	Mr. Varqá Tibyániyán (Tibyání)	24 Jun.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
60.	Mr. Kamálu'd-Dín Bakhtávar	26 Jul.1981	Mashhad, Khurásán
61.	Mr. Ni'matu'lláh Kátibpúr-Shahídí	26 Jul.1981	Mashhad, Khurásán
62.	Mr. 'Abdu'l-'Alí Asadyárí *	29 Jul.1981	Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján
63.	Mr. Ḥusayn Asadu'lláh-Zádih *	29 Jul.1981	Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján
64.	Mr. Mihdí Báhirí *	29 Jul.1981	Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján
65.	Dr. Masrúr Dakhílí *	29 Jul.1981	Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján
66.	Dr. Parvíz Fírúzí *	29 Jul.1981	Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján
67.	Mr. Manúchihr Khádí'í *	29 Jul.1981	Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján
68.	Mr. Alláh-Virdí Mítháqí	29 Jul.1981	Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján
69.	Mr. Ḥabíbu'lláh Taḥqíqí *	29 Jul.1981	Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján
70.	Mr. Ismá'íl Zihtáb *	29 Jul.1981	Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján
71.	Mr. Ḥusayn Rastigár-Námdár	5 Aug.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
72.	Mr. Ḥabíbu'lláh 'Azízí *	29 Aug.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
73.	Mr. Bahman 'Áṭifí	11 Sep.1981	Dáryún, Iṣfahán
74.	Mr. 'Izzat 'Áṭifí	11 Sep.1981	Dáryún, Iṣfahán
75.	Mr. Aḥmad Riḍvání	11 Sep.1981	Dáryún, Iṣfahán
76.	Mr. 'Aṭá'u'lláh Rawḥání	11 Sep.1981	Dáryún, Iṣfahán
77.	Mr. Gushtásb Thábit-Rásikh	11 Sep.1981	Dáryún, Iṣfahán
78.	Mr. Yadu'lláh Sipihr-Arfa'	23 Oct.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán



Blessed is he who hath laid down his life in My path and hath borne manifold hardships for the sake of My Name. —Bahá'u'lláh

No.	*Name/Role*	*Date*	*Place where martydom occurred*
79.	Mr. Mihdí Amín Amín **	27 Dec.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
80.	Mr. Jalál 'Azízí **	27 Dec.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
81.	Dr. 'Izzatu'lláh Furúhí •**	27 Dec.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
82.	Mrs. Zhínús Ni'mat Maḥmúdí •**	27 Dec.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
83.	Dr. Maḥmúd Majdhúb **	27 Dec.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
84.	Mr. Qudratu'lláh Rawḥání **	27 Dec.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
85.	Dr. Sírús Rawshaní **	27 Dec.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
86.	Mr. Kámrán Ṣamímí **	27 Dec.1981	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
	1982		
87.	Mrs. Shívá Maḥmúdí Asadu'lláh-Zádih *	4 Jan.1982	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
88.	Mr. Iskandar 'Azízí *	4 Jan.1982	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
89.	Mrs. Shídrukh Amír-Kíyá (Baqá)	4 Jan.1982	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
90.	Mr. Fatḥu'lláh Firdawsí *	4 Jan.1982	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
91.	Mr. Khusraw Muhandisí *	4 Jan.1982	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
92.	Mr. Kúrush Ṭalá'í *	4 Jan.1982	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
93.	Mr. 'Aṭá'u'lláh Yávarí *	4 Jan.1982	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
94.	Mr. Ibráhím Khayrkháh	22 Feb.1982	Bábul-Sar, Mázindarán
95.	Mr. Ḥusayn Vaḥdat-i-Ḥaqq	28 Feb.1982	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
96.	Mr. 'Askar Muḥammadí	2 Apr.1982	Raḥímkhán, Ádhirbáyján
97.	Mr. Iḥsánu'lláh Khayyámí	12 Apr.1982	Urúmíyyih, Ádhirbáyján
98.	Mr. 'Azízu'lláh Gulshaní	29 Apr.1982	Mashhad, Khurásán
99.	Mrs. Ishráqíyyih Farúhar *	8 May 1982	Karadj, Ṭihrán
100.	Mr. Maḥmúd Farúhar *	8 May 1982	Karadj, Ṭihrán
101.	Mr. Badí'u'lláh Ḥaqpaykar *	8 May 1982	Karadj, Ṭihrán
102.	Mr. Ágáhu'lláh Tízfahm	10 May 1982	Urúmíyyih, Ádhirbáyján
103.	Miss Jalálíyyih Mushta'il-Uskú'í	10 May 1982	Urúmíyyih, Ádhirbáyján
104.	Mrs. Írán Raḥímpúr (Khurmá'í)	12 May 1982	Dizfúl, Khuzistán
105.	Mr. Naṣru'lláh Amíní *	16 May 1982	Kháníábád, Ṭihrán
106.	Mr. Sa'du'lláh Bábázádih *	16 May 1982	Kháníábád, Ṭihrán
107.	Mr. 'Aṭá'u'lláh Ḥaqqání	1 Jun 1982	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
108.	Mr. Muḥammad 'Abbásí *	9 Jul.1982	Qazvín, Ṭihrán
109.	Mr. Jadídu'lláh Ashraf *	9 Jul.1982	Qazvín, Ṭihrán
110.	Mr. Manúchihr Farzánih-Mu'ayyad *	9 Jul.1982	Qazvín, Ṭihrán
111.	Mr. Muḥammad Manṣúrí *	9 Jul.1982	Qazvín, Ṭihrán



Blessed is he who hath laid down his life in My path and hath borne manifold hardships for the sake of My Name. —Bahá'u'lláh

No.	*Name/Role*	*Date*	*Place where martyrdom occurred*
112.	Mr. Manúchihr Vafá'í	9 Jul.1982	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
113.	Mr. 'Abbás-'Alí Ṣádiqípúr	15 Jul.1982	Shíráz, Fárs
114.	Mr. 'Alí Na'ímíyán	11 Aug.1982	Urúmíyyih, Ádhirbáyján
115.	Mr. Ḥabíbu'lláh Awjí	16 Nov.1982	Shíráz, Fárs
116.	Dr. Dhíyá'u'lláh Aḥrárí *	21 Nov.1982	Shíráz, Fárs
117.	Mr. Ḥusayn Nayyírí-Iṣfahání	29 Nov.1982	Iṣfahán, Iṣfahán
118.	Mrs. Guldánih 'Alípúr	24 Dec.1982	Sárí, Mázindarán
	1983		
119.	Mr. Hidáyatu'lláh Síyávushí *	1 Jan.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
120.	Mr. Yadu'lláh Maḥmúdnizhád * •	12 Mar.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
121.	Mr. Raḥmatu'lláh Vafá'í *	12 Mar.1983	Marvdasht, Fárs
122.	Mrs. Ṭúbá Zá'irpúr	12 Mar.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
123.	Mr. 'Aḍadu'lláh ('Azíz) Zaydí	1 Apr.1983	Míyán-Duáb, Ádhirbáyján
124.	Mr. Jalál Ḥakímán	1 May 1983	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
125.	Mr. Suhayl Ṣafá'í	1 May 1983	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
126.	Dr. Bahrám Afnán *	16 Jun.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
127.	Mr. 'Abdu'l-Ḥusayn Ázádí *	16 Jun.1983	Akbarábád, Fárs
128.	Mr. Kúrush Ḥaqqbín *	16 Jun.1983	Marvdasht, Fárs
129.	Mr. 'Ináyatu'lláh Ishráqí	16 Jun.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
130.	Mr. Jamshíd Síyávushí *	16 Jun.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
131.	Mr. Bahrám Yaldá'í	16 Jun.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
132.	Miss Shahín (Shírín) Dálvand	18 Jun.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
133.	Mrs. 'Izzat Jánamí Ishráqí	18 Jun.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
134.	Miss Ru'yá Ishráqí	18 Jun.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
135.	Miss Muná Maḥmúdnizhád	18 Jun.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
136.	Miss Zarrín Muqímí-Abyánih	18 Jun.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
137.	Miss Mahshíd Nírúmand	18 Jun.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
138.	Miss Símín Ṣábirí	18 Jun.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
139.	Mrs. Ṭáhirih Arjumandí Síyávushí	18 Jun.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
140.	Miss Akhtar Thábit	18 Jun.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
141.	Mrs. Nuṣrat Ghufrání Yaldá'í *	18 Jun.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
142.	Mr. Aḥmad-'Alí Thábit-Sarvistání	30 Jun.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
143.	Mr. Muḥammad Ishráqí •	31 Aug.1983	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
144.	Mr. Akbar Ḥaqíqí	21 Sep.1983	Khuy, Ádhirbáyján

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No.	*Name/Role*	*Date*	*Place where martyrdom occurred*
145.	Mr. Suhayl Húshmand	29 Sept.1983	Shíráz, Fárs
146.	Mr. Bahman Dihqání	19 Nov.1983	Muḥammadíyyih, Iṣfahán
147.	Mr. 'Abdu'l-Majíd Muṭahhar	15 Dec.1983	Iṣfahán, Iṣfahán
		1984	
148.	Mr. Raḥmatu'lláh Ḥakímán	11 Jan.1984	Kirmán, Kirmán
149.	Mr. Nuṣratu'lláh Ḍíyá'í	3 Mar.1984	Báft, Kirmán
150.	Mr. Muḥsin Raḍaví	4 Mar.1984	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
151.	Mr. Ghulám-Ḥusayn Ḥasanzádih-Shákíri	10 Mar.1984	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
152.	Mr. Kámrán Lutfí	9 Apr.1984	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
153.	Mr. Raḥím Raḥímíyán	9 Apr.1984	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
154.	Mr. Yadu'lláh Ṣábiríyán	9 Apr.1984	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
155.	Mr. Asadu'lláh Kámil-Muqaddam	2 May 1984	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
156.	Mr. Maqṣúd 'Alízádih	5 May 1984	Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján
157.	Mr. Jalál Payraví •	5 May 1984	Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján
158.	Mr. Jahángír Hidáyatí **	15 May 1984	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
159.	Mr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Zamání	15 May 1984	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
160.	Mr. Nuṣratu'lláh Vaḥdat	17 Jun. 1984	Mashhad, Khurásán
161.	Mr. Iḥsánu'lláh Kathírí	27 Jun.1984	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
162.	Dr. Manúchihr Rúḥí	16 Aug.1984	Bujnúrd, Khurásán
163.	Mr. Amínu'lláh Qurbánpúr	25 Aug.1984	near Ṭihrán
164.	Mr. Rustam Varjávandí	15 Sept.1984	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
165.	Mr. Shápúr (Húshang) Markazí	23 Sept.1984	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
166.	Mr. Fírúz Purdil	30 Oct.1984	Mashhad, Khurásán
167.	Mr. Aḥmad Bashírí **	1 Nov.1984	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
168.	Mr. Yúnis Nawrúzí-Iránzád *	1 Nov.1984	Karadj, Ṭihrán
169.	Mr. 'Alíriḍá Níyákán	11 Nov.1984	Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján
170.	Mr. Ḍíyá'u'lláh Maní'i-Uskú'í	13 Nov.1984	Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján
171.	Dr. Farhád Aṣdaqí **	19 Nov.1984	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
172.	Mr. Fírúz Aṭharí *	9 Dec.1984	Karadj, Ṭihrán
173.	Mr. Ghulám-Ḥusayn Farhand *	9 Dec.1984	Karadj, Ṭihrán
174.	Mr. 'Ináyatu'lláh Ḥaqíqí *	9 Dec.1984	Karadj, Ṭihrán
175.	Mr. Jamál Káshání *	9 Dec.1984	Karadj, Ṭihrán
176.	Mr. Jamshíd Púr-Ustádkár *	9 Dec.1984	Karadj, Ṭihrán
177.	Dr. Rúḥu'lláh Ta'lím *	9 Dec.1984	Kirmánsháh

Blessed is he who hath laid down his life in My path and hath borne manifold hardships for the sake of My Name. —Bahá'u'lláh

No.	*Name/Role*	*Date*	*Place where martyrdom occurred*
		1985	
178.	Mr. Rúḥu'lláh Ḥaṣúrí•*	21 Jan.1985	Yazd, Yazd
179.	Mr. Rúḥu'lláh Bahrámsháhí *	25 Feb.1985	Yazd, Yazd
180.	Mr. Nuṣratu'lláh Subḥání	5 Mar.1985	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
181.	Mr. 'Abbás Ídilkhání	1 Aug.1985	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
182.	Mr. Raḥmatu'lláh Vujdání *	31 Aug.1985	Bandar-'Abbás
183.	Mr. Núru'd-Dín Ṭá'ifí	12 Oct.1985	Pahlavídizh, Mázindarán
184.	Mr. 'Azízu'lláh Ashjárí	19 Nov.1985	Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján
		1986	
185.	Mr. Paymán Subḥání	17 Apr.1986	Saráván
186.	Mr. Sirru'lláh Vaḥdat-Niẓámí	4 May 1986	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
187.	Mr. Fidrus Shabrukh	9 May 1986	Záhidán
188.	Mr. Faríd Bihmardí**	10 Jun 1986	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
189.	Mr. Ḥabíbu'lláh Muhtadí	27 Aug.1986	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
190.	Mr. Bábak Ṭálibí	2 Sep.1986	Karadj, Ṭihrán
191.	Íraj Mihdínizhád	4 Sep.1986	Bandar-'Abbás
		1987	
192.	Mr. Aḥmad Kávih	26 Jan.1987	Iṣfahán, Iṣfahán
193.	Mr. Surúsh Jabbárí	3 Mar.1987	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
194.	Mr. Abu'l-Qásim Sháyiq	3 Mar.1987	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
195.	Mr. Ardishír Akhtarí **	28 Sept.1987	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
196.	Mr. Amír-Ḥusayn Nádirí **	28 Sept.1987	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
197.	Íraj Afshín	26 Nov.1987	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
		1988	
198.	Mr. Mihrdád Maqṣúdí	6 Feb.1988	Urúmíyyih, Ádhirbáyján
199.	Mr. Bihnám Páshá'í*	Autumn 1988	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán
		1989	
200.	Mr. Gulvirdí Qandíyán	7 Sep.1989	Quruq, Mázindarán
		1992	
201.	Mr. Bahman Samandarí	18 Mar.1992	Ṭihrán, Ṭihrán



Blessed is he who hath laid down his life in My path and hath borne manifold hardships for the sake of My Name. —Bahá'u'lláh

BAHÁ'ÍS WHO DISAPPEARED WITHOUT TRACE IN ÍRÁN AND ARE PRESUMED DEAD (1979–20 APRIL 1992)

• denotes member of the Auxiliary Board
** denotes member of the National Spiritual Assembly

No.	*Name*	*Where Disappeared*	*Date Disappeared*
		1979	
1.	Mr. Muḥammad Muvaḥḥid	Ṭihrán	24 May 1979
2.	Dr. 'Alímurád Dávúdí	Ṭihrán	11 November 1979
		1980	
3.	Mr. Rúhí Rawshaní	Ṭihrán	3 January 1980
4.	Mr. 'Abdu'l-Ḥusayn Taslímí **	Ṭihrán	21 August 1980
5.	Mr. Húshang Maḥmúdí **	Ṭihrán	21 August 1980
6.	Mr. Ibráhím Raḥmání **	Ṭihrán	21 August 1980
7.	Dr. Ḥusayn Nají **	Ṭihrán	21 August 1980
8.	Mr. Manúhir Qá'ím Maqámí **	Ṭihrán	21 August 1980
9.	Mr. 'Aṭá'u'lláh Muqarrabí **	Ṭihrán	21 August 1980
10.	Mr. Yúsif Qadímí **	Ṭihrán	21 August 1980
11.	Mrs. Bahíyyih Nádirí **	Ṭihrán	21 August 1980
12.	Dr. Kámbíz Ṣadiqzádih **	Ṭihrán	21 August 1980
13.	Dr. Yúsif 'Abbásíyán •	Ṭihrán	21 August 1980
14.	Dr. Ḥishmatu'lláh Rawḥání •	Ṭihrán	21 August 1980



Sirru'lláh Vaḥdat-Niẓámí



Fidrus Shabrukh



Farid Bihmardi



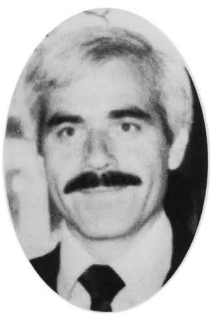
Bábak Ṭálibí



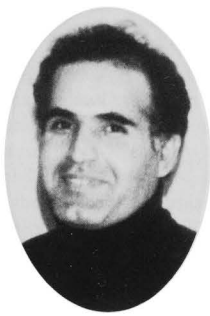
Íraj Mihdínizhád



Aḥmad Kávih



Surúsh Jabbárí



Abu'l-Qásim Sháyiq



Ardishír Akhtarí



Amír-Ḥusayn Nádirí



Mihrdád Maqṣúdí



Bihnám Pásh<u>á</u>'í



Gulvirdí Qandíyán



Bahman Samandarí

E. RESPONSE OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO THE PERSECUTION OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS 1980–20 APRIL 1992

Since 1980, human rights organs of the United Nations have been expressing concern about the tragic situation of the Bahá'í religious minority in Írán. This demonstration of international concern has played a critical role in moderating the actions of the Iranian authorities and providing a measure of security to the Bahá'í community.

In 1985 the General Assembly had the issue on its agenda for the first time. It adopted a resolution which expressed deep concern about the human rights situation in Írán and decided to continue its examination of the situation, "including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís...".

A summary history of this issue at the United Nations is outlined below:

1980

Resolution 10 (XXXIII) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities expresses profound concern for the Bahá'ís both individually and collectively, and invites the Government of Írán to protect their fundamental human rights and freedoms.

1981

Resolution 8 (XXXIV) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities draws attention of the Commission on Human Rights to the perilous situation facing the Bahá'ís and requests the Secretary-General to report on their plight to the next session of the Commission.

1982

Resolution 1982/27 of the Commission on Human Rights notes the Secretary-General's report on the Bahá'ís and requests him to establish direct contacts with the Government of Írán and to continue his efforts to ensure the Bahá'ís full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Grave concern for the Bahá'í minority was expressed by members of the Human Rights Committee at its 16th session, when the Committee discussed with representatives of the Iranian Government the preliminary report submitted by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Írán in accordance with its reporting obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Resolution 1982/25 of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities recalls its earlier resolutions on the plight of the Bahá'ís and expresses its continuing concern at human rights violations in Írán.

1983

Resolution 1983/34 of the Commission on Human Rights expresses its profound concern at the religious persecution of the Bahá'ís and requests the Secretary-General to continue his direct contacts with the Government of Írán on the human rights situation in that country, "including the situation of the Bahá'ís".

Resolution 1983/14 of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities expresses its grave concern at the continuing religious persecution of the Bahá'ís and suggests that the Commission on Human Rights appoint a Special Rapporteur to study the human rights situation in Írán.

1984

Resolution 1984/54 of the Commission on Human Rights expresses its concern for the Bahá'í minority and requests its Chairman to

appoint a Special Representative to establish contacts with the Government of Írán and to make a thorough study of the human rights of Írán.

Decision 1984/138 of the Economic and Social Council endorses the Commission's decision to appoint a Special Representative.

Resolution 1984/14 of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities expresses alarm at the continuing gross violations of human rights in Írán, including the religious persecution of the Bahá'ís, and welcomes the Commission's decision to appoint a Special Representative.

1985

Preliminary Report of the Special Representative to the Commission on Human Rights expresses great concern at the number and gravity of alleged violations of human rights in Írán, including denial of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Resolution 1985/39 of the Commission on Human Rights endorses the general observations of its Special Representative, expresses its deep concern at the number and gravity of alleged violations of human rights to which his preliminary report bears witness, extends his mandate, and requests him "...to present an interim report to the General Assembly at its fortieth session on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Írán, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís...".

Decision 1985/148 of the Economic and Social Council endorses the Commission's decision.

Resolution 1985/17 of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities welcomes the Commission's decision, expresses its alarm at the continuing reports of gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Írán, "in particular at the evidence of persecution of the Bahá'í religious minority...", endorses the general observations of the Special Representative in his preliminary report, and expresses the hope that the initial contacts of the Government of Írán with the Special Representative will develop into a positive cooperation.

Resolution 40/141 of the General Assembly

> Expresses its deep concern over the specific and detailed allegations of violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Írán to which the Special Representative refers in his interim report, and in particular, those related to the right to life, such as summary and arbitrary executions; the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the right to liberty and security of person and to freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention; the right to a fair trial; the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and to freedom of expression; and the right of religious minorities to profess and practice their own religion (operative paragraph 2):
>
> Decides to continue its examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Írán, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís, during its forty-first session in order to examine this situation anew in the light of additional elements provided by the Commission of Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council (operative paragraph 8).

1986

Resolution 1985/41 of the Commission on Human Rights "expresses its deep concern over the specific and detailed allegations of grave human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Írán to which the Special Representative refers in his report"; endorses his conclusion that "specific and detailed allegations concerning grave human rights violations" in Írán cannot be dismissed; decides to extend the mandate of the Commission's Special Representative and requests him to present an interim report on the situation, "including the situation of minority

groups such as the Bahá'ís" to the General Assembly at its forty-first session and a final report to the Commission at its forty-third session in 1987.

Decision 1986/137 of the Economic and Social Council approves the Commission's decision to extend the Special Representative's mandate and its request to the Special Representative to submit reports to the forty-first session of the General Assembly and the forty-third session of the Commission.

It was announced on 14 July 1986 that, in response to this request, the Chairman of the Commission had appointed Mr. Reynaldo Galindo Pohl to serve as the Special Representative of the Commission.

Resolution 41/159 of the General Assembly

> Expresses its deep concern over the specific and detailed allegations of violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Írán and in particular over those related to the right to life, such as summary and arbitrary executions, the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person and to freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention, the right to a fair trial, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and to freedom of expression and the right of religious minorities to profess and practice their own religion;
>
> Requests the Commission on Human Rights to study carefully the final report of the Special Representative, as well as other information pertaining to the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Írán, and to consider further steps for securing effective respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in that country;
>
> Decides to continue its examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Írán including the situation of minority groups such as the Baha'is, during its forty-second session....

1987

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1987/55 (11.3.1987) of the Commission on Human Rights recalling its resolution 1986/41, extends the mandate of the Special Representative for one year; requests him to present an interim report on the human rights situation including the situation of minority groups, such as the Bahá'ís; regrets "that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Írán has so far provided no comment or information to the Special Representative and has not allowed him to visit the country"; again expresses "its deep concern over the numerous and detailed allegations of grave and extensive human rights violations to which the Special Representative refers in his report (E/CN.4/1987/23) and in particular, those related to the right to life, the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person and to freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention, the right to a fair trial, the right to freedom of thought; conscience and religion and to freedom of expression, and the right of religious minorities to profess and practice their own religion"; requests "the Special Representative to present an interim report to the General Assembly, at its forty-second session on human rights in the Islamic Republic of Írán, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís...".

Decision 1987/150 of ECOSOC approves the Commission's decision to extend the Special Representative's mandate.

Resolution E/CN.4/Sub.2/RES/1987/12 (1.9.1987) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities refers to "various resolutions and documents published by other international bodies and organizations including resolutions ratified by the European Parliament and Council of Europe...all of which have expressed great concern over the violations of human rights and violation of the most basic rights of the ethnic and religious minorities..."; learns "with renewed concern that

the number of those allegedly executed by the ruling Government, including Bahá'ís and others, now exceeds 70,000..."; expresses "strong concern over the grave violations of human rights and basic freedom such as...the "right to freedom of belief and religion..."; urges "determined protest by the Commission to the Islamic Republic of Írán concerning continuing disrespect for the Charter of the United Nations in relation to human rights"; and "requests the Secretary-General to inform the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and its Special Representative of the information obtained from the Sub-Commission on the grave violation of human rights and the most basic freedoms in the Islamic Republic of Írán".

Resolution 42/136 (7.12.1987) of the General Assembly takes note of the Commission's resolution 1987/55 requesting the Special Representative "to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its forty-second session on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Írán, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís..."; again expresses "its deep concern about the numerous and detailed allegations of grave human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Írán to which the Special Representative had referred in his report, namely, those related to the right to life, the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person, and to freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention, the right to a fair trial, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and to freedom of expression, and the right of religious minorities to profess and practice their own religion"; expresses "its grave concern, in particular, that although the Special Representative indicates that the number of alleged violations of the right to life has diminished over the past two years, according to information made available to him, some one hundred persons were alleged to have been executed in the period October 1986–September 1987 because of their political and religious convictions"; expresses "its deep concern at allegations that maltreatment and torture, both physical and psychological, are common practice in Iranian prisons during interrogation and before and after the final verdict, and at the existence of extremely summary and informal proceedings, unawareness on the part of the prisoners of specific accusations, lack of legal counsel and other irregularities with respect to fair trial"; endorses "the conclusion of the Special Representative that acts continue to occur in the Islamic Republic of Írán that are inconsistent with the provisions of international instruments..."; decides "to keep under consideration the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Írán, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís, during its forty-third session...".

1988

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1988/69 (10.3.1988) of the Commission on Human Rights recalls its decision to request the Special Representative to present an interim report to the General Assembly on the human rights situation including the situation of minority groups, such as the Bahá'ís; expresses "again its deep concern about the numerous detailed allegations of grave human rights violations...in particular those related to the right to life...the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and to freedom of expression..."; requests "the Special Representative to present an interim report to the General Assembly at its forty-third session on the human rights situation, including the situation of minority groups, such as the Bahá'ís, and a final report to the Commission at its forty-fifth session".

Decision 1988/137 of ECOSOC approves the Commission's decision to extend the Special Representative's mandate. This decision refers also to Commission resolution 1984/54.

Resolution 43/137 (8.12.1988) of the General Assembly takes note of the Commission's

resolution 1988/69 requesting the Special Representative "to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its forty-third session on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Írán, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís..."; notes "the recent contacts between the Special Representative and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Írán, which it is hoped will lead to a state of full co-operation between the Special Representative and that Government, including a visit to the Islamic Republic of Írán, so that he can fulfil his mandate"; notes "that the Bahá'ís in the Islamic Republic of Írán continue to be subjected to various forms of harassment and discrimination, although there are indications that the intensity of the campaign of persecution against the Bahá'ís has diminished somewhat in recent months, and that a number of them have been released from prison"; expresses once more "its deep concern about the numerous and detailed allegations of grave human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Írán to which the Special Representative had referred in his report, namely, those related to the right to life, the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person, the right to a fair trial and the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion"; expresses "its deep concern also at the existence of extremely summary, informal and irregular proceedings, failure to inform defendants of specific accusations against them, lack of legal council, absence of an appropriate instance for appeal and other irregularities that contravene international standards on fair trial"; endorses "the conclusion of the Special Representative that acts continue to occur in the Islamic Republic of Írán that are inconsistent with the provisions of international instruments..."; decides "to keep under consideration the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Írán, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís, during its forty-fourth session...".

1989

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1989/66 (7.3.1989) of the Commission on Human Rights recalling "...the situation of minority groups, such as the Bahá'ís..."; notes "that the situation of the Bahá'ís in the Islamic Republic of Írán continues to be uncertain"; expresses once more "its deep concern over the numerous and detailed allegations of grave and extensive human rights violations to which the Special Representative has referred in his reports, namely, those related to the right to life, the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person, the right to a fair trial and to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and expression"; requests "the Special Representative to present an interim report to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session on human rights situation in Írán, including the situation of minority groups, such as the Bahá'ís and a final report to the forty-sixth session of the Commission".

Resolution E/CN.4/Sub.2/RES/1989/10 (31.8.1989) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities takes note "of numerous reports by United Nations special rapporteurs and by NGOs,..."; concerned "also at reports of denial of rights of minorities to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own beliefs"; is "further concerned at reports about persecution and detention of members of the Bahá'í community in the Islamic Republic of Írán".

Resolution 44/163 (15.12.1989) of the General Assembly takes note "with appreciation of the interim report of the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights"; takes note "of the view of the Special Representative that, in order to achieve full co-operation between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Írán and the Special Representative, there is a need to proceed to another stage in the discharge of his mandate"; welcomes "the invitation by the Islamic Republic of Írán to the Special

Representative for him to visit that country"; decides "to continue its examination....during its forty-fifth session".

1990

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1990/79 (7.3.1990) of the Commission on Human Rights notes "the findings of the Special Representative on the situation of the Bahá'ís in the Islamic Republic of Írán"; expresses "its concern that testimony gathered by the Special Representative reiterated complaints about unlawful executions, torture, substitute prisoners, imprisonment beyond the period specified in the sentence, spontaneous decisions by low-ranking officials and the absence of council for defence as well as restrictions on the right to assemble..."; requests "the Special Representative to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Írán, including the situation of minority groups, such as the Bahá'ís, and a final report to the Commission at its forty-seventh session".

Decision 1990/243 of ECOSOC approves the Commission's decision to extend the Special Representative's mandate.

Resolution E/CN.4/Sub.2/RES/1990/9 (30. 8.1990) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities notes "that the situation of the Bahá'ís in the Islamic Republic of Írán continues to be uncertain"; expresses "its deep concern about the grave violations of human rights namely those related to the right to life, the right to freedom from torture and from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person, the right to a fair trial, and the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and expression..."; decides "to consider the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Írán, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'í, at its forty-third session".

Resolution 45/173 (18.12.1990) of the General Assembly noting "the findings of the Special Representative on the situation of the Bahá'ís in the Islamic Republic of Írán"; calls upon "the Islamic Republic of Írán to intensify its efforts to investigate and rectify the human rights issues raised by the Special Representative, in particular as regards the administration of justice and due process of law in order to comply with international instruments on human rights, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which the Islamic Republic of Írán is a party, and to ensure that all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including religious groups, enjoy the rights recognized in these instruments"; notes "that the co-operation of the Islamic Republic of Írán with the Special Representative has improved and has included replies by the Government to allegations that have been transmitted to it, and urges the Government to reply in detail to all allegations referred to by the Special Representative in his reports".

1991

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1991/82 (7.3.1991) of the Commission on Human Rights noting further "the findings of the Special Representative on the situation of the Bahá'ís in the Islamic Republic of Írán"; welcomes "the full cooperation extended by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Írán to the Special Representative, which has reached its highest level, as well as the intention of the Government to continue its full cooperation with the Special Representative"; requests "the Special Representative to maintain his contact and cooperation with the Government...and to report on further progress with regard to the recommendations contained in his report, on the basis of his mandate pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1984/54 of 14 March 1984"; also requests the Special Representative "to submit a report to be considered by the Commission which will consider the report with the view to its discontinuing the

mandate if there is further progress achieved regarding his recommendations".

Decision 1991/261 of ECOSOC approves the Commission's request to the Special Representative to maintain his contacts and cooperation with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Írán and to report on further progress.

Resolution E/CN.4/Sub.2/RES/1991/9 (23.8.1991) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities notes "that the situation of the Bahá'í community in the Islamic Republic of Írán continues to be a matter of great concern"; expresses "its deep concern at the escalating grave violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Írán, in particular of the right to life, the right to freedom from torture and from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person, the right to a fair trial and the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and expression, and calls upon the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-eighth session, to extend the mandate of the Special Representative and the monitoring of the situation of human rights"; decides "to consider the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Írán, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'í community, at its forty-fourth session".

1992

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1992/67 (4.3.1992) of the Commission on Human Rights takes note "with appreciation of the report of the Special Representative of the Commission (E/CN.4/1992/34) and the observations contained therein"; expresses "its deep concern at the continuing reports of violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Írán"; expresses "its concern more specifically at the main weaknesses, according to the Special Representative, of the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Írán, namely, the lack of guarantees of due process of law, discriminatory treatment of certain groups of citizens for reason of their religious beliefs, notably the Bahá'ís..."; welcomes "the fact that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Írán has permitted the Special Representative to visit the country and has continued to reply to allegations of human rights violations transmitted to it by the Special Representative"; calls upon the Government "to ensure that all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including religious groups, enjoy the rights recognized in the international instruments"; decides "to extend the mandate of the Special Representative requesting him to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session"; decides "to continue its consideration of the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Islamic Republic of Írán, as a matter of priority, at its forty-ninth session".

Decision 1992/239 of ECOSOC approves the Commission's decision to extend the Special Representative's mandate and its request to the Special Representative to submit an interim report to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly and a final report to the forty-ninth session of the Commission.



Participants in a Women's Institute held at the Regional Bahá'í Centre of LatriKunda, Gambia, in 1987.



International Council of Women delegates from Korea and India listen to a speaker during a reception held to honour Laura Dreyfus-Barney, a Bahá'í and a member of the ICW. The event took place on 6 July 1988 at the UNICEF House in Washington, D.C., as part of the celebrations of the one hundredth anniversary of the International Council of Women.

4. WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

In every age and cycle He hath, through the splendorous light shed by the Manifestations of His wondrous Essence, recreated all things...[1]

THE Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh has given us a new vision of what it means to be human; a whole new set of standards with which to view ourselves as men and women, and new ways of seeing the relationships between what 'Abdu'l-Bahá called the *"two wings of one bird"*[2] of humanity. *"In this Day,"* Bahá'u'lláh Wrote, *"the Hand of divine grace hath removed all distinctions. The servants of God and His handmaidens are regarded on the same plane."*[3]

This is the first time in religious history that a Manifestation of God has enunciated this principle, and from the Writings it is clear that before a Bahá'í World Commonwealth can be brought into being a fundamental change in the status of women needs to take place. 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated: *"...it is well established in history that where woman has not participated in human affairs, the outcomes have never attained a state of completion and perfection."*[4]

The key to raising the status of women—indeed the key to raising all people up to *"the greatness which might be theirs"*[5]—is education. *"Woman's lack of progress and proficiency has been due to her need of equal education and opportunity. Had she been allowed this equality, there is no doubt she would be the counterpart of man in ability and capacity. The happiness of mankind will be realized when women and men co-ordinate and advance equally, for each is the complement and helpmeet of the other."*[6]

During the Six Year Plan, Bahá'í communities sponsored or supported a wide range of educational activities as a way of promoting the equality of men and women, and helping to bring about the needed "organic change in the structure of present-day society...."[7]

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The most basic laws and ordinances of the Bahá'í Faith underscore the need people have for an education. For example: Bahá'ís are asked to read from the Sacred Scriptures each day, which requires literacy skills; are enjoined to seek truth independently, which requires thought processes free from superstition and imitation; and are instructed to engage in some occupation—some art, trade or the like, which requires job training. These laws and ordinances apply to all Bahá'ís, male and female.

In many parts of the world, for a variety of reasons, people have not received the education that would make it possible for them to comply with these laws. To help,

[1] Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976), p. 62.

[2] 'Abdu'l-Bahá. *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978), p. 302.

[3] Bahá'u'lláh, extract from a previously untranslated Tablet; cited in *Women*, compiled by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice, January 1986. p. 2.

[4] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 134.

[5] *Paris Talks: Addresses given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Paris in 1911–1912* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979), p. 133.

[6] *Promulgation*, p. 182.

[7] Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 43.



In Sarh, Chad, the "Roses Noires" women's group met regularly to learn prayers, discuss family problems, receive lessons in hygiene, and learn sewing and embroidery skills. Photo taken on 8 June 1988.

Bahá'ís have worked to found tutorial and other schools, launch rural development programmes, organize job training facilities, establish educational radio stations, operate agricultural and medical projects, and other development projects. Most of these endeavours have been designed for the whole community. However, because women have been oppressed in so many societies for so long, some projects have been specifically designed to help women gain confidence in their abilities and develop skills.

In Zambia, where only twenty per cent of girls receive basic education, a Bahá'í residential secondary school for girls named after the Hand of the Cause of God Músá Banání began development under the auspices of the William Mmutle Masehla Institute. This school was planned to offer a curriculum that would combine agricultural training with the University of Cambridge Exams Syndicate curriculum which would provide students with the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) at the end of grade twelve.

Promoting literacy among women was the focus of Bahá'í activities in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu, all of which reported either special literacy classes being held for women, or noted that women were making up a significant percentage of those attending classes open for anyone. The National Spiritual Assembly of India established more than two hundred tutorial schools during the Plan, many of which were attended by girls and women.

The New Era Development Institute, based in Maharashtra, implemented the Government of India's Ministry of Human Resources adult education programme. The effort introduced centres in sixty-one local communities and ran a series of evening classes that were largely attended by women. The subjects discussed included adult literacy and children's education, health care, hygiene, animal husbandry and tree planting. Instructors were from the communities themselves.

The Rabbani School Rural Development Project, located near Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh, centres on the Rabbani School and more than twenty villages in the immediate vicinity. Development of the school included programmes for formal and non-formal education, agriculture, animal husbandry and health. Development of villages includes the formation of women's groups, and cooperation in such ventures as land reclamation, nursery development, poultry farming, agriculture and veterinary services. Many women also attend sewing classes, which include a component of functional literacy.

The combination of literacy classes and training in income-producing skills is the cornerstone of the programmes run by the

Bahá'í Vocational Institute for Rural Women. Started in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, in 1983, the project soon included two sub-centres, one in Manipur and one in Jhabua. In November 1986, a third course was started in Kalyanpura. In addition to adult literacy, vocational skills including weaving, sewing, knitting and embroidery have been taught. The initiative won national recognition for the level of excellence it has sustained in its work.

Sixty women attended courses in sewing, cooking, child care and English held in Franceville, Gabon, during the Six Year Plan. In Ciskei, the Bahá'ís of Ngqumeya began a candle-making operation as an income-generating project for women. This effort was run as a cooperative enterprise, with part of the proceeds from each sale being returned to the group to purchase more wax. Following the early success of the initiative the women were invited by a government official to demonstrate their skills to other villages. In Sarh, Chad, the "Roses Noires" women's group met regularly to learn prayers, discuss family problems, receive lessons in hygiene, and to learn sewing and embroidery. The group functioned under the direction of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Sarh.

Women often took part in—and benefited from—Bahá'í development efforts focused on health and nutrition. For example, in Burkina Faso women made up about fifty per cent of the volunteers trained to serve their village communities as part of the Hygiene and Nutrition Education Project. Started in 1984, the Project continued throughout the Six Year Plan to give basic training in nutrition, sanitation and hygiene, as well first-aid training and access to a "pharmacy box" containing a number of basic medications in each village.

In Zambia, Primary Health Care training programmes for women were initiated in 1988: one-week courses were conducted in communities, while two-week courses were carried out at the William Mmutle Masehla Bahá'í Institute. In Nigeria, Bahá'í women promoted the use of soya bean products to provide protein for families that could not afford to include animal milk, eggs or meat in their daily diets.

In Haiti, more than four hundred and fifty mothers were trained in the areas of family welfare, education and health care. Materials used in this programme included those developed by the Ruhi Institute of Colombia, and the National Spiritual Assembly of Kenya.

In Tuvalu, the Bahá'í women's Nutrition and Home Gardening Programme operated continually during the Six Year Plan to help families improve their health and standard of living. It consisted of a vegetable garden competition among Bahá'í households in Funafuti in which each family grew nine vegetables. In Tonga, women started a vegetable, fowl and pig farm on Tongatapu in 1989, and in Malaysia women were the prime workers in the small vegetable plots operated by the Bahá'í community of Pengkalan Hulu, Perak.

In 1989, a Health Awareness Project was undertaken by the National Women's Committee of Malaysia. The objective was to provide health and child development education for the mothers and families in the selected low income areas, and to expose the mothers to the benefits of health and child development practices. The first phase of the Project was to reduce the incidence of scabies, lice and worm infection among the families, to attract women to the centres, and to establish good and lasting relationships. The undertaking not only achieved all its objectives, but led to further development initiatives including dental care and literacy classes.

The very innovative project entitled "Traditional Media as a Change Agent", which worked at the village level, has been described in the article on Bahá'í social and economic projects (see p. 179). The National Spiritual Assemblies of Bolivia, Cameroon, and Malaysia cooperated in this activity which



Richard and Mona Grieser, standing in the back row centre, with participants in the "Traditional Media as a Change Agent" project co-sponsored by the Bahá'í International Community and the United Nations Development Fund for Women. Sarawak, Malaysia; 1992.

was funded through the Bahá'í International Community by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The two-year enterprise commenced in October 1991. Bahá'í communities in Brazil and Nigeria also joined the project.

The initiative sought to improve the status of rural women by using traditional media of music, dance and drama to stimulate village-wide discussion of women's roles. Men were included in the consultation, and were asked to help identify factors which inhibited women from taking part in decision-making and other activities which would allow them to contribute positively to the growth of their families and their communities. Early results were very encouraging, with all participating villages responding positively to the challenge.

A women's conference on radio programming was held at the Guaymi Cultural Centre in Panama from 31 August to 2 September 1990, with the goal of consulting about broadcasting on Radio Bahá'í Panama in relation to topics of special interest to women, such as the equality of men and women and the education of children. About 150 people attended, with men working in the kitchen and taking care of the young children so that the women could attend the sessions. The status of women was the subject of discussions aired on other Bahá'í radio stations as well, in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile, the United States, and Liberia.

CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND PUBLICATIONS

The Bahá'í Writings discuss three types of education: *"material education"*, which teaches people how to improve their physical well-being; *"human education"*, which is concerned with knowledge of commerce, the sciences and arts; and *"spiritual or moral education"*, which addresses values.[1] If social and economic development projects are among the types of "material" and "human" education, conferences could be included as types of "spiritual" education as they help deepen our understanding of the Bahá'í dispensation.

Throughout the Six Year Plan, Bahá'í conferences, seminars and workshops for women took place worldwide. Whether held under the open skies of a village or in a metropolitan auditorium, women discussed issues pertinent to their roles as mothers, as peacemakers, and as vital members of society.

In 1988, international Bahá'í women's conferences were organized in North and South America, and in the Caribbean. The event which took place in Dallas, Texas, from 8 to 12 August was attended by more

[1] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1981, p. 8.



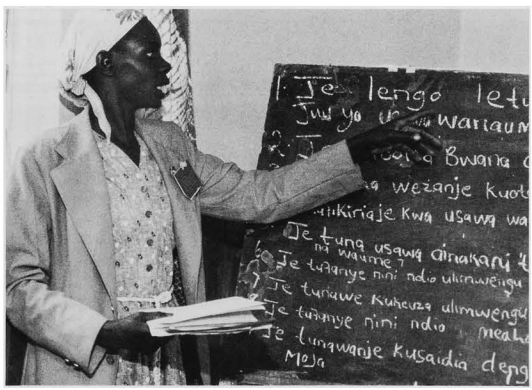
Left: In Luxembourg, the Bahá'í Women's Union organized a conference with concert held on 7 October 1988 and attended by about 130 people.

Below: In Mexico, Rosalinda Espinoza de Frazelle is talking about "Women and Peace" during a Bahá'í women's conference held in 1987.





Above: In Bangladesh, Mrs. Shirin Boman addresses a Bahá'í women's conference held in Dhaka in 1986.



Right: In Kenya, one of the friends makes a point during the National Bahá'í Women's Conference held in the Nakuru Bahá'í Centre in February 1989.

than one thousand women from sixty-five countries and all fifty states of the United States of America. Called "Global Peace, from Vision to Reality", the gathering was sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. The professionally organized programme included a daily schedule of workshops, talks, and working sessions on ways women could enhance their role in the global peace-making process. The meeting was widely publicized as reporters responded to its unusually diverse multiracial, multireligious quality which tangibly demonstrated the possibility of a peaceful global community.

One hundred and thirty women from seven nations of the Americas were welcomed to the International Women's Conference in Paraguay which opened on 15 July 1988. The gathering received full coverage for several days on both of the country's television channels and in all three national newspapers. Representatives of the United Nations helped to organize the programme, and the Minister of Education and Religion sent a message of welcome. Mrs. Isabel Pavon de Calderón, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors, commented that the conference was "writing the history of women in Latin America".

A strong feature of the Caribbean Women's Conference, held on the island of Antigua, in the Leeward Islands, from 9 to 11 September 1988, was that fifty percent of the participants were not Bahá'ís. The sessions attracted representatives from twelve countries and were given extensive news coverage.

The following year, Uruguay hosted an International Women's Conference that was described as "charged with enthusiasm". Conducted from 6 to 8 October 1989 in Montevideo, the occasion was co-sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly and the Ministry of Education and Culture. Approximately three hundred people from twelve countries took part, and messages of support were received from various Government authorities, Bahá'í institutions, and women's associations from other countries. The gathering was reported widely by the mass communications media.

The first initiative to form a European Bahá'í Women's Movement took place at De Poort Conference Centre in the Netherlands from 6 to 8 May 1988. Ten countries were represented by twenty-eight individuals, many of whom were members of National Bahá'í Women's Committees. Consultations were on ways the European Bahá'í communities could better understand the role of women.

As one result of these efforts, the Continental Board of Counsellors in Europe sponsored seven international women's conferences in 1990. The first took place in



Uruguay hosted an International Bahá'í Women's Conference co-sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly and the Ministry of Education and Culture and held in Montevideo from 6 to 8 October 1989.



A Pacific Bahá'í Women's Conference was held in Hilo, Hawaii, from 30 May to 7 June 1991, with seventy-six women from seventeen islands and countries bordering the Pacific basin taking part.

Iskenderun, Turkey, from 18 to 20 May, and its theme was "The Role of Women in the Faith". Participants came from many parts of Turkey and from other European countries, and the spirit reportedly was outstanding.

The second European women's conference was held in Fuscaldo Marina, Italy, from 8 to 10 June. The programme was excellent, the National Spiritual Assembly reported, and gave rise to participation in two ongoing teaching projects. One group of women went to Portici, Italy, to take part in intensive teaching activities there, while the other group travelled to Spain to join the teaching work among the Gypsies. "Both projects were carried out with great enthusiasm", the National Spiritual Assembly stated. Furthermore, the conference "incited the desire in the Bahá'í families to participate in teaching activities not only as individuals but as Bahá'í families".

The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum attended the European Bahá'í women's conferences held in Madrid, Spain, from 30 August to 3 September, with more than four hundred Bahá'ís from twenty countries attending, and in Bastia, Corsica, from 7 to 9 September, with about five hundred participants from fifteen countries. Publicity for the Faith was unprecedented in both countries.

The European conference for German-speaking women took place at Langenhain, Germany, on 6 and 7 October 1990, and the one for French-speaking women was held at the Bahá'í Centre in Luxembourg from 26 to 28 October. Their theme was "The Role of Women in the Transformation of Society". Approximately one hundred Bahá'ís from seven countries assembled for the meeting.

The last in the series of European women's conferences was conducted in Dublin, Ireland, from 2 to 4 November 1990. It was called "She Will Shine Resplendently", and was attended by three hundred and fifty Bahá'ís. "Heartened by the response from men, whose huge presence contributed greatly to the spirit of unity, to the practical outcome of the conference, and to encouragement of the women participants, a true feeling of 'new beginnings' was created for many."

A Pacific Women's Conference was held on the campus of the University of Hawaii at Hilo. It took place from 30 May to 6 June 1991 with seventy-six Bahá'í women from seventeen islands and countries bordering the Pacific basin taking part. The theme was "Empowering Women to Achieve", and the programme focused on: education for peace; permaculture; social and economic development programmes; health and nutrition; and, use of the media to support teaching projects.

In Africa, forty-four ethnic groups were represented among the two hundred people

who assembled for the International Bahá'í Women's Conference held from 31 October to 4 November 1991 in Nigeria. Five members of the Continental Board of Counsellors and six members of the Auxiliary Board were among the guests. At the end of the meeting the participants resolved "to arise and meet the unique opportunities open to them; to take responsibility for the development of themselves, their families and the world".

The President of the Republic of the Seychelles Islands, Mr. Albert René, "extended the warmest possible welcome" to representatives of the Bahá'ís who had travelled to his country to attend the Regional Bahá'í Conference for Women on the college campus of Port Lanau in Mahé from 31 December 1991 to 5 January 1992. More than one-hundred and thirty believers from Madagascar, Réunion, Mauritius, and the Seychelles listened to talks and participated in workshops on themes including the role of women in the family, women and the education of children, the role of women in the Bahá'í community, and women and peace.

Conferences featuring the principle of equality of men and women were sponsored by two chapters of the Association for Bahá'í Studies during the Six Year Plan. In the United States, the North American chapter hosted nearly eight hundred people during its meeting held from 15 to 17 September 1989 in Irvine, California. The theme of the gathering was "Full Partnership: An International Conference on the Equality of Women and Men". Seminars covered a range of interests including consultation and conflict resolution, the arts, health, agriculture, science and technology, and intercultural issues. There was an even attendance of men and women at the Conference, with the sentiment being widely held that equality is not a women's issue, but a human issue.

In Australia, the Association for Bahá'í Studies' eighth conference took place in Adelaide from 24 to 27 March 1989. A special one-day symposium featured "The Role of Women in an Advancing Civilization". This consisted of presentations of invited papers by Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í experts focusing on such areas of concern as women and power, women in the legal profession, and women, development and peace.

The first Association for Bahá'í Studies conference in Papua New Guinea, conducted in September 1988 at the University Bahá'í Club in Port Moresby, included a paper by a Papua New Guinean on "Equality of Men and Women: Traditional and Modern Concepts". The Association's second conference, held at the University of Papua New Guinea in May 1989, heard presentations on "The Effect of the Bahá'í Faith on the Position of Women in the Mountain Brown Area of Papua New Guinea", and "Women and Peace: An Anthropological Perspective".

Extracts from the Bahá'í Sacred Writings on the subject of women, compiled by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice and released in English in January 1986, provided much of the basis for study of the issue during the Six Year Plan. Editions of the compilation received at the Bahá'í World Centre Library during the period had been translated into Chinese, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish, and Turkish.

Newsletters by and for Bahá'í women were another source of inspiration. A sample of the newsletters produced include *Euro Bulletin* (in English) from the National Committee for Fostering the Equality of the Sexes, Republic of Ireland; *From the Hearts of the Handmaidens* (in English) from the Women's Consultative Group, Lynnwood, Washington, U.S.A.; *Bahai Josei Janaru* (in Japanese) from the National Women's Committee of Japan; *Bahá'í Women* (in Hindi) from the Bahá'í Women's Committee of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India; *Mujeres de la Nueva Era* (in Spanish) from the National Bahá'í Women's Committee of Bolivia; and, *Sauti ya Mama* (in Swahili) from the Bahá'í Women's Committee for Upper Zaire.



In the United States, Louise Profeit-Leblanc giving a presentation during the 14th Annual Conference for the Association for Bahá'í Studies held in Irvine California, 15 to 17 September, 1989.

EFFORTS TO PROMOTE EQUALITY IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY

The Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are for all of humanity, and His principles have become part of the spirit of the age. In isolation, however, any one of His Teachings can become distorted and so the Faith's clear perspective on the roles of women was often welcomed at public forums, and Bahá'ís' experience in advocating equality was offered as an example to many governmental bodies. The Bahá'í International Community participated fully in the work of the United Nations to promote the advancement of women (See also article on p. 522.) In addition to working directly with United Nations' agencies, Bahá'í communities worldwide supported UN initiatives.

The United Nations' International Women's Day was celebrated in Australia with a special service at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Sydney in March 1989. Eminent community leaders were among the readers at the service, including the President and Vice President of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. In Nigeria, the Executive Secretary of the Bahá'í Women's Development Board was told that the paper she presented at the International Women's Day celebrations for the Kaduna State Ministry of Health in 1988, "Educate Women, Build a Nation", would be published as a booklet and distributed through the local governments in Kaduna State.

Bahá'ís participated in activities marking National and International Women's Days in Cameroon, Uganda, Guyana, and Ireland. In Thailand, the Bahá'ís of Bangkok celebrated International Women's Day 1989 with a two-hour programme in a popular shopping mall. Hundreds of people heard readings from the Bahá'í Writings concerning women, and many pamphlets on peace and women were distributed.

In 1989, in the town of Rabaul, Papua New Guinea, National Women's Day was celebrated with a music festival during which a Bahá'í band, the Dawnbreakers, performed songs about peace, women, and a safe and happy home. Bahá'ís also set up a bookshop for the event and handed out flyers with songs, prayers, and Bahá'í Writings. In Port Moresby, two Bahá'ís were invited to participate in planning the Women's Day events, and one of them was chosen to be Mistress of Ceremonies. The Bahá'ís took part in all the



In the Solomon Islands Bahá'í women and children present their custom dancing during the Women's Week celebrations held in September 1988.

activities—reading Bahá'í prayers, serving as judges for several events, presenting a short drama, performing traditional dancing, and singing in a choir.

Bahá'í women of the Solomon Islands contributed to Women's Week in 1988 by marching in a parade sponsored by the Honiara Council of Women. A Bahá'í prayer was chosen as the first prayer for the official opening following the march, and the President of the Honiara Council—a Bahá'í and the only female lawyer in the Solomon Islands—was chosen to deliver an address. For National Women's Day in Samoa in 1990, the Bahá'ís created a float in the shape of a bird completely covered with fresh flowers and a sign that read "Equality of Men and Women". The Bahá'í women walking in the parade with the float sang, "With two wings, we will fly...".

Bahá'ís were among those who helped organize the first International Indigenous Women's Conference, called "Finding Common Ground". Held in Australia in July 1989, and funded by UNESCO, the gathering was attended by more than one thousand women. The event began with a two-day celebration of the arts of indigenous peoples. Topics discussed during the conference included women and racism, education, and domestic violence. The Bahá'ís of Australia were also represented at the "Recognition for Women in Australia" seminar hosted in July 1991 by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Office of the Status of Women and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The State Minister for Religious Affairs of Bangladesh was among the dignitaries welcomed to the conference "Equality of Men and Women—a Prerequisite for World Peace" in Dhaka in September 1991. The president and general secretary of the Bangladesh Women Writers' Association and journalists from several national newspapers were present as well. In Bermuda, during a public forum on "Women and Peace" which took place in February 1987, a Bahá'í chaired a panel composed of the nation's most prominent women including the Minister for Health and Social Services.

A Women's International Luncheon was held on 9 November 1991 at the National Bahá'í Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. This was followed by a panel of speakers who explored the topic "Gender and Development". Twenty-three prominent non-Bahá'í women plus twenty-five Bahá'í women attended the events, which received extensive media coverage. The Bahá'í Women's Committee of Fiji was represented at a national "Women in Development" conference in July 1986; a Bahá'í stall displayed pamphlets and handicrafts. In Côte d'Ivoire, Bahá'ís participated in a discussion of "The Rights of Women and Social Progress" conducted in December

1989 under the patronage of the Minister of Primary Education and the President of the Federation of African Jurists.

A representative of Zaire's Ministry for Women visited the National Bahá'í Centre in December 1988 to learn more about the National Bahá'í Women's Committee. The delegate said she was touched by the talk given by a spokeswoman for the National Committee and impressed by the organization and extent of Bahá'í women's activities. In Uganda, a written statement on the Bahá'í perspective on women was presented to religious leaders during a national seminar organized by the government in July 1989.

The President of Papua New Guinea's National Council of Women, the President of the Morobe Women's Association, the Regional Member for Morobe Province in the National Parliament, and the wife of the Prime Minister were among the leaders of thought who participated in the national conference co-sponsored by the Bahá'í community and the Morobe Women's Association in July 1989. The event received significant media coverage.

The National Bahá'í Women's Committee in the Republic of Ireland gained affiliation with the Council for the Status of Women in 1988: the Council is a recognized body of the national Government. In 1989, the Bahá'ís of Papua New Guinea achieved representation on the National Council of Women, fulfilling one of the goals of the country's Six Year Plan. The Bahá'í Women's Committee of New Zealand was invited to become affiliated with the National Council of Women in September 1986, and in the same year, Bahá'ís were asked by the National Women's Council of Vanuatu to help set up non-political, non-denominational women's committee for the Port Vila municipal area. This was achieved in Port Vila and two Bahá'í women were elected President and Vice-President of a committee of twelve.

The Malaysian Bahá'í Women's Committee was an affiliate and active supporter of the National Council of Women's Organizations, so when the NCWO celebrated its Silver Jubilee on 25 August 1988, Bahá'ís played an important role. The event was attended by more than one thousand guests, including Her Majesty, the Queen of Malaysia, and other prominent women. Bahá'ís helped to organize the celebration and produced souvenir programmes for each function. A Bahá'í was one of three women selected to represent the women of Malaysia in a pledge-taking ceremony.

The Bahá'í Women's Committee of Singapore collaborated with the Singapore Council of Women's Organizations, the Nigerian Bahá'í Women's Development Board registered with the National Council of Women Societies, and Bahá'ís in Hawaii were asked to serve on the Governor's



In Pakistan, a public meeting held in memory of Ṭáhirih was organized by the Local Ladies Committee of Karachi. Shown is the guest speaker, Mrs. Zahida Hina, a renowned journalist and poet. 25 August 1989.



In the Philippines, President Corazon Aquino (seated centre) and the Vice President of the All Nations Women's Group, Martha Taylor—a Bahá'í—(seated right) during the induction ceremony for the Group's new officers on 9 May 1990.

Commission on the Status of Women. Through the National Committee on Women in the United States, the Bahá'í Faith is affiliated with government and non-governmental organizations which are active in the field of women's issues.

In November 1988, Bahá'ís made major contributions held to mark the twentieth anniversary of the National Council of Women in Fiji. The Bahá'í National Women's Committee organized a devotional programme, and the believers participated in a peace march, carrying a banner which displayed a quotation from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. An article submitted by the Bahá'í National Council of Women was published in the *Fiji Times*, and Bahá'í youth performed a musical drama before nine hundred people.

CONCLUSION

Through the movement of Our Pen of glory We have, at the bidding of the omnipotent Ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame, and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All created things proclaim the evidences of this world-wide regeneration.[1]

Bahá'u'lláh has brought a new standard for what it means to be human, and has told us that education is the key to attain that station. This training is a process which will lead to "...the last and highest stage in the stupendous evolution of man's collective life on this planet."[2] "So marvellous a conception finds its earliest manifestations in the efforts consciously exerted and the modest beginnings already achieved by the declared adherents of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh who, conscious of the sublimity of their calling and initiated into the ennobling principles of His Administration, are forging ahead...."[3]

During the Six Year Plan, Bahá'ís forged ahead by organizing activities to promote the equality of men and women including developing projects focussing on the special needs of women, sponsoring conferences on the subject, publishing literature and forming Bahá'í women's groups which associated with other organizations pursuing similar aims.

> *Hence the new age will be an age less masculine and more permeated with the feminine ideals, or, to speak more exactly, will be an age in which the masculine and feminine elements of civilization will be more evenly balanced.*[4]

[1] Gleanings, pp. 92-93.
[2] Shoghi Effendi, *World Order*, p. 163.
[3] ibid., pp. 43-44.
[4] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted in J.E. Esslemont, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976), p. 156.

5. YOUTH ACTIVITIES

A. YOUTH YEAR OF SERVICE

"Why would we volunteer to scrub and clean things for a year? Because we love Bahá'u'lláh!" explained a radiant Bahá'í who was mid-way through her Youth Year of Service. This expression of love through action was reflected around the world during the Six Year Plan as followers of the Blessed Beauty as yet unburdened by career and family combined their abounding energy and curiosity with a commitment to serve the Faith.

Youth have always played a shining role in God's Plan for this Day. The Báb Himself was but twenty-five years old when He declared His stupendous Mission, and Shoghi Effendi was a student at Oxford when called to rise to the Guardianship. What is new is the relatively systematized approach to service. This grew out of a concept proposed in a letter from the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'í Youth of the World sent on January 3, 1984: "...give attention to the idea of volunteering a set period, say, one or two years, to some Bahá'í service, on the home front or abroad, in the teaching or development field...."

By April 1984, only three months after this clear guidance was received, the National Bahá'í Youth Committee of the United States began to recruit and place Youth Year of Service volunteers. Working with the International Pioneering Committee and others, the Youth Committee gathered facts about Bahá'í projects which youth could join for one year, and information about young people who were willing to serve. Over time this processing became quite sophisticated, including details about "host projects" such as the location, skills required, housing available and expenses to be covered, and data about the volunteers such as special needs for medical care, dietary requirements, interests, and talents. Other countries which developed special Youth Year of Service programs included Brazil, Colombia, Canada, Costa Rica, and Zambia.

During the Six Year Plan, the Youth Year of Service concept was spread and developed throughout Bahá'í communities worldwide. In Europe, for example, one of the first activities of the newly-formed European Bahá'í Youth Council was to set up a database of service positions available on the continent and issue a Youth Year of Service Information Pack to all National Spiritual Assemblies and National Youth Committees in the region. The Côte d'Ivoire held a six-week Development Institute to prepare youth for a year of service, and Ecuador reported a training seminar as part of its YYS program.

Information about the Youth Year of Service was a prime topic during some youth conferences, including one held in the Netherlands in July 1989, and one in Zimbabwe in August 1991. Articles about it were published in newsletters distributed to young Bahá'ís, such as the Australian *Network*, and Malawi's *Bahá'í Youth Newsletter.* Discussions were held at Bahá'í Clubs in universities from Alaska to Guam, and details were distributed through the Continental Boards of Counsellors, the Auxiliary Boards, and the various assistants.

Most of the youth served in their home countries. In India, for example, many of the nearly 200 tutorial school programs were run by local volunteers. Young friends worked in administrative capacities, guided at Bahá'í Temples, drove mobile institutes, helped at Bahá'í radio stations, assisted with Bahá'í medical projects, and provided vital consolidation teams. In-country service programs were reported in Alaska, Argentina, Australia,



Participants in the Ruhi Institute International Training Course for Tutorial School Teachers and for the Preparation of the Youth Year of Service. Colombia, November 1986.

Belgium, Bolivia, Cameroon, Canada, the Canary Islands, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Guyana, Honduras, Ireland, Kenya, Malaysia, New Zealand, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Taiwan, Thailand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Zaire.

Some young people spent their year of service as full-time teachers of the Faith. Youth dominated the teaching work in Eastern Europe, while the United States reported that youth participated in almost all ongoing projects and comprised most of the full-time teaching teams. In its Riḍván message for 1992 the Universal House of Justice wrote: "Youth activities took on a special character shaped by the idea of a youth year of service. The involvement of the youth in the Six Year Plan as short-term pioneers, travelling teachers and projecteers had a profound effect on the teaching work overall..."

Young Bahá'ís who were willing and able traveled to serve the Faith abroad. Many of these friends were from Australia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, and the United States, and were assigned to projects in Albania, the Baltic States, Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, the Canary Islands, Colombia, the Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, the Gambia, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, India, Ireland, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Romania, Russia, Swaziland, and the Ukraine. One frequent recipient of these youth volunteers was the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel, where individuals served the Universal House of Justice as plumbers and legal aides, as engineers and cooks, as desktop publishers and irrigation specialists, and in many other areas of need.

An informal survey of young Bahá'ís who gave a year of service during the Six Year Plan was carried out through the Continental Boards of Counsellors. Several dozen people responded, including friends who had traveled from Canada to serve in Romania, from Malaysia to Mongolia, from Australia to Japan, from Zimbabwe to Zambia, from New Zealand to India, from Papua New Guinea to the Holy Land, and from the United Kingdom to Botswana to serve the Cause. Quotations from some of their statements show how the Youth Year of Service enriched their lives and strengthened their Faith, as well as providing assistance to the communities which received them.

The survey asked for the youth's name, address, date of birth, period of service, and in what capacity he or she served. Then the friend was asked:

Could you please describe one of the memorable moments of your service?

One young Ecuadoran woman who served as a member of a teaching team in her home country wrote:

> The most memorable moment I experienced was the first night I spent in an indigenous village in Imbabura, where the team shared the life of the indigenous people—their food and their homes. Being a city person myself, I had never experienced the life of these people before. For the first time, I felt a true unity, as Bahá'u'lláh taught us.

An Australian who had travelled to Fiji to serve reported:

> I had typed a letter that began: "I would like to offer a twenty-minute presentation on the theme of world peace at your school". I had personally taken copies of this letter to seventeen schools when I was suddenly taken ill. I managed to present the peace message and proclaim the Faith in ten or eleven schools, however I could not carry on and spent three days in Labasa Hospital. As I lay on my bed during that time I did not know whether I would live, and hated the fact that the proclamation work had not been completed. You can imagine my elation when, on being discharged, I heard the news that one of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly had completed the proclamation work.

A young man who had gone from Great Britain to Africa responded:

> In Botswana we had heard that there would be a teaching project in South Africa—in Botsobella, a township. It was my first teaching project in South Africa. Three of us went into a school to make a presentation of the Faith. One of the more experienced teachers told me, "Don't look back. Go straight in and with confidence insist on an audience, you will not be refused". This we did, and within thirty seconds of entering the school we were led to the staff room where the teachers were enjoying their lunch. I proceeded to make my presentation, my first proclamation of the faith in front of the public. Four of the teachers declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh and many expressed interest. This demonstrated to me that if we forget our frailties and rely on Bahá'u'lláh the doors will open.

One young woman from Australia who served for some time at the Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi, India, described this experience:

> It was in July during the middle of the day when the temperature soared to 48 C. The dry heat was debilitating, yet hundreds of people were attracted to, and mesmerised by the House of Worship. I always felt it such a bounty to meet and welcome people from all over the world, drawn to the House of Worship by



Young volunteers in "The Temple Brigade" doing cleaning and maintenance work in and around the House of Worship in New Delhi, India, in 1988.



Some of the youth serving at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel, in March 1990. The diversity of these volunteer workers is a demonstration of the unity of mankind in action.

inquisitive minds, searching souls. During this particular day I was welcoming guests on the front steps of the House of Worship and offering information about the House of Worship in the form of pamphlets. A gentleman took a pamphlet from me and proceeded to climb a few steps, then he stopped, turned, and walked back to me. He asked me "What exactly, is this all about?" I began to answer his question and very soon I began to realise that the answer was not in my words. I felt free, I became the vehicle through which his question could be answered.

A Canadian youth who had travelled to serve in Romania answered:

> I had just moved into the city (Ploesti) and was at a weekend teaching project. The evening's fireside was attended by about fifty seekers and the atmosphere was very exciting despite the cool October temperature. I was talking to a travelling teacher during the fireside and asked him what he would do if everyone stood up and enrolled in the Faith. Before he could think of an answer, the fireside ended with an announcement that those people wishing to join the Bahá'í community should come to the front of the room. And in unison, the whole room jumped up and ran to the front! We were both shocked beyond words. About two hours later all the travelling teachers left the city and I was given the list of all the new Bahá'ís and told that I was now responsible for them. That was my first weekend in Ploesti! What a welcoming and what a responsibility!

The second question was:

In what way did your participation in the Youth Year of Service programme change your life?

A young Australian who went to Japan to serve for one year explained:

> It was an experience which greatly enhanced my life as an individual and as a member of the wonderful international Bahá'í community. The Bahá'ís of Utsunomiya were truly exceptional. I had never encountered so much love, respect and diversity among such a small group. Their focus was always "teaching", either through weekly firesides, weekly teaching trips to smaller country areas, visiting and deepening new Bahá'ís, meeting with dignitaries... They exemplified for me the way a Bahá'í community should be and I am so grateful for having been able to share a year of my life with them.

A youth from the mainland of the United States worked in the National Bahá'í Office of Hawaii, in Honolulu:

> Participating in a Youth Year of Service strengthened my Faith in Bahá'u'lláh immensely. I was tested to truly claim the

Bahá'í Faith as my own. My perspective on Bahá'í administration opened up because I worked so intimately with the National Bahá'í Center activities.

A woman from Papua New Guinea who travelled to Haifa to serve at the Bahá'í World Centre responded with these words of wisdom:

> One [important aspect] of my service was the feeling that the Bahá'í World Centre was also mine. Serving as a janitor gave me a lot of joy, and confirmed our teachings that any job done well is service to Bahá'u'lláh, and if done with a spirit of service gives tremendous happiness.

An Ecuadorian woman, the sister of the woman quoted above, also served in her own country and then later served for a year and a half in Romania:

> I think I have changed in the manner in which I consider the Faith in my life and especially in service to the beloved Cause. It is like a thirst that can't be quenched. It is to have found what I was searching for all my life. These moments of difficulty when we felt at one with the Beloved were unique, and I wouldn't have missed them for anything. We feel much closer to Him when we are serving the Faith. Now it is impossible to stop thinking about how to serve more and more and take advantage of every second of our lives to teach the Faith.

An Australian who went to help with the teaching work in Romania wrote:

> My Year of Service served to re-orient my life towards Bahá'u'lláh. I participated in the Year of Service for Bahá'u'lláh and every moment away I was reminded of this, whether it was waking up in a foreign city or trying to communicate in a foreign language. It is all too easy to lose spiritual focus in the routine of everyday life at home, and having this "year out" has helped me in becoming completely oriented towards service to the Cause.... The Blessed Beauty says, regarding sacrifices made in His path: *To tinge thy hair with thy blood is greater in My sight than the creation of the universe and the light of both worlds.*

The third question asked:

In what way did your service change the lives of those in the communities that you served?

A young Malaysian who served the Faith in Mongolia wrote:

> Mongolia was a newly opened country when I arrived in August 1991—there were only eight adult Bahá'ís. We taught with our limited knowledge of Mongolian and with lots of confirmation from Bahá'u'lláh, and the number increased to fourteen. The first Local Spiritual Assembly in Mongolia, the Assembly of Ulaan-Baatar, was formed.
>
> At that point in the development of the community, the Bahá'ís in Mongolia lacked confidence and were even afraid to have a vision of the glorious future promised by Bahá'u'lláh, lest it would not come true. I very much wanted to organize a project that would unite the community through a common vision, and that would be successful to give the community confidence and courage... By the grace of Bahá'u'lláh, the celebration of His Birthday helped us to achieve it.
>
> The Bahá'ís became excited by the idea of a celebration, and created a vision of how it should be. Undaunted by their limitations, each of the members began to draw on all of their talents and resources as well as those of their friends. We beseeched Bahá'u'lláh to assist us, and were guided—almost taken by our hands—to meet authorities, strangers and friends, who willingly helped and supported our project.
>
> The result was a Mongolian celebration in every sense of the word. It was held in a public hall complete with stage and backdrop, an appropriate devotional programme and stage performance of



A Bahá'í youth from Vanuatu (standing in back, second from right) with students of the literacy class he teaches as part of his Year of Service. They are by the Bahá'í Centre in Lownahurur, Middle Bush, Tanna, in February 1992.

songs, traditional dances and instrumental folk music.

The celebration of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh was held on the evening of 11 November 1991 with about eighty people attending. Considering that the Local Spiritual Assembly of Ulaan-Baatar had been formed less than a month previously, this was remarkable. Another aspect that made this event amazing was the demonstration of the incredible potency of His Covenant as a handful of Bahá'ís, placing their full reliance and trust in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's promise that "as ye have faith, so shall your powers and blessings be" managed to bring about this event.

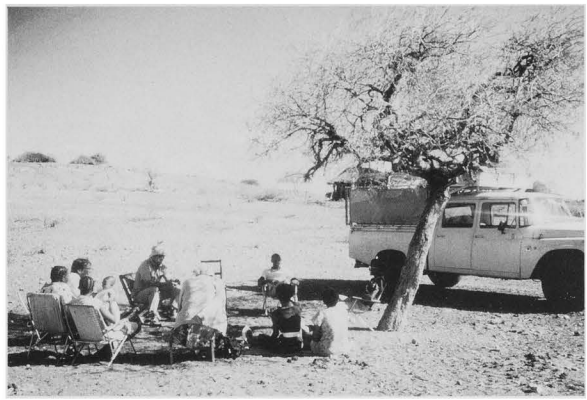
Writing this in retrospect, I will not go into who did what and how. What stands out in my memory is the absolutely wonderful happiness I felt while riding the bus to the celebration. It was a cold snowy evening, but the freezing temperature could not dampen my joy. I had to look out of the window because I didn't want to appear crazy to my fellow passengers—I could see this smiling face reflected in the glass. At the same time, I was close to tears but I couldn't stop grinning! Any time since then if I'm down, I focus on that mirrored happy radiant feeling. It never fails to warm my heart and lift my spirit. ... having had a taste of pure happiness, I know His Covenant is real.

More than anyone else, the Mongolian friends—who had been extremely conscious of our lack of strengths in many areas—agreed that it was our unity of vision and singleminded determined efforts to advance the affairs of the Cause that made our project so enjoyable and fulfilling to work on. Although the Local Spiritual Assembly of Ulaan-Baatar had not even managed to meet officially to elect their officers, yet the members came together to work on this project. They were united in their love of Bahá'u'lláh.

One of the young friends who served in Ecuador relates:

As to how the community was affected—truly it was not because of our efforts, but because of the mercy of God that the community was able to progress both spiritually and then materially through governmental institutions. About two weeks after more than one hundred people embraced the Faith, the village obtained electricity and piped water. They also changed spiritually, as people who had been enemies for years became part of one common Faith. They carried out many activities together, and the most thrilling part was to hear them praying and to see the love of the Blessed Beauty reflected in their faces.

Another youth describes how just by moving into a particular area she was an



Youth Year of Service volunteers went into the Kalahari Desert in Botswana to hold deepenings for the Bahá'ís who live there; October 1987.

example and inspiration to many and set a standard of Bahá'í values:

> My presence as a young woman "alone" in Asian countries was in itself an inspiration for other young women and an education for many who still held old world order values of women. Of course I had to struggle to achieve a balance so as to set an example without shocking. In India quite a few men learned that not all Western women are "loose" and that not all white people are rich. More than anything I hope that my main influence was to make people happy and feel hopeful about the oneness of humanity.

A young believer from Zimbabwe relates that by not being corruptible he made people curious about the Faith:

> Mostly in Zambia, non-Bahá'ís called me a priest. During those days I coordinated the relief food programme... under the Ministry of Health. I was in charge of more than six thousand villagers from fifteen villages. How I prevented any chance of corruption only God knows, but it brought all kinds of people to ask [about the Bahá'í Faith]. One elderly person later became a Bahá'í, after I talked to him about the principles that I live by. I think the friends also learned how to sacrifice, mostly in teaching and service... One time we slept outside for three nights and went teaching every morning and only ate at night. The youth also learned to be detached from their families because later four of the youth left to do their own year of service.

And one more story from Romania:

> By serving as a short term pioneer, I was privileged to see the transforming power of the Faith in changing the lives, individually and collectively, of the Bahá'ís of Satu Mare (Romania). Initially I went to the town with a travel teaching team, and was thus able to see several Romanian friends progress from "seekers" investigating the Faith to deepened Bahá'ís, actively involved in the affairs of the Faith. In one case, the school teacher of one Romanian youth remarked that something about her had changed, as she seemed much happier than before.

Blessed is he who in the prime of his youth and the heyday of his life will arise to serve the Cause of the Lord of the beginning and of the end, and adorn his heart with His Love, Bahá'u'lláh wrote.[1] The several thousand young Bahá'ís who participated in the Youth Year of Service programme during the Six Year Plan were among those who were truly blessed.

[1] *Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 2 (Mona Vale, NSW: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1991), p. 415.



In Hawaii, American Bahá'í youth cooking during a two-week-long summer camp held on Maui for Russian youth in 1988.



In the U.S. Virgin Islands, a "Sparks for Peace" team of Bahá'í youth reinstalling a fallen fence as a service project in St. Johns National Park; 1989.



In the Dominican Republic, a young graduate of the Olinga Institute courses in service to the Cause is now teaching children's classes; 1991.



In Luxembourg, Bahá'í youth volunteers working to clean and maintain the Garden of Wiltz; 1990.

In Uganda, part of the youth programme during the summer school in Mbale was to help clean up the local hospital; 1991.





In Tonga, a Bahá'í youth group cleans downtown Nukualofa in support of World Health Day; 1990.



In Scotland, youth participants in Operation Mona, after cleaning up a section of the River Clyde in July 1986.



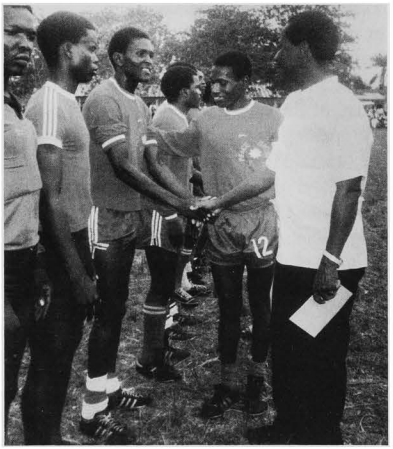
In Singapore, young Bahá'ís after helping to clean up a beach as a community service project in 1990.



In St. Vincent, children and youth participating in a Bahá'í-sponsored activity to clean up Villa Beach; April 1992.



In Panama, Bahá'í youth performing cultural dances as part of the International Day of Peace activities in Boca del Monte; 1989.



In Nigeria, members of the Bahá'í youth's football club, called The Peace Makers, during the semi-final match in a local government soccer competition in Oghara in 1987.



In Taiwan, six youth who enrolled in the Faith during the Muhájir Teaching Project in 1987 are members of three ethnic minorities—the Paiwan, the Amé, and the Paynan tribes.

B. European Bahá'í Youth Council

The strengthening of European Bahá'í youth identity and the remarkable progress made in European Bahá'í youth collaboration ranked among the notable developments of the Six Year Plan. Whether expressed through increasing numbers of regional and continental youth conferences and schools, projects involving European youth in teaching and service on the continent and even as far afield as Southern Africa, the intensification of communication between National Youth Committees and their representatives, or simply through the growing sense of unity and purpose among youth from different lands, there was certainly a very different sense of mission about the Bahá'í youth in the opening years of the Plan. Furthermore, the atmosphere was charged by constant awareness of the inspirational and exemplary steadfastness of the Bahá'í youth in Írán whose extraordinary sacrifices the Bahá'í youth in every land had been encouraged to emulate. The activities of the Bahá'í youth of Europe were to be further galvanised through the creation by the Universal House of Justice in August 1989 of the European Bahá'í Youth Council. This was a historic step, an entirely new and unprecedented development in the Bahá'í administrative system, which inaugurated a new stage in the evolution of the Bahá'í youth work in Europe, placing in the hands of the young European Bahá'ís a body charged with the duty of stimulating, coordinating and assisting their activities throughout the continent.

The Universal House of Justice had indeed anticipated such developments some time before, and in its message of 4 July 1983 addressed to the participants of the European Youth Conference in Innsbruck captured this vision in these profound words:

> This generation of Bahá'í youth enjoys a unique distinction. You will live your lives in a period in which the forces of history are moving to a climax when mankind will see the establishment of the Lesser Peace, and during which the Cause of God will play an increasingly prominent role in the reconstruction of human society. It is you who will be called upon in the years to come to stand at the helm of the Cause in face of conditions and developments which can, as yet, be scarcely imagined.... European Bahá'í youth in particular face tremendous and challenging tasks in the immediate future.... A vibrant band of Bahá'í youth on the European continent, committed to the promotion of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and the upholding of His laws and principles, determined to work in harmony and unity with their fellow believers of all ages and classes, can revolutionise the progress of the Cause.

It is perhaps only at the remove of some years that the full potency and significance of these words can be appreciated as one relates these sublime thoughts to the progress of the Cause of God in Europe since 1986.

In the years leading up to the appointment of the European Bahá'í Youth Council, there had been considerable discussion amongst the National Youth Committees of Europe about a Europe-wide body to coordinate and stimulate youth activities across the continent. Such thoughts, for example, had been articulated at meetings of National Youth Committee representatives at the major youth conferences of the Seven Year Plan, namely Fiesch (1980), Chigwell (1981), Innsbruck (1983) and Antwerp (1985), but the consensus of opinion was that such a step would be not only premature, but

administratively problematic. Until this point any European collaboration had been confined to initiatives involving youth from neighbouring countries.

At the youth school held at the Landegg Academy, 18–24 July 1986, and energised by the participation of the Hand of the Cause of God, 'Ali-Akbar Furútan and two European Counsellors, participants spontaneously began consulting on the emergence of a new vision of Bahá'í youth activity, particularly the role which a "European Bahá'í Youth Movement" could play. These informal gatherings were attended by members of a number of National Youth Committees and other young and enthusiastic Bahá'ís, prominent amongst whom were participants in the Varqá Project.[1] Inspired by the potential for a "vibrant band of Bahá'í youth" to revolutionise the progress of the Cause of God, and mindful of the tremendous challenges confronting them in taking the Faith to the spiritually starved Eastern half of their continent, the youth resolved to take a number of steps both in the immediate future and in the longer term. These included a more systematic and cooperative approach to acts of spiritual devotion, enhancing of the quality of the personal Bahá'í life, travel teaching initiatives, and the distribution of *The Promise of World Peace*.

To keep participants informed of developments, a "European Bahá'í Youth Movement Information Centre" was established in the Netherlands. Its first newsletter appeared in August 1986. Each participant in the consultative process at Landegg was encouraged to share the fruits of these discussions with their respective National Youth Committees and to seek approval for the appointment of three youth to develop the "Movement" within their respective national communities and to liaise with the Information Centre.

The Universal House of Justice hailed these developments. In a telex dated 29 July 1986 it wrote:

> REJOICE GREATLY SUCCESSFUL HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT YOUTH SCHOOL LANDEGG PRESENCE HAND CAUSE ALI-AKBAR FURUTAN, LAUNCHING EUROPEAN BAHA'I YOUTH MOVEMENT. WELCOME PRACTICAL STEPS TAKEN COORDINATE SERVICES YOUTH THROUGHOUT EUROPE.... URGE PARTICIPANTS PERSEVERE PRAISEWORTHY AIMS BE ASSURED ASSISTANCE BLESSED BEAUTY OPEN DOORS WIN HEARTS.

The results of the Landegg gathering quickly became manifest. The efforts of the youth found expression in personal and group teaching successes, increased use and distribution of *The Promise of World Peace* and the joy of association and collaborative activity among the youth from different countries. News about this Movement rapidly spread among the youth as they communicated their feelings and vision with enthusiasm and vigour.

The future development of the "European Bahá'í Youth Movement" was subsequently incorporated into the agenda of a special meeting of European National Youth Committee representatives in Strasbourg, France, 10–12 October 1986. Jointly conceived in March 1986 by the British and French National Youth Committees, this gathering paid special attention to what practical steps could be taken to unite the Bahá'í youth of Europe and recognised in the call for a European Bahá'í Youth Movement a natural response to the growing feeling of European Bahá'í youth solidarity that was emerging throughout the continent. Furthermore, the twenty-eight youth representing eleven countries endorsed the recently-established

[1] The Varqá Project was a Europe-wide initiative involving Bahá'í youth in a campaign of prayer and personal teaching dedicated to the memory of a young west European youth pioneering in Romania. Participants kept each other regularly informed of their news and successes, and the Landegg Youth School was the joyous occasion of their first reunion since the European Youth Conference in Antwerp in July 1985. The experiences and spirit of these youth thus prepared the background for discussions around the question of a "European Bahá'í Youth Movement" to naturally take place.

Information Centre as a channel for fluent and regular communication between countries and, in recognition of the dramatic new opportunities and challenges facing the Bahá'í youth of Europe, requested the Continental Board of Counsellors to consider the creation of a body that would provide direction and co-ordination to youth activities on a European level.

Plans also were formulated to regularly send European Bahá'í youth to serve in the teaching and development field in the Third World. The National Youth Committee of the United Kingdom was asked to co-ordinate this project on behalf of the National Youth Committees of Europe.

The Europe-wide discourse, initiated with such vigour at Landegg and developed subsequently at the Strasbourg gathering, was further enhanced at the First European Youth Seminar, held at Landegg Academy, 22–24 May 1987. The meeting was called at the request of the Continental Board of Counsellors, who in carefully organizing the programme of this important gathering and watching over its proceedings ensured that the historic process which had begun some months earlier continued on its course. Consultations between representatives of nineteen National Youth Committees, three Counsellors, Auxiliary Board members and representatives of National Assemblies, focused on important aspects of youth collaboration, including the devising of specific plans and projects to channel the services of the European youth. Particular emphasis was placed on encouraging youth involvement in the arts. Prayer, audacity, and movement were identified as key elements in translating the vision of a "vibrant band" into tangible reality. Unanimous support was voiced for the continuation of the important work of the European Bahá'í Youth Movement Information Centre and for its transfer to Norway.

The First Joint European Bahá'í Youth Third World Teaching Project, the "Botswana 1987" project, was arguably the first formal joint European Bahá'í youth teaching venture of its kind. It was to be followed by similar efforts, the "Star" projects of 1988, 1989 and 1990. In total, these projects drew some fifty young European Bahá'ís from more than half a dozen countries to the Southern African region for four successive summers of teaching and service.

Born out of intense collaboration between a handful of youth in Europe and the Spiritual Assembly of Botswana, "Botswana 1987" was a significant success. Through it a channel for service in the Third World had been opened for the Bahá'í youth of Europe, and a humble and initial step taken by the European youth to make Europe "a fountainhead of pioneers, travelling teachers and financial assistance to the Bahá'í communities of the Third World".[2] The Botswana Project exemplified what the Universal House of Justice later referred to as "the increasing collaboration and growing unity among all the Bahá'í youth on the continent of Europe".[3] A special fund, the "Eurobots Fund", administered initially by the National Youth Committee of Norway, was also set up to meet the needs of equipping the Bahá'í community of Botswana with a new motorised vehicle suitable for use in teaching and consolidation in the desert, and which would also be placed at the disposal of future European youth projecteers. All National Youth Committees in Europe were invited to participate in this campaign.

For those who participated in this landmark enterprise, it was an unforgettable experience, one which was to have a lasting and galvanic effect. In commending the youth participants in this project, the Spiritual Assembly of Botswana later wrote: "We invite you all to come back to Botswana, to experience again the supreme joy of

[2] From the Universal House of Justice to the participants of the European Youth Conference in Innsbruck, 4 July 1983.

[3] From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom, 29 October 1987.

demonstrating the oneness of the family of man from Iceland to the Kalahari, while fulfilling your divine purpose to unite souls with their God."

The experience of the Youth Conference in Manchester, United Kingdom, 5–9 August 1987, spurred the Continental Board of Counsellors on with their effort to organize an international youth conference in Spain in the summer of 1989, an event that could capture the vision of Bahá'u'lláh for peace and unity and share it with a large and diverse group of non-Bahá'í youth, including representatives of youth organisations and groups from all over Europe. Planning began well in advance, and by June 1988 separate programme and logistics committees were operating out of the United Kingdom and Spain respectively.

The original plan eventually had to be cancelled owing to logistical considerations, but while various alternatives were being considered, the need for forming a "European Association of Bahá'í National Youth Committees" was increasingly recognised. The "Association" was essentially a generic title which the youth could use in their approaches to non-Bahá'í organisations to lend more credibility to their stature as the representatives of the Bahá'í youth of Europe.

Central to these important developments were the contributions of the Board of Counsellors and the "Peace Moves" Committee, the body originally requested to plan the programme of the international youth conference for the summer of 1989. This Committee was appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom on the recommendation of the Counsellors. Appointed to membership of the Peace Moves Committee were Dona Adamson, Sean Hinton, Kishan Manocha, Riḍván Moqbel, Vafa Ram, Adam Robarts, Kitt Sandvik and Robert Weinberg. Officially a committee of the National Assembly, it served in an advisory capacity to the Counsellors, consulting extensively on the development of a vision for the Bahá'í youth of Europe. As a result, "Peace Moves", a decade-long campaign of galvanising the youth of Europe, Bahá'ís and others alike, around the themes enunciated in *The Promise of World Peace*, came into being. Its principal aim is to empower Bahá'í youth to initiate and refine their interaction with their peers around the spirit and content of Bahá'u'lláh's peace programme, destined to usher in, before the close of the century, the Lesser Peace.

The significant increase in the scope of responsibilities of the Committee necessitated its evolution into a body charged with the work of coordinating much of the continental youth activities. This was particularly so during the period from June 1988 until the first meeting of the European Bahá'í Youth Council in November 1989. In this sense the Peace Moves Committee was the precursor of the Council itself.

Representatives of National Youth Committees present at the European Youth School, De Poort, the Netherlands, 23–29 July 1988, focused much of their informal consultations on the question of European Bahá'í youth collaboration, particularly among the National Youth Committees. A number of options for the emergence of a Europe-wide coordinating body were considered and presented to the Universal House of Justice. In a letter dated 11 August 1988 the Supreme Body stated its full agreement as to the ripeness of the time "for the strengthening of continent-wide ties among the Bahá'í youth of Europe". It stated that the International Teaching Centre had been requested to ask the Continental Board of Counsellors to consider the matter and to recommend a working structure which would "provide effective links and enable the youth to serve the Cause together unitedly with a continental vision of the work."

However, the vision of the House of Justice went beyond the confines of Europe. The letter stated: "Europe, with its many national Bahá'í communities contained within a reasonably small area, can in this



The third Peace Moves '89 Regional European Youth Conference, held in Madrid, Spain, from 20–23 July 1989. More than seven hundred Bahá'ís from twenty-six countries attended.

way pioneer a very challenging development in international Bahá'í collaboration." This set in motion the process of defining the nature of the emerging institution that would fulfil this role. In December 1988 the Peace Moves Committee tabled detailed proposals outlining the structure and function of such a body, which were later submitted by the Counsellors through the International Teaching Centre to the Universal House of Justice for consideration.

Although the vision of "Peace Moves" was only gradually introduced to the youth, for example at a meeting of representatives of selected National Youth Committees in Lyon, France, 1–2 October 1988, the decade was to be officially opened in the summer of 1989 when Bahá'í youth and their peers would gather at a series of five regional conferences to celebrate its launch. Nearly 2,000 youth participated in these conferences held at De Poort (Netherlands), San Marino, Madrid (Spain), Torshavn (the Faroe Islands) and Sheffield (United Kingdom) during the period July–August 1989.[4] The conferences ended on a high note of expectation, releasing and channelling tremendous energies.

The House of Justice commented:

> THRILLING MESSAGES FROM SERIES OF CONFERENCES THROUGHOUT EUROPE EVOKE HIGHEST HOPES EXTRAORDINARY POTENCY BAHA'I YOUTH FOR ADVANCEMENT CAUSE BAHA'U'LLAH THAT CONTINENT. YOUTH GATHERED IN SHEFFIELD, INCLUDING HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT REPRESENTATIVES EASTERN EUROPE AND CHINA, HAVE DEMONSTRATED ... HOW GREAT WILL BE THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE ENTIRE BAHA'I COMMUNITY AS THEY SPREAD OUT TO THEIR HOMES AND PIONEER POSTS.

To aid National Youth Committees to develop a common vision of the future of Bahá'í youth activities in Europe in the context of the newly appointed Peace Moves Committee and to prepare for the launch of the "Peace Moves" initiative, a meeting of National Youth Committee representatives was convened in Luxembourg, 24–26 February 1989. The consultations were shaped and guided by a momentous message from the Universal House of Justice conveyed through the International Teaching Centre, in which the Supreme Body expressed its preference for the establishment of a European Bahá'í Youth Council, which would be

[4] The Sheffield conference was addressed by M. Andrè-Jacques Dodin, Director of the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France. Representatives of the Peace Moves Committee had met with M. Dodin in December 1988 to brief him about plans to hold an international youth conference in Spain and to apprise him of the "Peace Moves" effort.



The members of the first European Bahá'í Youth Council after their first meeting in London, England, in November 1989.

appointed by and be responsible to the House of Justice. Significantly, the House of Justice stressed the need "for the vision of the Council to embrace the whole of Europe (emphasis added), from the Atlantic to the Urals, and not just the countries of the European Community." It was only when the Iron Curtain was breached a few months later that the full significance of the words of the House of Justice became apparent.

On 20 October 1989, the Universal House of Justice announced to all National Spiritual Assemblies in Europe its historic decision to bring into being a new institution, unique in the history of the Administrative Order:

> ANNOUNCE APPOINTMENT FIRST EUROPEAN BAHA'I YOUTH COUNCIL WITH FOLLOWING MEMBERS: ONNO FRANK VAN BEKKUM, MORTEN BERGSMO, NADI HOFMANN, ALESSANDRA LANFRANCONI, JOHN MCGILL, BAHIYYIH TAHZIB, ROBERT WEINBERG.... HAIL THIS NEW DEVELOPMENT BAHA'I YOUTH WORK, EAGERLY ANTICIPATE GREAT ENHANCEMENT POTENTIAL FOR PROMOTION FAITH THROUGHOUT CONTINENT.[5]

In its 28 August 1989 letter of appointment of the Council the House of Justice outlined the three major functions of this new body: co-ordination of the activities of European Bahá'í youth which bridge national boundaries, and therefore also of the international involvement of the National Bahá'í Youth Committees of Europe; representation, on a continental basis, of the European Bahá'í youth with non-Bahá'í youth groups and other agencies; collaboration in youth matters with the Continental Board of Counsellors and the National Spiritual Assemblies in Europe.

The first full meeting of the European Bahá'í Youth Council took place during the weekend of 4–6 November 1989 in London, during which time the newly-appointed members took the opportunity to visit the Resting Place of Shoghi Effendi. At that same meeting, the Council met with the Peace Moves Committee and there was a smooth handover of responsibilities and transfer of the work in progress, after which the Committee, having fulfilled its functions, officially ceased to exist.

The creation of the European Bahá'í Youth Council coincided with dramatic social and political changes sweeping through Central and Eastern Europe. These changes brought about the collapse of political systems that had for so long prevented millions of people from receiving the light of Bahá'u'lláh. Fresh opportunities for serving the Faith abounded. The events of

[5] Members of the Council were drawn from six countries, and included one of the members of the Peace Moves Committee.

the day had further broadened the horizons of the youth of Europe who could now see Europe as an undivided whole, a continent burgeoning with the promise of unprecedented teaching victories.

Against this background of profound change this new agency of the Faith began to take up its duties of stimulating and coordinating the activities of the Bahá'í youth of a new Europe. The most outstanding feature of the period 1989–1990 was the way in which the youth rose to the challenge of taking the Faith to the countries of the former Eastern Bloc. During the summer of 1990 the European Bahá'í Youth Council organized teaching projects in five Central and Eastern European countries which were all dedicated to outstanding women from the early years of Bahá'í history, and each associated with a specific theme. These projects set a number of highly significant, historic precedents. They served as the first formal Bahá'í youth teaching enterprise in the former communist countries of Europe; the first continental youth activity to be sponsored by the newly-established Youth Council; and the first time that the Bahá'í youth of Europe had arisen in such large numbers and with such resolution and vigour to serve together in a challenging joint endeavour in Europe. Indeed, as a result of the participation of so many young European Bahá'ís in these projects, continent-wide youth collaboration had scaled new heights.

Teaching projects were held in Czechoslovakia (the Martha Root Project), Hungary (the Renée Szanto Project), Poland (the Lydia Zamenhof Project), Romania (the Ṭáhirih Project), and Yugoslavia (the Louisa Mathew Project). Particularly noteworthy was the project in Czechoslovakia, subtitled, "Peace through Participation", in which over 160 Bahá'ís from twenty-seven different countries took part. The Faith enjoyed extensive media coverage and was particularly well received by public officials, academics, and representatives of non-governmental and political organisations. At the close of the project strong foundations were laid for the establishment of the first Spiritual Assemblies in the project cities of Bratislava and Brno, which came into being in January 1991.

In addition to these summer projects, the highly successful George Adam Benke project, named after the first European Bahá'í martyr, took place in Bulgaria between October 1990 and January 1991. Among the fruits of the project were the establishment of the Spiritual Assembly of Plovdiv, the first Local Spiritual Assembly formed in Bulgaria since World War II, the opening of over half a dozen localities to the Faith, and national television coverage. Project participants also made a pilgrimage to Edirne, Turkey, where they had the opportunity to visit the House of Bahá'u'lláh.

Capitalising on the success of these projects, the European Bahá'í Youth Council set in motion a long-term strategy for these newly-opened countries to ensure that adequate and regular follow-up and assistance was given to these new, thriving centres of Bahá'í activity.

The mobilisation of youth throughout the continent continued through 1991 in preparation for the Holy Year with a clear focus on teaching. In response to the Council's call, significant victories were won, many Bahá'í communities were invigorated by the visits of the youth, contacts were established with prominent people and organisations, and many souls brought into the Faith. Among the activities were the four regional youth conferences held during the summer of 1991 with the theme "Bahá'u'lláh—The King of Glory," in Kabli (Estonia), Strasbourg (France), Berlin (Germany) and Neptune (Romania). The 150 participants from seven Republics of the former Soviet Union and nine other countries attending the conference in Kabli, Estonia, commented in their message to the Universal House of Justice that "this gathering has played a unique role in the forging of strong bonds of friendship and understanding between the youth from



Bahá'ís gathered in Neptune, Romania, in July 1991, for one of the four regional youth conferences held that summer by the European Bahá'í Youth Council.

East and West." The Estonia conference was also significant in that it was only the second Bahá'í youth conference to be held in the then-Soviet Union. Particularly noteworthy also was the conference in Neptune which attracted 250 participants from twenty countries around the world. Over 600 souls embraced the Cause during the course of this conference and during teaching activities before and after it.

The European Bahá'í Youth Council, in collaboration with national institutions and committees, also organized a number of other teaching projects in different parts of the continent during the course of 1991, including Bulgaria (George Adam Benke Projects II and III), Cyprus (Winds of Hope Project), Greece (Anís Project), Hungary, Italy, Poland (Lydia Zamenhof Projects II and III), Spain and Turkey.

One of the first tasks given to the European Bahá'í Youth Council by the Universal House of Justice was a smooth transfer of functions between the Peace Moves Committee and the Council. The Supreme Body had described the five regional Peace Moves conferences held during the summer of 1989 as "outstandingly successful". Early on in its first year the Council carefully considered the development of the Peace Moves campaign and recognised its potential as one of many possible means to stimulate and motivate the teaching work of the youth. The Council identified Peace Moves as one of its four major focuses of activity for the summer of 1990. In the autumn of 1990 it issued a comprehensive statement outlining the features of Peace Moves. It read, in part, as follows: "Peace Moves is a Bahá'í contribution to the establishment of a lasting world peace. Peace Moves is a means of enabling the Bahá'í youth to initiate and improve interaction with their peers in Europe. Peace Moves is the generation of activities inspired by, and realising, the contents of the Peace Statement of the Universal House of Justice."

The statement helped to clarify for the Bahá'í youth of Europe the relationship of Peace Moves to the teaching work. Since its launch several European youth communities enthusiastically had taken up the concept of Peace Moves as a focus for their teaching work. Indeed, much of the outstanding energy and enthusiasm generated by the 1989 Peace Moves events were channelled into the vital teaching work carried out in the newly-opened countries of Central and Eastern Europe. An international Peace Moves project, "Winds of Hope", which included a three-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land, was held during August 1991 in Cyprus. The Peace Moves campaign continued to be developed throughout the remaining years of



Participants in the George Adam Benke Project in Bulgaria attending the National Teaching Conference held in Plovdiv from 25 to 27 October 1991.

the Six Year Plan in those countries in which it was felt to be relevant to their needs and interests.

One of the outstanding developments of the Peace Moves events of the summer of 1989 was the launch of the Dr. Ugo Giachery Arc Fund Project established in memory of the valiant Hand of the Cause of God who passed away that summer during a visit to Samoa. The aim was to encourage the Bahá'í youth of Europe to make a substantial contribution towards the building of the Arc on Mount Carmel, a venture which the Universal House of Justice had announced to the Bahá'í world in August 1987. The management of this project was taken on by the European Bahá'í Youth Council upon its appointment, and at the First Annual Conference of National Youth Committees in 1990, the representatives present unanimously requested that a target of one million dollars be set.

The project officially ended at Riḍván 1992. At the time of the Third Annual Conference of Youth Committee representatives in February 1992 a total of US $187,000 had been raised. In commenting on the significance of this collaborative venture by the Bahá'í youth of Europe shortly after the Second Annual Conference of youth representatives in 1991, the Universal House of Justice stated through its Secretariat: "The raising of one hundred thousand dollars for the Dr. Ugo Giachery Arc Fund Project is a remarkable achievement and a fine example to the entire Bahá'í community."

One of the most important duties facing the newly-appointed Youth Council was the establishment of effective relationships with the European National Bahá'í Youth Committees. In order to facilitate communication with National Youth Committees and communities in Europe and to share with them its vision for the development of youth work throughout the continent, the European Bahá'í Youth Council called annual meetings of Youth Committee representatives. At the first of these Annual Conferences at De Poort, the Netherlands, from 26–28 January 1990, representatives from 22 National Youth Committees in Europe consulted with the Council and representatives of the European Board of Counsellors on a common strategy for the continent for the 1990s. At the Second Annual Conference, 15–17 February 1991, 26 representatives from both Western and Eastern Europe met and consulted under the inspiring guidance of a representative of the Board of Counsellors. The presence of Eastern European representatives was highly appreciated by the other participants, and a strong, unified bond was created between East and West. The Third Annual Conference was held in Wiesbaden,

Germany, 1–2 February 1992, when twenty-two representatives from all over Europe gathered to consult primarily on the challenges and the opportunities presented by the Holy Year.

At its third meeting held 16–19 February 1990 in Berlin, the European Bahá'í Youth Council felt it timely and important to visit the European countries in order to further strengthen collaboration between the Council and the respective National Youth Committees. This objective was to serve a number of purposes: to deepen the Council's relationship with the National Youth Committees and their National Spiritual Assemblies; to establish personal contact with the Bahá'í youth in the community and thereby to obtain a more accurate picture of the situation in each country; to encourage co-operation between the National Youth Committees on a regional level; to share news, ideas, plans and needs with the National Youth Committees and the youth of Europe; to assist the National Youth Committees, especially the newly-appointed ones, in their functioning where necessary and to encourage all youth to raise their standard of the English language in order to better study and understand the writings of Shoghi Effendi. Since its formation, members of the European Bahá'í Youth Council have been able to visit all National Youth Committees on at least one occasion and to consult with most National Spiritual Assemblies. Further, the Council intensified its working relationship with the Continental Board of Counsellors through regular consultations.

The work of the European Bahá'í Youth Council during its first full year was successfully carried out from a temporary Secretariat based initially at the United Nations Office of the Bahá'í International Community in Geneva, Switzerland, and subsequently in the Netherlands. The Universal House of Justice had originally indicated that the European Bahá'í Youth Council would need a full-time Secretariat and on 6 January 1991 wrote that the establishment of a permanent secretariat would be "a great reinforcement to the services which the Council is already rendering with such distinction". As of 1 February 1991 a full-time Secretariat, fully equipped with modern telecommunications facilities, was established in Sweden with one member of the Council employed in a salaried position. The European Bahá'í Youth Newsletter, based on news and information gathered at the Secretariat, was first issued on 6 April 1990. National Youth Committees either reproduced the entire newsletter and sent it promptly to their youth, or chose to include items of information in their own youth bulletins and magazines or national Bahá'í journals.

One of the three main functions assigned to the European Bahá'í Youth Council by the Universal House of Justice is that of representation, on a continental basis, of the European Bahá'í youth with non-Bahá'í youth groups and other agencies. The first tentative steps in this arena of work had been taken by the Peace Moves Committee with its representation to the Council of Europe's European Youth Foundation in Strasbourg, France, in December 1988. Soon after its formation the European Bahá'í Youth Council participated in the Second Annual Conference on Intolerance held in Strasbourg, France, 10–15 December 1989, a conference organized under the auspices of the European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe, at which a number of important contacts were made.

In November and December 1991, representatives of the Youth Council met with two representatives of the United Nations offices of the Bahá'í International Community in Geneva and other individual Bahá'ís in Europe to discuss the legal status of the Council. Subsequently the European Bahá'í Youth Council appointed a Representation Committee and a Legal Task Force. The former was given the responsibility of further developing relations with European youth organisations and other agencies on behalf of the Council and the organisation of

a high-level representation conference with the theme "Overcoming Racism in Europe" scheduled for April 1993. The Legal Task Force, a group of three European Bahá'í lawyers, began its work of drafting the legal status of the European Bahá'í Council and seeking its official recognition by such bodies as the Council of Europe, the European Coordination Bureau of International Youth Organisations, and the Youth Forum of the European Communities. In March 1992 the European Bahá'í Youth Council submitted an application for financial assistance to the European Youth Foundation, a most significant step, taken after formal contacts had been established as a result of meetings of some Council representatives with officials in Strasbourg.

Other matters given special consideration by the European Bahá'í Youth Council were those of the Youth Year of Service and Junior Youth. The Council made the promotion of the concept of the Youth Year of Service one of its highest priorities, encouraging all National Spiritual Assemblies and National Bahá'í Youth Committees in Europe to emphasise this important area of service among the youth in their communities. To assist with this process the Council set up a database of available service positions in Europe and issued a Youth Year of Service Information Pack to all National Spiritual Assemblies and Youth Committees. The Youth Council also devoted special attention in its own consultations and in those with National Spiritual Assemblies and Youth Committees, to the needs of Junior Youth, especially their full integration into all aspects of Bahá'í community life, particularly youth activities. Countries with a significant percentage of Junior Youth were asked to organize specific projects for this age group. Both the concept of the Youth Year of Service and Junior Youth figured prominently in the Council's strategy for the Holy Year.

The European Bahá'í Youth Council also placed special emphasis on Bahá'í activities in universities, particularly the development of Bahá'í student societies in universities where such possibilities exist. To this end, an Ad-hoc Committee on Student Societies was appointed in 1991 to undertake the necessary research into European Bahá'í student activity on its behalf. As a result an information pack containing valuable material on the importance of Bahá'í university societies, practical suggestions on setting up such societies, sample constitutions, discussion papers, ideas for activities, etc. was produced and sent to all National Spiritual Assemblies and Youth Committees in Europe. The Committee also organized a conference on Bahá'í activities at universities in Europe held in Brno, Czechoslovakia, from 2 to 5 January 1992. Twenty-four delegates representing eleven countries consulted on the development of Bahá'í activities at universities, the need for increasing collaboration between Bahá'í students throughout Europe.

The Council began its planning for the Holy Year, 1992–1993, well in advance. Its strategy for the Year was sent to all National Spiritual Assemblies and National Bahá'í Youth Committees of Europe in December 1991. In the preface to this document the Council stated:

> Every step we take in this Holy Year should be a step towards service. It is a time when the Bahá'í youth of Europe must make extraordinary sacrifices and rise to the call of the Universal House of Justice. This strategy is offered to the Bahá'í youth of Europe by the European Bahá'í Youth Council as a means to channel our energies, realise our potential and raise us to new heights of service. It is a strategy calling for great sacrifice, spiritual discipline and personal transformation. It is a strategy which calls for vision, courage and certitude. It is a strategy made up of plans and activities which the Bahá'í youth of Europe can humbly offer to Bahá'u'lláh in this, His Holy Year, as a sign of our love, our devotion and our desire to serve Him.



El Viento Canta, formed at the Bahá'í World Centre by youth who served there from Mexico, Peru, the United States, and the United Kingdom. This photograph was taken in 1988, before the group began its European tour.

The plans of the Youth Council for the Holy Year included specific year of service projects; history tours to visit the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Turkey; a European prayer campaign; a "silent" conference to provide a unique opportunity for meditation and reflection; a high-level representation conference with other youth organisations; and specific junior youth activities. The Council's plans for national youth committees included ways of orienting the youth towards a greater understanding of Bahá'u'lláh and His Mission; conducting proclamation events with the use of mass media; holding national conferences, projects and deepening weekends; dissemination of the statement on Bahá'u'lláh, and organising events aimed at fostering greater correlation of the Teachings with current issues.

To execute its Holy Year strategy most effectively, the European Bahá'í Youth Council appointed a Holy Year Board, a committee of seven European youth, to coordinate and monitor the Council's international activities for the Holy Year. It held its first meeting in November 1991. Foremost among the international activities for the Holy Year was the Year of Service Project, comprising fourteen specially designated teaching routes throughout Europe to which young believers could devote periods of time ranging from three months to one year. By the opening of the Holy Year at Riḍván 1992 this unique project had caught the imagination of the friends far and wide. The strategy was later to win the admiration of the International Teaching Centre, which in a letter dated 19 April 1992 to the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe wrote: "The breadth, directness and intended intensity of the effort envisioned by the Holy Year Board is such that we can but admire this new generation of Bahá'í planners."

By the end of the Six Year Plan, the pattern and nature of European Bahá'í youth activity had undergone a significant qualitative change, holding out hope and promise for the future. The degree of collaborative work among the youth made the wholeness of Europe a living reality. They responded magnificently to the challenges resulting from the collapse of social and political systems in the Eastern half of the continent, valiantly arising as resourceful pioneers, energetic travelling teachers and dynamic administrators in the establishment of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in virgin lands. In this, their lofty endeavour, they were inspired and guided by the nascent European Bahá'í Youth Council, a unique instrument created by the Universal House of Justice for this very purpose.

C. Special Youth Projects

A significant feature of the Six Year Plan was the use of the arts to share the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. Many projects involving the arts were carried out by youth, who combined drama, music and dance to teach the Faith. Three special projects have been featured here because of the international scope of their services.

El Viento Canta

On 21 March 1987, the music group now known as El Viento Canta first performed during a talent show at the Bahá'í World Centre. The ensemble was composed of youth who had volunteered to serve at the Centre and had a love of Latin American music. The members were: Cesar Cortes (Peru), Claudia Cortes (Mexico), Rolando Cortes (Peru), David Hadden (United States), Roxana Hadden (Peru), and Conrad Lambert (England). The audience's response to the music was so positive that the friends continued to perform for various gatherings in Haifa. The group formalized its name for a presentation at the Jacob's Ladder Folk Festival in northern Israel in September 1987.

As a result of the performance at the Jacob's Ladder Folk Festival, the musicians were asked to give a full-length concert at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. This concert was also successful, and the friends began to realize the teaching potential of their music. They began planning a trip to share their Faith with people in Western Europe, writing to National Assemblies in Europe and receiving positive responses for sponsorship from thirteen. New members were added to the group: Miguel Cortes from Peru (Rolando and Cesar's brother), and Lisa Smith-Cortes from the United States (Cesar's wife).

In June 1988, El Viento Canta began its tour in Cyprus, then proceeded on to Greece, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and England. Each concert's format varied slightly to accommodate the location, but generally the performance lasted between one and one-and-a-half hours and consisted of songs from Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Spain, Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico and Ecuador. The songs were sung in Spanish and Quechua, the native language of the Indians in the Andes. In between the songs, members introduced themselves as Bahá'ís and talked about Bahá'u'lláh and the principles He brought. Invariably, a few people would stay



Members of El Viento Canta with children on the grounds of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Kampala, Uganda, during their tour of Africa in 1989.

after the concert and participate in the impromptu firesides held in hotel rooms or onstage. At one concert in Spain, hundreds of copies of the Peace Statement were distributed to an audience of 3,000! The group performed approximately forty-eight concerts in three months.

During the 1988 International Convention in Haifa, several Continental Counsellors from Africa had heard the group perform and asked if it would consider travelling to that continent for three music festivals to be held in 1989. After El Viento Canta's final concert in England in August of 1988 (which happened to be held at the Africa Centre in London), the members dispersed to several countries to work and study until their trip to Africa.

As the friends waited, sweeping changes were taking place in Eastern Europe and many opportunities for teaching the Faith opened up there. The International Teaching Centre asked El Viento Canta if it could extend its African trip to include Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, Mongolia, and China! Of course the members agreed and set out with anticipation to meet in Liechtenstein (the home of Miguel's new wife, Bernadette) in November 1989.

During December 1989, the group travelled through Botswana, Kenya, Uganda, and Liberia. The music festivals planned there were held to encourage local believers to perform their own native songs and dances, and El Viento Canta was to be an illustration of how this might be possible. All of the festivals were inspiring and beautiful, and the friends had an opportunity to visit the House of Worship in Kampala, Uganda, for a spiritual renewal. One of the most beautiful stories of the group's experience in Africa occurred in Uganda. On the last evening of the band's stay, they were to play at a special camp for handicapped children. They played in a room filled with about 200 children and lit only by a single dim lightbulb. At one point, a performer was to dance with a member of the audience. When she invited one happy-looking child, she didn't realize that the boy had no legs. The child proceeded to dance with great agility on his hands! Later, a deaf little girl told the group how much she enjoyed the music, and a young blind man asked very earnest questions about Bahá'u'lláh.

El Viento Canta returned to Europe at the end of December and travelled through Croatia and Slovenia in Yugoslavia, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Russia, Ukraine, Siberia, Mongolia, China, Macau, and Hong Kong. Travelling in the dead of winter with sixteen people, instruments and luggage and a complete sound system, one could surmise that the group's purpose was not tourism. In fact,



Members of El Viento Canta in Ulaan-Baatar, Mongolia, with Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Sean Hinton (back left) and some of the first Mongolian Bahá'ís; 1990.

the members wandered through these countries to spread the divine fragrances of the Cause of God. They knew that wherever they went people would be attracted to the joyful, upbeat music, and would stay after the concerts to hear more of the Message that was presented on stage. They didn't know how many sacrifices, delights, tears, and adventures they would share along the way.

One of their biggest adventures took place on the train between Poland and their first stop in the Soviet Union, Estonia. The group missed one train and had to catch three to make up for lost time. The band had experienced several robberies in Poland, and the train was no exception. The weary travellers probably could have given up right then and there, but Lynda Godwin, the coordinator for the Soviet trip, suddenly pulled out a letter from the House of Justice and began to read from it. It was the letter informing the Bahá'í world of the vast changes in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and Mongolia which called for a new Two Year Teaching Plan for those countries.

The performers immediately felt exhilarated and inspired by those words. They forgot about their hardship, became cheerful and loving once again, and felt so happy that they were a part of these changes and could teach in these countries. Even though they encountered more difficulty before they got to Estonia (Conrad had left his passport in Warsaw and had to go back for it), they had been given new strength and energy to continue their efforts for the Faith.

After El Viento Canta finished its Soviet tour in Siberia, it was time to travel to Mongolia. However, the group had no plans for Mongolia. No concerts had been set up, and no contacts had been made. The International Teaching Centre had asked the friends to go there and do what they could. Everyone wished that Sean Hinton, a pioneer to Mongolia, would be able to meet them there but they knew he was back in England. They just decided to make the best of it, and if nothing happened, to go on to Beijing.

They took the train from Ulan-Ude to Irkutsk, on Lake Baikal, where they would catch a plane to the capital of Mongolia, Ulaan-Baatar. They got to Irkutsk early in the morning and took taxis to the airport. When they arrived, Cesar suddenly shouted, "Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá!" in a panic-stricken voice. Everyone turned to him and asked what had happened, and he said, "I left my bag on the train!" This travel pouch contained his passport and visas and US$2,300 of the group's money. He had put it under his pillow on the train so that it would be safe.

Immediately the group's Russian translator took him to a taxi so that they could try to catch the train. Meanwhile, two hours remained before boarding time. The American guide, Bill Mahoney, told the friends to get some breakfast and see what would happen. Claudia and Lisa decided to stay with the luggage. As they were waiting, rather dejectedly, for their chance to eat, they suddenly heard a very British voice say, "My, you have a lot of luggage, don't you?"

Shocked to hear English, they looked up and saw a young man with bright blue eyes. "Who are you?" Lisa asked. "Sean," he said. "Sean Hinton? Alláh'u'Abhá! We're El Viento Canta!" He, just as shocked, said, "What are you doing here?" They told him that they were about to fly into Mongolia, and he told them he was on the same flight. They immediately took him up to the other members, who were also stunned to see him. He apparently had decided to come back to Mongolia for further studies for one month. He knew El Viento Canta was scheduled to be there, in Mongolia, but he had no idea how or when it was to arrive.

Finally everyone was to board the plane and Cesar still hadn't come back. Bill told the friends he would wait for Cesar and do what they could to get him to Mongolia. But no one really believed that he could find the group in Ulaan-Baatar.

The band arrived in Ulaan-Baatar and half of the members got taxis to one of the two hotels; the other half stayed at the

airport until another taxi was available. When the second group arrived at the hotel, who should they bring with them but Cesar!

Cesar and the Russian translator had rushed to the train station to find that the train had already left for the next town. They called ahead to the next town, described the bag to the train police, and got back in the taxi. When they arrived at the next station after a harrowing taxi ride, they found the bag and all of its contents perfectly safe in the police station. After verifying that everything was in order, they raced back to Irkutsk to find that the airplane had left fifteen minutes earlier. The next passenger plane was not scheduled to leave for another week.

Bill asked Cesar if he minded riding in a cargo plane. Cesar said, "I'll take it!" and flew to the Ulaan-Baatar airport, where half the group was still going through customs! Sean Hinton already had contacts in Ulaan-Baatar and went on to arrange four concerts and a visit to the Mongolian steppes. Such wonders served to greatly confirm the dedication of the young performers.

China was a very different experience for the group. The members could not teach the Faith openly there, and many of their concerts had been cancelled. However, in one area, Guiyang, they were able to give small concerts and visit a lovely area in the mountains where the Miao minority live. The friends visited on April 21 and were able to explain to their hosts that that was a very special day, the "King of Festivals" for Bahá'ís. The Miao shared their dances, food, and beautiful costumes with El Viento Canta, which was astonished at the similarity between the Miao people and the native people of South America.

The group returned to the western style of living when it flew to Macau and then later visited Hong Kong. After having been among lovely, spiritual-minded people in China, Mongolia, the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and Africa, the group was pleasantly surprised to find the same kind of pure hearts in such modern surroundings.

El Viento Canta could not have travelled to any of these remarkable places without the love, kindness, diligence and support of countless Bahá'ís and their wonderful communities. In every city or town, the Bahá'ís could always be picked out of the crowds by their cheerful smiles and open faces. It is a testament to the power of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant that the Bahá'í communities in all these lands exhibited such excellent hospitality and were able to arrange concerts and venues so well.

The Wildfire Theatre Group

In January 1988, a group of twenty-eight Bahá'í youth toured Australia to share the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh through a programme of music, dance, and comedy entitled "It's Not the End of the World". Calling themselves the Wildfire Project, the youth met with an extraordinary response among the approximately three thousand people who saw the show. During the rest of the Six Year Plan, Wildfire embarked on a number of similar performing tours. The membership of the group and the content of the shows changed, but Wildfire remained dedicated to spreading Bahá'u'lláh's message of peace through the arts.

In November 1989, the Wildfire Theatre Group completed its first international teaching tour. Composed of five youth, the troupe travelled to Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and Thailand. Monty Engs (New Zealand), Simon Hinton (Australia), Glen Martin (Australia), Mary Sinclair (United States), and Kirsten Zemke (New Zealand) spent ten months performing in schools, universities, shopping centres, refugee camps, public parks and other venues. During this tour, Wildfire shared the Bahá'í Faith with approximately 120,000 people.

The Bahá'í community of Hong Kong reported being deeply touched by the dedication and enthusiasm of the members of Wildfire, whose performances in nine Vietnamese Refugee Camps and Detention Centres brought the joyous news of the

Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh to hundreds of people. As the first entertainment group ever to enter some of the camps in Hong Kong, Wildfire was credited with helping ease mounting tension among the inhabitants, thereby winning for the Faith the admiration and praise of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and local social service agencies with whom they cooperated.

Wildfire's performances in Hong Kong generated unprecedented media coverage for the Faith in both Chinese and English newspapers, on television and on radio.

An audience of several hundred gathered to watch the group's first official performance in Macau, which formed part of the community's celebration of Naw-Rúz. Hundreds more watched and listened from the towering apartment blocks around the park.

The friends' second performance in Macau took place in the Leal Senado Square, in the centre of the city, before an audience of 2,000. Spectators gathered long before the beginning of the show, having heard about it in one of the six newspaper articles published about the group. The one-hour show, which was repeated twice, included song introductions in Cantonese and short talks throughout about the principles of the Faith. A Bahá'í information table was visited by more than four hundred people who accepted literature on the Faith, and at the end of the evening eight people asked to enrol in the community.

As a result of its performances in Macau, the group was invited by the University of East Asia's music society to be guest performers at its annual singing competition. Wildfire performed at the beginning of the programme to a very appreciative audience of seven hundred in the cultural centre of the university. Later in the programme, Wildfire's artistic director, Simon Hinton, accepted on behalf of the friends an engraved silver plate presented by the society.

Other highlights of the Asia trip were a seventeen-city tour of Taiwan, which included a performance for a group of tribal aborigines resulting in the enrollment as Bahá'ís of two daughters of the chief of the Beinan tribe, and a six-day tour of the South of Thailand, with performances in schools and colleges which resulted in the enrollment of eight hundred and fifteen new believers.

The group was particularly blessed to spend time in the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, who was travelling through Asia at the time and attended several of Wildfire's performances. Her loving spirit and kindness greatly inspired the youth in their efforts.

Wildfire's tour of Asia not only led many souls to embrace the Faith but motivated the Bahá'í youth of that region. The youth of Melaka, Malaysia, who assisted with preparations for Wildfire's performances in Sonbgkhla, Thailand, were so energized by the group's example that they formed their own musical group called Wildfire II.

In 1991, Wildfire re-formed with a new group of performers to tour South Queensland, Australia. "The Do-it-Yourself Peace Show" was seen by approximately 2,100 people in nine cities, and an additional 2,500 saw the friends perform promotional segments. The show's premise is that at the first rehearsal for a new peace show, the director doesn't arrive and the members must overcome their feelings of inadequacy to discuss the issues involved with peace and suggest songs and dances to illustrate those points. Eventually they reach a unified approach and create a show outlining the major barriers to peace and ways to overcome them. Each performance ended with a brief explanation that the principles of Bahá'u'lláh had formed the basis for the presentation. Then the floor was opened for questions.

Venues for the show ranged from the National Bahá'í Conference in Toowoomba where one thousand people crowded the hall, to a small Aboriginal settlement full of children who shared their own dance moves after the performance, to a prison in Brisbane where enthusiastic shouts of agreement followed a song about racial prejudice.



Members of the Wildfire Youth Theatre Group during one of their performances in New South Wales, Australia, in February 1989.

A five-city tour of Western Australia followed in early 1992, involving fifteen youth who performed, conducted workshops with their peers, and gave radio and newspaper interviews.

As the Six Year Plan ended, plans were being made to continue Wildfire's teaching activities into the future.

Light in the Darkness

This group was made up of about twelve musicians, most of whom were students living in Italy. They represented various nationalities, and came together after finding themselves informally singing and performing together at several Bahá'í conferences. It was suggested that they form a more organized ensemble for the purpose of teaching the Bahá'í Faith. An initial meeting was held in December 1988 in central Italy, and Olinga Mazlum acted as a director to help organize regular practices.

The first performance by Light in the Darkness was during the Easter 1989 Italian Youth Conference, then in July 1989 they sang two songs during the "Peace Moves" European Youth Conference held in San Marino. These efforts were enthusiastically received, and encouraged the friends to travel together to Portici, near Naples, to join in the special teaching project taking place there under the auspices of the Continental Board of Counsellors.

The group gave a concert in Portici which was attended by about one hundred people. Afterwards, many in the audience went to the Bahá'í Centre and later enrolled in the Faith. This was the beginning of "mass entry" into the Faith in Portici, with two to three people joining the Faith every day at first, and then up to ten people a day. The musicians stayed after the concert to help with deepenings, firesides, public meetings, and then performed at the summer school. Fifteen days later they performed in Paola, giving several concerts and helping with the teaching work.

In December 1989, Light in the Darkness performed at the Italian Bahá'í Winter School, and in April 1990 they met to plan a summer tour under the guidance of the National Teaching Committee. During June, July and August 1990 the friends travelled to Campobasso, Italy, and Ljubljana and Zagreb in Yugoslavia where many activities involving their performances had been organized by the European Bahá'í Youth Council. Next, the group went to Portici, Sicily and Sardinia in Italy, and performed at the Mediterranean Bahá'í Conference held in Corsica.

During the winter of 1990/91, the European Bahá'í Youth Council and the National Teaching Committee of Austria organized two concerts each in Ljubljana and Zagreb, Yugoslavia. Light in the Darkness performed in each of these, and then in April

1991 they performed during the Italian National Youth Conference.

In the summer of 1991, the group went on a tour of Poland, performing in Warsaw, Gdansk, Wrocław and Krakow. From Poland they travelled to Romania, where they participated in the historic first European Bahá'í Youth Conference held in Neptune (near Constanza). After the Conference they performed in other localities in the area, with very positive response. Between songs they would invite people to find out more about the Bahá'í Faith, and during one of their concerts some eighty people enrolled.

In August 1991 the friends went back to Portici, Italy, to give a concert in support of the teaching project there. After the performance some members stayed in Italy to help with the teaching work, and some returned to Romania to participate in the extraordinary activities taking place in Eastern Europe.

Towards the end of the Six Year Plan, the group concentrated on expanding its repertoire by writing original music inspired by Bahá'í themes. Its goal was to produce a cassette tape to raise the funds needed to undertake an extended tour to proclaim the Faith during the Holy Year in 1992.



Light in the Darkness performing during the European Bahá'í Youth Conference held in Neptune, Romania, in July 1991.



Musical entertainment being presented during a youth conference held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; November/December 1991.



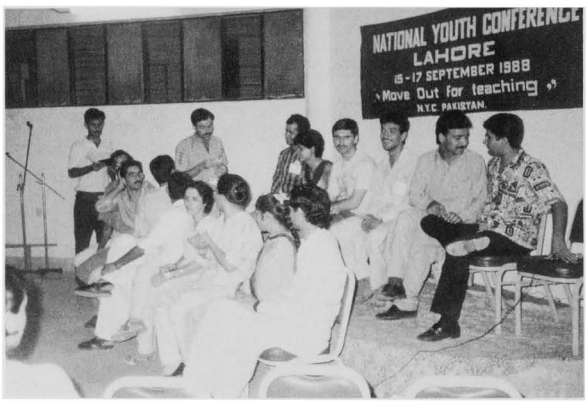
Participants in Austria's National Youth Conference held in Spital am Pyhrn in 1992.



The Prime Minister of Guyana, His Excellency Hamilton Greene, addressing the Caribbean Bahá'í Youth Conference held in Georgetown from 11 to 14 August 1989.



Friends attending a youth institute in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, on 3 and 4 December 1988.



Participants in a quiz held during the National Youth Conference in Lahore, Pakistan, from 15 to 17 September 1988.



A group photograph taken during the International Youth Conference held near Harare, Zimbabwe, from 15 to 22 August 1990.

6. BAHÁ'Í SCHOLARSHIP

A. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BAHÁ'Í CHAIRS AT UNIVERSITIES

The Bahá'í Chair for World Peace, University of Maryland, United States

On 12 February 1990, the Universal House of Justice wrote to the Bahá'ís of the world:

> With feelings of thankfulness and joy we announce an achievement of immense importance to the accelerating progress of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. The University of Maryland and the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States recently signed a memorandum of understanding, establishing 'The Bahá'í Chair for World Peace' at that University's Center for International Development and Conflict Management. The stated purpose of the Chair is 'to conduct and publish research, design courses and conduct seminars in the field of Bahá'í studies and world peace within an interdisciplinary context; to initiate public forums for discussing the issues proposed in the Statement of the Universal House of Justice entitled 'The Promise of World Peace'; and to establish academic linkages with and provide technical assistance to Bahá'í institutions in the fields of peace education and international development.
>
> This first initiative by a well-founded, significant institution of higher learning to formulate such a serious program of Bahá'í studies is a direct response to the Peace Statement, as is borne out by a letter addressed to us by the Director of the Center for International Development and Conflict Management in which he said: 'With this letter I am answering on behalf of CIDCM and the University of Maryland your call: "If the Bahá'í experience can contribute in whatever measure to reinforcing hope in the unity of the human race, we are happy to offer it as a model for study."
>
> Fully cognizant of Bahá'u'lláh's praise of knowledge as 'wings to man's life' and of the importance which He assigns to its acquisition; of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's advice that we should 'seek to impart the Message to influential persons and become a cause of guidance to the learned and distinguished'; and of Shoghi Effendi's call for a 'resolute attempt' to reinforce measures 'for the establishment of closer contact with the leaders of public thought, with colleges and universities', we hail this seminal development both as a mark of the Faith's emergence from obscurity and as the harbinger of that day when hosts of scholars will devote their energies to the exploration, exposition and defence of the dynamic principles animating the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, thereby fulfilling the need identified by the beloved Guardian for 'well-read and well-educated people, capable of correlating our teachings to the current thoughts of the leaders of society'. On that day, we shall witness an expansion and consolidation of the community as has not yet been experienced.

The official signing of the memorandum took place on 26 January 1990 in the presence of Dean Murray Polakoff of the University of Maryland, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Dr. Abdel R. Omran, Acting Director of the Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM), Dr. Suheil Bushrui, Director of the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace, and eight members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States.

At a luncheon hosted by the National Assembly and the Center for International Development and Conflict Management, attended by some one hundred Bahá'ís and their guests, Dean Polakoff explained the vital need for the spiritual perspective that the Bahá'í Chair will provide in the study of world peace and conflict resolution.

Dr. William F. Gibson, Chairman of the Board of Directors for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), gave a stirring keynote address relating racism and ethnic conflicts to the themes outlined in the Peace Statement. Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh followed with a thought-provoking address on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly concerning the purpose of the Chair. Professor Bushrui closed the proceedings with a tribute to Professor Edward Azar, Director of CIDCM, who first proposed the idea of the Chair.

At the time of the reception, nine roses were delivered to an ailing Dr. Azar, who was deeply grateful for them as a symbol for the establishment of the Bahá'í Chair.

The Chair for Bahá'í Studies, University of Indore, India

In its Riḍván message of 1990, the Universal House of Justice wrote:

> Just as the community has extended its ramifications internally, it has also expanded its relations, influence and appeal externally in a variety of ways, some astonishing in their breadth and potential. A few examples will suffice: ...the National Spiritual Assembly of India announced that an agreement had been reached to establish a Chair for Bahá'í Studies at the University of Indore.

The memorandum of understanding for the establishment of the Chair for Bahá'í Studies at the University of Indore (later renamed Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya) had been signed on 9 April 1990 by the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Professor M.S. Sodha, and the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of India, Ramnik Shah.

Upon being notified of the signing, the House of Justice sent the following cable to the National Assembly of India:

> CONGRATULATIONS ESTABLISHMENT CHAIR FOR BAHÁ'Í STUDIES AT UNIVERSITY INDORE. THUS A NEW STEP IS TAKEN AIMED AT ENHANCING PRESTIGE FAITH AND RAISING CALL GOD IN ACADEMIC CIRCLES. EXTEND OUR APPRECIATION TO THOSE WHO LABOURED IN INDORE AND ELSEWHERE FOR SUCCESS THIS OUTSTANDING PROJECT.

In pursuance of the agreement, permission had been sought by the University from the Higher Education Department of the Government of Madhya Pradesh for the establishment of the Chair. This permission was obtained on 22 January 1991.

The Chair was established to promote research and scholarship in Bahá'í studies; to design and conduct courses, seminars and studies in the field of Bahá'í studies and related subjects within an interdisciplinary context and publish results and reports of such activities; and to promote inter-university linkage through seminars, exchange, lectures, and so forth, with a view to promoting inter-faith harmony, national as well as international integration and world peace.

The University advertised all over India for candidates to fill the post of Professor of Bahá'í Studies. The selection committee met on 12 April 1991 and unanimously selected Dr. Vishnudatta Nagar, then Professor Emeritus at Baba Saheb Ambedkar National Institute of Social Sciences, for the new post. This recommendation was ratified by the Executive Council, and Dr. Nagar joined the University of Indore as Professor of Bahá'í Studies on 16 May 1991.

He pursued the goals of the Chair in three main ways: by starting formal courses and academic activities; undertaking research studies and registering candidates for research work leading to the degree of Ph.D. in Bahá'í Studies; and arranging group discussions and lectures among teachers on campus.



In January 1992, two lectures were arranged by the Chair for Bahá'í Studies at the University of Indore, India. Shown from left, Dr. Vishnudatta Nagar, Dr. Falairiva Taafaki, Mr. Ramnik Shah, Mr. Sherif Rushdy, Dr. T.K. Vajdi, and Dr. Shirin Mahalati.

In July 1991, Dr. Nagar attended and participated in the World Order Studies Course at Landegg Academy in Switzerland, where he delivered three lectures. Through his efforts, the University of Indore agreed to start a compulsory course in World Order Studies and an optional course in Religion and Society at the Master of Philosophy level. Students seeking the Master of Philosophy degree would immediately be enrolled into the course upon passing their post-graduate examination.

At the end of the Six Year Plan, the courses were being finalised in consultation with Dr. Iraj Ayman of Landegg Academy in preparation for being approved by the various academic bodies of the University. A Statement of Intent was signed in October 1991 establishing "cooperative relations" between Landegg Academy and the University of Indore.

In November 1991, two research assistants joined the Chair, their appointment provided for in the agreement with the University. Before the end of the Six Year Plan, two research candidates had been registered for the degree of Ph.D. and two other applicants were being processed. The main purpose of the research work was to identify the most challenging problems facing the world and to explain how specific Bahá'í principles address these problems. The topics of the proposed dissertations were: "The Contribution of Religion in the Evolution of a Just Society", "The Role of Religion in the Economic Transformation of Society", "Nature of the Human Soul—A Thematic Study of the Sacred Scriptures of Hindu and Bahá'í Religions", and "Religion and the Environment".

Apart from individual and group discussions held with teachers, two lectures were arranged by the Chair on 27 January 1992. Dr. Falairiva Taafaki, a development consultant from the United States, spoke on "The Way Out of the Dead End: Ecologically Sustainable Development", and Mr. Sherif Rushdy spoke on "The Role of Science and Technology in the Transformation of Global Society". These two speakers also delivered lectures at the University's School of Advanced Liberal Studies and spoke on "The Role of Teachers and Youth in the Transformation of Society". The lectures at both locations were well-attended and received wide coverage in the local newspapers.

The Chair's library was started as the National Spiritual Assembly of India sent about seven hundred Bahá'í books, in various installments. Some of these were contributed by Bahá'í communities outside India. The books were registered and catalogued according to the accepted principles of library science.

B. Bahá'í Courses in Universities

During the Six Year Plan, a number of courses on the Bahá'í Faith were approved for university credit, while other university courses on comparative religion included sections on the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. These developments signalled the growing recognition in the academic community of the importance of Bahá'í studies to scholars of all backgrounds.

In 1988, the curriculum for third-year students at the University of Swaziland began to include the history, teachings, and administrative order of the Bahá'í Faith. In 1991, university officials asked Bahá'ís to write a new curriculum on specific Bahá'í subjects in relation to African customs and traditional religions.

A three-credit course on the history of the Bahá'í Faith began in the fall of 1988 at the University of Hawaii, Hilo campus. Its two main texts were *The Bahá'í Faith: the Emerging Global Religion* and *The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions, 1844–1944: Some Western Accounts.*

Two courses on the Bahá'í Faith and peace were conducted by one of the Bahá'ís of Burkina Faso at Ouagadougou University's Higher School of Law. In 1989 the university granted permission for the National Assembly to give courses on the theme "The Programme of Bahá'u'lláh for Peace".

Full credit was earned by students at Brown University in Rhode Island, U.S.A., who formed a Group Independent Study Project on the Bahá'í Faith in the spring of 1987. A detailed syllabus for the semester-long course—which covered the history, principles, and administration of the Faith—was approved by university officials.

The Faculty of Part-time and Continuing Education at the University of Western Ontario in Canada offered a course in the spring of 1992 exploring the "new world order". The subject was suggested by the Association for Bahá'í Studies Campus Club and topics covered included Moral Foundations of a New World Order, Environment: Global Directions in Education, and Racial Dimensions of a New Social Order. The description in the course catalogue read:

> The phrase a "new world order", coined by the Bahá'í Faith in the 1800s, articulates a vision of a new, unified world order, and its premises serve as a point of departure for this series of informal lectures and discussions on the world as it might be.

Courses to study the Faith were also established in Brazil at the Federal University of Santa Catarina and in Sierra Leone at Makeni Teachers' College.

The Faith was included in quite a number of existing university courses, usually in the field of comparative religion, but also in departments of education and economics.

The head of Christian Religious Education at Shanzu Teacher Training College in Mombasa, Kenya, invited speakers from the Bahá'í community to address more than 400 first-year students in February 1987. The Bahá'í Faith was added to the syllabus of the College's religious education section as a new topic of study.

In 1989, the Department of Religious Studies of Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, implemented two new courses: Religion, Peace, and Justice, and Religion and Contemporary Social and Economic Development. The first included extensive study of the Bahá'í writings related to peace and justice, and the second looked at approaches to development taken by Christianity, Islam, and the Bahá'í Faith. In 1991, a new faculty member joined the same university and incorporated Bahá'í content into his courses on Religion and Social and Economic Development, and Research Methods.

In Malawi, the head of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Zomba

requested information about the Bahá'í Faith. When it was delivered, the Bahá'ís found that the Department Head was already using *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* in his classes.

Lectures on the Bahá'í Faith were given as part of comparative religion courses at Bermuda College, University of the South Pacific in Fiji, Chancellor University in Malawi, and the University of Zimbabwe.

Students at Gweru Teacher Training College in Zimbabwe and at the Ecumenical Institute of Theological Sciences in Brazil (which offers undergraduate studies in theology for high school teachers of religion) learned about the Bahá'í Faith in their courses. Bahá'ís in New Caledonia were invited to present the Bahá'í point of view on economics to students of that subject at the University in Nouméa.

C. Landegg Academy and Institute of International Education and Development

The Landegg Conference Centre, located in Wienacht, Switzerland, and established in 1983, continued to host youth conferences, seminars, and schools, as well as courses for both Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís, during the Six Year Plan.

In 1989, a new Bahá'í international learning institution, known as Landegg Academy, was born. It was established by the Landegg International Bahá'í Foundation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland as a twin institution of the Landegg Conference Centre. The Institute of International Education and Development was also established as an affiliate with the Academy to provide services to institutions, agencies, and communities worldwide, both Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í.

The mission statement adopted to guide the activities of the Academy reads:

> Landegg Academy is an international learning centre dedicated to providing a stimulating environment in which students of all ages, and from all ethnic and national backgrounds, can explore the nature of the human being, the dynamics of community life, and the myriad challenges facing today's global society. Through a variety of on- and off-campus activities and in collaboration with individuals and institutions with similar goals, Landegg Academy is committed to developing programmes that foster those moral and spiritual qualities and related practical skills that are needed at this critical transitional phase in the collective life of mankind.

The Academy's specific objectives are: to implement an holistic approach to education, integrating the spiritual, intellectual and physical development of individuals; to demonstrate and propagate the oneness of mankind; to nurture bonds of friendship among participants from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds; to cultivate respect for all peoples and all cultures; to promote the harmony of science and religion; to instil through community activity the ideal of service to mankind; and to develop, offer, and promote academic programmes for the study of the Bahá'í Faith.

One of the outstanding courses offered by the Academy is the three-year Certificate Programme in World Order Studies. The Programme is designed to foster systematic Bahá'í scholarship, as called for by Shoghi Effendi in a letter written on his behalf to an individual believer, dated 21 October 1943:

> The Cause needs more Bahá'í scholars, people who not only are devoted to it and believe in it and are anxious to tell others about it, but also who have a deep grasp of the Teachings and their significance, and who can correlate its beliefs with the current thoughts and problems of the people of the world.

Participants in the Certificate Programme meet at Landegg each year during the entire month of August for the purposes of orientation, preparation of study schedules, and examinations. Independent study is carried out during the intervening months. The first group, which convened in August 1990, consisted of 28 students from eleven countries.

In addition to the World Order Studies Programme, a curriculum for junior youth was established. Called Education for Peace, it involved sixteen months of independent study.

One-week-long residential study courses were also offered in various languages during the Six Year Plan. Some were held at Landegg and some in other parts of the world, organized in cooperation with host institutions. Examples of courses offered include: the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, the New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, the Covenant, Bahá'í Education, the Spiritual Dimensions of Health, Assembly Management, Fund Development and Management, Media Arts, and Assemblies Facing Family Problems.

International conferences held at Landegg were often co-sponsored by other international organizations. Some were planned as periodically recurring events, such as the International Dialogues on Transition to a Global Society, which were held under the auspices of the Director-General of UNESCO and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe. The first such gathering, held in September 1990, brought together eighty leaders of thought from around the world to present papers and contribute to a discussion about the changing world order.

During its first four years of operation, Landegg Academy and the Institute of International Education and Development were invited by governmental and public agencies to conduct education-related projects in several countries. In Albania, several national symposia on moral education were held, textbooks on the subject were revised, and a magazine for children was produced, a joint undertaking with the Albanian Ministry of Education and the Institute of Pedagogical Studies. In the Ukraine, assistance was given to establish the Ukrainian Institute of Spiritual Foundations of World Civilization. In Russia, projects were developed in cooperation with the International Foundation for the Survival and Development of Humanity and the Foundation for Social Innovation.

Landegg contributed to the availability of scholarly materials by publishing the proceedings of various conferences, as well as guidebooks and manuals for educational services. A total of twelve titles were produced during the Plan. Recordings of lectures and other proceedings of Landegg programmes were made available for sale through a department of Audio-Visual Services, and an inventory of more than 1,500 titles of Bahá'í literature and audio-visual productions in various languages was maintained.

In addition to the Institute for International Education and Development, a number of other bodies were established as affiliates or departments of Landegg.

The Youth Centre was charged with planning projects related to youth and maintaining contact with the European Bahá'í Youth Council. The Centre conducted such annual events as Landegg Youth Symposia (providing opportunities for youth to explore issues such as the environment and conflict resolution, in consultation with adults), Forums for Young Professionals, and youth conferences.

The Department of Education and Family Life and its adjunct Documentation Centre were in charge of activities related to Bahá'í education, teacher training, and Bahá'í family life. The Department conducted mobile courses in various host countries, and the Documentation Centre acted as a clearing house for material on Bahá'í education.

The Persian Arts and Letters Society promoted the Persian language, literature, and arts, with focus on the contributions of the Bahá'í Faith and community to this field.

The International Society for Agriculture and Rural Development functioned as an affiliate body dedicated to services related to development at the grassroots level.

D. General Systems Research Conference, Budapest 1987

A Bahá'í delegation headed by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum participated in a scientific conference organized by the International Society for General Systems Research (later renamed the International Society for the Systems Sciences) and held in Budapest, Hungary, from 1 to 5 June 1987. Other members of the delegation were Mrs. Violette Nakhjavání and Dr. Janet Khan from the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, and Dr. Ingeborg Franken and Dr. Udo Schaefer from Germany.

Bahá'í participation in the Budapest meeting was encouraged and facilitated by Dr. Ervin Laszlo, a well-known scientist and member of the Club of Rome. Dr. Laszlo invited the Bahá'ís to present a paper on the Bahá'í Faith in the conference session arranged by his General Evolution Research Group, thereby providing a valuable opportunity to discuss aspects of the Bahá'í teachings at an international scientific gathering.

The conference, held in a city visited by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and much admired by Him, took place at a time when the embryonic Hungarian Bahá'í community, consisting of a mere handful of devoted followers, was required to operate with extreme caution and wisdom. Against such a background, it is interesting that the Universal House of Justice, in one of its communications, stated that "the presence of a Bahá'í delegation...constituted an historic step forward in the relationship of the Bahá'í community with the academic world and also in its standing in the communist countries".[1]

The gathering in Budapest attracted some of the foremost systems scientists from Eastern Europe and the West. They were drawn from such disciplines as mathematics, physics, engineering, economics, management, and the biological and social sciences. One of the featured speakers was Professor G.I. Marchuk, President of the Academy of Sciences of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The purpose of the conference was to apply "systems thinking" to the problems of constancy and change confronting an increasingly complex world. "Systems thinking" is a way of looking at the world in terms of relationships and integration. It is used to explain processes and events in the physical, social, and cultural worlds. For example, a human body is a system in which all parts are related and interdependent and where the health of the part depends on the whole and vice versa. Just as an individual is faced with the need to continue to evolve and develop while, at the same time, retaining a sense of identity, so too, the world of today is characterized and challenged by the operation of the forces for constancy and change.

Dr. Janet Khan delivered a paper entitled "The Bahá'í Community as a Model for Social Change". The presentation examined the experience of the Bahá'í community as an evolving global society. Its organic nature and unique system of organization were described with special reference to the dynamic interrelations between the processes of change and constancy operating in its evolution. These processes were illustrated by reference to the relationship between the individual and the community, the flexibility and elasticity of Bahá'í administrative functioning, the response it has made worldwide to external threat in the form of the current wave of persecution directed against its members in Írán, and the nature of the community's expansion. The paper was well received and elicited many questions about the Faith, its teachings, its relationship to science and its manner of functioning in the world. This presentation marked the first occasion, in several decades, in which the Bahá'í teachings had been presented before an audience in a country such as Hungary.

[1] Memorandum dated 29 June 1987 to Dr. Janet Khan.



The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum and Dr. Ervin Laszlo during a television interview following the International Society for General Systems Research Conference held in Budapest, Hungary, in June 1987.

Dr. Ingeborg Franken, a physicist, and Dr. Udo Schaefer, a public prosecutor, participated in a workshop on peace. During the discussion periods, they had the opportunity to describe the elements of the Bahá'í peace programme and the activities of the world-wide Bahá'í community in sensitizing humankind to the need for and the inevitability of peace. Dr. Ingeborg Franken was subsequently invited to write a brief article on the role of consultation in promoting peace, for publication in the newsletter of the Society's Peace Group.

At the conclusion of the conference, the Bahá'í delegation met informally with several members of Dr. Laszlo's General Evolution Research Group to discuss subjects of mutual interest. One outcome of this meeting was that, in response to Dr. Laszlo's request, materials on aspects of the Bahá'í Faith were forwarded to all members of his Group.

The members of the Bahá'í delegation were impressed that a significant number of the scientists and academics present at the conference already had some knowledge of the Faith, often as a result of the dissemination of the Peace Statement. And, through their participation in this meeting the members reported having many opportunities to enhance the understanding of their fellow conferees concerning the uniqueness of the Bahá'í approach to the social organization of humankind.

E. THE ASSOCIATIONS FOR BAHÁ'Í STUDIES

The Association for Bahá'í Studies was founded as the Canadian Association for Studies on the Bahá'í Faith in 1975 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada. It was the result of a diverse group of individuals attempting to fulfil a Five Year Plan goal "to cultivate opportunities for formal presentations, courses and lectureships on the Bahá'í Faith in Canadian universities and other institutions of higher learning". The Association provided a means for approaching intellectuals, making them aware of the Bahá'í Faith and acquainting them with the academic resources available to facilitate a formal study of it.

The Association increasingly assumed a significant role in the intellectual and social life of the Bahá'í community worldwide. In 1981, its name was changed to the Association for Bahá'í Studies—recommended by the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada and approved by the Universal House of Justice—to reflect the evolving nature of the Association's membership and activities. With guidelines set forth by the House of Justice, affiliates were established in more than twenty countries under the auspices of the Center for Bahá'í Studies, located in Ottawa, Canada, which acts as the international coordinating centre

During the Six Year Plan, the primary purpose of the Association for Bahá'í Studies was to stimulate, coordinate, and present original research on the Bahá'í Faith. It was also engaged in developing curricula suitable for use at universities that recognized the Bahá'í Faith as an important subject for research and instruction. The Association achieved these goals by holding annual meetings, international conferences, and regional symposia. The Center for Bahá'í Studies also produced a quarterly newsletter, the *Bulletin*, which kept members advised of the international activities of the Association.

Association for Bahá'í Studies—Australia
The Association for Bahá'í Studies in Australia was first established in June 1984, with its operating secretariat located in Perth, Western Australia. During the Six Year Plan, the Association co-ordinated and stimulated the activities of Bahá'í Societies in universities and other institutions of higher learning by holding national and regional conferences, and distributing a quarterly newsletter.



The 1989 Australian National Bahá'í Studies Conference was held in Adelaide from March 24 to 27. Highlights of the Conference included a one-day symposium on the Role of Women in an Advancing Civilization.

With a membership of more than two hundred people, this Association increased the scope of its studies by forming new interest groups in such areas as women's studies, health, agriculture, and science and technology. These interest groups gave a greater structure and focus to Bahá'í studies.

The Association's eighth conference was held in Adelaide from 24 to 27 March 1989. For the first time, committees of the National Spiritual Assembly—the Social and Economic Development Committee and the National Children's Education Task Force—were invited to present research papers on their areas of interest. The programme also included a section for the presentation of general papers, meetings for a number of special interest groups, and a one-day symposium entitled "The Role of Women in an Advancing Civilization". This symposium consisted of presentations of invited papers by Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í experts focusing on such topics as Women and Power, Women in the Legal Profession, and Women, Development and Peace.

From 13 to 16 April 1990, the ninth meeting of the national Association for Bahá'í Studies was held in Perth. More than three hundred people registered for the conference, including several members of the public who had heard one of the many radio announcements broadcast prior to the event. Among the highlights of this gathering was a day-long symposium on "The Environment Humanity's Common Heritage", which included contributions from several Bahá'í environmental experts. Papers were submitted on The Environment—Past, Present and Future, Environmental Damage: Reshaping International Relations, and Agriculture and the Environment. Several of the speakers were interviewed on various radio and television programmes prior to the conference, and a number of media representatives were present at the symposium. A new feature was a half-day forum held in Persian.

Association for Bahá'í Studies—Brazil

One of the significant activities of the Association for Bahá'í Studies in Brazil during the Six Year Plan was the first National Peace Symposium in the Nuclear Era, held from 19 to 21 September 1986 in Goiânia, Goiás. This gathering was supported by hundreds of citizens, industrialists, artists, and top scientists from throughout the country.

The Symposium was officially inaugurated by the wife of the State Governor in the presence of Mr. Hushmand Fatheazam, a member of the Universal House of Justice; representatives from the Ministry of Culture and Education; and municipal authorities. The Secretary-General of the United Nations; the President of Brazil, José Sarney; and various Ministers of the Government sent messages in honour of the occasion.

Approximately 500 people, eighty per cent of whom were not Bahá'ís, attended three main panel discussions on peace, led by eminent scientists and leaders of thought. The topics presented were Science for Peace; Education for Peace; and Economy and Political Science for Peace. The participants also took part in nine workshops, the outcome of which was a document entitled Letter of Goiânia that conveyed to the United Nations the results of the Symposium with recommendations toward the establishment of peace.

On the last day of the Symposium, the cornerstone for a Monument for Peace was placed. This monument was designed by Siron Franco, a well-known Brazilian artist, and bears the quotation from Bahá'u'lláh that states "The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens". The cornerstone, consisting of a beautiful glass plate, was dedicated by Professor Venerando de Freitas Borges, the first mayor of Goiânia. The monument will be a glass tower seven meters high, filled with artistically displayed coloured earth to be received from many countries of the world.



The first conference of the Association for Bahá'í Studies in East, Central and South Africa held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 28 to 30 September 1990.

Association for Bahá'í Studies—Central, South, and East Africa

The activities of the Association for Bahá'í Studies for Central, South, and East Africa included its first annual conference, held at the National Bahá'í Center in Nairobi, Kenya, from 28 to 30 September 1990. A total of thirty-five members attended, among whom were four Auxiliary Board members.

During the gathering, seven speakers presented papers on the following topics: Bahá'í Scholarship—the Master's Style; What is a Bahá'í Scholar?; Applying the Teachings to Solve Current Problems; Relating Christianity, Islam, and the Bahá'í Faith; How to Research the Bahá'í Faith; Fostering Creative Development; and Understanding: the Greatest Gift.

Association for Bahá'í Studies—Chile

The Association for Bahá'í Studies in Chile was established on 19 October 1985 with an initial membership of 39 individuals and two Local Spiritual Assemblies. By the end of the Six Year Plan, its membership had grown to more than sixty individuals and eight institutions. During this time, the Association organized national and regional conferences, and an annual "Essay, Music, and Art Contest"; printed Bahá'í publications; established a library for Bahá'í studies; and formed special interest groups.

From 15 to 16 August 1986, the first annual Association for Bahá'í Studies Conference was held. The conference focused on "Peace and the New World Order", with the keynote speakers being Dr. Augusto Lopez Claros of the International Monetary Fund and Dr. Mansour Sedaghat of the University of Concepción.

The theme of the second annual conference, held from 26 to 27 September 1987, was "New Perspectives in Education", and it featured Counsellor Farzam Arbab and a forum of Bahá'í educators. More than eighty Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís from five countries attended. During the same year, the Association sponsored a series of six regional Bahá'í Studies Institutes, wherein members conducted classes, workshops, and lectures on various themes related to the Bahá'í Faith.

In 1989, this Association received commendations from the Universal House of Justice for its fourth annual conference and for the participation of non-Bahá'í leaders in its forum. This conference, held in Santiago from 30 September to 1 October, addressed "Human Development and Society". Approximately eighty people from Chile, Colombia, Hong Kong, and Peru attended, including non-Bahá'í experts in the field of development.

"Human Rights and Social Justice" was the theme of the fifth annual conference,

which commenced on 25 August 1990 in Santiago. More than fifty people listened to presentations on such topics as The Bahá'í Declaration of Human Rights; The Search for a Just Society; and Social Justice and Development. As well, three simultaneous workshops were held to discuss The Rights of Children; Social Justice and Community; and Youth and Justice.

Beginning in 1986, the Association sponsored a contest which evolved into an annual "Essay, Music and Art Contest" to give individuals the opportunity to express their artistic talents within the context of the Bahá'í Faith. This competition included categories for youth, university students, and adults. A magazine containing some of the essays submitted for this contest was published by the Executive Committee.

The Association also established a Library for Bahá'í Studies in 1986. Located at the National Bahá'í Center, it was set up to provide students and researchers of the Faith with a center of information. Its collection consisted of more than 300 books and 600 periodicals in English, Persian, and Spanish. The Library's reading room was open to members and non-members.

Special interest groups were formed to study the relationship of the Faith with specific fields and to develop a Bahá'í discourse that could deal with relevant issues in society. Groups studied such areas as the environment, communications, human rights and social justice, health, peace, economic and social development, education and culture, and women's studies. Throughout the Six Year Plan, the Association's representatives took part in forums organized by Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í groups.

In 1990, the Association began offering a formal programme of study on the Faith. Covering various aspects of the teachings, the programme began with courses on Christianity and the Bahá'í Faith; and Islam and the Bahá'í Faith.

Association for Bahá'í Studies—English-Speaking Europe

During the Six Year Plan, the Association for Bahá'í Studies in English-Speaking Europe continued to encourage a scholarly approach to the study of the Bahá'í Faith. It also promoted and encouraged research on the Faith by Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís in universities and other institutions of higher learning.

This Association was established in Ireland in 1984, then was transfered to the United Kingdom in 1989 after consultation between the two National Spiritual Assemblies. An Executive Committee was formed to help the Association develop and build upon the work already done in Ireland.

Within this period, the Association held regional and national conferences; it produced audio-visual materials; and published an annual journal entitled *The Bahá'í Studies Review*. The Association was successful in encouraging the creation of campus associations at colleges and universities, and had a membership of more than two hundred people in 1991.

The first annual conference was held in Birmingham, England, in April 1990 on the theme "Community and Diversity".

From 13 to 15 September 1991, a total of fifty Bahá'ís met for the second annual conference also held in Birmingham, England, which focused on "New Human Values for a New World Order". A variety of presentations were made on subjects such as The Path to Peace—an Introduction to the Problems of Prejudice; Encouraging Sustained Participation; and The Writings of Shoghi Effendi. Workshops gave the participants an opportunity to further explore these themes.

Following Riḍván 1990, a series of regional conferences were held throughout England, Ireland, and Scotland to permit for a wide range of topics to be examined in informal settings. They also allowed for more believers to become involved with the

Association and its activities, and resulted in local media publicity for the Faith.

The Association's first conference held in Northern Ireland took place on 12 January 1991 in Londonderry. Talks were given on such topics as The Environment—More than Just a Bandwagon; Science and Religion; and Bahá'ís and the Arts.

"The Bahá'í Faith and Other Religions" was the theme of the Association's first conference in Scotland, held from 3 to 5 May 1991 in Edinburgh. Talks were presented on Judaism and the Bahá'í Faith; Muḥammad and the Qur'án: An Overview; Christian and Islamic Objections to the Bahá'í Faith; and The Christian–Bahá'í Dialogue during 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Edinburgh.

The Association held a conference in Bath, England, on 3 July 1991. The first of two papers presented was on The Maid of Heaven, the Image of Sophia, and the Logos. The second paper focused on the topic Thoughts on the Development of Spirituality, which looked at several ways to spirituality such as creation, suffering, education, prayer, and meditation.

Association for Bahá'í Studies—French-Speaking Europe

Since 1984, the Association for Bahá'í Studies in French-speaking Europe has organized annual conferences on a variety of themes and current issues.

The 1986 annual conference, held in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg on 22 and 23 November, focused on "The Place and Contribution of Minorities in Society". Approximately one hundred participants from Belgium, Canada, France, Luxembourg, and Switzerland attended, among whom were two Government Ministers, one Member of Parliament, and a President of the Tribunal which represents the Grand Duchy to the European Commission on Human Rights. Also present were Dr. Agnès Ghaznavi and Mr. Louis Hénuzet, members of the Continental Board of Counsellors.

The Association's fourth annual conference centered on the theme "Religious Values and Lay Values: Searching for a Universal Ethic". This conference, which took place on 31 October and 1 November 1987, was organized in collaboration with the Open Faculty of Religions and Lay Affairs at the University of Charleroi in Belgium.

On 29 and 30 October 1988, the annual Bahá'í Studies conference took place at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland. Participants delved into the issue of "Economy and Society: What are the Perspectives Beyond Today's Crises?". A presentation by a non-Bahá'í university student on the system of communication in the Bahá'í Faith was a noteworthy feature of the gathering.

In 1989, more than one hundred and eighty people took part in the Association's



The Association for Bahá'í Studies, French-Speaking Europe, held its annual conference in Luxembourg in November 1986. Two Government Ministers, one Member of Parliament, and the President of the Tribunal were among the participants.



The Association for Bahá'í Studies, German-Speaking Europe, held its fifth annual conference in Hof, Austria, from 29 September to 1 October 1989.

sixth annual conference held at the Palais des Congrés in Paris, France, on 18 and 19 November. Speeches emphasized the theme "Freedom in History and Society".

The seventh annual conference was held in Luxembourg under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and was inaugurated by Mr. Jacques Santer, the Prime Minister of the Grand Duchy. Held on 10 and 11 November 1990, the theme "The Dawning of European Unity" offered an opportunity to invite, for the first time, a sociologist from the former Soviet Union. On the whole, favourable echoes of the conference reverberated in the press.

"Environment: a heritage for humanity" was the theme examined at the Association's annual conference held in Liége, Belgium, in 1991.

After each of the conferences, the Association for Bahá'í Studies in French-speaking Europe published the proceedings of the presentations. The Association also sought to expand its publishing activities to include translations into French of previously unpublished articles by Dr. Udo Schaefer.

Association for Bahá'í Studies—German-Speaking Europe

The Association for Bahá'í Studies in German-speaking Europe held its second annual conference in May 1986 at the Landegg Academy in Switzerland. Representatives of four countries examined the theme of peace through three papers, several seminars, and art sessions. Plans to consolidate and enlarge the Association were also discussed.

A total of 54 people took part in the Association's fifth annual conference, held from 29 September to 1 October 1989 in Hof, Austria. Speakers from Austria, Germany, Hungary, and Switzerland focused on the central theme of the conference—"Economy: Old Dogmas, New Thinking"—with presentations on the paradigm shift in economics, an approach to a new theory of economics under the influence of the Bahá'í Revelation, and the modern work environment.

Prominent non-Bahá'í scholars addressed the Association's sixth annual conference, held from 12 to 14 October 1990 in Mils, Austria. The gathering's theme—"On the Oneness of Reality: the New Convergence of Religion and Science"—resulted in the submission of papers on such topics as religion as the fountainhead of great cultures, the epistemological investigations of belief and science, and the mystical dimension of human reality as contained in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Association for Bahá'í Studies—India

The Association for Bahá'í Studies in India was formed in 1983, following consultation between the National Spiritual Assemblies of India and Canada. As a result, a Management

Committee was appointed in New Delhi, whose function was to coordinate study-related activities, particularly in initiating and fostering an active pursuit of Bahá'í scholarship.

One of the first activities of the Association was to acquire diaries of early believers in India to stimulate a study of events and individuals connected with the early years of the Bahá'í Faith in the Indian sub-continent.

During the Six Year Plan, three non-Bahá'í scholars, on their own initiative, approached the Bahá'í community for study materials on the Faith for their Ph.D. dissertations. This serves as an example of the growing interest in Bahá'í studies stimulated by the Association.

Association for Bahá'í Studies—Japan

The first annual conference of the Association for Bahá'í Studies in Japan took place at the Tokyo Bahá'í Center on 21 and 22 December 1991, with more than fifty believers attending. Presentations were given on Learning and the Acquisition of Knowledge by Counsellor Kimiko Schwerin, and A Vision of Bahá'í Scholarship by Dr. Hossain Danesh. The conference was described as "a success in motivating the friends to delve deeper into the Writings to discover the truths that will assist in advancing the Cause in Japan".

Association for Bahá'í Studies—Malaysia

The Bahá'í community of Malaysia established its nation's Association for Bahá'í Studies in 1988, thereby fulfilling one of the goals of the country's Six Year Plan. The Association cultivated opportunities for formal presentation of the Bahá'í Faith at universities and other institutions of higher learning. It promoted a greater study of the Faith and its application to the needs of humanity by hosting conferences, printing publications, and forming regional associations. The first *Bulletin for the Association for Bahá'í Studies of Malaysia* was published in April 1989.

Association for Bahá'í Studies—North America

The Association for Bahá'í Studies in North America continued to function as a cooperative effort between the National Assemblies of Alaska, Canada, and the United States. The Center for Bahá'í Studies, located in Ottawa, Canada, acted as the coordinating centre for the activities of the Association in North America and its affiliates worldwide. Adjacent to the University of Ottawa, the Center enjoyed access to the university resources, which, combined with the Center's own library, offered the facilities needed for research on the Bahá'í Faith.

During the Six Year Plan, the Association organized international conferences, annual



The Association for Bahá'í Studies in Japan held its first annual conference in Tokyo from 21 to 22 December 1991.



The Association for Bahá'í Studies, North America, held its thirteenth meeting in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, from 7 to 10 October 1988.

meetings, and special seminars. It also sponsored regional conferences throughout North America which provided opportunities for scholars to exchange ideas and present papers. Selected material from these proceedings was published in *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies*, a quarterly journal, and *Bahá'í Studies*, a serial monograph. As stated earlier, the Center for Bahá'í Studies produced a quarterly international newsletter, the *Bulletin*, which kept members advised of the activities of the Association internationally.

The eleventh annual conference of the Association for Bahá'í Studies was held from 20 to 24 August 1986 in London, Ontario, Canada. This was the largest conference to date, with approximately two thousand adults participating. Focusing on the theme "Beyond the Quest for Peace: Creating a New World Order", this conference was planned in response to a request by the Universal House of Justice that each national Bahá'í community sponsor one major event to mark the United Nations International Year of Peace. Among those addressing the gathering were the Hands of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum and Dr. 'Alí Muḥammad Varqá, as well as Mr. 'Alí Nakhjavání, a member of the Universal House of Justice. For two days preceding the main conference, eight other agencies and affiliates of the Association held their sessions. Among them were the Bahá'í International Health Agency and the Bahá'í Education Institute.

From 22 to 25 October 1987, the Association held its twelfth annual conference at Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey, United States of America, on "Converging Realities: An International Conference on Science, the Humanities, and Religion." Among those addressing the event were eminent Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í scholars, scientists, and systems theorists. Talks were delivered on such topics as The Redemption of Science, Poverty and Racism in Urban America, Convergence of Body and Soul, and Art and Spiritual Education.

The Association for Bahá'í Studies welcomed approximately 800 people to its fourteenth annual conference held from 15 to 17 September 1989 in Irvine, California, U.S.A. The theme of this gathering was "Full Partnership: An International Conference on the Equality of Women and Men". Talks were presented on the roles of women and men in bringing about full partnership and on the implications of the equality principle on women. Seminars during the conference covered a wide range of topics including consultation and conflict resolution, the arts, health, agriculture, and intercultural issues.

"Models of Racial Unity" was the theme of the fifteenth annual Bahá'í Studies conference, held from 9 to 11 November 1990 in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A. Plenary

sessions, professional interest seminars, and workshops presented nearly a century of North American Bahá'í experience in the field of racial unity.

In preparation for the Holy Year, approximately six hundred people spent four days in August 1991 at the University of Victoria in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, attending workshops, plenary sessions, and special presentations. The themes pursued at this gathering were the Mission of Bahá'u'lláh, His Covenant, the World Order, and the Bahá'í community. Sessions were also held on the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the *Tablets of the Divine Springtimes*, and the Long Obligatory Prayer. David Hofman, former member of the Universal House of Justice, delivered the annual Hasan Balyuzi Memorial Lecture on Bahá'í History. His address, entitled "Bahá'u'lláh: King of Glory", reminded the audience of the vast scope of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission. One of the significant events at this gathering was a memorial service for the late Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts. Prepared with the assistance of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, the programme featured readings and musical tributes, as well as a touching recollection of the late Hand by Mrs. Audrey Robarts.

The Association continued to be affiliated with campus organizations, which provided a valuable source of ideas and research. The campus clubs held activities that complemented the aims of their institutions. These groups received the *Campus Association Newsletter*.

One of the most exciting developments of the Association during the Plan was that on 27 July 1986, the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada cabled:

> Joyfully announce federal incorporation of Association for Bahá'í Studies granted July 22....

Association for Bahá'í Studies—Papua New Guinea

The first Association for Bahá'í Studies conference in Papua New Guinea was held in September 1988 at the University Bahá'í Club in Port Moresby and was attended by fifteen people. Among the papers presented were Traditional Education in New Hanover, The Effect of the Bahá'í Faith on Medina Village, and Equality of Men and Women: Traditional and Modern Concepts. All speakers were Papua New Guineans.

In May 1989, the second annual Association for Bahá'í Studies conference was held at the University of Papua New Guinea. Among the twenty-five Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís present was Peter Vuyiya, a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre. The three papers presented at this gathering were on the topics of The



A Seminar on Intercultural Issues preceded the Conference of the Association for Bahá'í Studies held in Irvine, California, from 15 to 17 September 1989.



The Association for Bahá'í Studies, Papua New Guinea, held its second conference at the University of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby, in May 1989.

Effect of the Bahá'í Faith on the Position of Women in the Mountain Brown Area of Papua New Guinea, The Coming of the Bahá'í Faith to Some of the Islands of Fiji, and Women and Peace: An Anthropological Perspective.

Association for Bahá'í Studies—Puerto Rico

The Association for Bahá'í Studies in Puerto Rico was established at the Mayaguez Campus of the University of Puerto Rico in 1987, thus helping to fulfil one of the goals of the nation's Six Year Plan. Throughout this period, the Association held regular weekly meetings and carried out various activities.

The first endeavour undertaken by the Association was proclaiming the Bahá'í Faith campus-wide. Posters, pamphlets, and specially prepared lessons on the Faith were placed in different locations around the Mayaguez campus. Thousands of one-sheet lessons on the Faith were taken by the students. This occurred during a period of several years. As a consequence of these activities, five students accepted the Bahá'í Faith directly through the lessons, and two professors and three students enrolled in the Faith through personal contacts. In addition, a great number of these posters were placed at the Inter-American University, in the nearby town of San Germán.

In addition to the weekly meetings for Bahá'ís and their friends, other gatherings were organized and publicized throughout the campus. The Association found that inviting professors to talk on a particular subject at meetings organized by the Association was very fruitful, for the professors would thus become acquainted with the tenets of the Faith.

Sequences of talks with common themes were organized by the Association, including a series on Peace—Economy and Peace, Technology and Peace, World Politics and Peace. These gatherings were well publicized and well attended. The Association held two series, four years apart, on world religions, at which professors were invited to talk about their religions.

One of the significant activities of the Association in Puerto Rico was the distribution of the Peace Message to nearly all the faculty members of the University in 1987. The Chancellor was very appreciative and shortly thereafter invited the Bahá'ís to make a presentation at an ecumenical meeting that she organized.

7. BAHÁ'Í PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

IN 1980, during the first Bahá'í International Conference on Health and Healing, held in Ottawa, Canada, under the sponsorship of the Association for Bahá'í Studies, a recommendation was made that an association of Bahá'í health professionals be established. This recommendation was accepted by the executive committee of the Association for Bahá'í Studies, approved in principle by the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, and encouraged by the Universal House of Justice.

In 1982, the Universal House of Justice expanded the concept of Bahá'í professional associations in a letter addressed to all National Spiritual Assemblies:

> Consider convening gatherings, wherever possible, of Bahá'í professionals to discuss the means by which they, as individuals, can reach, and aid the Bahá'í Community in fostering good relations with, persons of prominence in their respective professions.

In response to this letter, Bahá'í professionals throughout the world convened conferences and seminars to discuss not only the means to reach people of prominence with the healing Words of Bahá'u'lláh, but also to apply the Bahá'í teachings to their own daily lives more effectively.

These interactions resulted in the formation of a number of Bahá'í professional associations. Offering an exciting arena for intellectual reciprocity and the examination of spiritual concepts, these were a means of encouragement and support to fellow associates, as well as coordinating and stimulating research and education in their respective fields. In addition, owing to the prestige that is conferred upon groups of career-minded individuals, these became a tool bringing the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh to people of prominence in those professions. Hence, the Faith was taught more systematically and with greater efficacy.

The trend towards the formation and concretion of professional associations prevalent during the Six Year Plan exemplifies the development of the Bahá'í community. One hundred years after the Ascension of the Blessed Beauty, real progress was being made from cognition to volition; in uniting "religion" and "daily life" in a world which advocates their separation.

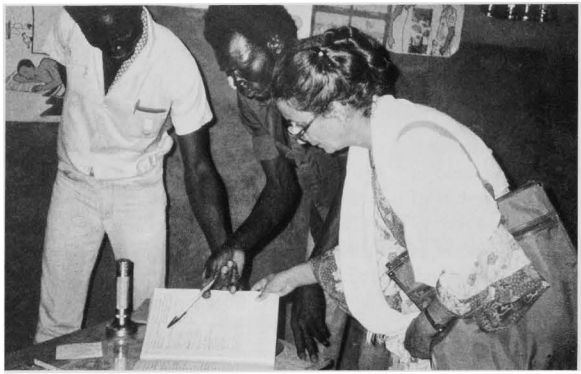
A. THE BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL HEALTH AGENCY

O thou loyal servant of God and thou spiritual healer of man! Whensoever thou dost attend a patient, turn thy face toward the Lord of the heavenly Kingdom, ask the Holy Spirit to come to thine aid, then heal thou the sickness.

('Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l- Bahá* [Haifa: Baha'i World Centre, 1978], p. 181).

The Bahá'í International Health Agency is an affiliate of the Bahá'í International Community and the Association for Bahá'í Studies, and functions under the aegis of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada.

The Association was created in response to a recommendation made at the first Bahá'í International Conference on Health and Healing, as stated above. Its first formal meeting, held on 10 and 11 April 1982 in Ottawa, Canada, was attended by more than



Mrs. Mona Grieser (front), a Bahá'í health professional, visiting the home of a Bahá'í Health Education Agent in Sarh, Chad. June 1988.

fifty Bahá'ís who were health professionals working in Canada, the United States, and Chile.

This agency was established to co-ordinate and encourage research and education among the Bahá'ís who are health professionals, and others who have knowledge in this area. Its functions consist of: making articles and reviews on health and related topics available for circulation to members, interested individuals and institutions; encouraging individuals to initiate the formation of local chapters dedicated to promoting health-care projects; collaborating with the National Pioneering Committee regarding overseas posts for health-care workers; planning annual conferences; discussing and acting upon correspondence from the Universal House of Justice, the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, and Agency members; and publishing a bulletin at least twice a year.

The proceedings of the annual conferences on health and healing fulfil, in part, requirements set by the National Spiritual Assembly, "...to encourage and facilitate ...education...in the field of health based on the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith." These gatherings focus upon the current moral and scientific discussions of the medical community within the context of the Bahá'í teachings.

The theme of the fifth annual conference, held from 20 to 21 August 1986, at the University of Western Ontario in Canada, was health and peace. The objective was to explore the role of health in the service of humanity, and to study the Bahá'í approach to health services. More than one hundred and fifty people participated in workshops and presentations on the topics of medical ethics, food and nutrition, and the link between international health and peace. Participants concluded that health-care workers must help change attitudes; and that the most difficult task is the changing of the hearts of men. They determined that the world needs the Bahá'í principles as the tool for change; that there is a great need for cultural understanding, for a universal language, and a deep empathy for other people's sufferings.

The seventh annual conference, held in Evanston, Illinois, United States of America, from 26 to 28 August 1988, focused on primary health care and the integration of alternative methods of healing. Approximately sixty friends attended. The issue addressed at this event was the challenge of ensuring that the needs of the recipients are met in any project. It was agreed that this problem can be overcome with the utilization of Bahá'í principles, with the key being true consultation. A firm belief in the spiritual equality of all peoples helps to focus on the development of individuals. The role of women in the promotion of primary health care and the larger implications for world

peace were also discussed. Women as first educators have enormous influence on the community and will pass their skills and information to their children.

In 1989, more than seventy people participated in the eighth annual health conference in Irvine, California, United States. This conference's theme dealt with women's issues in health. The concept of the empowerment of women in the delivery of health was discussed, with the suggestion that empowerment must be based on Bahá'u'lláh's first Hidden Word in which the qualities of kindness, radiance, and purity are linked to sovereignty. Women were invited to realize the importance of bringing their specific positive strengths into their new fields of responsibility and action, and to eliminate the old stereotypes that link femininity with passivity, compliance, and weakness. Other issues presented at the conference were strategies to attain health for all by the year 2000, and the ethical challenges faced by Bahá'í health professionals.

More than thirty-five participants took part in the ninth annual conference on health and healing, held in November 1990 in Atlanta, Georgia, United States. The focus of this conference was discrimination in health care. Studies on the effects of active patient involvement in their own health care, and its impact on improved health care outcomes, were reviewed. It was noted that these data complement the Bahá'í teachings that encourage the individual to seek medical attention when necessary, but for the individual to determine for himself what is competent medical advice. The topic of "Discrimination and the International Human Immunodeficiencey Virus Epidemic" was addressed. Statistics were given which outlined the disproportionate number of urban poor, blacks, and hispanics with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in North America—numbers representative of the discrimination already faced by these social groups. A third presentation, entitled "Towards a Concrete Understanding of Illness", challenged the audience to consider the effect of the diversity of cultures and behaviors on shaping different world views on health and its maintenance. The successful development of a universal framework for the conceptualization of health and illness will occur in an atmosphere of respect for the validity of the contributions of persons from all races and ethnicities, it concluded.

In addition to annual gatherings, the Association sponsored two conferences aimed at increasing the Bahá'í community's awareness of the AIDS epidemic, and a third conference focusing on the topic of homosexuality. The two conferences highlighting AIDS were held in Montreal, Canada, in 1989 and at the Green Acre Bahá'í School in Maine, United States, in 1991; and the conference on homosexuality was held in 1992 at Green Acre. Participation in these conferences was by friends from Canada and the United States with a personal or professional interest in the subject. The goals of these events were to study and consult on the Bahá'í Writings which relate to these issues; to create a network of Bahá'ís who will share information and encourage one another; and to consult on future activities.

Members of the Bahá'í International Health Agency participated in various international health conferences and seminars. As a result, members of the Agency presented the principles of the Bahá'í Faith to those of the highest calibre in the medical field.

In May 1986, the World Health Organization invited members of the Bahá'í International Community to its thirty-ninth Health Assembly. Dr. Ethel Martens, a Public Health Educator and the Executive Secretary of the Bahá'í International Health Agency, was one of the Bahá'í delegates who attended this gathering. More than five hundred people participated, among whom were a large number of Ministers of Health.

Dr. Abdul Missagh Ghadirian ['Abdu'l-Míthág Qadíríyán] an executive member of the Bahá'í International Health Agency

and a psychiatrist, represented the Bahá'í International Community at the United Nations Interregional Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations for Prevention of Drug Abuse, held in Stockholm, Sweden, from 15 to 19 September 1986. One hundred copies of an article by Dr. Ghadirian, entitled "Prevention of Drug Abuse: A Bahá'í Perspective" were distributed among delegates. In addition, seventy copies of his book *In Search of Nirvana* were given to dignitaries and delegates of national and international reputation who participated in the Conference.

Due to the Bahá'í International Community's signing of the "working relations" agreement with the World Health Organization in March 1989, the Bahá'í International Community was officially invited to participate at the World Health Organization's consultation with various international women's non-governmental agencies on the issues of AIDS prevention, control, and care, held from 21 to 22 December, 1989, in Geneva, Switzerland. The Bahá'í International Community was represented by Dr. Denise Belisle, a physician from Montreal, Canada, and an executive member of the Bahá'í International Health Agency, and Mr. Giovanni Ballerio from the Bahá'í International Community Office in Geneva. The primary Bahá'í contribution to this consultation was on the theme of the equality of women and men, specifically the importance of empowering women who are at a high-risk of developing HIV-AIDS because of a lack of information, a lack of access to information, or because of non-assertive behavior due to, among other things, a low socio-economic status. A second contribution by the Bahá'í delegation emphasized the need for spiritual transformation, not only at the individual but also at the institutional level, and referred to the Bahá'í concept of unity as a basic prerequisite for the solution of most social problems. This meeting was successful from the perspective of the Bahá'í International Health Agency because it facilitated the establishment of personal and professional contacts between the Bahá'í participants and representatives of diverse women's non-governmental organizations.

B. The Association Médicale Bahá'íe

The Association Médicale Bahá'íe, under the auspices of the National Assembly of France, was registered in 1985 in conformity with the requirements of French law and of the French Medical Council. Membership is essentially open to all Bahá'í medical practitioners and students in legally licensed professions concerned with health care.

During the Six Year Plan, the Association's activities included the study of Bahá'í principles relevant to health and their diffusion to non-Bahá'í professionals and to the Bahá'í community at large. Study sessions open to all included topics such as ethics, patient-doctor relationships, stress, health and nutrition, life and death, mother and child relations, environment, and communication. Renowned non-Bahá'í lecturers participated in many of the sessions and greatly enhanced the professional quality of the meetings. In addition, these gatherings generated a greater appreciation of the Faith amongst professionals in the medical field.

The Association's members also took part in commissions for preserving family unity, taught dental and general hygiene to children at summer schools, and participated in several humanitarian projects in Chad, Niger, Yugoslavia, and Albania.

C. The Bahá'í Business and Economics Association

Your criterion should be to pursue your commercial activities with such fairness and equity as to be a cause of guidance to others. The friends of God should, through the instrumentality of their business, lead the people to God's path, and make them so astonished as to exclaim: "How great is their truthfulness, how high their trustworthiness, and how true is their good will!"

(Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted in *Compilation of Compilations,* vol. 2 [Mona Vale, NSW: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1991], p. 341).

The Bahá'í Business and Economics Association was formed in 1991 as an affiliate of the Association for Bahá'í Studies in Canada. Its members are business people and economists who want to bring the spiritual guidance of Bahá'u'lláh to the worldwide business community. In particular, they hope to demonstrate the positive impact of the application of spiritual principles in the workplace and on the lives of those involved in business.

One Association goal is to have a direct and constructive influence on the business community by supporting grassroots initiatives of Bahá'í business people. Another goal is to be instrumental in promoting networking and advocating the increase of wealth within a spiritual framework. The Association strives to increase cooperation and collaboration as tools for resolving conflicts and disputes within the business community, and tries to serve as a forum for reaching people of capacity in the field of commerce.

The primary purpose of this Association is to provide its members with information. An international directory has been compiled of individuals and organizations concerned with the practical aspects of the application of spiritual principles to the business community. This directory could be used to support world-wide networking efforts—putting individuals with similar concerns in touch with one another, enabling people travelling to share the results of their experience with others, and making interested parties aware of opportunities and needs that the business community may be able to address.

The Association has also provided its members and associates with a resource directory of material on socio-economic developments that reflect the principles of the Bahá'í Faith in practice.

The development of local Bahá'í business forums throughout the world has been encouraged and supported by this Association, with the vision that once sufficient numbers of these local forums are functioning within a particular country or region, the Association will actively support the formation and development of National and Regional Bahá'í Business and Economic Associations.

D. The Bahá'í Business and Professional Association

The Bahá'í Business and Professional Association in Australia is a non-profit grassroots organization concerned with the promotion of social and economic development in the community by fostering the fulfillment of human potential in the work environment. It has no direct connection with the National Spiritual Assembly and is completely self-funding.

The Association was formed when interested Bahá'ís gathered in Sydney in March 1984 to discuss the business and professional needs of the community. Two months later a committee of nine was elected to conduct the affairs of the group, and this committee was re-elected annually at general meetings. In 1988, a similar organization developed in Melbourne and the National

Assembly requested that the two groups form a national association with an appropriate constitution. The first National Board of Directors was elected in 1989 and the concept of local chapters of the Association was instituted.

The objectives of the Association were defined to include: establishing forums for communication between members; stimulating and improving the dissemination of the Bahá'í standards of behavior and ethics to career-minded and professional people; and advancing the interests of the Bahá'í Faith by assisting the Universal House of Justice and National Spiritual Assemblies to achieve their goals.

During the Six Year Plan, communication among members was achieved through a quarterly newsletter initiated in 1987, and by the hosting of seminars and lunch meetings. These seminars usually examined the Bahá'í outlook on pertinent social issues.

The organization used several approaches to promote Bahá'í standards of behavior and ethical conduct in the business and professional environment. First it ventured to educate the Bahá'í community on the subject of Bahá'í ethics. In 1989, at the request of the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, the Association prepared and presented a draft paper on "Bahá'í Business Ethics", which was subsequently printed in the *Australian Bahá'í Bulletin*. In conjunction with this paper, the Association organized a public seminar on ethics, which was recorded. Tapes of the proceedings were sold through the Bahá'í Distribution Service.

Public promotion of Bahá'í standards was achieved through the participation of non-Bahá'ís in seminars hosted by the Association. In addition, the Association and the Australian National Spiritual Assembly co-sponsored a service at the Bahá'í House of Worship in 1990 entitled "Transformation to Globalization." It was designed to attract members of the business and professional communities and to mark the commencement of the last decade of this century. More than three hundred people attended the service, including all nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly. Official guests included a representative of the Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales.

The final objective of the Association, advancing the interests of the Bahá'í Faith by assisting wherever possible the Universal House of Justice and National Assemblies in achieving their goals, was primarily achieved by providing the National Assembly of Australia with expert opinions about aspects of the Assembly's business dealings, such as property purchases, credit unions, and comments on National Convention recommendations. The Association was also of assistance to the National Assemblies of the Pacific region, and continually responded to queries from Bahá'í institutions and individuals in relation to economic and social matters.

E. The European Bahá'í Business Forum

The European Bahá'í Business Forum, a network of Bahá'ís interested in the application of the Faith's principles to business and industry, and in reaching people of capacity in the field of commerce, was initiated at a conference held in September 1990 in Chamonix, France. The twenty-four Bahá'í participants from throughout Europe, the United States and Canada decided to create an informal association of Bahá'ís involved in business and industry, with the hope that the group would evolve into a formal association. This decision was conveyed to the Universal House of Justice, which directed its Department of the Secretariat to reply:

> The Universal House of Justice was most interested to receive your letter of 1 October 1990 and to learn of the aims of the proposed European Bahá'í Business Forum. There are undoubtedly many ways in which such an association can be of value to the Cause of God.



The European Bahá'í Business Forum held its second annual conference in Paris, France from 30 August to 1 September 1991.

This association, registered in France as a non-profit organization, provides an arena for its members and for business people in general to explore ways of applying Bahá'í ethical and social teachings to their business activities. This is accomplished through annual conferences and by calling upon experienced individuals to make presentations on various topics of interest to the business community.

In heeding the call issued by the Universal House of Justice in its 1990 Riḍván message, that the time had become ripe "to embrace increasing numbers of people of capacity, including persons of accomplishment and prominence in the various fields of human endeavour", the Forum sought ways of reaching outstanding managers, leaders of business and industry, and economists of Europe.

During its annual conferences, Forum members examined the kind of support they could lend the European Bahá'í community in proclamation and teaching activities. They also considered how they could assist Bahá'ís operating in the economic field to better understand, respect, and comply with the principles of the Faith in their own work.

At the second annual conference, held from 30 August to 1 September 1991 in Paris, Counsellor Patrick O'Mara encouraged the thirty friends present to develop the Forum, and to go back to their communities and link up with other Bahá'í business people. He also emphasized the role which Bahá'ís with professional and business experience could play in teaching and proclamation work in Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. In response, the Business Forum offered the abilities and expertise of its members to all the National Spiritual Assemblies working with the Eastern European Countries.

Toward A New Paradigm of Management, a paper exploring the shift both in the values of business leaders and the practices of management towards a standard reflecting the spiritual principles and teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, was presented at the annual conference held in 1991. Subsequently, this article was translated into French and distributed to non-Forum members.

During the same time, the association published, in English and French, *Group Decision Making and Bahá'í Consultation,* an article concerned with assisting business organizations to fulfil their goals through the medium of consultation. .

Through the distribution of a regular newsletter and a directory of its members, the Forum provided a network for the exchange of information among the European Bahá'í business community.

The Forum was also successful in counselling and informing young people about career opportunities in relevant fields of endeavor, as well as encouraging educational and training activities.

F. THE BAHÁ'Í JUSTICE SOCIETY

O Son of Spirit! The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Hidden Words, Arabic no. 2 [Wilmette, Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982], p.3.)

The Bahá'í Justice Society is dedicated to the promotion of justice in a manner consistent with the principles of the Bahá'í Faith. Formed in 1986, the Society has members throughout the United States, and affiliates in Cameroon, Canada, England, Germany, India, Mozambique, New Guinea, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, and the Virgin Islands. The members of the Justice Society represent a diverse range of occupations including judges, lawyers, teachers, musicians, administrators, and students. In 1992, the Society's membership included one hundred and forty people.

This agency functions under the guidance of the National Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. Its objectives are: to contribute to the improvement of jurisprudence, the world's legal systems, and the practice of law; to discover, train, and encourage legal and related talents to promote the principles of justice and their application to all aspects of human society; to promote an understanding of the relationship between the Bahá'í Faith, jurisprudence, the administration of justice, and the practice of law; to promote the communication of the principles of the Faith to justice-related institutions; to advance the honor and dignity of the profession of law; to promote the highest ethical and moral standards within the profession of law; and to promote the rule of law in the world.

The second annual meeting of the Bahá'í Justice Society was held from 27 to 29 March 1987, in the shadow of the House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, United States. The conference discussion topics included professional ethics and world peace through international law. One of the significant outcomes of this event was the completion of the Society's charter and by-laws.

Also, a scholarship was established by the Board to encourage participation by the economically disadvantaged. Initial expenditure from the fund provided financial assistance for individuals desiring, but financially unable, to attend Bahá'í Justice Society functions.

The third annual meeting, at the Bosch Bahá'í School in California, included such speakers as Dr. Wilma Ellis, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors and the Administrator-General of the Bahá'í International Community, and members of the National Spiritual Assembly. Also addressing the more than one hundred participants were former California Supreme Court Justice Frank Newman, professor of law at the University of California at Berkeley, and Juana Conrad, President of Women for International Peace and Arbitration.

More than eighty participants attended the fourth annual conference of the Bahá'í Justice Society, held in Atlanta, Georgia, United States, from 9 to 11 June 1989. The conference theme was "Economic Justice—Bridging the Gap between Rich and Poor". Topics addressed at this event were the role of education in economic justice; justice only through oneness; interdependence, law, and the international economy; and the future role of the Bahá'í Justice Society. In conjunction with the conference, a delegation of five Bahá'ís, headed by Judge James Nelson, presented a copy of *The Promise of*

World Peace to six State and Superior Court Judges in the area.

Seventeen American states, as well as Canada, Israel, Liberia, and the Virgin Islands, were represented at the fifth annual conference of the Justice Society held in June 1990 in Illinois, United States. The presentations at this conference focused on the theme "Advancing Toward a Just World: Our Challenge for the 1990s". Among those present at this event was Mr. Hugh Chance, a member of the Universal House of Justice. Mr. Chance, who practiced law prior to being elected to the House of Justice, addressed the conference on the challenges facing Bahá'í lawyers into the twenty-first century. Judge Dorothy Nelson, member of the United States Court of Appeals and the National Spiritual Assembly, spoke on "Justice, Peace and Professional Responsibility".

The Society presented two workshop sessions focusing on mediation as a technique for resolving disputes at the Association for Bahá'í Studies Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, United States, from 9 to 11 November 1990. The workshops, entitled "The Bahá'í Justice Society: A Catalyst for Racial Unity", addressed the efforts of the Society with regard to racial unity and justice. Approximately sixty people took part in each of the two ninety-minute sessions, which featured a demonstration of mediation in a mock community dispute.

In October 1990, five members of the Society travelled to Leningrad and Kiev, Russia, to participate in the first Russian Bahá'í Women's Forums. During this trip approximately twenty-five Russian friends expressed interest in joining the Society. Presentations were made on the Bahá'í Justice Society and the use of mediation in conflict resolution.

"Developing Bahá'í Models of Dispute Resolution" was the theme of the annual conference and meeting held at the Los Angeles Bahá'í Center in 1991. This gathering featured a talk on "Preventative Law" by former University of Southern California law professor Louis Brown. The conference was enhanced by the presence of Mrs. Jacqueline Delahunt, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors and a native Lakota Sioux, who gave an insight on dispute resolution in other cultures.

Also in 1991, the Justice Society co-sponsored the National Conference on Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution in Charlotte, North Carolina, United States. The title of the conference was "Community in Conflict", and its mission was "to promote the use and acceptance of non-violent approaches to the resolution of conflict and to improve conflict resolution theory and practice". The conference attracted one thousand attendees. A full-day workshop on Bahá'í consultation was presented.

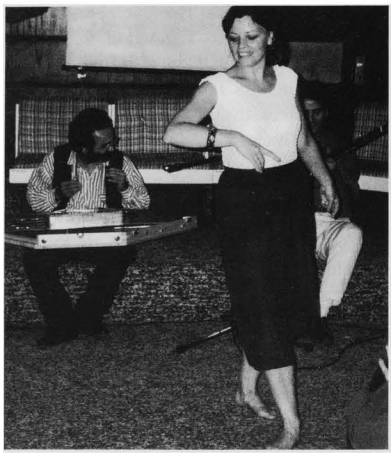
G. The Bahá'í Association for Arts

The day will come when the Cause will spread like wildfire when its spirit and teachings will be presented on the stage or in art and literature as a whole. Art can better awaken such noble sentiments than cold rationalizing....

(Shoghi Effendi, quoted in *Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 1 [Mona Vale, NSW: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1991], p. 7.)

The Bahá'í Association for Arts (BAFA) was formed in August 1986 during a Peace Festival held at the Landegg Academy in Switzerland. Friends from eight European countries gathered for workshops and talks that centered around the arts. An afternoon of this event was set aside to form the Association.

The goal of this Association is to gain a greater understanding of the Bahá'í view on the arts, and to provide a means for its members to encourage and support their fellow



Art Forum East, held in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, in July 1991.

artists. Members receive the BAFA's newsletter four times a year, which includes news from the Association's board and members.

The most significant of the activities initiated by the Association were the conferences on the arts. Art Forum 1988, held in De Poort, Netherlands, was the first conference of its kind which focused entirely on Bahá'í artists and their views. Participants from Britain, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Írán, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United States took turns showing their work, sharing how they came upon their ideas, and answering questions about their presentation. In regard to this conference, the Universal House of Justice stated, "Delighted news success first festival BAFA held De Poort. Gratified plans to serve goals plan throughout Europe."

The next Art Forum, held in De Poort in July 1990, focused on the choices Bahá'í artists face. More than thirty participants, representing five countries, attended workshops which addressed artistic choices in connection to the media of artists' expression, the use of time, and service to the Cause. The keynote address of this event centered on the history of the relationship between the arts and religion, and outlined the task set by Bahá'u'lláh for artists in this most great Day.

Transformation through the love of Bahá'u'lláh and meditation on His Writings was the theme of Art Forum 1991. Painters, singers, an architect, a sculptor, a poet, a film-maker, an Indian classical dancer, and a story-teller were among those who demonstrated their talents at this event. They shared stories about their personal transformation, their techniques, and the influences of the Bahá'í Writings on their work. The questions of what is art and how the believers can use their talents to serve Bahá'u'lláh were addressed, along with issues of personal development and service to the evolving administrative order.

In conjunction with Art Forum 1991, Art Forum East was held in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia from 23 to 28 July. More than sixty people from fifteen countries participated. The theme of this gathering was "Crossing Borders", and workshops were held on such topics as ethics, the ego, inspiration, and excellence. A great variety of artistic presentations was displayed and demonstrated at the conference, including musical performances, dance and drama workshops, and mural exhibits. Six visual artists displayed their work in a gallery in the center of the city. Interviews and news about this event were carried by two radio stations and two newspapers. As a result of this gathering, a network for the Association for the Arts was established in the Soviet Union, and networks in France and Germany were strengthened. The Association reported that the participants left the Art Forum East with a better sense of the high station that is given to the arts in the Bahá'í Writings.

8. USE OF COMPUTERS BY THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY DURING THE SIX YEAR PLAN

adapted from an article by
BRYN DEAMER AND STEVEN KOLIN

Introduction

When a new Dispensation begins, God endows humanity with the means through which civilization can give effect to the teachings of the Revelation, by the Divine Messenger of God.

> Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God is endowed with such potency as can instill new life into every human frame, if ye be of them that comprehend this truth. All the wondrous works ye behold in this world have been manifested through the operation of His supreme and most exalted Will, His wondrous and inflexible Purpose ... No sooner is this resplendent word uttered, than its animating energies, stirring within all created things, give birth to the means and instruments whereby such arts can be produced and perfected. All the wondrous achievements ye now witness are the direct consequences of the Revelation of this Name. In the days to come, ye will, verily, behold things of which ye have never heard before. [1]

Bahá'ís see the revolutionary changes in the fields of science and technology, during the past century, as expressions of the creative impulses released by the advent of two successive Manifestations of God, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. The full impact of these immense new resources will be felt only as society responds to the social and spiritual principles which lie at the heart of the new Revelation and reorganizes its affairs so that the entire human race is able to benefit equitably from the advances now made possible.

As one consequence of this point of view, the Bahá'í community, from its inception, has tended to embrace technological developments as gifts of God and as entirely consonant with the spiritual mission of the Founder of their Faith. With respect to electronic information technology, Shoghi Effendi envisioned the day when:

> A mechanism of world inter-connection will be devised, embracing the whole planet, freed from national hindrances and restrictions, and functioning with marvellous swiftness and perfect regularity.[2]

Initially, computer technology was available only to very large organizations who could afford and could make use of the massive "main-frame" installations which began to appear in the 1950s. By the 1970s, the situation had changed dramatically, so that older Bahá'í communities such as those in the United States and Canada could begin to employ computers to maintain membership records and financial information. As advances in technology throughout the 1980s produced ever smaller and more powerful computers and led to dramatic price reductions, Bahá'í communities throughout the world increasingly embraced "personal" computers as a means of meeting the needs of their ever-expanding operations.

In a meeting in Langenhain, Germany in 1987, the assembled representatives of the European National Spiritual Assemblies were

[1] Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976), pp. 141–142.

[2] Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Selected Letters* (1929–1936) (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 203.

warmly encouraged by representatives of the Bahá'í International Community's offices to give a high priority to equipping themselves with advanced information and communications technology.

1988 saw the appearance of V. Mitra Gopaul's book *Personal Computers and the Bahá'í Community*[1] which was widely disseminated among the growing band of Bahá'ís interested in information technology. This practical book demonstrated how computers could be used for a wide range of activities vital to the goals of local and national Bahá'í communities: record keeping, letter production, financial tracking, statistical analysis, publications, and the like.

At about this same time, another major development began quietly in the computer world—computers began to be programed to communicate with each other without human intervention. This advancement in technology, including the ability to send computer messages through telephone lines, was the birth of electronic mail (email) which has begun to have a far-reaching impact on mankind. The ability of an average person to send a document or message instantly from one computer to another computer anywhere in the world has opened entire new fields of human communication. Email truly fits Shoghi Effendi's vision of "world inter-communication ... freed from national hindrances and restrictions...."

Use of Computer-Mediated Communications by Bahá'ís

In May 1982, Sheryl and Roger Coe formed an informal organization known as the Bahá'í Computer Users' Association.[2] Then, during the seventh Annual Conference for the Association for Bahá'í Studies held at Ottawa, Canada, in September 1982, Steven Caswell gave a presentation on "Telecommunications and the Bahá'í Faith."[3] In this he traced the historic growth of telecommunications and compared it to the growth of the Faith, finding an almost perfect correlation in numeric terms.

These efforts were given further impetus at an historic Bahá'í telecommunications conference held 17 to 19 December 1983 in San Fernando, California. Forty Bahá'ís from the United States and Canada attended the meeting and "formulated plans designed to help establish the new Bahá'í radio station in South Carolina [WLGI] and to research possible applications of existing computer technology to serve the Faith".[4]

Among the fruits of this conference was the proposal to establish "a Bahá'í Computer and Telecommunications Association to monitor developments... and to serve as a "clearing-house" for evaluating the potential for application of new technology in service to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. One such application might be setting up a computer network to link Bahá'ís across the country in an interactive conferencing system involving hundreds or even thousands of Bahá'ís".[5] Shortly after the conference, a Core Committee was appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States to guide the operation of the Association.[6]

In 1985, a statement in the *Bahá'í Computer and Telecommunications Committee Newsletter* read: "One of the primary goals for the coming year... is already becoming a reality. Very shortly all of the Bahá'í administrative offices [in the United States] which have a computer and a telephone will have the capability to link-up to a nationwide Bahá'í computer network which is being set up on Dialcom."[7]

[1] Gopaul, V. Mitra. *Personal Computers and the Bahá'í Community* (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1988).

[2] *Bahá'í Computer User's Association Newsletter*, [No. 1] 11 May 1982.

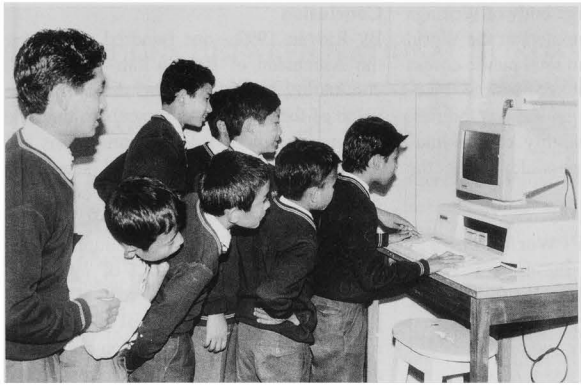
[3] Cassette No. RT-81, Association for Bahá'í Studies Annual Conference, 1982, Images International, 1982.

[4] "San Fernando Host to Historic Telecommunications Conference," *The American Bahá'í*, February 1983, p. 1.

[5] ibid.

[6] *Bahá'í Computer and Telecommunications Association Newsletter*, No. 4, October 1983.

[7] *Bahá'í Computer and Telecommunications Association Newsletter*, No. 5, July 1985.



Students at the Tadong Bahá'í School in Sikkim, India, learning to use computers as part of their regular curriculum; 1991.

By the mid-1980s the term "Bahá'í-net", which Steven Caswell had used in his talk in Ottawa in 1982, was being commonly used to describe Bahá'í use of computers in various forms to communicate with each other. More formally, Jennifer Tidwell started the Bahai-Net mailing list on a computer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology sometime during 1987 or 1988. When the World Centre acquired Internet email access via UUCP to the first commercial Internet service provider (UUnet) in 1989 (registering the domain "bwc.org") there already were more than one hundred members on the Bahai-Net mailing list and the number was steadily growing.

Bahá'í Discussion Groups and Bulletin Boards

The first computer bulletin board system created by a Bahá'í was set up by Frank Haendel of Colorado, USA. In the *Bahá'í Computer and Telecommunications Association Newsletter*, Roger Coe wrote: "The other night I hooked my modem to the telephone, dialed a number, ... watched my computer screen and here is what I saw.....

> WELCOME TO A UNIQUE BULLETIN BOARD FOR THINKERS, SEEKERS AND EVERYONE ELSE WHO CAN REALIZE THAT WE EXIST WITHIN THE MIDST OF AN INCREDIBLE WORKSHOP FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR HIGHER NATURE. YOU HAVE JUST CONNECTED WITH...
>
> *** THE BAHA'I BULLETIN BOARD ***"[1]

Mr. Coe's dream of being "able to associate with a world-wide network of Bahá'ís and Bahá'í institutions via computer—exchanging information, working on problems, and shrinking the world into a loving neighborhood"[2] was coming a step closer.

Mr. Coe went on to describe three other dreams:

- Having the entire body of the Writings of the Bahá'í Faith in computer-readable format.
- A computer-to-satellite-to-computer network that would link us all together so we could share information, libraries, programs, database management systems, etc., no matter how remote we might be from each other in physical terms.
- A possibility of "on-line" consultation for scholarly and other practical research and investigations—including consultation on the repair of our computers![3]

[1] ibid.
[2] *Bahá'í Computer Users' Association Newsletter*, No. 1, 11 May 1982.
[3] ibid.

By Riḍván 1992, a large body of Writings had been typed into computers at the World Centre and elsewhere, but total public access to many of these was not yet possible. Likewise Mr. Coe's visions of shared libraries, databases, and the possibility of "on-line" consultation were not possible during the Six Year Plan.

Computers at the Bahá'í World Centre

The first computer at the Bahá'í World Centre arrived as a kit brought to the Holy Land by Robert Gregory in 1977. The first "official" World Centre computer began operation in 1981. This was a DEC (Digital Equipment Corporation) PDP 11/34 acquired to run the first computerized financial accounting system for the Bahá'í International Fund. At the same time a word processing system called Lex was purchased.

When the Seat of the Universal House of Justice was constructed, it was wired with computers in mind. When the building was occupied in 1983, virtually all staff had terminals at their desks linked to a central computer system. Electronic mail first became possible at the World Centre in 1984 with the purchase of a Vax computer. It was known as "Vaxmail" and quickly gained acceptance as a way of sending and requesting information without the interruptions caused by telephone calls.

In 1985, a company called Goldnet began operation in Israel, testing with selected clients for one year before offering its service to the public. The Bahá'í World Centre asked to join the program. Mailboxes were acquired for the Bahá'í International Community offices in New York and Geneva, and software developed at the World Centre was installed to utilize the Dialcom service in a very cost-effective manner. Email was first used to coordinate the activities of the Bahá'í International Community representatives to gain passage of a resolution in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights condemning the persecution of Bahá'ís in Írán.

Conclusion

By Riḍván 1992—one hundred years after the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh—the Bahá'í community everywhere had discovered the value of the rapid developments in the field of computer-mediated communications and information-provision that had seemingly burst upon the world. Personal computers had become a regular feature of Bahá'í life: their use was helping communities and Assemblies raise their level of operations to a higher, more "professional" plane, and produce newsletters, statistical and financial reports that were both more comprehensive and easier to understand. Electronic mail was being rapidly developed and pursued, and networks of Bahá'í discussion groups were highly active and moving into areas of specialization.

This use of new technologies expanded the capacity of Bahá'ís, as individuals and as communities, to acquire, access, and organize knowledge—a capacity fundamentally necessary for a society such as that described in the Bahá'í Writings, based on universal participation both in decision-making and in contributing to the advancement of civilization.

> Unification of the whole of mankind is the hall-mark of the stage which human society is now approaching. Unity of family, of tribe, of city-state, and nation have been successively attempted and fully established. World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving. Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and establish once for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life.[1]

[1] Shoghi Effendi, *World Order*, p. 202.

9. Relations Between National Spiritual Assemblies and Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations and with the Public in General

> FOR Bahá'u'lláh ... has not only imbued mankind with a new and regenerating Spirit. He has not merely enunciated certain universal principles, or propounded a particular philosophy, however potent, sound and universal these may be. In addition to these He [has]... clearly and specifically laid down a set of Laws, established definite institutions, and provided for the essentials of a Divine Economy. These are destined to be a pattern for future society, a supreme instrument for the establishment of the Most Great Peace, and the one agency for the unification of the world, and the proclamation of the reign of righteousness and justice upon the earth.[1]

In the opening years of the fourth epoch of the Formative Age of the Faith, Bahá'ís used this Divine Pattern as their point of reference in submitting written statements directly explaining the relationship between Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings and the challenges facing modern society. A number of national Bahá'í communities contributed recommendations to constitutional drafting committees and other governmental organizations determining policies for the future. The enthusiastic response shown to these suggestions was notable. Among the various activities of this kind which took place, four examples—from Brazil, South Africa, Singapore, and the United States—are highlighted in this section and their documents are reproduced.

[1] Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 19.

A. Brazil
Constitutional Reform

IN April 1987, a delegation of eight Bahá'ís from different parts of Brazil spent four days presenting material on the Bahá'í perspective on government to the 559 congressmen and senators in charge of writing a new constitution. Each legislator received a folder including *The Promise of World Peace*, general information on the Faith, and a document called "The Bahá'ís and the Constitutional Assembly" which included 20 proposals to be considered for inclusion in the nation's new charter. The proposals related to such topics as education, the rights of indigenous peoples, the rights of women, and international relations.

More than 100 cables, letters, and telephone calls were received by the National Spiritual Assembly expressing gratitude for the suggestions. Several of the recipients sent to the Bahá'ís the texts of proposed amendments which would be of special interest to them, such as those relating to religious liberty and promotion of the concept of world citizenship.

Media coverage of the Bahá'í contribution was unprecedented. At least 19 daily newspapers from 17 Brazilian states printed articles; reports on 10 television programmes equalled 2 hours of live broadcasts; and 1 hour and 20 minutes of radio time on 7 different programmes was devoted to the Bahá'ís.

More than 90 per cent of the articles proposed by the Bahá'ís were included in the final draft of the Constitution which was voted on by the legislators.

THE BAHÁ'ÍS AND THE CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY*

A CONTRIBUTION TOWARD A NEW SOCIETY

I. Introduction

In full awareness of the fact that the drawing up of a Constitution represents an instrument for the promulgation of a new social pact in which all the shades of opinion within the country are represented, the Bahá'í community of Brazil presents, in this document, the viewpoint of the Bahá'ís as a sincere effort to contribute to the noble endeavor currently being undertaken by the National Constitutional Assembly.

The Constitution, as the *lex maximus* of the country, is the Magna Carta where general legal principles are enshrined. It is the foundation for the nation's entire judicial system. It must reflect the emerging concern for inspiring life in society; it must mirror the sovereignty of a state of law whose most valued asset is justice, a justice which, above all else, seeks the fulfilment of the human being within the social context.

Far from being a magic wand capable of extirpating all the problems of the nation, the Magna Carta should contain those cardinal principles which, while not demeaning the historical and cultural traditions of the nation, address the legitimate aspirations of the people, further economic and social development, favour a just distribution of wealth and, above all, institute mechanisms to assure the full attainment and exercise of the fundamental rights inherent to the human being.

It is within this context that, with the convocation of the National Constitutional Assembly recently elected by the people to discuss and vote on the new Constitution, we are witnessing a unique moment in history replete with challenges generated by the discovery of the growing interdependence among the nations which was expressed more than a century ago in the words of the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith,[1] Bahá'u'lláh, that "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens."[2] This thought reflects in its entirety the new stage of social organization toward which mankind is definitively headed.

Within this framework, we feel that the vision of the Constitutional Assembly must, while seeking to reflect solutions for the current needs of our people at this historical and social moment, also be a bridge to the future, envisioning the full economic, social and spiritual development of the nation, casting its light, like that of the sun, along the paths that lead us to a truly glorious future.

—The Bahá'í Community of Brazil

* English translation of the statement submitted.

[1] The Bahá'í Faith was founded in Persia (now Írán), by Mírzá Ḥusayn-'Alí (1817–1892), known as Bahá'u'lláh (which means "the Glory of God"), Who, in 1863, publicly revealed His divine mission as inaugurator of a new era of human civilization, the basic principles and general teachings of which He outlined in more than one hundred volumes, written during the 40 years of His ministry. Because of His religious convictions, He was exiled from Írán—initially to Turkey, and subsequently to Palestine, the Holy Land, where He passed away, in the city of 'Akká, in 1892.

The Bahá'í Faith is today an independent world religion, which has followers of all nationalities, colors, races, social classes and professions, in more than 116,000 localities and in 340 countries and territories, of which 116 are independent nations. Its fundamental principles are the oneness of God, the oneness of religion and the oneness of humanity. Bahá'í literature has been translated into 739 languages and dialects.

Through the Bahá'í International Community, one of the non-governmental organizations accredited with the United Nations, the Bahá'í Faith participates, with consultative status, in ECOSOC (the Economic and Social Council) and UNICEF (the Children's Fund), and officially participates in the Environmental Program. It also collaborates with the Public Information Office. All these are organs of the United Nations.

[2] Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976), p. 250.

II. Some considerations on cooperation, the consultative process, justice, education, and civil authority

Below, we have enumerated certain principles which we believe will be especially valuable at this unique moment in the life of the nation, in which the new Magna Carta of the country is being drawn up.

COOPERATION

One of the inevitable results of the process of disintegration of the current system of world interrelationships has been the growing emphasis on competition and self-preservation. Significant sectors of public opinion, both in Brazil and abroad, are facing a crisis of confidence in the spirit of cooperation with which contemporary societies emerged from the Second World War. In today's world, the spirit of competition is assuming grave proportions; and, should it become the predominant characteristic of social behavior, it may completely undermine the entire collective effort toward cooperation and human relationships which represent legitimate wishes of the people for social peace, justice, and progress.

We understand that the most urgent areas for the exercise of cooperation are the vital topics related to capital and labor, government and private initiative, etc.

THE PROCESS OF CONSULTATION

In the current legislative system, we observe an anachronism which is incapable of responding to the challenges of the future—the political party. The system has undeniable merits, but the institutions were conceived to meet the needs of a different age. Considering the existence of political parties as one of the greatest challenges facing the system in its attempt to direct its efforts toward unity and harmony, with a view to achieving the common welfare and meeting the needs of social development—a reality which is unlikely to be changed—we believe that the most advisable thing to do would be to direct the energies of the nation toward the expansion and systematization of what we call the consultative process, or consultation.

We mention the principle of consultation, particularly, because it is intrinsically linked to the functioning of our own Faith. Bahá'u'lláh declared that consultation and compassion together form the foundation for the stage of the maturity of humanity. Our experience with His guidance on consultation in the administration of an extraordinarily varied international community has proven so fruitful that we are compelled to summarize a few of its guiding principles:

1. All of the parties involved in a decision must have the freedom and opportunity to participate in the consultative process.
2. There must be a clear distinction between general consultation and the deliberations of the democratically-elected body which will be responsible for making a decision.
3. Every individual engaged in the consultative process must be encouraged to freely express the dictates of his own conscience.
4. Any form of partiality is prohibited.
5. All of the participants in the consultative process have a responsibility to exercise courtesy and moderation.
6. Each individual participant in the consultative process has the moral obligation to detach himself from his own contribution, which, once made, becomes the common property of the group.
7. Once a decision has been taken, it is a requirement that everyone—those in favor and those originally opposed—unite whole-heartedly to carry out that decision.

8. Decision-making bodies have an obligation to constantly evaluate their work and, whenever necessary, to revise it.

JUSTICE

Justice, Bahá'u'lláh declared in the past century, is "the best beloved of all things"[1] in the sight of God, and represents a *gift* granted to man in this age, the era of his maturity.

> This being a complex topic, we believe that new moral and spiritual standards are needed today to solve the intertwined economic and social problems of our planet; and these rest on one single foundation: the consciousness, on the part of each individual, of the organic oneness of mankind. We are not just citizens of our own country; we are also citizens of the whole world. We are a part of an ecosystem; but this ecosystem is derived from our inner world, which encompasses values and attitudes, which give us the capacity for understanding, will and the power to uplift the quality of physical and spiritual life of all the peoples. This conviction on the part of the individual and society of the essential oneness of the human race is now the only viable standard for economic and social justice. On it will depend the successful resolution of the problems of environment, property, population, food, health, employment, etc. In summary, this means considering the welfare of the community as one's own welfare, thinking of mankind as an individual and the individual as a member of its bodily form, and being convinced that if pain or illness aflicts any member of its body, this will inevitably bring suffering to the remainder.[2]

We believe that a basic economic concern of the government should be to encourage a greater level of confidence and cooperation between capital and labor, the twin pillars on which rest the foundations of the material well being of the country.

EDUCATION

"Regard man," Bahá'u'lláh declared, *"as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom."*[3] We may also say that education is the only possession that cannot be taken away from a person. The potentialities latent in every human being need, therefore, the polishing stone of education in order to become manifest. This being the case, we wish to emphasize a few guiding principles for a new approach to education in this day:

1. The schools should stress the concept of the oneness of the human race and emphasize the importance of translating into reality the mutual interdependence of its members, leading to the unification of mankind and the establishment of world peace and stability.
2. The students should be imbued with a sense of world consciousness and of loyalty to the human race, a transcendent loyalty that does not belittle lesser loyalties, such as those due to any particular race, creed, nation or ideology. This is a particularly urgent challenge in our increasingly multi-racial and multi-religious society.
3. The educators, in turn, should instill in their pupils from earliest childhood an awakening of love for mankind, a love capable, in the end, of abolishing all forms of racial, religious, political, social and intellectual prejudice.

[1] Bahá'u'lláh, The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1975), p. 3.
[2] From a declaration by the Bahá'í International Community entitled *"One World. . . One People."*
[3] Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 259.

Within this framework, centered around the concept of world citizenship, the Bahá'í teachings state, *"Every child must be instructed in sciences as much as is necessary. If the parents are able to provide the expenses of this education, it is all right; otherwise the community must provide the means for the teaching of that child."*[1]

CIVIL AUTHORITY

No one can fail to note the anxiety that the problems created by a disintegrating social order are causing for a steadily growing number of human beings who feel unable to protect themselves and their families. All citizens have responsibilities, too. The most important responsibility in a democratic society is submission to the will of the majority, expressed through the constitutional provisions that society has created and polished. Governments have the right to expect civil obedience. No good, but only harm, can result from the deliberate violation of civil law, or deliberate disobedience to the institutions duly constituted by the civil authority.

From the Bahá'í scriptures, we have selected the following texts, which, we believe, well exemplify the Bahá'í thinking on this matter:

"The *Law* must reign, and not the individual; thus will the world become a place of beauty and true brotherhood will be realized."[2]

> *What mankind needeth in this day is obedience unto them that are in authority, and a faithful adherence to the cord of wisdom. The instruments which are essential to the immediate protection, the security and assurance of the human race have been entrusted to the hands, and lie in the grasp, of the governors of human society. This is the wish of God and His decree....*[3]

The Bahá'ís reaffirm their total loyalty and obedience to the new Constitution that will soon be promulgated.

III. The Bahá'í Proposal

We present below the text of proposed articles to be considered in the new Constitution of the country, dealing with the following important topics:

1. Sovereignty of the law
2. Equality of all before the law
3. Abuse of power
4. Defense of human rights
5. Uplifting socially discriminated groups
6. The right of the individual to self-expression and manifestation of conscience
7. Freedom of religion
8. Freedom of marriage
9. Equality of rights and opportunities for men and women
10. Elimination of the extremes of wealth and poverty
11. Participation of the workers in the profits of the companies
12. Setting of a minimum wage compatible with human dignity
13. Obligatory and free education, directed toward human peace and fraternity

[1] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Foundations of World Unity* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979), p. 31.

[2] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1972), p. 132.

[3] Bahá'u'lláh, excerpt from a Tablet directed to the Kings of the Earth, in 1863, cited in *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1967), pp. 13–14.

14. Ethnic, cultural and geographical integrity of the indigenous population
15. International relations in harmony with the concept of world citizenship
16. Peaceful resolution of international conflicts
17. Abstention from participation in the arms race or support of it
18. Obligatory service to the fatherland, of a military or civilian nature
19. Obligatory rendering to the needy populations of services in the area of economic and social development
20. Asylum for foreigners persecuted with violation of human rights
21. Means of mass communication

BAHÁ'Í PROPOSALS

ARTICLE: The law is sovereign and all submit to it.

ARTICLE: All power emanates from the people, and must be exercised for the benefit of the people.

Paragraph: It is the responsibility of the state, through the organization of the branches of government, to assure to all citizens ample conditions for the development of their physical, intellectual and spiritual potentialities, in a peaceful way and in a spirit of unity.

ARTICLE: The abuse of power on the part of any authority shall be punished in accordance with the law.

ARTICLE: Everyone is equal before the law without distinction of any kind, whether of sex, race, profession, social class, religion, creed, nationality, culture or political convictions.

Paragraph: The state is to create instruments to guarantee the upliftment of any groups which have been discriminated against socially.

Paragraph: Any discriminatory action shall be punished as a serious crime for which no bail is acceptable.

ARTICLE: The inalienable right of the individual to self-expression and manifestation of conscience is assured.

ARTICLE: Freedom of religious worship includes the right of assembly, expression, or association for religious purposes.

Paragraph: In accordance with the law, religious ministering shall be given to the armed forces and their auxiliaries, and, in establishments of collective internment, to interested parties who solicit it directly or through their legal representatives, respecting the creed of each.

Paragraph: Cemeteries shall have a secular character and shall be administered by the municipal authority; all religious faiths shall be permitted to practice their rituals in them.

Paragraph: In accordance with the law, religious organizations may maintain private cemeteries.

ARTICLE: Freedom of marriage is assured, without any restriction as to the race, nationality or religion of the spouses. The law establishes the equality of rights and duties between the couple during the marriage and after its dissolution, should such occur.

Paragraph: Weddings shall be civil, and their celebration free of charge. Religious weddings, of any denomination, are equivalent to civil ceremonies provided that the act is inscribed in the Public Register upon request of the celebrant or of any interested party, and that the requirements and prohibitions of the law are observed.

Paragraph: The religious wedding celebrated without the formalities of the preceding paragraph shall have civil standing if the couple's application is inscribed in the Public Register through prior arrangement before the proper authority.

ARTICLE: Equality of rights and opportunities between men and women is assured in all human relationships and in all elective, administrative, and decision-making processes of society.

ARTICLE: It is the duty of the state to promote the elimination of the extremes of wealth and poverty, through mechanisms of taxation and distribution of wealth, in accordance with the law.

Paragraph: The participation of the workers in the profits of the companies is assured.

Paragraph: A minimum wage capable of providing the worker and his family with dignity in meeting their basic needs for food, shelter, health, education, transportation, clothing and leisure is assured.

ARTICLE: Education shall be inspired and conducted under the aegis of the following principles:

a) The basic objective of education is to release the potentialities existing in each individual, and at the same time to eradicate prejudices of race, creed, class, nationality, and sex.
b) Education is obligatory and is the right of everyone.
c) The state must provide free schooling for everyone between 6 and 14 years of age.
d) Public education shall always be free of charge, and private schooling shall be treated as a concession by the state to private initiative, in accordance with the law.
e) Religious instruction shall be optional; and, when offered, the inclusion of a complementary vision of universal religious expression shall be obligatory.
f) Instruction shall promote an education directed toward the ideals of peace and human fraternity.

ARTICLE: The ethnic, cultural and geographical integrity of the indigenous population within the national territory is assured and protected by law.

Paragraph: It is the duty of the state to assure indigenous peoples access to education as a means of appreciation and preservation of indigenous culture, customs and traditions making possible the unfolding of their potentialities.

Paragraph: The education of the indigenous peoples is also to be offered in their native language.

ARTICLE: In its international relations, the executive branch shall, *ad referendum* by the National Congress,

a) Promote, among all the countries of the international community, the concept of world citizenship, laying the foundations of a new world order in the economic, social and political fields.
b) Promote and support the unconditional defense of the fundamental rights inherent to the human person.
c) Defend peace; the employment of force is permitted only in case of external aggression.
d) Promote the interchange of the technological discoveries of the scientific and cultural heritage of humanity.

e) Resolve international conflicts through direct negotiation, arbitration and other peaceful means, with the mediation of international organizations recognized by the international community.

ARTICLE: The maintenance of diplomatic, commercial and cultural relations with countries which, as acknowledged by international organizations, violate the fundamental rights of the human person, principally by virtue of discrimination by sex, race or religious creed, and utilize terrorism or torture, is prohibited.

ARTICLE: In the event of war between countries with which Brazil maintains diplomatic relations, it is up to the Brazilian State to take the initiative to propose a peaceful solution to the conflict. Should the conflict persist, Brazil shall participate in the international forces of intervention to assure the re-establishment of peace.

ARTICLE: Brazil shall not involve itself in an arms race of any kind or nature.

Paragraph: It is the responsibility of the federal government to authorize and monitor the production and sale of war materiel, for the exclusive use of the armed forces, in their function of defense of the fatherland, within the national territory.

ARTICLE: All Brazilians are obliged to render service to the fatherland; this service may be civil or military, in accordance with the law.

ARTICLE: The rendering of services with a view to the economic and social development of needy populations, by citizens who have recently graduated from programs of higher education, is obligatory, within the conditions established by the law.

ARTICLE: Brazil shall grant asylum to any foreigner whose fundamental liberties, as defined in the Constitution, were violated, especially if by reason of his political, religious or philosophical activities and/or convictions.

ARTICLE: The representatives of the mass media have a fundamental commitment to truth, and are to express themselves in a free and impartial manner; all manipulation by public or private interests is forbidden.

B. SOUTH AFRICA: VIEWS SUBMITTED ON CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

ON 21 January 1991, a delegation composed of three members of the National Spiritual Assembly of South Africa and a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Pretoria met with Judge P.M. Olivier at the South African Law Commission in Pretoria to present materials explaining the Bahá'í perspective on a new constitution for the country. A covering letter, a statement of principles, a compilation of extracts from the Bahá'í Writings bearing on the issues facing South Africa, and the book *A Pictorial History of the Bahá'í Faith in South Africa, 1911–1989* were presented.

Judge Olivier was deeply impressed, indicating that the Bahá'ís were the one organization that had so far spoken of moral and spiritual foundations for the constitution. He requested more Bahá'í Writings so that he could add another chapter to his proposal to the government regarding this aspect of the constitution.

The following is the complete text of the submission:

To the Constitutional Commission,
South Africa

Dear Sirs,

The Bahá'í community of South Africa is grateful for the opportunity to offer its views in the drafting of a new Constitution for our country. We hope that the attached document, "Some thoughts for the drafting of a Constitution for South Africa", based on principles set out in the scriptures of our Faith, will prove a useful contribution to this urgent national endeavour.

These same principles have animated the development of the Bahá'í community of South Africa ever since its inception eighty years ago. A good deal of the optimism we feel about the ability of the people of South Africa eventually to build in this favoured land a just and unified society arises from the confirmations which have met our efforts to realize these spiritual and social ideals in the life of our own community.

If our experience can serve to reinforce a sense of confidence in the eventual outcome of the long struggle in which our nation is engaged, we would be honoured to share it, too, with those whose task it is to create the constitutional framework for the process.

In no sense does South Africa stand alone. The forces that are welding humanity into one family and our globe into a common homeland challenge all peoples and all of the cultural and political assumptions of the past. In such a world, the solutions we achieve here in South Africa can have influence far beyond our borders.

Please be assured of the ardent prayers of South Africa's Bahá'ís for the success of the historic task you have undertaken.

Sincerely,

The National Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of South Africa

Some Thoughts for the Drafting of a Constitution for South Africa

Human beings have been endowed by Divine Providence with immeasurable qualities of spirit and mind without discrimination as to sex, race or nationality. The progressive unfoldment of the potentialities inherent in these qualities enables the human race to fulfil its purpose in carrying forward an ever advancing civilization. This is confirmed by the record of continuous development of human society as it has traversed the successive stages of its evolution from the emergence of the family as society's basic corporate entity to the unity of tribe, of city-state and of nation.

Now, the world with its myriad peoples and cultures, and through the rapid advances in scientific discovery, has suddenly contracted into a neighbourhood, affirming that the path of its social evolution leads ultimately to global unity, implying the essential oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and thus requiring, at this stage of social maturity, that every unit of society, whether at the local, regional or national level, of which this neighbourhood is composed, adopt a world-embracing vision.

To ensure the orderly continuity of social life on the planet and to encourage the collective realization of humanity's latent endowments, governments are formed, maintaining their authority and capacity to canalize the flow of civilization by upholding the principles of justice. Fundamental to all progress in human affairs is man's right to a just government.

Sensible of this broad context in which its destiny must be shaped, fully conscious of the remarkable opportunity which Providence has bestowed upon it at this ripe time in human history, and confident of the positive influence which a fitting response to the challenges facing it can exert at home and abroad, South Africa must attend to these requisites in its consideration of the provisions of a new constitution.

- Ensure the peace, freedom, well-being, tranquillity and advancement of all persons under its jurisdiction, regardless of race, class, creed or economic condition.
- Safeguard the personal rights, freedom and initiative of individuals.
- Include among the specific rights guaranteed to all citizens: the right to a basic education, the right to work and free choice of employment, the right to freedom of movement and residence, the right to assemble peacefully, the right to freedom of association with people of all backgrounds.
- Devise a system of government which will maintain a balance between centralized national or federal authority, on the one hand, and decentralized regional or local authority, on the other; which allows a wide latitude for autonomous action at the local level; which adheres to the practice of consultation as the basis of decision-making; which provides mechanisms for acquainting the government with the condition of the people in all areas—mechanisms that will encourage the freedom of the people to express their opinions for the good of the country and to air their grievances with impunity.
- Safeguard the stability of society at its primary source by promoting the well-being and solidarity of the family.
- Strengthen the fabric of society by promoting recognition of the equal rights of men and women.
- Guarantee education for all, and attend to the necessity of educating girls and women, who are the first educators of children, giving primacy to this if for some compelling reason a choice has to be made between the sexes in providing education.
- Foster development of the sciences and the arts, and provide for the stimulation of interest in these essential pursuits of civilized life at all levels of society.
- Regulate the economic life of the country in such a way as to prevent destitution, on the one hand, and gross accumulation of ownership, on the other; and while promoting

advancement in industrial development, maintain the primacy of agriculture, which is vital to the well-being of society.

- Protect the natural resources from misuse, thereby aiming to preserve the fitness of the environment, while at the same time permitting the sources of raw material to be tapped for the economic benefit of the country.
- Guarantee free choice in religious faith and practice, for the fear of God is conducive to the upbuilding of the moral character of a people, a prerequisite of social stability, which cannot be guaranteed only by the enactment of civil laws.
- Adopt a language to serve as the common vehicle of communications among the entire people; teach it in the schools along with the mother tongue in each region.
- Collaborate with international efforts to secure the peaceful progress of the entire human race.

Excerpts from the Bahá'í Writings that Bear on Constitutional Issues Facing South Africa

GOVERNMENT

1. The world of politics is like the world of man; he is seed at first, and then passes by degrees to the condition of embryo and foetus, acquiring a bone structure, being clothed with flesh, taking on his own special form, until at last he reaches the plane where he can befittingly fulfil the words: "the most excellent of Makers." Just as this is a requirement of creation and is based on the universal Wisdom, the political world in the same way cannot instantaneously evolve from the nadir of defectiveness to the zenith of rightness and perfection. Rather, qualified individuals must strive by day and by night, using all those means which will conduce to progress, until the government and the people develop along every line from day to day and even from moment to moment.[1]
2. While the setting up of parliaments, the organizing of assemblies of consultation, constitutes the very foundation and bedrock of government, there are several essential requirements which these institutions must fulfil. First, the elected members must be righteous, God-fearing, high-minded, incorruptible. Second, they must be fully cognizant, in every particular, of the laws of God, informed as to the highest principles of law, versed in the rules which govern the management of internal affairs and the conduct of foreign relations, skilled in the useful arts of civilization, and content with their lawful emoluments.[2]
3. It is obvious that not until the people are educated, not until public opinion is rightly focussed, not until government officials, even minor ones, are free from even the least remnant of corruption, can the country be properly administered. Not until discipline, order and good government reach the degree where an individual, even if he should put forth his utmost efforts to do so, would still find himself unable to deviate by so much as a hair's breadth from righteousness, can the desired reforms be regarded as fully established.[3]
4. There must be special laws made, dealing with these extremes of riches and of want. The members of the Government should consider the laws of God when they are framing plans for the ruling of the people. The general rights of mankind must be guarded and preserved.

[1] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1983), p.107.
[2] ibid., p. 17.
[3] ibid., p. 16.

The government of the countries should conform to the Divine Law which gives equal justice to all. This is the only way in which the deplorable superfluity of great wealth and miserable, demoralizing, degrading poverty can be abolished. Not until this is done will the Law of God be obeyed.[1]

ONENESS OF HUMANKIND

5. That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race. The Great Being saith: Blessed and happy is he that ariseth to promote the best interests of the peoples and kindreds of the earth. In another passage He hath proclaimed: It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.[2]
6. The Great Being saith: O ye children of men! The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men. Suffer it not to become a source of dissension and discord, of hate and enmity. This is the straight Path, the fixed and immovable foundation. Whatsoever is raised on this foundation, the changes and chances of the world can never impair its strength, nor will the revolution of countless centuries undermine its structure....[3]

PEACE

7. True civilization will unfurl its banner in the midmost heart of the world whenever a certain number of its distinguished and high-minded sovereigns—the shining exemplars of devotion and determination—shall, for the good and happiness of all mankind, arise, with firm resolve and clear vision, to establish the Cause of Universal Peace. They must make the Cause of Peace the object of general consultation, and seek by every means in their power to establish a Union of the nations of the world. They must conclude a binding treaty and establish a covenant, the provisions of which shall be sound, inviolable and definite. They must proclaim it to all the world and obtain for it the sanction of all the human race. This supreme and noble undertaking—the real source of the peace and well-being of all the world—should be regarded as sacred by all that dwell on earth. All the forces of humanity must be mobilized to ensure the stability and permanence of this Most Great Covenant. In this all-embracing Pact the limits and frontiers of each and every nation should be clearly fixed, the principles underlying the relations of governments towards one another definitely laid down, and all international agreements and obligations ascertained. In like manner, the size of the armaments of every government should be strictly limited, for if the preparations for war and the military forces of any nation should be allowed to increase, they will arouse the suspicion of others. The fundamental principle underlying this solemn Pact should be so fixed that if any government later violate any one of its provisions, all the governments on earth should arise to reduce it to utter submission, nay the human race as a whole should resolve, with every power at its disposal, to destroy that government. Should this greatest of all remedies be applied to the sick body of the world, it will assuredly recover from its ills and will remain eternally safe and secure.[4]

[1] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks: Addresses given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Paris in 1911–1912* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979), p. 153.
[2] *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982), p. 167.
[3] *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1984), p. 215.
[4] *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, pp. 64–65.

EDUCATION

8. [A] requirement of perfection is to arise with complete sincerity and purity of purpose to educate the masses: to exert the utmost effort to instruct them in the various branches of learning and useful sciences, to encourage the development of modern progress, to widen the scope of commerce, industry and the arts, to further such measures as will increase the people's wealth. For the mass of the population is uninformed as to these vital agencies which would constitute an immediate remedy for society's chronic ills.[1]
9. ...Arts, crafts and sciences uplift the world of being, and are conducive to its exaltation. Knowledge is as wings to man's life, and a ladder for his ascent. Its acquisition is incumbent upon everyone. The knowledge of such sciences, however, should be acquired as can profit the peoples of the earth, and not those which begin with words and end with words.... In truth, knowledge is a veritable treasure for man, and a source of glory, of bounty, of joy, of exaltation, of cheer and gladness unto him. Happy the man that cleaveth unto it, and woe betide the heedless.[2]
10. The education and training of children is among the most meritorious acts of humankind and draweth down the grace and favour of the All-Merciful, for education is the indispensable foundation of all human excellence and alloweth man to work his way to the heights of abiding glory. If a child be trained from his infancy, he will, through the loving care of the Holy Gardener, drink in the crystal waters of the spirit and of knowledge, like a young tree amid the rilling brooks. And certainly he will gather to himself the bright rays of the Sun of Truth, and through its light and heat will grow ever fresh and fair in the garden of life.... Every child is potentially the light of the world—and at the same time its darkness; wherefore must the question of education be accounted as of primary importance. From his infancy, the child must be nursed at the breast of God's love, and nurtured in the embrace of His knowledge, that he may radiate light, grow in spirituality, be filled with wisdom and learning, and take on the characteristics of the angelic host.[3]

CONSULTATION

11. Consultation bestoweth greater awareness and transmuteth conjecture into certitude. It is a shining light which, in a dark world, leadeth the way and guideth. For everything there is and will continue to be a station of perfection and maturity. The maturity of the gift of understanding is made manifest through consultation.[4]
12. In all things it is necessary to consult. This matter should be forcibly stressed by thee, so that consultation may be observed by all. The intent of what hath been revealed from the Pen of the Most High is that consultation may be fully carried out among the friends, inasmuch as it is and will always be a cause of awareness and of awakening and a source of good and well-being.[5]
13. ...The first condition is absolute love and harmony amongst the members of the assembly. They must be wholly freed from estrangement and must manifest in themselves the Unity of God, for they are the waves of one sea, the drops of one river, the stars of one heaven, the rays of one sun, the trees of one orchard, the flowers of one garden. Should

[1] *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 39.
[2] Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979), pp. 26–27.
[3] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982), pp. 129–131.
[4] Bahá'u'lláh, quoted in *Consultation: A Compilation*, prepared by the Research Department at the Bahá'í World Centre, p. 1.
[5] ibid., p. 1.

harmony of thought and absolute unity be non-existent, that gathering shall be dispersed and that assembly be brought to naught. The second condition: they must when coming together turn their faces to the Kingdom on High and ask aid from the Realm of Glory. They must then proceed with the utmost devotion, courtesy, dignity, care and moderation to express their views. They must in every matter search out the truth and not insist upon their own opinion, for stubbornness and persistence in one's views will lead ultimately to discord and wrangling and the truth will remain hidden. The honoured members must with all freedom express their own thoughts, and it is in no wise permissible for one to belittle the thought of another, nay, he must with moderation set forth the truth, and should differences of opinion arise a majority of voices must prevail, and all must obey and submit to the majority. It is again not permitted that any one of the honoured members object to or censure, whether in or out of the meeting, any decision arrived at previously though that decision be not right, for such criticism would prevent any decision from being enforced. In short, whatsoever thing is arranged in harmony and with love and purity of motive, its result is light, and should the least trace of estrangement prevail the result shall be darkness upon darkness.... If this be so regarded, that assembly shall be of God, but otherwise it shall lead to coolness and alienation that proceed from the Evil One.... Should they endeavour to fulfil these conditions the Grace of the Holy Spirit shall be vouchsafed unto them, and that assembly shall become the centre of the Divine blessings, the hosts of Divine confirmation shall come to their aid, and they shall day by day receive a new effusion of Spirit.[1]

The Role of Religion

14. O contending peoples and kindreds of the earth! Set your faces towards unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you. Gather ye together, and for the sake of God resolve to root out whatever is the source of contention amongst you.... There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God. The difference between the ordinances under which they abide should be attributed to the varying requirements and exigencies of the age in which they were revealed. All of them, except a few which are the outcome of human perversity, were ordained of God, and are a reflection of His Will and Purpose. Arise and, armed with the power of faith, shatter to pieces the gods of your vain imaginings, the sowers of dissension amongst you. Cleave unto that which draweth you together and uniteth you....[2]
15. Universal benefits derive from the grace of the Divine religions, for they lead their true followers to sincerity of intent, to high purpose, to purity and spotless honor, to surpassing kindness and compassion, to the keeping of their covenants when they have covenanted, to concern for the rights of others, to liberality, to justice in every aspect of life, to humanity and philanthropy, to valor and to unflagging efforts in the service of mankind. It is religion, to sum up, which produces all human virtues, and it is these virtues which are the bright candles of civilization....[3]

[1] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, cited in a letter dated 5 March 1922 written by Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, published in *Bahá'í Administration: Selected Messages 1922–1932*, pp. 22–23.

[2] Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 217.

[3] *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 98.

WOMEN

16. Woman's lack of progress and proficiency has been due to her need of equal education and opportunity. Had she been allowed this equality, there is no doubt she would be the counterpart of man in ability and capacity. The happiness of mankind will be realized when women and men coordinate and advance equally, for each is the complement and helpmeet of the other.[1]
17. Divine Justice demands that the rights of both sexes should be equally respected since neither is superior to the other in the eyes of Heaven. Dignity before God depends, not on sex, but on purity and luminosity of heart. Human virtues belong equally to all![2]
18. The world in the past has been ruled by force, and man has dominated over woman by reason of his more forceful and aggressive qualities both of body and mind. But the balance is already shifting; force is losing its dominance, and mental alertness, intuition, and the spiritual qualities of love and service, in which woman is strong, are gaining ascendancy. Hence the new age will be an age less masculine and more permeated with the feminine ideals, or, to speak more exactly, will be an age in which the masculine and feminine elements of civilization will be more evenly balanced.[3]

FAMILY LIFE

19. According to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh the family, being a human unit, must be educated according to the rules of sanctity. All the virtues must be taught the family. The integrity of the family bond must be constantly considered, and the rights of the individual members must not be transgressed. The rights of the son, the father, the mother—none of them must be transgressed, none of them must be arbitrary. Just as the son has certain obligations to his father, the father, likewise, has certain obligations to his son. The mother, the sister and other members of the household have their certain prerogatives. All these rights and prerogatives must be conserved, yet the unity of the family must be sustained. The injury of one shall be considered the injury of all; the comfort of each, the comfort of all; the honor of one, the honor of all.[4]

[1] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912 (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 182.

[2] *Paris Talks: Addresses given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Paris in 1911–1912*, p. 162.

[3] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, cited in J. E. Esslemont, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987), p. 149.

[4] *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 168.

C. SINGAPORE: STATEMENT ON THE NATIONAL IDEOLOGY

WHEN the Government of Singapore invited individuals and groups to submit ideas that would help them form a set of "core values" to take the nation along the path of progress into the twenty-first century, the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Singapore prepared a "Statement on the National Ideology". In 1990, after receiving approval from the Universal House of Justice, the Spiritual Assembly submitted the Statement to the Office of the First Deputy Prime Minister, which was responsible for this issue, and to all 82 members of the Parliament of Singapore.

The following is the text of the statement.

Statement on the National Ideology

PREAMBLE

Singapore is a nation of many remarkable achievements. Despite its brief history, a dramatic economic expansion has resulted from the collaboration between a vigilant and responsible government and an enterprising population. Progress in such areas as housing, education, transportation, and communication can be traced to this same fortunate combination. Singapore society, with citizens who come from diverse racial, cultural and religious backgrounds, is in many respects, a microcosm of the world. Despite their differences Singaporese live together in prosperity and harmony, reflective of the essential oneness of humankind.

We now stand together on the threshold of the last decade of this century, facing not only dazzling prospects, but also great challenges. The winds of change blow here as everywhere. There are trends in the world and our country which, if not effectively countered, have the potential to undermine the achievements that have been so painstakingly gained. Such trends include deepening materialism, the disintegration of the family, and religious and racial intolerance. Such trends are profoundly divisive to the unity on which our prosperity rests.

Consequently, the Bahá'í community of Singapore welcomes the decision of the Government of our country to consult the various segments of society on the principles that should govern our collective life. Singapore has a wealth of scholarly and professional expertise upon which such a study can draw. We will content ourselves with offering certain spiritual and moral principles that derive from the Teachings of our Faith and that have been central to the unity and progress of Bahá'ís everywhere.

CORE ELEMENTS

We humbly put forward these values:

a. Balance-embracing moderation, understanding and fairness.
b. Preservation of family unit.
c. Fostering the spirit of co-operation.
d. Consultation—applied to all facets of decision-making.
e. Social and economic justice.
f. Unity in diversity.

a. Balance: Balance is an important and fundamental concept that every individual shall strive to embrace. Inherent in this concept are the virtues of moderation, understanding, and fairness which should be inculcated at a very early stage of an individual's education.

This comes from the belief that "whatsoever passeth beyond the limits of moderation will cease to exert a beneficial influence".

b. *Preservation of family unit:* The foundation stone of every human society is the family unit. The family home, as a fortress for well-being, is the nucleus for the education and inculcation of values and virtues. Filial piety is one of these virtues which is slowly being eroded in the name of progress and in the face of materialistic influences.

According to the Bahá'í Writings: "The family being a human unit must be educated according to the rules of sanctity. All the virtues must be taught in the family. The integrity of the family bond must be constantly considered and the rights of the individual members must not be transgressed."

c. *Fostering the spirit of co-operation:* The hallmark of the maturity of the individual is the extent to which he is able to go beyond self and extend the spirit of co-operation to society at large. "All progress is the result of association and co-operation." Without co-operation, development and progress of society will be impossible. To the extent that we can imbue each and every individual with this quality will depend the advancement and growth of our society.

d. *Consultation—applied to all facets of life:* The art of consultation is the method that enables thoughts to combine and to evolve beyond the limitations of individuals. "Take ye counsel together in all matters, inasmuch as consultation is the lamp of guidance which leadeth the way, and is the bestower of understanding." Only when this principle is applied to all aspects of our lives will society be able to soar higher than ever imagined before.

Consultation is the art of seeking truth through frank and thorough presentation of dissenting ideas. "The shining spark of truth cometh forth only after the clash of differing opinions." The very attempt to achieve harmony through consultative action can release such a salutary spirit among the peoples of the nation that no power could resist the final triumphal outcome.

e. *Social and Economic Justice:* Justice, as declared in the Bahá'í Writings, is "the best beloved of all things" in the sight of God and represents God's freely given gift to man in this, the age of his maturity. In the decades since this was written, justice has become the touchstone with which every proposal for social and economic change is tested. Those societies which are best organized to serve as vehicles of this divine gift are the ones who will ultimately succeed.

The importance of adopting social and economic justice as a core value becomes apparent when the topics of emancipation of women, care for the elderly, education for all and equal opportunities for everyone are considered.

f. *Unity in diversity:* This is the crowning value of the proposed group because it brings all the other values to fruition. Through balance, individuals are transformed. The upholding of the structure of the family provides a solid foundation for the individual to step into the society. Consultation consolidates myriad ideas within the society into one relative truth. Social and economic justice provides the means for the society to prosper. And finally, unity in diversity is the cohesive force behind a unified nation.

In the eyes of the Almighty we are "the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch". Once the weighty load of prejudice is shed from the shoulders of a nation, the spectacular rewards of co-operation in the light of unity become obvious.

CONCLUSION

With the adoption of an appropriate set of core values, we are confident that this nation will become a beacon of light within this region and beyond. In addition, we put forward the following for consideration: ultimately the national ideology cannot be limited to the national boundaries. Nations are now bound and interlinked to other nations. The national ideology must foster peace and growth not just within the nation but also to the rest of the world itself. We, as representatives of the Bahá'í community in Singapore, would like to thank the Government for the opportunity to express our views on such an important exercise and we stand ready to present them in person, if so required.

D. UNITED STATES: STATEMENT ON RACE UNITY

IN June 1991, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States published a statement to define and present Bahá'í solutions to the problems borne of the racism plaguing the nation. *The Vision of Race Unity—America's Most Challenging Issue* became the centerpiece of a special campaign to educate the public on Bahá'í approaches to the subject. Nearly 200,000 copies were sold before the end of the Six Year Plan and presentations were made to members of virtually every segment of American society.

The following is the text of the statement.

The Vision of Race Unity—America's Most Challenging Issue

Racism is the most challenging issue confronting America. A nation whose ancestry includes every people on earth, whose motto is *e pluribus unum*, whose ideals of freedom under law have inspired millions throughout the world, cannot continue to harbor prejudice against any racial or ethnic group without betraying itself. Racism is an affront to human dignity, a cause of hatred and division, a disease that devastates society.

Notwithstanding the efforts already expended for its elimination, racism continues to work its evil upon this nation. Progress toward tolerance, mutual respect, and unity has been painfully slow and marked with repeated setbacks. The recent resurgence of divisive racial attitudes, the increased number of racial incidents, and the deepening despair of minorities and the poor make the need for solutions ever more pressing and urgent. To ignore the problem is to expose the country to physical, moral and spiritual danger.

Aware of the magnitude and the urgency of the issue, we, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, speaking for the entire U.S. Bahá'í community, appeal to all people of goodwill to arise without further delay to resolve the fundamental social problem of this country. We do so because of our feeling of shared responsibility, because of the global experience of the Bahá'í community in affecting racial harmony within itself, and because of the vision that the sacred scriptures of our Faith convey of the destiny of America.

I

The oneness of humanity is the pivot round which revolve all the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith. It is at once a statement of principle and an assertion of the ultimate goal of human experience on the planet. More than a century ago, Bahá'u'lláh, the Prophet-Founder of the

Bahá'í Faith, wrote: "The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established." It is a principle that issues naturally from the genesis and purpose of human existence. The Word of God as presented in the Bahá'í writings offers compelling insights as in the following examples:

Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty.

Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light! Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory.

All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. The Almighty beareth Me witness: To act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man. Those virtues that befit his dignity are forbearance, mercy, compassion and loving-kindness towards all the peoples and kindreds of the earth.

Having gone through the stages of infancy and turbulent adolescence, humanity is now approaching maturity, a stage that will witness "the reconstruction and demilitarization of the whole civilized world—a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life." In no other country is the promise of organic unity more immediately demonstrable than in the United States because this country is a microcosm of the diverse populations of the earth. Yet this promise remains largely unrealized even here because of the endemic racism that, like a cancer, is corroding the vitals of the nation.

For too much of its history and in so many places the human race has squandered its energy and resources in futile efforts to prove the unprovable: that one portion of itself, because of separation by geography, a difference in skin color, or the diversity of cultural expression, is intrinsically distinct from another portion. The ignorance and prejudice on which such efforts are founded have led to endless conflicts in the name of the sanctity of tribe, race, class, nation, and religion. Paradoxical as it may seem, in the consistency of these negative efforts across the spectrum of the race, humanity has proved the exact opposite: it has affirmed its oneness. The proof is in the fact that, given the same circumstances, all people, regardless of ethnic or cultural variety, behave essentially the same way. In the futility of its efforts to classify and separate its diverse elements, humanity has become disoriented and confused. Unaided by the divine influence of religion, people are incapable of achieving a proper orientation to their innermost reality and purpose and are thus unable to achieve a coherent vision of their destiny. It is in this respect that the Bahá'ís find relevancy, direction, and fulfillment in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of their Faith.

The oneness of humanity is a spiritual truth abundantly confirmed by science. Recognition of this truth compels the abandonment of all prejudices of race, color, creed, nation, and class—of "everything which enables people to consider themselves superior to others." The principle of the oneness of humankind" is no mere outburst of ignorant emotionalism or an

expression of vague and pious hope.... It does not constitute merely the enunciation of an ideal.... It implies an organic change in the structure of present-day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced."

II

The application of the spiritual principle of the oneness of humanity to the life of the nation would necessitate and make possible vast changes in the economic status of the non-white segments of the population. Although poverty afflicts members of all races its victims tend to be largely people of color. Prejudice and discrimination have created a disparity in the standards of living, providing some with excessive economic advantage while denying others the bare necessities for leading healthy and dignified lives. Poor housing, deficient diet, inadequate health care, insufficient education are consequences of poverty that afflict African Americans, American Indians, and Hispanic Americans more than they afflict the rest of the population. The cost to society at large is heavy.

Evidence of the negative effect of racial and ethnic conflict on the economy has prompted a number of businesses and corporations to institute educational programs that teach conflict resolution and are designed to eliminate racial and ethnic tensions from the workplace. These are important steps and should be encouraged. If, however, they are intended primarily to save the economy, no enduring solution will be found to the disastrous consequences of racism. For it cannot suffice to offer academic education and jobs to people while at the same time shutting them out because of racial prejudice from normal social intercourse based on brotherly love and mutual respect. The fundamental solution—the one that will reduce violence, regenerate and focus the intellectual and moral energy of minorities, and make them partners in the construction of a progressive society—rests ultimately on the common recognition of the oneness of humankind.

It is entirely human to fail if that which is the most important to people's self-perception is denied them—namely, the dignity they derive from a genuine regard by others for their stature as human beings. No educational, economic, or political plan can take the place of this essential human need; it is not a need that businesses and schools, or even governments, can provide in isolation from the supportive attitude of society as a whole. Such an attitude needs to be grounded in a spiritual and moral truth that all acknowledge and accept as their own and that, like the oxygen that serves all equally, breathes life into their common effort to live in unity and peace. Absence of the genuine regard for others fostered by such truth causes hopelessness in those discriminated against; and in a state of hopelessness, people lose the coherent moral powers to realize their potential. This vitalizing truth, we are convinced, is summarized in the phrase: the oneness of humankind.

So essential is the principle of the oneness of humanity to the efficacy of educational programs that it cannot be overemphasized. Without its broad influence such programs will not contribute significantly to the development of society. The very fact that businesses are themselves implementing educational programs is indicative of the glaring deficiency of the entire educational system. As we have already said, beyond the mechanisms of education lies the essential prerequisite of a proper attitude on the part of those dispensing curricula and, even more important, on the part of society as a whole. On this basis, education is not only the shortest route out of poverty; it is the shortest route out of prejudice as well. A national program of education, emphasizing the values of tolerance, brotherhood, appreciation for cultures other than one's own, and respect for differences would be a most important step toward the elimination of racism and, as a consequence, the bolstering of the economy.

III

The persistent neglect by the governing bodies and the masses of the American people of the ravages of racism jeopardizes both the internal order and the national security of the country.

From the day it was born the United States embraced a set of contradictory values. The founding fathers proclaimed their devotion to the highest principles of equality and justice yet enshrined slavery in the Constitution. Slavery poisoned the mind and heart of the nation and would not be abolished without a bloody civil war that nearly destroyed the young republic. The evil consequences of slavery are still visible in this land. They continue to affect the behavior of both Black and White Americans and prevent the healing of old wounds.

Healing the wounds and building a society in which people of diverse backgrounds live as members of one family are the most pressing issues confronting America today. Her peace, her prosperity, and even her standing in the international community depend to a great extent on the resolution of this issue.

That the virulence of the race issue in America attracts the attention of the entire world should spur this country to an unprecedented effort to eliminate every vestige of prejudice and discrimination from her midst. America's example could not fail to have a profound influence on world society nor could it fail to assist the establishment of universal peace. "For the accomplishment of unity between the colored and white," the Bahá'í writings proclaim, "will be a cause of the world's peace."

The responsibility for the achievement of racial peace and unity in the United States rests upon both Black and White Americans. To build a society in which the rights of all its members are respected and guaranteed, both races must be animated with the spirit of optimism and faith in the eventual realization of their highest aspirations. Neither Black nor White Americans should assume that the responsibility for the elimination of prejudice and of its effects belongs exclusively to the other. Both must recognize that unity is essential for their common survival. Both must recognize that there is only one human species. Both must recognize that a harmoniously functioning society that permits the full expression of the potential of all persons can resolve the social and economic problems now confounding a society wracked with disunity.

It is evident that both Black and White Americans in large numbers are feeling deeply disappointed and frustrated by what each group perceives to be a failure of the efforts in recent decades at affecting progress in the relations between the races. To rationalize this failure, both have been reacting by retreating to the more familiar ground of racial separation. As the problems with crime and drug addiction mount, the tendency is to use the seeming intractability of these problems as a measure of the failure of years of struggle on the part of both to overcome the barriers of centuries. Formidable as is the challenge yet to be met, can it fairly be said that no significant progress has taken place since the days of the sit-ins at lunch counters across the South?

Similarly, the victims of a protracted and entrenched racial discrimination seek relief in the notion that Black Americans, White Americans, American Indians, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans are so distinctly different from one another that all of them must stake out their own cultural and social territories and stay within them. Would this be sensible? Would it not be a retreat from the reality of our common humanity? Would it not be a formula for the total breakdown of civilization? Those who raise the call for separation preach a grim doctrine indeed. If the nation is seriously to submit to such a view, where exactly will either the Black or the White Americans divide their cultural heritage, one from the other?

Racism runs deep. It infects the hearts of both White and Black Americans. Since without conscious, deliberate, and sustained effort, no one can remain unaffected by its corrosive influence, both groups must realize that such a problem can neither easily nor immediately be resolved. "Let neither think that anything short of genuine love, extreme patience, true humility, consummate tact, sound initiative, mature wisdom, and deliberate, persistent, and prayerful effort can succeed in blotting out the stain which this patent evil has left on the fair name of their common country."

Both groups must understand that no real change will come about without close association, fellowship, and friendship among diverse people. Diversity of color, nationality, and culture enhances the human experience and should never be made a barrier to harmonious relationships, to friendship, or to marriage. "O well-beloved ones!" Bahá'u'lláh wrote, "The tabernacle of unity has been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch."

IV

Our appeal is addressed primarily to the individual American, because the transformation of a whole nation ultimately depends on the initiative and change of character of the individuals who compose it. No great idea or plan of action by the government or other interested organizations can hope to succeed if the individual neglects to respond in his or her own way as personal circumstances and opportunities permit. And so we respectfully and urgently call upon our fellow Americans of whatever background to look at the racial situation with new eyes and with a new determination to lend effective support to the resolution of a problem that hinders the advance of this great republic toward the full realization of its glorious destiny.

We mention the experience of the Bahá'í community not from any feeling of pride and ultimate victory, because that which we have accomplished still falls short of that to which we aspire; nonetheless, the results to date are most encouraging, and it is as a means of encouragement that we call attention to them.

From its inception in 1863 the Bahá'í community was dedicated to the principle of the unity of humankind. Bahá'ís rely upon faith in God, daily prayer, meditation, and study of sacred texts to effect the transformation of character necessary for personal growth and maturity; however, their aim is to create a world civilization that will in turn react upon the character of the individual. Thus the concept of personal salvation is linked to the salvation, security, and happiness of all the inhabitants of the earth and stems from the Bahá'í belief that "the world of humanity is a composite body" and that "when one part of the organism suffers all the rest of the body will feel its consequence."

Guided and inspired by such principles, the Bahá'í community has accumulated more than a century of experience in creating models of unity that transcend race, culture, nationality, class, and the differences of sex and religion, providing empirical evidence that humanity in all its diversity can live as a unified global society. Bahá'ís see unity as the law of life; consequently, all prejudices are perceived as diseases that threaten life. Rather than considering that the unity of humankind can be established only after other problems afflicting it have been solved, Bahá'ís believe that both spiritual and material development are dependent upon love and unity. Therefore, the Bahá'ís offer the teachings of their Faith and the example of their community for examination, convinced that these can make a contribution toward the eradication of racism endemic in American society. We do so with firm faith in the assistance of our Creator, Who, out of His infinite love, brought forth all humanity from the same stock and intended that all belong to the same household. We

believe, moreover, that the day of the unification of the entire human race has come and that "the potentialities inherent in the station of man, the innate excellence of his reality, must all be manifested in this promised Day of God."

ADDENDUM

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States is the national administrative body for the Bahá'ís of the United States. The Assembly has nine members and is elected annually by delegates from the forty-eight contiguous states. It directs, coordinates, and stimulates the activities of local Bahá'í administrative bodies and of the 110,000 Bahá'ís in the United States.

The Bahá'í Faith is an independent world religion with adherents in virtually every country. The worldwide Bahá'í community, numbering more than five million, includes almost all nationalities and classes. More than 2,100 ethnic groups and tribes are represented. There are 155 National Spiritual Assemblies. [1]

Bahá'u'lláh was the Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith. The central principles of His religion are the oneness of God, the oneness of religion, and the oneness of humanity. His religion "proclaims the necessity and the inevitability of the unification of mankind.... It, moreover, enjoins upon its followers the primary duty of an unfettered search after truth, condemns all manner of prejudice and superstition, declares the purpose of religion to be the promotion of amity and concord, proclaims its essential harmony with science, and recognizes it as the foremost agency for the pacification and the orderly progress of human society. It unequivocally maintains the principle of equal rights, opportunities and privileges for men and women, insists on compulsory education, eliminates extremes of poverty and wealth, abolishes the institution of priesthood, prohibits slavery, asceticism, mendicancy and monasticism, prescribes monogamy, discourages divorce, emphasizes the necessity of strict obedience to one's government, exalts any work performed in the spirit of service to the level of worship, urges either the creation or the adoption of an auxiliary international language, and delineates the outlines of those institutions that must establish and perpetuate the general peace of mankind."

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[1] By the end of the Six Year Plan (Riḍván 1992) there were 165 National Spiritual Assemblies.

10. INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS IN THE WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

ON 29 December 1988, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter to the Bahá'ís of the United States clarifying the Bahá'í perspective on individual rights and freedom of expression. In 1989, this letter was published in booklet form by the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of the United States.

The following is the text of the letter.

To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the United States of America

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

We have noticed with concern evidences of a confusion of attitudes among some of the friends when they encounter difficulties in applying Bahá'í principles to questions of the day. On the one hand, they acknowledge their belief in Bahá'u'lláh and His teachings; on the other, they invoke Western liberal democratic practices when actions of Bahá'í institutions or of some of their fellow Bahá'ís do not accord with their expectations. At the heart of this confusion are misconceptions of such fundamental issues as individual rights and freedom of expression in the Bahá'í community. The source of the potential difficulties of the situation appears to us to be an inadequacy of Bahá'í perspective on the part of both individual believers and their institutions.

Recognizing the immense challenge you face to resolve such confusion, we pause to reflect with you on these issues in search of a context in which relevant fundamental questions may be discussed and understood in the community.

The extraordinary capacities of the American nation, as well as the superb stewardship of the Bahá'í community within it, have repeatedly been extolled in the writings of our Faith. In His Tablets and utterances, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Centre of the Covenant, projected a compelling vision of the world-embracing prospects of that richly endowed country. "The American nation", He averred, "is equipped and empowered to accomplish that which will adorn the pages of history, to become the envy of the world, and be blest in both the East and the West for the triumph of its people." In another assertion addressed to the Bahá'í community itself, He uttered words of transcendent importance: "...your mission", He affirmed, "is unspeakably glorious. Should success crown your enterprise, America will assuredly evolve into a centre from which waves of spiritual power will emanate, and the throne of the Kingdom of God will, in the plenitude of its majesty and glory, be firmly established."

Shoghi Effendi, in various statements, celebrated the remarkable achievements and potential glories of that specially blessed community, but was moved to issue, in "The Advent of Divine Justice", a profound warning which is essential to a proper understanding of the relation of that Bahá'í community to the nation from which it has sprung. "The glowing tributes," he solemnly wrote, "so repeatedly and deservedly paid to the capacity, the spirit, the conduct, and the high rank, of the American believers, both individually and as an organic community, must, under no circumstances, be confounded with the characteristics and nature of the people from which God has raised them up. A sharp distinction between that community and that people must be made, and resolutely and fearlessly upheld, if we wish to give due recognition to the transmuting power of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, in its impact on the lives and standards of those who have chosen to enlist under His banner.

Otherwise, the supreme and distinguishing function of His Revelation, which is none other than the calling into being of a new race of men, will remain wholly unrecognized and completely obscured." It is the far-reaching, transformative implications of this distinction which we especially invite you to contemplate.

The vantage point that gives us perspective and is the foundation of our belief and actions rests on our recognition of the sovereignty of God and our submission to His will as revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, His supreme Manifestation for this promised Day. To accept the Prophet of God in His time and to abide by His bidding are the two essential, inseparable duties which each soul was created to fulfil. One exercises these twin duties by one's own choice, an act constituting the highest expression of the free will with which every human being has been endowed by an all-loving Creator.

The vehicle in this resplendent Age for the practical fulfilment of these duties is the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh; it is, indeed, the potent instrument by which individual belief in Him is translated into constructive deeds. The Covenant comprises divinely conceived arrangements necessary to preserve the organic unity of the Cause. It therefore engenders a motivating power which, as the beloved Master tells us, "like unto the artery, beats and pulsates in the body of the world". "It is indubitably clear", He asserts, "that the pivot of the oneness of mankind is nothing else but the power of the Covenant." Through it the meaning of the Word, both in theory and practice, is made evident in the life and work of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the appointed Interpreter, the perfect Exemplar, the Centre of the Covenant. Through it the processes of the Administrative Order—"this unique, this wondrous System"—are made to operate.

In emphasizing its distinctiveness, Shoghi Effendi has pointed out that "this Administrative Order is fundamentally different from anything that any Prophet has previously established, inasmuch as Bahá'u'lláh has Himself revealed its principles, established its institutions, appointed the person to interpret His Word and conferred the necessary authority on the body designed to supplement and apply His legislative ordinances". In another statement, he maintains that "It would be utterly misleading to attempt a comparison between this unique, divinely conceived Order and any of the diverse systems which the minds of men, at various periods of their history, have contrived for the government of human institutions." "Such an attempt", he felt, "would in itself betray a lack of complete appreciation of the excellence of the handiwork of its great Author."

The lack of such appreciation will detract from the perspective of anyone who measures Bahá'í administrative processes against practices prevalent in today's society. For notwithstanding its inclination to democratic methods in the administration of its affairs, and regardless of the resemblance of some of its features to those of other systems, the Administrative Order is not to be viewed merely as an improvement on past and existing systems; it represents a departure both in origin and in concept. "This new born Administrative Order", as Shoghi Effendi has explained, "incorporates within its structure certain elements which are to be found in each of the three recognized forms of secular government, without being in any sense a mere replica of any one of them, and without introducing within its machinery any of the objectionable features which they inherently possess. It blends and harmonizes, as no government fashioned by mortal hands has as yet accomplished, the salutary truths which each of these systems undoubtedly contains without vitiating the integrity of those God-given verities on which it is ultimately founded."

You are, no doubt, conversant with the Guardian's expatiations on this theme. Why, then, this insistent emphasis? Why this repeated review of fundamentals? This

emphasis, this review, is to sound an appeal for solid thinking, for the attainment of correct perspectives, for the adoption of proper attitudes. And these are impossible without a deep appreciation of Bahá'í fundamentals.

The great emphasis on the distinctiveness of the Order of Bahá'u'lláh is not meant to belittle existing systems of government. Indeed, they are to be recognized as the fruit of a vast period of social evolution, representing an advanced stage in the development of social organization. What motivates us is the knowledge that the supreme mission of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, the Bearer of that Order, is, as Shoghi Effendi pointed out, "none other but the achievement of this organic and spiritual unity of the whole body of nations", indicating the "coming of age of the entire human race". The astounding implication of this is the near prospect of attaining an age-old hope, now made possible at long last by the coming of Bahá'u'lláh. In practical terms, His mission signals the advent of "an organic change in the structure of present-day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced". It is a fresh manifestation of the direct involvement of God in history, a reassurance that His children have not been left to drift, a sign of the outpouring of a heavenly grace that will enable all humanity to be free at last from conflict and contention to ascend the heights of world peace and divine civilization. Beyond all else, it is a demonstration of that love for His children, which He knew in the depth of His "immemorial being" and in the "ancient eternity" of His Essence, and which caused Him to create us all. In the noblest sense, then, attention to the requirements of His World Order is a reciprocation of that love.

It is this perspective that helps us to understand the question of freedom and its place in Bahá'í thought and action. The idea and the fact of freedom pervade all human concerns in an infinitude of notions and modes. Freedom is indeed essential to all expressions of human life.

Freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of action are among the freedoms which have received the ardent attention of social thinkers across the centuries. The resulting outflow of such profound thought has exerted a tremendous liberating influence in the shaping of modern society. Generations of the oppressed have fought and died in the name of freedom. Certainly the want of freedom from oppression has been a dominant factor in the turmoil of the times: witness the plethora of movements which have resulted in the rapid emergence of new nations in the latter part of the twentieth century. A true reading of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh leaves no doubt as to the high importance of these freedoms to constructive social processes. Consider, for instance, Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation to the kings and rulers. Can it not be deduced from this alone that attainment of freedom is a significant purpose of His Revelation? His denunciations of tyranny and His urgent appeals on behalf of the oppressed provide unmistakable proof. But does not the freedom foreshadowed by His Revelation imply nobler, ampler manifestations of human achievement? Does it not indicate an organic relationship between the internal and external realities of man such as has not yet been attained?

In his summary of significant Bahá'í teachings, Shoghi Effendi wrote that Bahá'u'lláh "inculcates the principle of 'moderation in all things'; declares that whatsoever, be it 'liberty, civilization and the like', 'passeth beyond the limits of moderation' must 'exercise a pernicious influence upon men'; observes that western civilization has gravely perturbed and alarmed the peoples of the world; and predicts that the day is approaching when the 'flame' of a civilization 'carried to excess' 'will devour the cities'."

Expounding the theme of liberty, Bahá'u'lláh asserted that "the embodiment of liberty and its symbol is the animal"; that "liberty causeth man to overstep the bounds

of propriety, and to infringe on the dignity of his station"; that "true liberty consisteth in man's submission unto My commandments". "We approve of liberty in certain circumstances," He declared, "and refuse to sanction it in others." But He gave the assurance that, "Were men to observe that which We have sent down unto them from the Heaven of Revelation, they would, of a certainty, attain unto perfect liberty." And again, He said, "Mankind in its entirety must firmly adhere to whatsoever hath been revealed and vouchsafed unto it. Then and only then will it attain unto true liberty."

Bahá'u'lláh's assertions clearly call for an examination of current assumptions. Should liberty be as free as is supposed in contemporary Western thought? Where does freedom limit our possibilities for progress, and where do limits free us to thrive? What are the limits to the expansion of freedom? For so fluid and elastic are its qualities of application and expression that the concept of freedom in any given situation is likely to assume a different latitude from one mind to another; these qualities are, alas, susceptible to the employment alike of good and evil. Is it any wonder, then, that Bahá'u'lláh exhorts us to submission to the will of God?

Since any constructive view of freedom implies limits, further questions are inevitable: What are the latitudes of freedom in the Bahá'í community? How are these to be determined? Because human beings have been created to "carry forward an ever-advancing civilization", the exercise of freedom, it may be deduced, is intended to enable all to fulfil this purpose in their individual lives and in their collective functioning as a society. Hence whatever in principle is required to realize this purpose gauges the latitudes or limits of freedom.

Contemplating Bahá'u'lláh's warning that "whatsoever passeth beyond the limits of moderation will cease to exert a beneficial influence", we come to appreciate that the Administrative Order He has conceived embodies the operating principles which are necessary to the maintenance of that moderation which will ensure the "true liberty" of humankind. All things considered, does the Administrative Order not appear to be the structure of freedom for our Age? 'Abdu'l-Bahá offers us comfort in this thought, for He has said that "the moderate freedom which guarantees the welfare of the world of mankind and maintains and preserves the universal relationships is found in its fullest power and extension in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh".

Within this framework of freedom a pattern is set for institutional and individual behaviour which depends for its efficacy not so much on the force of law, which admittedly must be respected, as on the recognition of a mutuality of benefits, and on the spirit of cooperation maintained by the willingness, the courage, the sense of responsibility, and the initiative of individuals —these being expressions of their devotion and submission to the will of God. Thus there is a balance of freedom between the institution, whether national or local, and the individuals who sustain its existence.

Consider, for example, the Local Spiritual Assembly, the methods of its formation and the role of individuals in electing it. The voter elects with the understanding that he is free to choose without any interference whomever his conscience prompts him to select, and he freely accepts the authority of the outcome. In the act of voting, the individual subscribes to a covenant by which the orderliness of society is upheld. The Assembly has the responsibility to guide, direct and decide on community affairs and the right to be obeyed and supported by members of the community. The individual has the responsibility to establish and maintain the Assembly through election, the offering of advice, moral support and material assistance; and he has the right to be heard by it, to receive its guidance and assistance, and to appeal from any Assembly decision which he conscientiously feels is unjust or detrimental to the interests of the community.

But occupation with the mechanics of Bahá'í Administration, divorced from the animating spirit of the Cause, leads to a distortion, to an arid secularization foreign to the nature of the Administration. Equally significant to the procedures for election—to further extend the example—is the evocation of that rarefied atmosphere of prayer and reflection, that quiet dignity of the process, devoid of nominations and campaigning, in which the individual's freedom to choose is limited only by his own conscience, exercised in private in an attitude that invites communion with the Holy Spirit. In this sphere, the elector regards the outcome as an expression of the will of God, and those elected as being primarily responsible to that will, not to the constituency which elected them. An election thus conducted portrays an aspect of that organic unity of the inner and outer realities of human life which is necessary to the construction of a mature society in this new Age. In no other system do individuals exercise such a breadth of freedom in the electoral process.

The equilibrium of responsibilities implied by all this presupposes maturity on the part of all concerned. This maturity has an apt analogy in adulthood in human beings. How significant is the difference between infancy and childhood, adolescence and adulthood! In a period of history dominated by the surging energy, the rebellious spirit and frenetic activity of adolescence, it is difficult to grasp the distinguishing elements of the mature society to which Bahá'u'lláh beckons all humanity. The models of the old world order blur vision of that which must be perceived; for these models were, in many instances, conceived in rebellion and retain the characteristics of the revolutions peculiar to an adolescent, albeit necessary, period in the evolution of human society. The very philosophies which have provided the intellectual content of such revolutions—Hobbes, Locke, Jefferson, Mill, come readily to mind—were inspired by protest against the oppressive conditions which revolutions were intended to remedy.

These characteristics are conspicuous, for example, in the inordinate scepticism regarding authority, and consequently, in the grudging respect which the citizens of various nations show toward their governments; they have become pronounced in the incessant promotion of individualism, often to the detriment of the wider interests of society. How aptly, even after the lapse of half a century, Shoghi Effendi's views, as conveyed by his secretary, fit the contemporary scene: "Our present generation, mainly due to the corruptions that have been identified with organizations, seem to stand against any institution. Religion as an institution is denounced. Government as an institution is denounced. Even marriage as an institution is denounced. We Bahá'ís should not be blinded by such prevalent notions. If such were the case, all the divine Manifestations would not have invariably appointed someone to succeed Them. Undoubtedly, corruptions did enter those institutions, but these corruptions were not due to the very nature of the institutions but to the lack of proper directions as to their powers and nature of their perpetuation. What Bahá'u'lláh has done is not to eliminate all institutions in the Cause but to provide the necessary safeguards that would eliminate corruptions that caused the fall of previous institutions. What those safeguards are is most interesting to study and find out and also most essential to know."

We make these observations not to indulge in criticism of any system, but rather to open up lines of thought, to encourage a re-examination of the bases of modern society, and to engender a perspective for consideration of the distinctive features of the Order of Bahá'u'lláh. What, it could be asked, was the nature of society that gave rise to such characteristics and such philosophies? Where have these taken mankind? Has their employment satisfied the needs and expectations of the human spirit? The

answers to such questions could lay the ground for a contrasting observation of the origin and nature of the characteristics and philosophy underlying that Order.

As to freedom of expression, a fundamental principle of the Cause, the Administrative Order provides unique methods and channels for its exercise and maintenance; these have been amply described in the writings of the Faith, but they are not yet clearly understood by the friends. For Bahá'u'lláh has extended the scope and deepened the meaning of self-expression. In His elevation of art and of work performed in the service of humanity to acts of worship can be discerned enormous prospects for a new birth of expression in the civilization anticipated by His World Order. The significance of this principle, now so greatly amplified by the Lord of the Age, cannot be doubted; but it is in its ramifications in speech that keen understanding is urgently needed. From a Bahá'í point of view, the exercise of freedom of speech must necessarily be disciplined by a profound appreciation of both the positive and negative dimensions of freedom, on the one hand, and of speech, on the other.

Bahá'u'lláh warns us that "the tongue is a smouldering fire, and excess of speech a deadly poison". "Material fire consumeth the body," He says in elaborating the point, "whereas the fire of the tongue devoureth both heart and soul. The force of the former lasteth but for a time, whilst the effects of the latter endureth a century." In tracing the framework of free speech, He again advises "moderation". "Human utterance is an essence which aspireth to exert its influence and needeth moderation", He states, adding, "As to its influence, this is conditional upon refinement which in turn is dependent upon hearts which are detached and pure. As to its moderation, this hath to be combined with tact and wisdom as prescribed in the Holy Scriptures and Tablets."

Also relevant to what is said, and how, is when it is said. For speech, as for so many other things, there is a season. Bahá'u'lláh reinforces this understanding by drawing attention to the maxim that "Not everything that a man knoweth can be disclosed, nor can everything that he can disclose be regarded as timely, nor can every timely utterance be considered as suited to the capacity of those who hear it."

Speech is a powerful phenomenon. Its freedom is both to be extolled and feared. It calls for an acute exercise of judgement, since both the limitation of speech and the excess of it can lead to dire consequences. Thus there exist in the system of Bahá'u'lláh checks and balances necessary to the beneficial uses of this freedom in the onward development of society. A careful examination of the principles of Bahá'í consultation and the formal and informal arrangements for employing them offer new insights into the dynamics of freedom of expression.

As it is beyond the scope of this letter to expatiate upon these principles, let it suffice to recall briefly certain of the requisites of consultation, particularly for those who serve on Spiritual Assemblies. Love and harmony, purity of motive, humility and lowliness amongst the friends, patience and long-suffering in difficulties—these inform the attitude with which they proceed "with the utmost devotion, courtesy, dignity, care and moderation to express their views", each using "perfect liberty" both in so doing and in "unveiling the proof of his demonstration". "If another contradicts him, he must not become excited because if there be no investigation or verification of questions and matters, the agreeable view will not be discovered neither understood." "The shining spark of truth cometh forth only after the clash of differing opinions." If unanimity is not subsequently achieved, decisions are arrived at by majority vote.

Once a decision has been reached, all members of the consultative body, having had the opportunity fully to state their views, agree wholeheartedly to support the outcome. What if the minority view is right? "If they agree upon a subject," 'Abdu'l-Bahá

has explained, "even though it be wrong, it is better than to disagree and be in the right, for this difference will produce the demolition of the divine foundation. Though one of the parties may be in the right and they disagree, that will be the cause of a thousand wrongs, but if they agree and both parties are in the wrong, as it is in unity, the truth will be revealed and the wrong made right." Implicit in this approach to the social utility of thought is the profundity of the change in the standard of public discussion intended by Bahá'u'lláh for a mature society.

The qualities by which the individual can achieve the personal discipline necessary to successful consultation find their full expression in what Shoghi Effendi regarded as the "spirit of a true Bahá'í". Ponder, for instance, the appealing remark addressed to your own community in one of his earliest letters: "Nothing short of the spirit of a true Bahá'í can hope to reconcile the principles of mercy and justice, of freedom and submission, of the sanctity of the right of the individual and of self-surrender, of vigilance, discretion and prudence on the one hand, and fellowship, candour, and courage on the other." This was an appeal to the maturity and the distinction towards which he repeatedly directed their thoughts.

Because the Most Great Peace is the object of our longing, a primary effort of the Bahá'í community is to reduce the incidence of conflict and contention, which are categorically forbidden in the Most Holy Book. Does this mean that one may not express critical thought? Absolutely not. How can there be the candour called for in consultation if there is no critical thought? How is the individual to exercise his responsibilities to the Cause, if he is not allowed the freedom to express his views? Has Shoghi Effendi not stated that "at the very root of the Cause lies the principle of the undoubted right of the individual to self-expression, his freedom to declare his conscience and set forth his views"?

The Administrative Order provides channels for expression of criticism, acknowledging, as a matter of principle, that "it is not only the right, but the vital responsibility of every loyal and intelligent member of the community to offer fully and frankly, but with due respect and consideration to the authority of the Assembly, any suggestion, recommendation or criticism he conscientiously feels he should in order to improve and remedy certain existing conditions or trends in his local community". Correspondingly, the Assembly has the duty "to give careful consideration to any such views submitted to them".

Apart from the direct access which one has to an Assembly, local or national, or to a Counsellor or Auxiliary Board member, there are specific occasions for the airing of one's views in the community. The most frequent of these occasions for any Bahá'í is the Nineteen Day Feast which, "besides its social and spiritual aspects, fulfils various administrative needs and requirements of the community, chief among them being the need for open and constructive criticism and deliberation regarding the state of affairs within the local Bahá'í community". At the same time, Shoghi Effendi's advice, as conveyed by his secretary, goes on to stress the point that "all criticisms and discussions of a negative character which may result in undermining the authority of the Assembly as a body should be strictly avoided. For otherwise the order of the Cause itself will be endangered, and confusion and discord will reign in the community."

Clearly, then, there is more to be considered than the critic's right to self-expression; the unifying spirit of the Cause of God must also be preserved, the authority of its laws and ordinances safeguarded, authority being an indispensable aspect of freedom. Motive, manner, mode, become relevant; but there is also the matter of love: love for one's fellows, love for one's community, love for one's institutions.

The responsibility resting on the individual to conduct himself in such a way as to ensure the stability of society takes on

elemental importance in this context. For vital as it is to the progress of society, criticism is a two-edged sword: it is all too often the harbinger of conflict and contention. The balanced processes of the Administrative Order are meant to prevent this essential activity from degenerating to any form of dissent that breeds opposition and its dreadful schismatic consequences. How incalculable have been the negative results of ill-directed criticism: in the catastrophic divergences it has created in religion, in the equally contentious factions it has spawned in political systems, which have dignified conflict by institutionalizing such concepts as the "loyal opposition" which attach to one or another of the various categories of political opinion —conservative, liberal, progressive, reactionary, and so forth.

If Bahá'í individuals deliberately ignore the principles imbedded in the Order which Bahá'u'lláh Himself has established to remedy divisiveness in the human family, the Cause for which so much has been sacrificed will surely be set back in its mission to rescue world society from complete disintegration. May not the existence of the Covenant be invoked again and again, so that such repetition may preserve the needed perspective? For, in this age, the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh has been protected against the baneful effects of the misuse of the process of criticism; this has been done by the institution of the Covenant and by the provision of a universal administrative system which incorporates within itself the mechanisms for drawing out the constructive ideas of individuals and using them for the benefit of the entire system. Admonishing the people to uphold the unifying purpose of the Cause, Bahá'u'lláh, in the Book of His Covenant, addresses these poignant words to them: "Let not the means of order be made the cause of confusion and the instrument of union an occasion for discord." Such assertions emphasize a crucial point; it is this: In terms of the Covenant, dissidence is a moral and intellectual contradiction of the main objective animating the Bahá'í community, namely, the establishment of the unity of mankind.

We return to the phenomenal characteristics of speech. Content, volume, style, tact, wisdom, timeliness are among the critical factors in determining the effects of speech for good or evil. Consequently, the friends need ever to be conscious of the significance of this activity which so distinguishes human beings from other forms of life, and they must exercise it judiciously. Their efforts at such discipline will give birth to an etiquette of expression worthy of the approaching maturity of the human race. Just as this discipline applies to the spoken word, it applies equally to the written word; and it profoundly affects the operation of the press.

The significance and role of the press in a new world system are conspicuous in the emphasis which the Order of Bahá'u'lláh places on accessibility to information at all levels of society. Shoghi Effendi tells us that Bahá'u'lláh makes "specific reference to 'the swiftly appearing newspapers', describes them as 'the mirror of the world' and as 'an amazing and potent phenomenon', and prescribes to all who are responsible for their production the duty to be sanctified from malice, passion and prejudice, to be just and fair-minded, to be painstaking in their inquiries, and ascertain all the facts in every situation".

In His social treatise, "The Secret of Divine Civilization", 'Abdu'l-Bahá offers insight as to the indispensability of the press in future society. He says it is "urgent that beneficial articles and books be written, clearly and definitely establishing what the present-day requirements of the people are, and what will conduce to the happiness and advancement of society". Further, He writes of the "publication of high thoughts" as the "dynamic power in the arteries of life", "the very soul of the world". Moreover, He states that "Public opinion must be directed toward whatever is worthy of this day, and this is impossible except through the use of

adequate arguments and the adducing of clear, comprehensive and conclusive proofs."

As to manner and style, Bahá'u'lláh has exhorted "authors among the friends" to "write in such a way as would be acceptable to fair-minded souls, and not lead to cavilling by the people". And He issues a reminder: "We have said in the past that one word hath the influence of spring and causeth hearts to become fresh and verdant, while another is like unto blight which causeth the blossoms and flowers to wither."

In the light of all this, the code of conduct of the press must embrace the principles and objectives of consultation as revealed by Bahá'u'lláh. Only in this way will the press be able to make its full contribution to the preservation of the rights of the people and become a powerful instrument in the consultative processes of society, and hence for the unity of the human race.

Some of the friends have suggested that the emergence of the Faith from obscurity indicates the timeliness of ceasing observance in the Bahá'í community of certain restraints; particularly are they concerned about the temporary necessity of review before publishing.

That the Faith has emerged from obscurity on a global scale is certain. This definitely marks a triumphant stage in the efforts of the community to register its existence on the minds of those who influence world events. Consider how, because of the sufferings and sacrifices of the friends in Iran, the concerns of the community in these respects have become a matter of discussion in the most influential parliaments and the most important international forums on earth. That this emergence frees the Cause to pursue objectives hitherto unreachable is also undeniable; but that it marks the attainment of the community's anticipated maturity is entirely doubtful.

How could it have attained maturity, when we know from the clear guidance of the beloved Guardian that obscurity is but one of the many stages in the long evolution towards the Faith's golden destiny? Has he not advised us all that the subsequent stage of oppression must precede the stages of its emancipation and its recognition as a world religion? Can the friends forget the oft-quoted warning of 'Abdu'l-Bahá concerning the bitter opposition that will confront the Cause in various lands on all continents? In the case of the American believers, has Shoghi Effendi not alluded to this coming fury in his description of them as "the invincible Army of Bahá'u'lláh, who in the West, and at one of its potential storm centres is to fight, in His name and for His sake, one of its fiercest and most glorious battles"?

Those who are anxious to relax all restraint, who invoke freedom of speech as the rationale for publishing every and any thing concerning the Bahá'í community, who call for the immediate termination of the practice of review now that the Faith has emerged from obscurity—are they not aware of these sobering prospects? Widespread as has been the public revulsion to the current persecutions in Iran, let there be no mistake about the certainty of the opposition which must yet be confronted in many countries, including that which is the Cradle of the Administrative Order itself.

The Faith is as yet in its infancy. Despite its emergence from obscurity, even now the vast majority of the human race remains ignorant of its existence; moreover, the vast majority of its adherents are relatively new Bahá'ís. The change implied by this new stage in its evolution is that whereas heretofore this tender plant was protected in its obscurity from the attention of external elements, it has now become exposed. This exposure invites close observation, and that observation will eventually lead to opposition in various quarters. So, far from adopting a carefree attitude, the community must be conscious of the necessity to present a correct view of itself and an accurate understanding of its purpose to a largely sceptical public. A greater effort, a greater care must now be exercised to ensure its

protection against the malice of the ignorant and the unwisdom of its friends.

Let us all remember that the struggle of the infant Faith of God to thrive is beset with the turmoil of the present age. Like a tender shoot just barely discernible above ground, it must be nurtured to strength and maturity and buttressed as necessary against the blight of strong winds and deadly entanglements with weeds and thistles. If we to whose care this plant has been entrusted are insensitive to its tenderness, the great tree which is its certain potential will be hindered in its growth towards the spreading of its sheltering branches over all humankind. From this perspective we must all consider the latent danger to the Cause of ill-advised actions and exaggerated expectations; and particularly must we all be concerned about the effects of words, especially those put in print. It is here that Bahá'í authors and publishers need to be attentive and exert rigorous discipline upon themselves, as well as abide by the requirements of review at this early stage in the development of the Faith.

The right of the individual to self-expression has permeated the foregoing comments on the various freedoms, but, even so, a word more might be said about individual freedom. The fundamental attitude of the Faith in this respect is best demonstrated by statements of 'Abdu'l-Bahá concerning the family. "The integrity of the family bond", He says, "must be constantly considered, and the rights of the individual members must not be transgressed.... All these rights and prerogatives must be conserved, yet the unity of the family must be sustained. The injury of one shall be considered the injury of all; the comfort of each, the comfort of all; the honour of one, the honour of all."

The individual's relation to society is explained by Shoghi Effendi in the statement that "The Bahá'í conception of social life is essentially based on the principle of the subordination of the individual will to that of society. It neither suppresses the individual nor does it exalt him to the point of making him an anti-social creature, a menace to society. As in everything, it follows the 'golden mean'."

This relationship, so fundamental to the maintenance of civilized life, calls for the utmost degree of understanding and cooperation between society and the individual; and because of the need to foster a climate in which the untold potentialities of the individual members of society can develop, this relationship must allow "free scope" for "individuality to assert itself" through modes of spontaneity, initiative and diversity that ensure the viability of society. Among the responsibilities assigned to Bahá'í institutions which have a direct bearing on these aspects of individual freedom and development is one which is thus described in the Constitution of the Universal House of Justice: "to safeguard the personal rights, freedom and initiative of individuals". A corollary is: "to give attention to the preservation of human honour".

How noteworthy that in the Order of Bahá'u'lláh, while the individual will is subordinated to that of society, the individual is not lost in the mass but becomes the focus of primary development, so that he may find his own place in the flow of progress, and society as a whole may benefit from the accumulated talents and abilities of the individuals composing it. Such an individual finds fulfilment of his potential not merely in satisfying his own wants but in realizing his completeness in being at one with humanity and with the divinely ordained purpose of creation.

The quality of freedom and of its expression—indeed, the very capacity to maintain freedom in a society—undoubtedly depends on the knowledge and training of individuals and on their ability to cope with the challenges of life with equanimity. As the beloved Master has written: "And the honour and distinction of the individual consist in this, that he among all the world's multitudes should become a source of social good. Is any larger bounty conceivable than

this, that an individual, looking within himself, should find that by the confirming grace of God he has become the cause of peace and well-being, of happiness and advantage to his fellowmen? No, by the one true God, there is no greater bliss, no more complete delight."

The spirit of liberty which in recent decades has swept over the planet with such tempestuous force is a manifestation of the vibrancy of the Revelation brought by Bahá'u'lláh. His own words confirm it. "The Ancient Beauty", He wrote in a soul-stirring commentary on His sufferings, "hath consented to be bound with chains that mankind may be released from its bondage, and hath accepted to be made a prisoner within this most mighty Stronghold that the whole world may attain unto true liberty."

Might it not be reasonably concluded, then, that "true liberty" is His gift of love to the human race? Consider what Bahá'u'lláh has done: He revealed laws and principles to guide the free; He established an Order to channel the actions of the free; He proclaimed a Covenant to guarantee the unity of the free.

Thus, we hold to this ultimate perspective: Bahá'u'lláh came to set humanity free. His Revelation is, indeed, an invitation to freedom—freedom from want, freedom from war, freedom to unite, freedom to progress, freedom in peace and joy.

You who live in a land where freedom is so highly prized have not, then, to dispense with its fruits, but you are challenged and do have the obligation to uphold and vindicate the distinction between the licence that limits your possibilities for genuine progress and the moderation that ensures the enjoyment of true liberty.

IV
BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION

1. THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH AND THE UNITED NATIONS: SUMMARY OF THE YEARS 1947–1986

THE relationship of the world Bahá'í community to the United Nations began in 1948, when the eight National Spiritual Assemblies then existing were recognized collectively by the United Nations Office of Public Information (OPI) as an international non-governmental organization under the name Bahá'í International Community. An official Bahá'í-United Nations relationship had actually started a year before—in the spring of 1947—when OPI accredited the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada as a national non-governmental organization, qualified to be represented through an observer.

The next step in Bahá'í-United Nations cooperation—and a major one—took place in 1970, when the Bahá'í International Community was granted consultative status, category II, with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). A few years later, in 1974, as an extension of this relationship in the economic and social fields, the Bahá'í International Community established an association with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Then, in 1976—another important development—it was welcomed into consultative status with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). In 1985, it formalized its representation with the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS).

For detailed information on Bahá'í International Community activities with the U.N. during this period, see earlier volumes of *The Bahá'í World*.

The First Period: 1947–1970

Although limited to activities educating the public about the aims and programs of the United Nations, the first stage of Bahá'í-United Nations cooperation allowed many opportunities for sharing the Bahá'í perspective, both through participation in numerous non-governmental conferences, and through the presentation to the United Nations of several important statements.

One of the most important contributions took place in 1947, when the United Nations Special Palestine Committee addressed a letter to Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, resident at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, requesting an expression of the Bahá'í attitude to the future of Palestine. Explaining that "Our aim is the establishment of universal peace in the world and our desire to see justice prevail in every domain of human society, including the domain of politics," Shoghi Effendi enclosed with his reply a summary of the history and teachings of the Bahá'í Faith.

Other presentations of note were: A "Bahá'í Declaration on Human Obligations and Rights" (1947); a study entitled

"Proposals for Charter Revision," circulated at a United Nations Conference for Revision of the United Nations Charter (1955); a statement endorsing the Genocide Convention, presented to the President of the Commission on Human Rights (1959); and a comprehensive statement to a meeting of the United Nations Office of Public Information to discuss problems of cooperation "with the United Nations family insofar as its program affects the new nations", noting the "vigorous assistance of Bahá'í communities" through the implementation of Bahá'í teachings and principles, to help the less developed peoples become integrated into the more developed society surrounding them (1960).

The Bahá'í International Community was also able, even in the early years of its relationship with the United Nations, to assist in the protection and recognition of the Bahá'í world community. For example, appeals were lodged with the United Nations in 1955 and 1962 on behalf of Bahá'ís being persecuted in Írán and Morocco, respectively, and in 1967 a special edition of *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh* was presented on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to fifty-six Heads of State, through their Permanent Representatives to the United Nations.

The Second Period: 1970–1986

These years witnessed a noticeable increase in the range and depth of Bahá'í-United Nations cooperation, as the Bahá'í International Community began the steady growth of its consultative relationship with ECOSOC and with UNICEF, and its associations with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS) while continuing its close cooperation with the United Nations Office—later Department—of Public Information.

As it worked closely with ECOSOC, its functional commissions, committees and associated bodies, the Bahá'í International Community gradually explored new avenues of participation in United Nations social and economic programs. Not only was it represented at sessions of United Nations bodies concerned with issues of aging, children, crime prevention, disabled persons, disarmament, energy—new and renewable sources, environment, exploration and peaceful uses of outer space, the family, human rights, human settlements, law of the sea, narcotic drugs, population, science and technology, social development, status of women, the United Nations University, world food, and youth, but it also furnished information, submitted statements and published brochures on most of these subjects. In addition, the Bahá'í International Community participated in United Nations Years, in world conferences and congresses, in regional conferences and in seminars concerned with the socio-economic problems of our planet, as well as in preparation and follow-up meetings and activities.

When the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, the functional committee of ECOSOC in charge of fostering the United Nations relationship with NGO's in the social and economic field, reviewed the work of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC during the years 1973–77, 1978–81, the Bahá'í International Community reports, showing an impressive number of activities recording warm cooperation with the United Nations, were approved without questions.

Most gratifying during this period was the increased participation of national Bahá'í communities, through their National Spiritual Assemblies, United Nations representatives and committees, in fostering the ties of the Bahá'í world with the United Nations. They not only organized national and local Bahá'í-United Nations activities, but also represented the Bahá'í International Community at Conferences, and offered the growing experience of Bahá'í social and economic development projects as applications of Bahá'í teachings to the solution of specific world problems. In addition,

National Spiritual Assemblies in countries where United Nations conferences or meetings took place made a valuable contribution to successful Bahá'í participation, furnishing clear evidence that each Bahá'í community did, in fact, share in the consultative relationship of the Bahá'í International Community with ECOSOC and UNICEF.

The Bahá'í International Community worked closely, through its United Nations representative, with United Nations offices and officials at United Nations headquarters in New York, as well as in Geneva, Vienna, and Nairobi; and—through representatives from its member Bahá'í communities with United Nations field offices around the world.

In addition, under the direction and guidance of the Universal House of Justice, contacts were made on many occasions during this period with Missions to the United Nations and the United Nations Secretariat, to assist in the recognition of the Faith and the protection of Bahá'í communities. Here again, a growing understanding of the Bahá'í International Community, its non-partisan political nature, as well as its constructive contributions to the work of the United Nations resulting from its consultative status, made access to key United Nations officials easier when a clear presentation of the Bahá'í position was needed. This became especially important from 1981 on, since access to the United Nations human rights organs—the Commission on Human Rights and the Subcommission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities—became crucial in bringing the persecution of the Bahá'í community of Írán to the attention of the governments of the world, and curbing, to some extent, this flagrant case of religious discrimination.

It became clear during these years that, as government delegates and United Nations personnel increasingly witnessed the Bahá'í presence, through extensive Bahá'í representation and a variety of written and oral statements—many of the written ones circulated as United Nations documents—they were becoming aware of a worldwide Bahá'í community committed to the spiritual and moral vision of the unity of mankind.

2. The United Nations Office of the Bahá'í International Community 1986–1992

Overview

For more than twenty years, the United Nations Office of the Bahá'í International Community has sought, through its consultative and working relations with the United Nations' specialized agencies, to support the work of the United Nations by sharing Bahá'í perspectives and experience. During the Six Year Plan, Bahá'í International Community representatives attended more than one hundred UN consultative sessions and international conferences. Many of the more than ninety statements and reports presented between 1986 and 1992 were based on the experience of Bahá'í communities in such areas as fostering popular participation in development, enhancing the role of women, eliminating racial prejudice, and preventing drug abuse—all areas of intense interest to governments.

The Bahá'í International Community actively participated in the activities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at the United Nations, primarily in Geneva, New York and Vienna, participating in numerous NGO conferences and consultations. It served as vice president (1986–1988) and as secretary (1988–1991) of the Board of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO) in Consultative Status

with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In Geneva, New York and Vienna, its representatives also served as officers on NGO committees on human rights, the family, women, human settlements, development, youth, the Department of Public Information, and the United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Bahá'ís around the world assisted the Bahá'í International Community to carry out its work. Volunteers in Nairobi, Rome and Vienna were appointed by the Bahá'í International Community to help strengthen ties with the UN Center for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). In addition, volunteers were appointed to represent the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations Regional Economic Commissions for Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; for Latin America in Santiago, Chile; and for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand. Organizing the work by sectors allowed the Bahá'í International Community United Nations Office to cover efficiently an immense range of overlapping issues. These sectors included advancement of women, education and social development, health, peace, human rights, and refugees.

Promoting the Advancement of Women

The Bahá'í International Community gave high priority to the advancement of women, participating fully in the work of the United Nations in this area, particularly the Commission on the Status of Women. The Bahá'í International Community was represented by both women and men at meetings called by the Commission, including global and regional conferences, seminars, and workshops, and worked closely with the community of NGOs at the United Nations in Geneva, New York, and Vienna.

During the Six Year Plan, the work in this area expanded and diversified, as seeds sown during the Decade of Women (1976–1985) began to bear fruit. The Bahá'í International Community strengthened its presence at the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Represented each year by an international delegation of women and men, the Bahá'í International Community presented more than fifteen statements, focusing on such topics as social and economic development, education, and the status of the girl child. Bahá'ís with professional expertise became more involved in the United Nations work related to women over these six years, representing the Bahá'í International Community at conferences, workshops, and symposia held at global and regional levels.

One direct result of Bahá'í International Community involvement with the Commission was a project financed by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) entitled Traditional Media as Change Agent. A Bahá'í International Community statement to the Commission in 1988 suggested that permanent change in the status of women requires the support of the whole community. The Director of UNIFEM suggested that Bahá'ís develop a project for funding by UNIFEM to foster that community support. In cooperation over the next three years with the Bahá'í Office of Social and Economic Development, selected National Spiritual Assemblies, Bahá'í consultants, and UNIFEM, the Bahá'í International Community developed a project using traditional media, such as music and dance, to stimulate village-wide discussions about women's roles. The two-year project, which began to be implemented in Bolivia, Cameroon, and Malaysia, engaged entire communities in improving the status of women. Bahá'í communities in Brazil and Nigeria also joined the project. The joint Bahá'í International Community/UNIFEM project marked a new level of cooperation between the Bahá'í International Community and the United Nations' agencies.

The Bahá'í International Community Office of Public Information and the United

Nations Office jointly sponsored a prestigious luncheon in Washington, D.C., in 1988 for the Executive Board of the International Council of Women (ICW). The event, held to commemorate the centennial of the ICW, honoured Madame Laura Dreyfus Barney, known to Bahá'ís as the compiler of *Some Answered Questions*, and a distinguished member of the ICW. A reception to commemorate the life of Madame Barney was also held in New York, co-sponsored by the Bahá'í International Community and UNICEF.

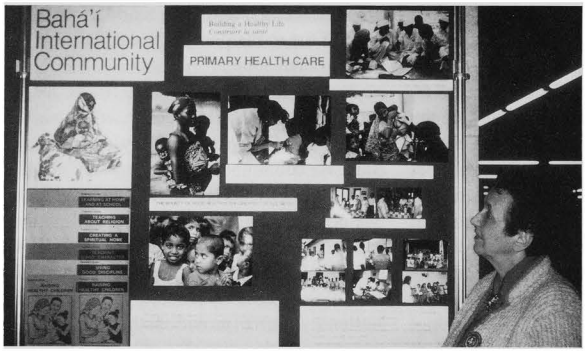
Awakening policy-makers to the important role of women in achieving food security for Africa was also a major Bahá'í International Community focus. In 1988, the Bahá'í International Community began serving as convenor of Advocates for African Food Security: Lessening the Burden of Women, a unique coalition of international and national NGOs, United Nations agencies, and intergovernmental organizations. Convinced that women are the key to food security in Africa, where eighty to ninety percent of the food for domestic consumption is produced by women, the Advocates strove to raise the awareness of policy-makers to this fact, and the importance of involving women in all levels of decision-making to end the food crisis. Annual symposia at the United Nations in New York were held; wide circulation was given to a survey on the status of food security in Africa, conducted by the Advocates in 1990 and compiled by a Bahá'í consultant; brochures and symposium reports were distributed, as well as a video entitled *A Day in the Life of an African Woman Farmer*. In April 1992, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Africa participated in the first Advocates symposium held in Africa.

Gradually, the idea that the advancement of women is a prerequisite for peace and development became more widely accepted. The Bahá'í International Community, with its sustained involvement in this area and its uncommon emphasis on partnership between women and men, stood in the forefront of the movement toward equality in the international sphere.

Education and Social Sector

Education, always a primary concern for Bahá'ís, continued to be a priority for the Bahá'í International Community United Nations Office. Preparation for and participation in International Literacy Year (1990) and the World Conference on Education for All (1990), both sponsored by the United Nations system, provided the focus for a variety of educational activities. The UN Office promoted the International Literacy Year by providing National Spiritual Assemblies with information about the year, by serving on the International Task Force on Literacy, and by attending five international meetings in Europe, Asia, and Africa. The Bahá'í International Community also promoted "The Book Voyage", a global project which collected the writings of newly literate men and women and compiled them into a ceremonial book. A special edition of this book was presented to the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, by a Bahá'í International Community representative and a literacy learner from Kenya at UN Headquarters during a ceremony coordinated by the Bahá'í International Community.

The Bahá'í contribution to the 1990 World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, and sponsored by UNICEF, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the World Bank, was notable. The Bahá'í International Community published and distributed *Survey of Bahá'í Education Programmes* and contributed four papers to the round-table discussions. In addition, the Bahá'í International Community representative was asked to represent NGOs on the steering group for the conference. The New York Bahá'í International Community United Nations Office was



The Bahá'í International Community was represented at the World Health Assembly, held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 2 to 14 May 1988. Shown at right, Dr. Ethel Martens.

instrumental in developing an Education For All Network. For the last two years of the Plan, this network encouraged NGOs to contribute to the achievement of the ambitious education goals adopted at the conference. The Bahá'í International Community representative attended regional meetings on education sponsored by the Network in Bangladesh and Chile.

Increased international attention to education issues and the visible contribution of the Bahá'í International Community strengthened its relations with UNICEF and made it better known to UNESCO. As a consultative NGO since 1976, the Bahá'í International Community addressed the 1991 meeting of the UNICEF Executive Board, supporting its emphasis on educating girls. The Bahá'í International Community also assisted with three major UNICEF conferences: one in Zimbabwe on Child Development in Africa and two in New York on Education of the Girl Child. Through these and other activities, local Bahá'í programs in education and the Bahá'í commitment to universal education became better known throughout the world.

The Bahá'í International Community's dedication to children was not limited to education. As participants in both United Nations and NGO human rights working groups, Bahá'í International Community representatives helped draft the Convention on the Rights of the Child, contributing notably to the text of Article 17. In addition, the World Summit on Children, held for Heads of State at United Nations headquarters in 1991, was attended by a Bahá'í International Community observer.

Health

In support of the World Health Organization's (WHO) goal of Health for All by the Year 2000 through Primary Health Care, Bahá'í communities around the world initiated health projects, most emphasizing education for health. This increased activity encouraged the Bahá'í International Community United Nations Office to intensify its own involvement with health issues.

In Geneva, WHO headquarters, the Bahá'í International Community became an active member of the NGO Primary Health Care Group in 1986. Bahá'í International Community representatives attended the annual sessions of both the WHO Executive Board and the World Health Assembly, and participated actively in Assembly Technical Discussions. The same year, the Bahá'í International Community established working relations with WHO and subsequently continued to strengthen cooperation with the organization. Primary health care activities at the grass roots level, many in cooperation with WHO, included the involvement of Bahá'í communities in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, India, Laos, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Zaire, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The Bahá'í International Community supported education for health by distributing sample copies of *Facts for Life*, a publication sponsored by UNICEF, WHO, and UNESCO, to forty-one National Assemblies and providing over five thousand copies in four languages free of charge to thirty national Bahá'í communities. The Bahá'í International Community also supported the development by Bahá'ís of a model community health workers' training program, based on the elements of primary health care, and adaptable to the needs of each community.

Peace

The International Year of Peace (1986), proclaimed by the United Nations, was well underway when the Six Year Plan began, and the Universal House of Justice had already addressed *The Promise of World Peace* to the peoples of the world. The process of distributing that message to Heads of State, UN ambassadors, and officials, however, was just beginning. As a result of concerted efforts by the Bahá'í International Community and national Bahá'í communities around the world, by January 1989 *The Promise of World Peace* had been translated into seventy-six languages and distributed to more than two hundred Heads of State, many through their Ambassadors at the United Nations, and to over two million individuals. A wide range of peace activities, centered around this message of hope, led the United Nations Secretary-General to designate the Bahá'í International Community and five of its affiliates—the National Assemblies of Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Kenya, and Lesotho—as "Peace Messengers," an honor bestowed on only three hundred organizations in the world.

The Bahá'í International Community supported the many activities of the International Year of Peace Secretariat (later the Peace Studies Unit) and the UN Department of Disarmament Affairs. In addition, Bahá'í International Community representatives participated in major United Nations meetings on peace and disarmament, including the United Nations Conference for Promotion of International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, the UN Conferences on Disarmament and Development, and the Third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament.

Protection and Promotion of Human Rights

Beginning in 1980, the Bahá'í International Community vigorously sought protection through the United Nations human rights system for the beleaguered Bahá'í community in Írán. It also actively promoted the human rights of all people.

The United Nations first intervened on behalf of the Bahá'í community in Írán in 1955. When persecutions began again in 1979, the Bahá'í community in Írán, having no recourse at the national level, once again appealed for protection to the United Nations human rights system. The 1980 Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, in response to a Bahá'í International Community request, issued the first of several resolutions asking the Iranian authorities to respect the rights of Bahá'ís. Subsequently, concern for the welfare of the Bahá'í community in Írán was expressed repeatedly in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and in the General Assembly.

At first, the resolutions by the Commission and Sub-Commission, the expressions of concern by the General Assembly, and the public outrage, particularly over the executions, seemed to have little effect. In 1986, however, the Commission on Human Rights appointed Reynaldo Galindo Pohl Special Representative of the Commission and called on the Iranian government to cooperate by inviting him to visit Írán. For two years the Iranian government refused, but in 1988 it agreed to accept Mr. Galindo Pohl's visit and to cooperate with his investigations.



A representative of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Brazil receiving the United Nations' "Peace Messengers" award from Merida Morales O'Donnel, chief of the UN High Commission for Refugees, in Brazil on 15 September 1987.

A year prior to Mr. Galindo Pohl's visit, the government began systematically to release Bahá'ís from the prisons and jails. Bahá'í children were re-admitted to elementary and secondary schools, and executions came to a halt in 1988. Although the worst abuses were coming to an end, discrimination continued and the Bahá'í Faith remained a proscribed religion.

Unable to meet with Mr. Galindo Pohl on his first visit to Írán, Bahá'ís succeeded in meeting with him on Iranian soil in 1990. He subsequently made two more visits to Írán, and his reports, verifying and deploring the discrimination against Bahá'ís, became progressively more critical.

Besides sensitizing the United Nations system, government missions in Geneva, and NGOs, the Bahá'í International Community United Nations Office worked closely with National Spiritual Assemblies, providing periodic updates, and requesting their assistance. By bringing to the attention of their governments the plight of the Bahá'ís in Írán, National Assemblies played a critical role in mobilizing the international community and strengthened relations with their governments. In consultation with the Bahá'í World Centre, the Bahá'í International Community office in Geneva also selected and translated relevant documents for submission to those in the UN system monitoring discrimination.

Violations of the rights of Bahá'ís in other countries were also reported to the UN human rights system. In addition, the Bahá'í International Community devoted considerable attention to promoting the human rights of children and minorities, supporting human rights education, cooperating with other NGOs and participating in the preparatory process for the World Conference on Human Rights to be held in 1993. The Bahá'í International Community presented approximately forty oral and written statements to the Commission and to the Sub-Commission on such issues as the need for religious tolerance and respect for the rights of minorities and the disabled, the right to development, the need to eliminate torture and racism, the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights, and the need for a more just international economic order. The Bahá'í International Community contributed to a UN study on minorities and to the draft declaration on the rights of minorities.

The Bahá'í International Community's participation in the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child was, perhaps, its most significant contribution. Bahá'í International Community representatives proposed much of the wording for what became Article 17 of the Convention ensuring the access of children to appropriate information. Article 17 addresses the role of the media in disseminating to children

information that promotes social, spiritual, and moral well-being and physical and mental health. The Bahá'í International Community attended the two meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights, contributing statements to both meetings.

Refugee Office

In 1990, the Bahá'í International Refugee Office, which had been established in Canada by the Universal House of Justice in 1986, was transferred to Geneva. This transfer facilitated closer interaction with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva and with other organizations concerned with refugee matters. During the last year of the Six Year Plan, the number of refugees leaving Írán decreased substantially. The Refugee Office continued to monitor the resettlement of refugees and to assist the National Assembly of Pakistan, the UNHCR and other relevant agencies in Pakistan, where most of the refugees had initially arrived, in processing Bahá'í refugee cases.

ANNEX I

Special United Nations Conferences, Congresses and Seminars in which the Bahá'í International Community Participated 1986–1992

1. United Nations Seminar on International Assistance and Support to Peoples and Movements Struggling Against Colonialism, Racism, Racial Discrimination and Apartheid; Yaounde, Cameroon; 28 April–9 May April 1986. Rep: Mr. E.O. Asare.
2. United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa; New York, U.S.A; 27–31 May 1986. Reps: Mrs. Mary Sawicki Power, Mr. Victor de Araujo.
3. United Nations Conference for Promotion of International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy (UNCPICPUNE); Geneva, Switzerland; 23 March–10 April 1987. Reps: Mr. Giovanni Ballerio, Mrs. Machid Fatio, Mr. Gerald Knight.
4. United Nations International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (ICDAIT); Vienna, Austria; 17–26 June 1987. Reps: Mr. Giovanni Ballerio, Mr. Khashayar Forghani, Mrs. Neda Forghani, Dr. 'Abdu'l Missagh Ghadirian, Mrs. Helene Hölzl, Mrs. Naghmih Mavaddat, Dr. Roland Philipp.
5. International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development; New York, U.S.A.; 24 August–11 September 1987. Reps: Mr. Victor de Araujo, Mr. Paul Öjermark.
6. Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes; Vienna, Austria; 7–15 September 1987. Reps: Mr. Giovanni Ballerio, Mr. Paul Öjermark, Mrs. Neda Forghani, Mrs. Helene Hölzl.
7. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Informal Consultation on the Drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; Geneva, Switzerland; 20–22 January 1988. Rep: Mrs. Machid Fatio.
8. World Health Assembly (WHA) Technical Discussions on "Leadership Development for Health for All"; Geneva, Switzerland; 7–9 May 1988. Reps: Mr. Giovanni Ballerio, Dr. Ethel Martens.
9. African Seminar on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Lomé, Togo; 5–7 April 1988. Rep: Dr. Akouété Akakpo-Vidah.
10. Third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament; New York, U.S.A.; 8–16 May 1988. Reps: Mr. Robert White, Mr. Victor de Araujo.
11. European Workshop on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Past, Present and Future; Milan, Italy; 7–9 September 1988. Rep: Mr. Morten Bergsmo.
12. Fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); Guatemala City, Guatemala; 27–30 September 1988. Rep: Mrs. Helen Mirkovitch de Sanchez.
13. United Nations Global Consultation on Racial Discrimination; Geneva, Switzerland; 3–7 October 1988. Rep: Mr. Wytze Bos.
14. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Informal Consultation on the Drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; Geneva, Switzerland; November 1988. Reps: Mr. Wytze Bos.
15. UN Seminar on the Teaching of Human Rights; Geneva; 5–9 December 1988. Rep: Mr. Wytze Bos.

16. United Nations Commemoration of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland; 12 December 1988. Reps: Mr. Wytze Bos, Mrs. Machid Fatio.
17. United Nations Commemoration of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights sponsored by UNESCO; Paris, France; 8–10 December 1988. Reps: Mr. Wytze Bos, Mrs. Christine Samandari-Hakim.
18. International Bureau of Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO-IBE) International Conference on Education, 41st Session; Geneva, Switzerland; 9–17 January 1989. Rep: Mr. Giovanni Ballerio.
19. United Nations Seminar on the Effects of Racism and Racial Discrimination on the Social and Economic Relations between Indigenous Peoples and States; Geneva, Switzerland; 16–20 January 1989. Reps: Mr. Wytze Bos, Mrs. Machid Fatio.
20. World Health Assembly (WHA) Technical Discussions on "Health of Youth"; Geneva, Switzerland; 11–13 May 1989. Reps: Mr. Giovanni Ballerio, Dr. Ethel Martens.
21. International Conference on the Protection and Promotion of Child Rights; Beijing, China; 20–23 November 1989. Rep: Mrs. Nahid Mohajeri Eng.
22. Fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development and on the Implementation of the Arusha Strategies for the Advance of Women in Africa (ECA); Abuja, Nigeria; 6–10 November 1989. Rep: Mrs. Alasebu Gebre Selassie.
23. World Health Organization Consultation with International Women's NGOs on AIDS Prevention, Control and Care; Geneva, Switzerland; 21–22 December 1989. Reps: Mr. Giovanni Ballerio, Dr. Denise Belisle
24. UN General Assembly Special Session on Drug Abuse; New York City, U.S.A.; 20–23 February 1990. Rep: Dr. A.M. Ghadirian.
25. World Conference on Education for All by the Year 2000, sponsored by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Bank; Jomtien, Thailand, 5–9 March 1990. Rep: Mr. Daniel Wegener.
26. Global Consultation on the Realization of the Right to Development as a Human Right; Geneva, 8–12 January 1990. Rep: Mrs. Machid Fatio.
27. Regional preparatory meeting for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED); Bergen, Norway; 8–16 May 1990. Rep: Mr. Robert White.
28. United Nations Asian/Pacific Workshop on International Human Rights Issues; Manila, Philippines; 7–11 May 1990. Rep: Dr. Martha Taylor.
29. First Preparatory Committee (Prepcom) session for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED); Nairobi, Kenya; 6–31 August 1990. Reps: Mrs. Joy M'boya, Mrs. Rose Akech, Mr. Greg Duly.
30. International Bureau of Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO-IBE) International Conference on Education, 42nd Session, Geneva, Switzerland; 3–8 September 1990. Reps: Mr. Giovanni Ballerio, Mr. Daniel Wegener.
31. Second United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in the Least Developed Countries (UNCTAD); Paris, France; 3–14 September 1990. Reps: Mrs. Liesbeth Bos de Jong, Mr. Wytze Bos.
32. UN World Summit on Children; New York, U.S.A.; 30 September 1990. Rep: Dr. Wilma Ellis.
33. Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)/Non-governmental organization (NGO) Media Symposium on Communication for Environment; Bangkok, Thailand; 6–10 October 1990. Reps: Mrs. Samireh Smith, Mr. Husayn Anwar.
34. Second Ministerial session of the World Climate Conference sponsored by World Meteorological Organization (WMO), United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU); Geneva, Switzerland; 6–7 November 1990. Rep: Mr. Lawrence Arturo.
35. UN International Seminar on Political, Historical, Economic, Social and Cultural Factors Contributing to Racism, Racial Discrimination and Apartheid; Geneva, Switzerland; 10–14 December 1990. Reps: Mr. Wytze Bos, Mrs. Machid Fatio.
36. First session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change; Washington, D.C.; 4–14 February 1991. Reps: Mrs. Mona Grieser, Mr. Richard Grieser.
37. The Latin American and Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED); Mexico City, Mexico; 4–7 March 1991. Rep: Mr. Lawrence Arturo.
38. Second Preparatory Committee (Prepcom) session for the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED); Geneva, Switzerland; 18 March–5 April 1991. Rep: Mrs. Han-Ju Kim-Farley.
39. United Nations Consultation on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; Geneva, Switzerland; 8 May 1991. Rep: Mr. Giovanni Ballerio.
40. United Nations Meeting of Peace Messenger Organizations; Dagomys, U.S.S.R., 10–14 June 1991. Rep: Mrs. Machid Fatio.
41. Third Preparatory Committee (Prepcom) session for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED); Geneva, Switzerland;

12 August–4 September 1991. Reps: Mrs. Rebequa Getahoun Murphy, Mrs. Han-Ju Kim-Farley.

42. First Preparatory Committee session for the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland; 9–16 September 1991. Reps: Mr. Wytze Bos, Mrs. Machid Fatio.
43. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization Sub-Regional Meeting on Literacy in Francophone Africa; Porto Novo, Benin; October 1991. Reps: Mr. Daniel Wegener, Mrs. Parvin Djoneidi.
44. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) South Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Welfare and Social Development; Manila, Philippines; 7–11 October 1991. Reps: Mr. Husayn Anwar, Mrs. Tinai Hancock.
45. United Nations Regional Symposium on Co-operation between the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) for Rural Poverty Alleviation; Bangkok, Thailand; 16–19 December 1991. Reps: Mrs. Tinai Hancock.
46. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization International Consultative Forum on Education for All by the Year 2000; Paris, France; December 1991. Rep: Mr. Daniel Wegener.
47. World Health Organization International Forum on "Health: a Conditionality for Economic Development, Breaking the Cycle of Poverty and Inequity"; Accra, Ghana; 4–6 December 1991. Rep: Mrs. Beatrice Asare.
48. Regional Consultation on Education for All for South Asia; Dhaka, Bangladesh; 24–26 February 1992. Rep: Mr. Daniel Wegener.
49. Fourth Preparatory Committee (Prepcom) session for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED); New York, U.S.A.; 2 March–3 April 1992. Reps: Mr. Lawrence Arturo, Mrs. Han-Ju Kim-Farley.
50. Second Preparatory Committee session for the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland; 30 March–10 April 1992. Reps: Mr. Wytze Bos, Mrs. Machid Fatio.
51. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Regional Seminar on Strategies to Satisfy Basic Learning Needs; Santiago, Chile; 20–22 April 1992. Reps: Mr. Daniel Wegener, Mrs. Helen Mirkovitch de Sanchez.

ANNEX II

Statements, Reports and other Publications Presented by the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations Riḍván 1986–Riḍván 1992

1. Statement to the 42nd Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP); Bangkok, Thailand, 22 April–2 May 1986.
2. Statement to the Ninth Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements; Istanbul, Turkey, 5–6 May 1986.
3. "Food Security: The African Woman Farmer," a statement by Seminar Resource Person Paul Öjermark of the Bahá'í International Community at a symposium sponsored by the Advocates for African Food Security at UN Headquarters, New York, U.S.A., 15 May 1986.
4. "Help African Women"; a statement presented jointly by the members of the Advocates for African Food Security to the UN General Assembly Special Session on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa; New York, U.S.A., 27–31 May 1986.
5. "Conflict-Free Conflict Resolution: Concepts and Methods" a paper by Hossain Danesh presented by the Bahá'í International Community to the World Congress Devoted to the International Year of Peace sponsored by the World Association of World Federalists; Copenhagen, Denmark, October 1986.
6. A Report to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on Bahá'í International Community activities in support of International Youth Year, submitted 3 June 1986.
7. Report to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on Bahá'í International Community consultative activities during the period January 1982/December 1985; submitted 20 June 1986.
8. "Education for Peace and Unity"; a statement submitted to the International Symposium "Education for International Understanding and Peace"; Barcelona, Spain, 7–12 July 1986.
9. "Persecution of the Bahá'ís in Írán 1979–1986. A 7-Year Campaign to Eliminate a Religious Minority," Second Edition. A booklet published by the Bahá'í International Community United Nations Office.
10. Statement to the General Congress of the International Catholic Child Bureau; Rome, Italy, 1–3 December 1986.
11. "Prevention of Drug Abuse: A Bahá'í Perspective", a paper by A.M. Ghadirian, M.D., presented at the Interregional Conference on the Involvement of NGOs in Prevention and Reduction of the Demand for Drugs; Stockholm, Sweden, 15–19 December 1986.

12. "The Family: A Bahá'í Perspective," a statement to the consultation "The Family as the First Community," sponsored by the New York Non-Governmental Organization Working Group on the Family; New York, U.S.A., 7 January 1987.
13. Statement submitted jointly by several non-governmental organizations to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women on the consultative role of NGOs in the implementation of the Commission's future work and in the Commission's efforts to integrate the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies into the Medium-Term Plan and into development programs; Vienna, Austria, 15 January 1987.
14. Oral statement to the 30th session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development on trends and strategies for social integration through popular participation and policies for the advancement of specific social groups; Vienna, Austria, 23 February–4 March 1987.
15. Oral statement to the 43rd session of the UN Commission on Human Rights on the human rights situation of the Bahá'ís in Írán; Geneva, Switzerland, 21 January 1987.
16. Oral statement to the 43rd session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on the status of the international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights. Geneva, Switzerland, January/March 1987.
17. Oral statement to the 43rd session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on the Question of the Violation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in any Part of the World; Geneva, Switzerland, January/March 1987.
18. Written statement to the 43rd session of the Commission on Human Rights on the Question of the Violation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in any Part of the World, with Particular Reference to Colonial and Other Dependent Countries and Territories, circulated as UN document E/CN.4/1987/23; Geneva, Switzerland, 28 January 1987.
19. Oral statement to the 43rd session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination; Geneva, January/March 1987.
20. Statement to the 43rd session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief; Geneva, January/March 1987.
21. Oral statement to the 43rd session of the UN Commission on Human Rights on the Question of the realization in all countries of the rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Geneva, January/March 1987.
22. Oral statement to the 43rd session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; Geneva, January/March 1987.
23. Oral statement to the 43rd session of the Commission on Human Rights on the role of youth in the promotion and protection of human rights; Geneva, January/March 1987.
24. Oral statement to the 43rd session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in rebuttal of the charges made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Írán in his statement to the Commission on 5 March 1987; and in his reply on 9 and 10 March 1987. Geneva, March 1987.
25. Oral statement to the United Nations Conference for the Promotion of International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy (UNCPICPUNE); Geneva, Switzerland, 23 March–10 April 1987.
26. Oral statement to the Tenth Session of the UN Commission on Human Settlements; Nairobi, Kenya, 6–16 April 1987.
27. Written statement to the 27th session of the United Nations Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on Recurrent Publications of the United Nations, circulated as UN document E/AC.51/1987/12; 28 April–23 May 1987.
28. Oral statement to the United Nations International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking; Vienna, Austria, 17–26 June 1987.
29. Statement on the Rights of Indigenous Populations presented to the 5th session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities; Geneva, Switzerland, 30 July 1987.
30. Written statement to the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, circulated as UN document A/Conf.130/NGO/34; New York City, U.S.A., 24 August–11 September 1987.
31. Written statement to the United Nations Interregional Consultation on Development Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, circulated as UN document E/CONF.80/NGO.7; Vienna, Austria, 7–15 September 1987.
32. Oral statement to the UN Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes; Vienna, Austria, 10 September 1987.
33. The Bahá'í Statement on Nature, presented to HRH the Duke of Edinburgh when the Bahá'í Faith became the sixth major religion to join the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Network on Conservation and Religion on 5 October 1988.
34. Oral statement on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Írán presented to the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly at its 42nd session during consideration of the Report of the Economic and Social Council; New York City, U.S.A., 12 October 1987.

35. Written statement to the 10th special session of the United Nations Economic and Social Council Commission on Narcotic Drugs, circulated as UN document E/CN.7/1988/NGO.1; Vienna, Austria, 8–19 February 1988.
36. Oral statement on the implementation of the programme of action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination presented to the 44th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, 10 February 1988.
37. Oral statement on the right to development presented to the 44th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, 16 February 1988.
38. Oral statement on the elimination of religious discrimination presented to the 44th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, 17 February 1988.
39. Oral statement on the elimination of torture presented to the 44th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, 19 February 1988.
40. Oral statement on the human rights situation of the Bahá'ís in Írán, presented to the 44th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, 1 March 1988.
41. Written statement on equality presented to the 32nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, circulated as UN document E/CN.6/1988/NGO/1; Vienna, Austria, 14–23 March 1988.
42. Written statement on the problems of rural women, including food, water resources, agricultural technology, rural employment, transportation and environment, circulated as UN document E/CN.6/1988/NGO/13 at the UN Commission on the Status of Women; Austria, 14–23 March 1988.
43. Oral statement to the 44th session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP); Jakarta, Indonesia, 11–20 April 1988.
44. Comments and views on a UN-commissioned study on the Achievements made and Obstacles Encountered during the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, submitted to the UN Centre for Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, 23 June 1988.
45. Oral statement on the evolution of standards concerning the rights of indigenous populations, presented to the 6th session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the 40th session of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities; Geneva, Switzerland, 1–5 August 1988.
46. Oral statement on measures to combat racism and racial discrimination and the role of the Sub-Commission to the 40th session of the UN Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities; Geneva, Switzerland, August 1988.
47. Written statement on measures to combat racism and racial discrimination and the role of the Sub-Commission circulated as UN document E/CN.4/Sub.2/1988/NGO/5 at the 40th session of the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities; Geneva, Switzerland, 8 August 1988.
48. Oral statement on the human rights situation of the Bahá'ís in Írán presented to the 40th session of the United Nations Sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities; Geneva, Switzerland, August 1988.
49. Oral statement on human rights and disability presented to the 40th session of the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities; Geneva, Switzerland, August 1988.
50. Written statement on human rights and disability, circulated as UN document E/CN.4/Sub.2/1988/NGO/4 at the 40th session of the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities; Geneva, Switzerland, August 1988.
51. Oral statement to the Fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean; Guatemala City, Guatemala, 27–30 September 1988.
52. "Spiritual Foundations for an Ecologically Sustainable Society," an essay by Robert White, originally published in *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies* (vol. 2, no. 1), issued as a monograph by the Office for the Environment as a contribution to the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.
53. *ONE COUNTRY*, Winter 1989, Vol. 1, Issue 1, the newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community. Headline: "New Conservation Project Reaches out to Artistic World," distributed to ambassadors, diplomats and other leaders of thought.
54. Oral statement on implementation of the Programme of Action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination presented to the 45th UN Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, 8 February 1989.
55. Oral statement on the problems which the developing countries face in their efforts to achieve economic, social and cultural rights, presented to the 45th United Nations Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, 9 February 1989.
56. Oral statement on a World Campaign for Human Rights presented to the 45th United Nations Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, 15 February 1989.
57. Oral statement on the human rights situation of the Bahá'ís in Írán presented to the 45th Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, 1 March 1989.
58. Oral statement on implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance

and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, presented to the 45th Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, 1 March 1989.

59. Oral statement on a Bahá'í development project for women in India, presented to the 33rd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women; Vienna, Austria, 29 March–7 April 1989.
60. *ONE COUNTRY* Spring 1989, Vol. 1, Issue 2, newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community. "Decade-long Effort to Promote Literacy Launched."
61. Report to the United Nations Division on the Advancement of Women, on Bahá'í International Community Implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies; June 1989.
62. Oral statement on Bahá'í International Community Training Activities for Women in the Pacific, presented to the South Pacific Commission Interagency Meeting; Suva, Fiji, 31 July–4 August 1989.
63. *ONE COUNTRY*, June–August 1989, Vol. 1, Issue 3, newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community. Headline: "Simple methods, simple training are keys to primary health care in villages."
64. Oral statement on the evolution of standards concerning the rights of indigenous populations, presented to the 7th session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities; Geneva, 3 August 1989.
65. Oral statement on the human rights situation of the Bahá'ís in Írán, presented to the 41st session of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities; Geneva, 16 August 1989.
66. Oral statement on measures to combat racism and racial discrimination presented to the 41st session of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities; Geneva, 21 August 1989.
67. Oral statement on the individual and contemporary International Law, presented in French to the 41st session of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities; Geneva, 30 August 1989.
68. *ONE COUNTRY*, October–December 1989, Vol. 1, Issue 4, newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community. Headline: "Anis Zunuzi School in Haiti emphasizes moral training and cooperation skills."
69. Oral statement on the implementation of the Arusha Strategies for the Advancement of Women in Africa beyond the end of the United Nations Decade for Women, presented to the 4th Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development and on the Implementation of the Arusha Strategies for the Advance of Women in Africa, organized by the Economic Commission for Africa; Abuja, Nigeria, 6–10 November 1989.
70. "Survey of Bahá'í Education Programmes," January 1990, booklet published by the Bahá'í International Community for distribution at the World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien, Thailand, 5–9 March 1990.
71. *ONE COUNTRY*, January–March 1990, Vol. 2, Issue 1, newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community. Headline: "A Visit to the Soviet Union, carrying a message of peace, evokes a warm response."
72. Written statement on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief, circulated as UN document E/CN.4/1990/NGO/5 at the 46th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, 25 January 1990.
73. Written statement on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, circulated as UN document E/CN.4/1990/NGO/7 at the 46th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, 25 January 1990.
74. Written statement on the Report of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities at its 41st session, circulated as UN document E/CN.4/1990/NGO/6 at the 46th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, 26 January 1990.
75. Oral statement on the right to development, presented to the 46th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, 9 February 1990.
76. Oral statement on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief, presented to the 46th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, 12 February 1990.
77. Oral statement on the situation of the Bahá'ís in Írán to the 46th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, February 1990.
78. Statement submitted by the Advocates for African Food Security and signed by several non-governmental organizations to the 34th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, on the negative effects of the international economic situation on the improvement of the status of women; Vienna, Austria, 26 February–9 March 1990.
79. Oral statement to the 34th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, on equality in political participation and decision-making; Vienna, Austria, 26 February–9 March 1990.
80. Statement on NGOs and Literacy: Meeting Basic Learning Needs—The Experience of Bahá'í Communities, presented to a round-table discussion at the World Conference on Education for All; Jomtien, Thailand, 5–9 March 1990.
81. Statement on The Teacher's Situation: The Determining Factor of a Quality Education for All, presented to a round-table discussion at the World

Conference on Education for All; Jomtien, Thailand, 5–9 March 1990.

82. Statement on The Education of Girls: Constraints and Policy Measures, presented to a round-table discussion at the World Conference on Education for All; Jomtien, Thailand, 5–9 March 1990.
83. Statement on New Delivery Systems for Basic Education, presented to a round-table discussion at the World Conference on Education for all; Jomtien, Thailand, 5–9 March 1990.
84. *ONE COUNTRY*, April–June 1990, Vol. 2, Issue 2, the newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community. Headline: "Among the Daga people in Papua New Guinea a newfound sense of cooperation emerges."
85. Pamphlet describing the work of the Bahá'í International Community Office of the Environment.
86. Quadrennial Report to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the period January 1986 through December 1989, describing the work of the Bahá'í International Community as a non-governmental organization in consultative status. Appendix I lists United Nations meetings attended; Appendix II lists statements presented to United Nations bodies.
87. "Women 2000 Report" submitted in response to a questionnaire from the UN Division for the Advancement of Women in Vienna, Austria, for publication in the magazine, Women 2000. Also used in the preparation of a background document on Machinery for the Integration of Women in Development for the 1991 session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.
88. *ONE COUNTRY*, July–September 1990, Vol. 2, Issue 3, the newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community. Headline: "Nur University: An educational Upstart Exceeds Expectations in Bolivia."
89. Oral statement to the 8th session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, addressing the evolution of standards concerning the rights of indigenous populations. Geneva, 23 July–3 August 1990.
90. Oral statement to the 8th session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous populations.
91. Statement by the Bahá'í International Community to the Baltic Sea Rally on Minorities and Human Rights, Bornholm 27 July 1990.
92. Statement on the importance of involving non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the process of preparing for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), presented to the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee for UNCED; Nairobi, Kenya, 6–31 August 1990.
93. Oral statement on Protection of Minorities, presented to the 42nd session of the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities; Geneva, 15 August 1990.
94. Oral statement to the 42nd session of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on the human rights situation of the Bahá'ís in Írán; Geneva, August 1990.
95. Oral statement to the 42nd session of the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on measures to combat racism and racial discrimination and the role of the Sub-Commission; Geneva, August 1990.
96. "The Common Goal of Universal Peace in Buddhism and the Bahá'í Faith," a paper delivered to the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace; Ulaan Baatar, Mongolia, 16–25 September 1990.
97. *ONE COUNTRY*, October–December 1990, vol. 2, issue 4, the newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community. Headline: "Vocational training for rural women in India brings unexpected dividends."
98. Statement on the Proposed World Conservation Strategy for the 1990's, delivered to the General Assembly of the World Conservation Union (IUCN); Perth, Australia, 26 November 1990.
99. "Bahá'í Faith," an essay published in *The New Road*, Issue No. 16, Oct–Dec 90, published by the World Wide Fund for Nature. This essay was submitted in response to "editorial requests to scholars within all major faiths for their stand on the population issue."
100. *ONE COUNTRY*, January–March 1991, Vol. 3, Issue 1, the newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community. Headline: "Bolivian Environmental Research Center Focuses on Problems of the Altiplano."
101. "A Bahá'í perspective on drug abuse prevention" an article by A.M. Ghadirian in *Bulletin on Narcotics* Vol. XLIII, No. 1, 1991, published by the United Nations International Drug Control Program.
102. Report on Bahá'í International Community activities in support of International Literacy Year, 1990, presented to the International Task Force on Literacy, 4–8 February, 1991, Bonn, Germany.
103. "The Book Voyage," a project of the International Task Force on Literacy in support of International Literacy Year 1990, which culminated in ceremonies at the UN in New York on 10–11 December 1990. Report presented to the International Task Force on Literacy, Bonn, Germany; 4–8 February, 1991.
104. Statement on the International Year of the Family submitted jointly by several NGOs to the 32nd session of the Commission on Social Development; Vienna, 11–20 February 1991.
105. Written statement on the Rights of persons belong ing to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, circulated as UN document E/CN.4/1991/NGO/9 at the 47th Session of the UN

Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, February 1991.

106. Statement submitted jointly by several non-governmental organizations to the 47th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights on the status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; Geneva, February 1991.
107. Oral statement to the 47th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights on the human rights situation of the Bahá'ís in Írán; Geneva, February 1991.
108. Oral statement to the 47th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights on Implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief; Geneva, Switzerland, February 1991.
109. Statement submitted jointly by several NGOs to the 35th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, addressing the priority theme, Peace: Refugee and displaced women and children; Vienna, Austria, March 1991.
110. Statement submitted by the Advocates for African Food Security: lessening the burden for women on behalf of several NGOs to the 35th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women; Vienna, Austria, 27 February to 5 March.
111. Statement submitted jointly by several NGOs to the 2nd session of the Preparatory Committee (Prepcom) for the UN Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) on the interrelationship between population and environment and development and the essential role of women in these processes; Geneva, 18 March–5 April 1991.
112. Comments on the Questionnaire annexed to the Special Rapporteur's progress report on "Possible ways and means of facilitating the peaceful and constructive solutions of situations involving minorities"; Geneva, March 1991.
113. *ONE COUNTRY*, April–June 1991, Vol. 3 issue 2, Bahá'í International Community newsletter. Headline: "Earth Summit" in 1992 stimulates NGO activities worldwide."
114. "Elements for Inclusion in the Proposed "Earth Charter," suggestions offered to the 2nd Preparatory Committee of The UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED); Geneva, 5 April 1991.
115. Statement on the girl child, presented to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Board, under agenda item Women in development; New York, 22 April 1991.
116. "Culture and Development: A Survey of the Bahá'í Experience," a talk given at a seminar on the UN World Decade for Cultural Development, sponsored by the NGO Committee for Sustainable Development and UNESCO at UN Headquarters; New York City, May 29, 1991.
117. Oral statement presented jointly by the Bahá'í International Community and the NSAs of Brazil and Belgium to the Meeting of Peace Messenger Organizations; U.S.S.R., June 1991.
118. Proposal for the Improvement of the working methods of the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities with regard to the role of NGOs.
119. *ONE COUNTRY*, July–September 1991, Vol. 3, Issue 3, newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community. Headline: "New Survey of NGOs suggests root causes of African food problems."
120. Oral statement on the human rights situation of the Bahá'ís in Írán, presented to the 43rd session of the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities; August 1991.
121. "International Legislation for Environment and Development," a statement presented to the International Environmental Law Conference; The Hague, 12–16 August 1991. Also presented in a slightly modified form to Working Group III of the 3rd session of the Preparatory Committee for The UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED); Geneva, August 1991.
122. Oral intervention at the 1st session of the Preparatory Committee for the World conference on Human Rights; Geneva, 11 September 1991.
123. *ONE COUNTRY*, October–December 1991, Vol. 3, Issue 4, newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community. Headline: "On the Road to Rio: women's voices are raised in Miami."
124. "Women and Men: Partnership for a Healthy Planet," a statement presented to the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet; Miami, Florida, August 8–14, 1991.
125. Contribution to wording of the Report on Institutional Proposals by the Secretary General of the Conference, Paragraph 89, drafted 13 December 1991; presented to Working Group III of the 4th Preparatory Committee for UNCED; New York, 2 March–3 April 1992.
126. Report submitted to the UN Regional Symposium on Cooperation between the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for Rural Poverty Alleviation; Bangkok, Thailand, 16 December 1991.
127. *ONE COUNTRY*, October–December 1991, Vol. 4, Issue 1, newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community. Headline: "Before it begins the Earth Summit chalks up successes."
128. Statement on the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, submitted to the 48th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, February 1992.
129. Oral statement on the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities,

presented to the 48th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, February 1992.

130. Oral statement on Implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, presented under agenda item 22 to the 48th session of the Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, February 1992.
131. Oral statement on the human rights situation of the Bahá'ís in Írán, presented to the 48th session of the Commission on Human Rights; Geneva, Switzerland, 19 February 1992.
132. Written statement presented jointly by several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and circulated as UN document E/CN.6/1992/1. at the 36th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women on priority themes: Equality (Elimination of *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination against women) and Development (Integration of women in the process of development); Vienna, Austria, 20 February 1992.
133. Statement on partnership between women and men for sustainable development, submitted to the 36th session of the Commission on the Status of Women; Vienna, Austria, March 1992.
134. Oral statement about the effects of gender discrimination on girl children presented under the priority theme equality to the 36th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women; Vienna, Austria, 17 March 1992.
135. Oral statement urging the inclusion of the principle of the oneness of humanity in the preamble to the Earth Charter, presented to Working Group III of PrepCom 4 for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED); New York, 4 March 1992. Also circulated as a longer written statement.
136. *ONE COUNTRY,* Vol. 4 issue 2, April–June 1992, Bahá'í International Community. Headline: "The Legacy of Rio: A New Global Vision."
137. Statement on the human rights of women presented by the Bahá'í International Community on behalf of several non-governmental organizations to the 2nd session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights; Geneva, 6 April 1992.
138. Statement encouraging involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in regional meetings, submitted jointly by several NGOs to the 2nd session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights; Geneva, March 30–April 10, 1992.
139. Description of the Bahá'í International Community submitted for a Round Table on "Understanding the role of international non-governmental organizations: challenges and opportunities for the United Nations and Non-Governmental Organizations," hosted by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); New York, 9 April 1992.



The Bahá'í International Community was represented at the fourth Regional South Pacific Committee Conference of Pacific Women, held in Suva, Fiji, from 17–23 September 1988. On the left: Mrs. Mary Sawicki Power; on the right: Mrs. Tinai Hancock.

ANNEX III

Relationship of the Bahá'í International Community with the South Pacific Commission

(Conferences Attended)

1. The 5th meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) of the South Pacific Commission; Noumea, New Caledonia; 26–30 May 1986. Rep: Mrs. Tinai Hancock.
2. The 26th Conference of the South Pacific Commission; Papeete, French Polynesia; 3-5 November 1986. Rep: Mrs. Tinai Hancock.
3. The 7th meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) of the South Pacific Commission; Noumea, New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands; 18-22 May 1987. Reps: Mrs. Tinai Hancock, Mr. Timoci Serevi.
4. The 27th Conference of the South Pacific Commission; Noumea, New Caledonia; 10-14 October 1987. Rep: Mrs. Tinai Hancock.
5. The 4th Regional South Pacific Commission Conference of Pacific Women; Suva, Fiji; 17-23 September 1988. Reps: Mrs. Tinai Hancock, Ms. Mary Sawicki Power.
6. The 28th Conference of the South Pacific Commission; Rarotonga, Cook Islands; 10-12 October 1988. Rep: Mrs. Tinai Hancock, Ms. Mary Sawicki Power.
7. The 10th meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) of the South Pacific Commission; Noumea, New Caledonia; 22-26 May 1989. Rep: Mrs. Tinai Hancock.
8. South Pacific Commission Interagency Meeting; Suva, Fiji; 31 July-4 August 1989. Rep: Mrs. Tinai Hancock.
9. The 29th Conference of the South Pacific Commission; Agana, Guam; 9-11 October 1989. Rep: Mrs. Tinai Hancock.
10. The 30th Conference of the South Pacific Commission; Noumea, New Caledonia; 29-31 October 1990. Rep: Mrs. Tinai Hancock.
11. South Pacific Commission Interagency Meeting; Suva, Fiji; 18-20 February 1991. Rep: Mrs. Audrey Hancock-Aumua.
12. The 12th meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) of the South Pacific Commission (SPC); Noumea, New Caledonia; 27-31 May 1991. Rep: Mrs. Audrey Hancock-Aumua.
13. The 31st Conference of the South Pacific Commission; Tonga; 28-30 October 1991. Rep: Mrs. Tinai Hancock.

Statements Presented to the South Pacific Commission and at Conferences in the Region

1. Statement to the Fifth Session of the South Pacific Commission. Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA); Noumea, New Caledonia, 26–30 May 1986.
2. Statement to the 26th South Pacific Conference; Papeete, French Polynesia, 3–5 November 1986.
3. Statement on health, education and the role of women presented to the 9th Meeting of the South Pacific Commission's Committee of Representatives, Governments and Administrations (CARGA); Noumea, New Caledonia, 23–27 May 1988.
4. Statement submitted to the 28th South Pacific Conference (SPC); Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 10–12 October 1988.
5. Statement to the 10th Meeting of the South Pacific Commission's Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA); Noumea, New Caledonia, 22–26 May 1989.
6. Statement on Bahá'í International Community Training Activities for Women in the Pacific, presented to the South Pacific Commission Interagency Meeting; Suva, Fiji, 31 July–4 August 1989.
7. Statement to the 29th South Pacific Commission [SPC] Conference; Agana, Guam; 9–11 October 1989.
8. Statement on Health and Nutrition presented to the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) of the South Pacific Commission (SPC); Noumea, New Caledonia, 27–31 May 1991.

3. THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

THE Bahá'í International Community's Office of Public Information was one year old when the Six Year Plan opened at Riḍván 1986. Established for the purpose of promoting a favorable and accurate image of the Bahá'í Faith internationally, the Office disseminated information, produced resource materials, corrected inaccuracies and misperceptions, developed collaborative relationships with like minded groups, and provided assistance and advice to National Spiritual Assemblies and their information agencies.

Development of Branch Offices

The Office was created with its headquarters at the World Centre and a branch office in New York City. Late in 1988, a third office was established in Paris to give greater attention to supporting the work of the Bahá'í's United Nations Office in Geneva, and to take advantage of the opportunities offered by collaboration with European National Assemblies and francophone National Assemblies elsewhere. The following year, March 1989, a fourth office was opened in Hong Kong. Its mandate was directed principally to assisting the public information work of National Assemblies in countries with large Chinese-speaking populations.

During this period, a Public Information Officer was also appointed to coordinate activities in London. In due course, the Public Information Officers in Paris, Hong Kong, and London were each asked by their respective National Assemblies to serve also in a similar national capacity, thus ensuring maximum collaboration between the Faith's national and international interests. The three National Assemblies also made office and other facilities available.

Development of Supplemental Resource Materials

The task of creating resource materials to supplement those produced by National Assemblies was undertaken principally by the Haifa Office. Economies offered by the opportunity to design and produce materials centrally were especially attractive in the area of pamphlet literature. In 1987, a program entitled the Perspective Series was undertaken to make available to National Assemblies high quality literature on major subjects of public concern. Multi-language editions meant that such brochures could be sold at prices below what could be achieved if such items were produced by individual National Assemblies.

An agreement was made with the United Kingdom Publishing Trust to handle production, marketing, and distribution, with the Office of Public Information taking responsibility for the production of the copy, artwork, and design. The collaboration resulted in three separate titles being produced: *The Bahá'í Faith*, *Social and Economic Development*, and *Education: A Bahá'í Perspective.* By the end of the Plan, the series had appeared in twenty-one different language editions, and had sold nearly 800,000 copies.

The Office also promoted the production of audio-visual presentations. In 1988, it sponsored the production by a private firm of a documentary film on the Bahá'í Temple in India, *The Heart of the Lotus*. A few months later it produced a retrospective on the development of the Cause between 1983 and 1988, *The Fourth Epoch Opens*. In collaboration with the World Centre's Audio-Visual Department, it supplied materials and advice, and provided liaison assistance for a number of other productions. Just before the

conclusion of the Plan, the Office began working with two private Bahá'í-owned firms on the production of a film documentary on the Mission of Bahá'u'lláh.

Another major concern of the Office was the production of statements on subjects such as capital punishment and the role of women in the Bahá'í community for the assistance of national public information offices.

In December 1990, at the request of the Universal House of Justice, the Office of Public Information wrote and produced an introduction to Bahá'u'lláh's life and mission. This statement, entitled simply *Bahá'u'lláh,* was translated into a large number of languages.

Media Activities

During the Six Year Plan fourteen major press releases were issued to the international media by the New York office, which established the position of Information Officer in April 1987. This office also prepared a number of other press releases for use by national Bahá'í information offices around the world. Membership in the New York Foreign Press Association and the Religious Public Relations Council also strengthened relations with international news media.

Paris was also extremely active in this area, developing contacts with both print and television media that led to coverage of the Faith in such programs as the prime-time *Le Sphinx.* The Hong Kong office energetically pursued the development of relations with the media on the Chinese mainland. Programs covering educational and cultural exchanges were extremely well-received and proved very useful in highlighting the international image of the Faith.

Throughout the Six Year Plan, largely because of the energetic efforts of National Assemblies around the world, as well as the branch offices of the Office of Public Information, a growing number of media representatives began visiting the World Centre. Among the contacts that led to articles or programs were visits by the British Broadcasting Corporation's World Service, France's TF1 and FR3, Germany's ZDF, Bulgarian Television, World Television News, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and a number of newspapers and television stations in the United States.

The New York office undertook a campaign to secure maximum coverage of the award-winning New Delhi House of Worship prior to and during its dedication in December 1986. Information kits were prepared and distributed to architectural magazines throughout the world, resulting in several hundred articles, many of them with full color reproductions and design drawings, a number of them featuring the Temple on the magazine's cover.

For the 1988 International Convention in Haifa, a video cassette of brief news clips of the event was produced, duplicated in all three of the major international formats (PAL, NTSC, SECAM), and supplied to each national delegation at the end of the Convention for broadcasting immediately upon the delegation's return home. The appearance of the clip on South Africa's national television within 48 hours of the end of the convention was particularly gratifying.

In London, the efforts of the representative of the Office of Public Information were rewarded by an invitation for her to join the Foreign Press Association, giving her unusual access to publicity opportunities. In New York, the Public Information Officer secured membership in the Foreign Press Association as a journalist, and also won the distinction of being appointed Press Officer of the U.S. Public Relations Council.

Building Relationships

A good deal of energy was devoted throughout the Six Year Plan to the development of contacts with leaders of thought and collaborative relationships with like-minded organizations. Formal association was

inaugurated with the World Wide Fund for Nature and the World Conference for Religion and Peace, and practical assistance was given to the Bahá'í International Community's United Nations Office and to a number of National Spiritual Assemblies in the promotion of cooperative activities with various other agencies.

Paris proved to be a particularly important centre for this area of the Office's work, with some thirty private receptions being held for prominent personalities, over fifty official meetings, and participation in some eighty international events. The Paris office also took the lead in coordinating the participation of the National Spiritual Assemblies of France, the United Kingdom, and Germany in the World Centre for Peace and Human Rights at Verdun, which included a Bahá'í exhibition.

In Haifa, the growing recognition of the Faith around the world produced a steady increase in the number of distinguished visitors to the World Centre: diplomats, academics, parliamentarians, and officers of various international organizations. An estimated 450 receptions for distinguished visitors were organized during the course of the Plan. (See also section III.1)

Significant events included the co-sponsoring in October 1988 of "The Arts for Nature" program in support of conservation, an initiative launched at Sion House in London, with Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum and His Royal Highness Prince Philip as guest speakers. The following year the World Forestry Charter Gatherings, an institution established by Richard St. Barbe Baker in 1945, was revived in London, in collaboration with the United Nations Environmental Program. (See also subsection 4, starting on p. 541)

In 1991, Bahá'ís were invited to attend the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace (ABCP) held in Ulaan Baator, Mongolia, from 18 to 23 September. Han-ju Kim-Farley, the only woman speaker during the Conference, presented the principle statement of the Bahá'ís, which was entitled "The Common Goal of Universal Peace in Buddhism and the Bahá'í Faith." The statement had been translated into Mongolian, and approximately two hundred Mongolian and two hundred English copies were distributed. (See also p. 209)

One Country

From its inception, a goal of the Office of Public Information was the publication of a newsletter addressed to influential non-Bahá'í circles. By the beginning of 1989 preparations were complete, and the first issue of the English language edition of *One Country* was published that February. In all, sixteen issues were produced during the remaining years of the Six Year Plan; the last issue during the Plan was mailed to nearly 12,000 prominent individuals, non-governmental organizations, government agencies, academic institutions and media in over 180 countries and territories. The New York Office received a total of six hundred responses from recipients, almost all of which were very positive.

The French language edition was launched in October of 1989 by the Paris Office. Ten issues had appeared by the conclusion of the Plan, the final going out to nearly 2,000 people in over 50 countries. As with the English language edition, there were seventy-four letters of appreciation, the majority of them requesting additional information about the Faith and its activities. A Chinese language edition followed in June of 1990, eight issues appearing during the Plan. The mailing list included nearly 2,000 addressees in over 30 countries, and the Hong Kong Office reported a similarly appreciative response from the recipients.

During the Plan, the English edition received two significant awards for quality: an "Award of Merit" for excellence from the U.S.-based Religious Public Relations Council (April 1991); and the "Grand Award" in the APEX 1991 awards for publications' excellence. The French edition had

the distinction of special mention in *Le Monde Diplomatique*'s July issue, among international reviews that were recommended to the readership. Stories from both the English and French editions have been reprinted in a number of other publications.

As the Plan ended, the first issue of the new Russian-language edition, launched through the intermediary of the Paris Office, had just come off the press in Moscow.

Consultation with National Spiritual Assemblies

One of the most important tasks of the Office of Public Information was its ongoing service as a consultant and source of information to National Spiritual Assemblies and their public information agencies. By the end of the Plan the Haifa Office's correspondence alone had reached nearly one thousand items a year, and the branch Offices contributed significantly in providing information and advice by mail. The director of the Office travelled extensively for the same purpose, and a number of significant projects resulted from these consultations with National Spiritual Assemblies. A public information manual was prepared by the Haifa Office and distributed to the International Network. The New York Office developed a media training workshop for national public information officers, and assisted in organizing training sessions in Switzerland (1988), India (1990) and South Africa (1991).

Late in 1991 the Universal House of Justice created the International Advisory Group with the Office of Public Information as its executive agency. The Group's mandate was to help coordinate Bahá'í advice and assistance to governments and non-governmental organizations, particularly those functioning in countries of the former Soviet Union and the neighboring republics.

Preparation for the Holy Year

The Office of Public Information became extensively involved in various aspects of plans for the Holy Year. At the World Centre, a campaign was organized to include international media at the Commemoration of the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh. The Haifa Office also was involved in the planning and preparation of the program for the World Congress. After assisting in the development of the central theme, the Office prepared a "treatment" for each of the four days of the main event at Javits Center, for the consideration of the World Congress Program Committee. Once the program had been finalized, the Office undertook to produce one of the four major audio-visual segments and to serve as consultant for the production of the other three.

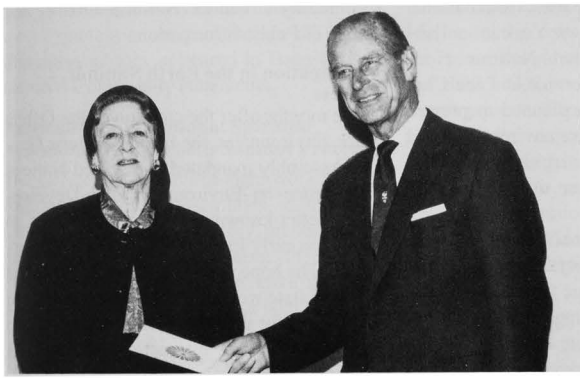
Starting in April 1991, the New York Office was appointed as the executive arm of the Congress' Media Task Force, devoting approximately ninety percent of its time and resources to Congress publicity. Conferences were organized for media professionals, an international media campaign was developed, a promotional video produced, and regional meetings organized in several parts of the world.

More than one hundred and seventy Bahá'ís from twenty-two countries, most of them employed in journalism, broadcasting, film-making, advertising, and public relations attended two-day conferences held in Los Angeles and New York during the spring of 1991. The purpose of the conferences was to develop ideas for reaching the media with the story of the Second Bahá'í World Congress.

After many months of consultation, the Task Force produced a Global Media Campaign which was approved by the Universal House of Justice and disseminated to the Bahá'ís worldwide.

One result was the development and expansion of the International Public Information Network, originally set up by the Haifa Office and devoted totally to the publicity needs of the Congress beginning in November 1991. Regional meetings to bring together National Public Information

Officers, Task Force representatives, National Assembly representatives and Continental Counsellors were held in Brazil, Canada, Fiji, Germany, Hawaii, Hong Kong, India, Kenya, Panama, Puerto Rico, Russia, Spain, Turkmenistan, and Zimbabwe.



Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum presenting the Bahá'í Statement on Nature to H.R.H. Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, on the occasion of the Bahá'í Faith joining the Network on Conservation and Religion of the World Wide Fund for Nature. 3 October 1987.

4. THE BAHÁ'Í OFFICE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Relations with United Nations Agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations

The Bahá'í International Community has been associated with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) since 1974. Ties with UNEP were strengthened during the Six Year Plan through visits by Bahá'í representatives to senior UNEP officials, and through Bahá'í attendance at three sessions of the UNEP Governing Council. The Bahá'í International Community also established relations in the early 1980s with the Environment Liaison Centre International.

Connections with other environmental NGOs reached a new stage when the Bahá'í International Community became a Working Partner of the Centre For Our Common Future and a member of the Network on Conservation and Religion of the World Wide Fund for Nature. A ceremony marking the Bahá'í Community's formal affiliation with the Network took place in Winchester, England, on 3 October 1987, after which a front page story on the event was printed in the World Wide Fund for Nature publication, *The New Road.*

Bahá'í International Community representatives met several times with top officials from the World Wide Fund for Nature to discuss potential areas of collaboration, and the Bahá'í International Community provided articles for *The New Road* on Bahá'í perspectives and conservation projects. National Spiritual Assemblies were also encouraged to explore cooperation with the World Wide Fund in their respective countries.

In October 1988, the Bahá'í International Community and the World Wide Fund co-sponsored a fund-raising banquet and reception in London to launch "Arts for Nature". The program was conceived by His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, as a means of drawing on visual and performing arts to enlist public support for critical environmental needs around the world. The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, representing the Bahá'í International Community, addressed the two hundred guests, among whom were influential figures in British public life and leading European artists.

On 11 September 1989, the Bahá'í International Community hosted a one-day symposium entitled "Africa—Environment and Development: NGO Perspectives for the 1990s." Held at the Bahá'í International Community Office in New York in collaboration with the United Nations Non-governmental Liaison Service and the Club of Rome, the event was planned to present an African perspective on environment and development issues to representatives of Western donor countries, donor agencies, and NGOs.

The Bahá'í International Community also collaborated with a number of environmental organizations to reinstitute the annual World Forestry Charter Gatherings. These Gatherings had been founded in 1945 by Richard St. Barbe Baker, a well-known Bahá'í who had founded Men of the Trees. For more than two decades he had sponsored an annual luncheon at which representatives of national governments and other influential persons were apprised of the current situation of the world's forests. The tradition was revived on 15 December 1989 in London, with a gathering attended by ambassadors or their representatives from fifteen countries. The event was co-sponsored by the UNEP, the United Nations Development Program, Men of the Trees, the World Wide Fund for Nature, Living Earth, and SOS Sahel.

Creation of the Bahá'í Office of the Environment

To support this ever-increasing Bahá'í work on behalf of the environment, and immediately following the October 1989 release by the Universal House of Justice of a new compilation entitled "Conservation of the Earth's Resources" prepared by the Research Department of the Bahá'í World Centre, the Bahá'í Office of the Environment was created with its headquarters in New York City. It was to represent the environmental interests of the Bahá'í International Community externally and to encourage sustainable development activities within the Bahá'í community, taking over responsibility for environment-related activities from the Bahá'í International Community's United Nations Office and Office of Public Information.

Participation in the Earth Summit Process

Three months after the creation of the Office of the Environment, the United Nations General Assembly mandated the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, better known as the Earth Summit, to be held in early June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The hope for this conference was that heads of state would be able to set aside their differences for the sake of future generations and establish a new international framework for sustainable development.

The process of planning and preparing for the Earth Summit, which took place on all continents, provided excellent opportunities for Bahá'í International Community involvement both within and outside of the United Nations system. Representatives of the Community—many of whom were volunteer consultants in the field—attended forty-three conferences and gatherings, scores of receptions, and over fifty meetings of other non-governmental organizations. In addition, the Office of the Environment was a member of five Earth Summit-related NGO working groups/networks, and signed two joint NGO statements.

Bahá'í principles relating to the environment and development were shared with many United Nations officials, members of government, NGO representatives, academics, and individuals. Five different displays were created by the Office of the Environment for use at conferences, and five oral and eight written statements were presented on various aspects of the environment and development, each of which focussed on an essential Bahá'í principle such as the oneness of humanity and the equality of men and women.

The response to the Bahá'í perspective was very positive, with Bahá'í principles being discussed extensively as part of the Earth Summit process. Many United Nations' governmental, and NGO documents carried direct quotations or paraphrases of Bahá'í principles as they appeared in Bahá'í International Community statements.

Participation of National Spiritual Assemblies in the Earth Summit Process

The Office of the Environment worked with National Spiritual Assemblies in their respective national preparatory processes for the Earth Summit, providing them with information and advice on environmental and developmental issues. Four National Spiritual Assemblies—Brazil, Iceland, Singapore, and the United States—became officially accredited to the Earth Summit. In addition, the Office of the Environment worked very closely with the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil to plan activities to take place during the Global Forum—the NGO conference held concurrent with the Earth Summit. Among these activities were eleven different cultural events and the presentation, as a permanent gift to the people of Rio de Janeiro, of a Peace Monument inscribed with the following words: "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens. — *Bahá'u'lláh*".

Supporting National Bahá'í Conservation Activities

Twenty-five circular letters were sent during the first two and a half years of the existence of the Office of the Environment encouraging national communities to consider initiating conservation projects and activities, and providing them with copies of the eight Bahá'í International Community statements on the environment. As a result, scores of Bahá'í communities took part in commemorating Earth Day International, at least fourteen National Spiritual Assemblies established National Desks or Offices of the Environment, and many local communities established such Desks or Offices.

The Office supported these national and local activities with information and materials, some developed in collaboration with the Bahá'í Office of Social and Economic Development. Thousands of letters and phone calls requesting information and advice not only from Bahá'í institutions but from NGOs, government officials, universities, and institutions were answered. In addition, the Office hosted more than three hundred and fifty visitors from various organizations.

Correspondence, reports, and interaction with Bahá'ís indicate that many communities have undertaken small-scale environmental service projects, and that Bahá'í communities are studying the environmental and developmental issues and the principles of the Faith that most directly relate to them.

Publications

Written materials offering the Bahá'í perspective on the environment and development were both created and encouraged by the Office of the Environment during the last half of the Six Year Plan. Three Bahá'í statements on the requirements for sustainable development were published as brochures and translated into French, Spanish, and Portuguese. The Bahá'í International Community newsletter, *One Country*, carried conservation-related articles in each edition, and an article which appeared in the *Journal of the Association for Bahá'í Studies*, entitled "Spiritual Foundations of an Ecologically Sustainable Society," was reprinted jointly by the Association for Bahá'í Studies and the Office of the Environment and translated into Portuguese for distribution at the Earth Summit in Brazil.

V
RECOGNITION OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

1. INCORPORATION OF NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
Riḍván 1986 to Riḍván 1992

In previous volumes, many certificates of incorporation or other documents attesting recognition of various National Spiritual Assemblies have been reproduced. The following are representative of the forms of recognition obtained by National Spiritual Assemblies during the period covered by this volume.

1. Certificate of Incorporation of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Cook Islands; 2 February 1989.

2. Recognition of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Guinea-Bissau in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution; 7 July 1988.

3. Receipt of the Declaration of Trust for the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Guinea; 29 May 1986 (first page).

4. Certificate of change of name from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of South and West Africa to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of South Africa; 27 March 1987.

5. Certificate of Incorporation of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the West Leeward Islands; 23 October 1991.

L. and D. 606

No. 108/89

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION

Under the Incorporated Societies Act 1908

I certify that THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHA'IS OF THE COOK ISLANDS INC.

is incorporated under the Incorporated Societies Act 1908.

Dated at RAROTONGA this 2ND day of FEBRUARY 1989

Seal

Assistant Registrar of Incorporated Societies.

87360 B-50 pads/12/76 Y80

1. Certificate of Incorporation of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Cook Islands; 2 February 1989.

REPÚBLICA DA GUINÉ-BISSAU
MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO, CULTURA E DESPORTOS
GABINETE DO MINISTRO

DESPACHO NORMATIVO Nº 1/88

Considerando o pedido formulado pela Assembleia Espiritual Nacional dos Bah'is da Guiné-Bissau para o seu legal reconhecimento ;

Tendo em atenção que, o Ministério da Educação, Cultura e Desportos de conformidade com a decisão do Conselho de Ministros, tenha estudado o respectivo dossier que para o efeito lhe fora oportunamente remetido ;

Atendendo ao facto de que a Assembleia Espiritual Nacional dos Bah'is da Guiné-Bissau para além do Culto, prossegue fins identicos aos objectivos almejados pelo Estado,

O Ministério da Educação, Cultura e Desportos, no uso das atribuições e competências que lhe foram delegadas pelo Conselho de Ministros em 11 de Julho de 1985 decide :

ARTIGO 1

É reconhecida a Assembleia Espiritual Nacional dos Bah'is da Guiné-Bissau, conformemente ao estatuido no Artº 44 da Constituição.

ARTIGO 2

São aprovados os respectivos estatutos que vão em anexo, publicados com este Decreto.

BISSAU, 7 De Julho DE 1988

Dr. FIDELIS CABRAL DE ALMADA
Ministro da Educação, Cultura e Desportos

GABINETE DO MINISTRO

2. Recognition of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Guinea-Bissau in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution; 7 July 1988.

PRESIDENECE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

MINISTERE DE L'INTERIEUR
ET DE LA DECENTRALISATION

N° 770 /MID/CAB /86

REPUBLIQUE DE GUINEE
TRAVAIL-JUSTICE-SOLIDARITE

Conakry, le 29/5/ 1986

LE MINISTRE

A MONSIEUR LE REPRESENTANT DE L'ASSEMBLEE

SPIRITUELLE NATIONALE DES BAHA'IS DE GUINEE.

RECIPISSE DE DECLARATION D'ASSOCIATION

Le Ministre de l'Intérieur et de la Décentralisation donne aux personnes ci-après désignées, récipissé de déclaration pour l'association régie par l'Ordonnance n° 072 portant création des O.N.G. en République de Guinée et définie comme suit :

1) - TITRE : *Assemblée spirituelle Nationale des BAHA'is de Guinée. Siège social : quartier de Taouyah à Conakry II.*

2) - OBJET : *Gérer les affaires et biens concernant la communauté Bahaie de Guinée, en respectant les principes du système administratif établis par BAHA'u'llah.*
- *Effectuer toute transaction mobilière et immobilière, acquérir ou construire des bibliothèques, des dispensaires, des écoles, réalis*

../..

3. Receipt of the Declaration of Trust for the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Guinea; 29 May 1986 (first page).

Republic of South Africa
Companies Act, 1973, Section 44(1)(b)

Republiek van Suid-Afrika
Maatskappywet, 1973, Artikel 44(1)(b)

REGISTRATEUR VAN MAATSKAPPYE
PRIVAATSAK/PRIVATE BAG X
1987 -02- 11
PRETORIA 0001
REGISTRAR OF COMPANIES

76/00020/08
Registration No. of company/Registrasienommer van maatskappy

Certificate of change of name of company

Sertifikaat van verandering van naam van maatskappy

This is to certify that/Hierby word gesertifiseer dat

The National Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of South and West Africa
(Incorporated Association not for Gain)

has changed its name by SPECIAL RESOLUTION and is now called
sy naam verander het by SPESIALE BESLUIT en nou genoem word

The National Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of South Africa
(Incorporated Association not for Gain)

and that the new name has this day been entered in the Register of Companies.
en dat die nuwe naam op hierdie dag in die Register van Maatskappye aangeteken is.

Signed and sealed at Pretoria, this/Geteken en geseël te Pretoria op hede die 27th

day of/dag van March

One Thousand Nine Hundred and/Eenduisend Negehonderd Eighty seven

Registrar of Companies/Registrateur van Maatskappye

Seal of Companies Registration Office
Seël van Registrateur van Maatskappye

4. Certificate of change of name from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of South and West Africa to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of South Africa; 27 March 1987.

SAINT CHRISTOPHER AND NEVIS
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
SAINT CHRISTOPHER CIRCUIT

A. D. 1991

REGISTRAR'S OFFICE 23 OCT 1991 ST. CHRISTOPHER/NEVIS

No. 52 of 1991

Certificate of Incorporation

I HEREBY CERTIFY that NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHA'IS /OF THE WEST LEEWARD ISLANDS is this day incorporated under the Companies Act, Chapter 335, and that the Company is Limited.

GIVEN under my Hand and Seal of the Registrar of Companies Saint Christopher and Nevis, this 23rd day of October, 1991

Winston H. Patterson
Registrar of Joint Stock Companies

5. Certificate of Incorporation of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the West Leeward Islands; 23 October 1991.

2. INCORPORATION OF LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

Riḍván 1986 to Riḍván 1992

1. Decree by the Government of Quebec, Canada, regarding the Civil Registry of Bahá'í Local Spiritual Assemblies in Hull, Quebec, Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Longueuil, and Montreal; 1990 (first page).

2. Registration of the Bahá'ís of Ashkhabad of the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic by the Council of Religious Affairs at the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; 25 January 1990.

3. Recognition of the Bahá'ís of Dushanbe of the Tadzhik Soviet Socialist Republic by the Council of Ministers of Tadzhikistan; 14 November 1990.

MAY 0 7 1990

DÉCRET

GOUVERNEMENT DU QUÉBEC

451-90

CONCERNANT les registres de l'état civil de certaines corporations religieuses désignées sous le nom de "Assemblées spirituelles des Bahá'is"

4 AVR. 1990

----oooOooo----

ATTENDU QUE le 28 février 1973, des lettres patentes ont été accordées à la corporation religieuse désignée sous le nom de L'Assemblée spirituelle des Baha'is de Lucerne qui, le 28 avril 1984, est devenue L'Assemblée spirituelle des Baha'is d'Aylmer, en vertu de la Loi sur les corporations religieuses (L.R.Q. c. C-71);

ATTENDU QUE le 28 février 1973, des lettres patentes ont été accordées à la corporation religieuse désignée sous le nom de L'Assemblée spirituelle des Baha'is de Hull, en vertu de cette loi;

ATTENDU QUE le 28 février 1973, des lettres patentes ont été accordées à la corporation religieuse désignée sous le nom de L'Assemblée spirituelle des Baha'is de la ville de Québec, en vertu de cette loi;

ATTENDU QUE le 20 avril 1979, des lettres patentes ont été accordées à la corporation religieuse désignée sous le nom de L'Assemblée spirituelle des Baha'is des Îles-de-la-Madeleine, en vertu de cette loi;

ATTENDU QUE le 23 mars 1979, des lettres patentes ont été accordées à la corporation religieuse désignée sous le nom de L'Assemblée spirituelle des Baha'is de Longueuil, en vertu de cette loi;

ATTENDU QUE le 2 mai 1989, des lettres patentes ont été accordées à la corporation religieuse désignée sous le nom de L'Assemblée spirituelle des Baha'is de Montréal, en vertu de cette loi;

ATTENDU QUE les assemblées spirituelles des Baha'is précitées ne sont pas des corporations religieuses autorisées à tenir ou à faire tenir les registres de l'état civil en vertu de l'article 44 du Code civil;

1. Decree by the Government of Quebec, Canada, regarding the Civil Registry of Bahá'í Local Spiritual Assemblies in Hull, Quebec, Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Longueuil, and Montreal; 1990 (first page).

ВЫПИСКА

из протокола № 3 заседания Совета по делам религий при Совете Министров СССР

25 января 1990 г. г.Москва

СЛУШАЛИ: Представление Совета Министров Туркменской ССР от 12.09.89 г. и заключение отдела по делам мусульманской и буддийской религий о регистрации религиозного общества бахаистов в г. Ашхабаде.

ПОСТАНОВИЛИ: 1.Зарегистрировать религиозное общество бахаистов в г.Ашхабаде Туркменской ССР.

2. Ашхабадскому горисполкому рассмотреть вопрос о молитвенном здании для данного общества.

ПЕЧАТЬ

Исх.№ 104 от 31.01.90 г.

Выписка подписана членом Совета Г.А. Михайловым

2. Registration of the Bahá'ís of Ashkhabad of the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic by the Council of Religious Affairs at the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; 25 January 1990.

РСС ТОҶИКИСТОН — ТАДЖИКСКАЯ ССР

СОВЕТИ ДЕПУТАТХОИ ХАЛҚИИ ШАҲРИ ДУШАНБЕ

КОМИТЕТИ ИҶРОИЯИ

К А Р О Р И

ДУШАНБИНСКИЙ ГОРОДСКОЙ СОВЕТ НАРОДНЫХ ДЕПУТАТОВ

ИСПОЛНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ КОМИТЕТ

Р Е Ш Е Н И Е

553/83 — от 14.II.90г.

О регистрации Общества бахаистов
в гор. Душанбе

В Душанбинский горисполком обратилась группа верующих граждан, исповедующих религию бахаизм, в количестве 25 человек, с просьбой разрешить им коллективно отправлять религиозные ритуалы. В составе членов учредителей данного религиозного общества в большинстве – люди среднего возраста, есть пенсионеры и молодежь от 22 до 25 лет. Имеется частный дом по ул. Набережной №19, взятый в наем бахаистами, для отправления своих религиозных ритуалов.

Руководствуясь ст. 52 Конституции СССР, и в соответствии с Указом Президиума Верховного Совета Таджикской ССР № 334 от 26 августа 1976 года "О религиозных объединениях" и разъяснением Совета по делам религий при Совете Министров СССР от 29.07.85г. "О порядке строительства, покупки и найма религиозными организациями строений для своих нужд", исполком Душанбинского городского Совета народных депутатов - Р Е Ш И Л:

1. Зарегистрировать общество бахаистов в гор.Душанбе ... (основные принципы баханизма прилагаются) и разрешить ему отправлять коллективно религиозные ритуалы по адресу: гор. Душанбе, ул. Набережная, 19

2. Просить Совет Министров Таджикской ССР утвердить данное решение.

Председатель исполкома М.Икрамов

ВОЕНИЗИРОВАННАЯ ЧАСТЬ

Тип. МНО, зак. 1728, тир. 30000, 12.12.89 г.

3. Recognition of the Bahá'ís of Dushanbe of the Tadzhik Soviet Socialist Republic by the Council of Ministers of Tadzhikistan; 14 November 1990.

3. A Selection of Other Documents Recording Official Recognition of the Bahá'í Faith

Riḍván 1986 to Riḍván 1992

1. Appointment by the Attorney General of a Bahá'í Marriage Officer in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, effective from 10 March 1988.

2. Approval of a legal representative of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Burundi by the Minister of Justice; 12 October 1988.

3. Letter from Equatorial Guinea's Ministry of Finance recognizing the right of the National Spiritual Assembly, as a religious organization, to be exempt from taxes; 29 April 1986.

4. Certificate of recognition of the Lomaivuna Bahá'í Kindergarten by the Ministry of Education of the Government of Fiji, dated 21 August 1987.

5. Circular Letter from the Minister for the Administration of the Territories of Gabon dated 6 May 1987, stating that the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Gabon may carry out any activities (first page).

6. Certificate dated 8 September 1988, duly registering the offices of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ireland as a place for the solemnisation of marriage.

7. The Malawi Gazette Supplement, dated 7 November 1986, giving notice of the licensing of the Bahá'í Centre in Limbe, and the Bahá'í Teaching Institute in Amalika Village, for the celebration of marriages.

8. Rental agreement between the Bahá'í Property Incorporate and three individuals filed with the Clerk of Courts on the Island of Santo, Kwajalein Atoll, in the Marshall Islands on 14 November 1986, of a property for a Bahá'í Centre.

9. Letter dated 10 September 1987 from the Department of Education for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands recognizing Bahá'í Holy Days as days when children may be excused from classes.

10. Notification by the Government of Pakistan's Ministry of Religious Affairs and Minority Affairs on 27 January 1988 of the appointment of a Bahá'í on the Advisory Council for Minorities Affairs.

11. Certificate of Registration of a Permitted School in Papua New Guinea dated 14 November 1986 for the Bahá'í Study Centre to operate as a high school.

12. Marriage contract of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Philippines which was approved by the Government in 1987.

13. Certificate of Registration by the Republic of Zambia of the William Mmuthe Maseltha Bahá'í Institute dated 5 October 1988.

14. First Day Cover of a commemorative stamp issued by the Government of Western Samoa for Christmas 1988. There are four stamps in this series, the $2.00 stamp having the picture of the House of Worship in Apia.

15. The Postal Department in India has depicted the House of Worship in New Delhi on a postage stamp to mark the Diamond Jubilee of that city. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is featured on one of two stamps which portray well-known buildings in India's capital. October 1991.

REGISTRAR GENERAL'S OFFICE
P. O. Box 532
Nassau, Bahamas

Ref: 15 U

Mr. Michael Horton
P. O. Box N 3822
Nassau, Bahamas.

20th May, 1988.

Dear Sir,

I have to inform you that the Attorney General has appointed you a Marriage Officer for the Commonwealth of the Bahamas with effect from 10th March 1988.

I should be grateful if you would read the Marriage Act so as to familiarize yourself with your duties as a Marriage Officer.

The necessary forms and registers can be obtained from this Office on application.

I add my congratulations and best wishes.

B. Bain
for Actg. Registrar General.

1. Appointment by the Attorney General of a Bahá'í Marriage Officer in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, effective from 10 March 1988.

REPUBLIQUE DU BURUNDI

Bujumbura, le

MINISTERE DE LA JUSTICE

Cabinet du Ministre

Réf. :

Objet :

ORDONNANCE N° 317 - DU 12 Octobre 1988
PORTANT AGREMENT DU REPRESENTANT LEGAL ET DU REPRESENTANT LEGAL SUPPLEANT DE L'ASSOCIATION SANS BUT LUCRATIF DENOMMEE "ASSEMBLEE SPIRITUELLE NATIONALE DES BAHA'IS' DU BURUNDI".-

LE MINISTRE DE LA JUSTICE,

Vu le décret-loi n° 1/001 du 27 octobre 1987 portant organisation des pouvoirs législatif et réglementaire ;

Vu spécialement en ses articles 9 à 11, le décret du 27 novembre 1959 relatif aux associations sans but lucratif applicable au Burundi en vertu de l'ordonnance n° 111/66 du 4 mars 1960 ;

Vu l'ordonnance n° 560/45 du 7 avril 1973 portant octroi de l'autorisation préalable de constitution et de la personnalité civile en faveur de l'association sans but lucratif dénommée "ASSEMBLEE SPIRITUELLE NATIONALE DES BAHA'IS' DU BURUNDI" ;

Vu la requête introduite en date du 21 juillet 1988 par les membres de cette association et désignant Messieurs Ildephonse MIGISHA et Côme NIMPAGARITSE respectivement en qualité de Représentant Légal et de Représentant Légal Suppléant ;

Attendu que cette requête est conforme aux dispositions du décret susvisé ;

O R D O N N E :

Article 1 : Sont agréés respectivement en qualité de Représentant Légal et de Représentant Légal Suppléant de l'association sans but lucratif dénommée "ASSEMBLEE SPIRITUELLE NATIONALE DES BAHA'IS' DU BURUNDI", Messieurs Ildephonse MIGISHA et Côme NIMPAGARITSE.-

Article 2 : La présente ordonnance entre en vigueur le jour de sa signature.-

Fait à Bujumbura, le 12/10/1988

[illegible] MIYONKURU.-

2. Approval of a legal representative of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Burundi by the Minister of Justice, dated 12 October 1988.

REPUBLICA DE GUINEA ECUATORIAL

MINISTERIO DE HACIENDAS

Sria.Gral.

Coord.

Emma.-

Vista la petición documentada promovida por Vd. en nombre y representación de la Asamblea Espiritual de los Baha'ís de / Guinea Ecuatorial, de fecha 21 de Enero último, solicitando la EXENCION del pago de la Contribución Urbana de sus propiedades; visto, asimismo, el favorable informe emitido al respecto por/ la Dirección General de Impuestos y Tesoro en su escrito número 408, fechado el 23 de los corrientes;

Este Ministerio de Finanzas en ejercicio de las prerrogativas que le están reconocidas y en base a lo previsto en el / artículo 43, inciso b), del Decreto-Ley número 1/1.986 de 10 / de Febrero, por el que se aprueba el Sistema Tributario de la República de Guinea Ecuatorial, por resolución de esta fecha / ha venido a bién en acceder a su petición y en su consecuencia concederle la EXENCION DEL PAGO DE LA CONTRIBUCION URBANA que solicita, toda vez que las fincas pertenecientes a Instituciones o Congregaciones Religiosas, en tanto que no produzcan rentas y se dediquen directamente al culto u obras benéficas están exentos del pago del Impuesto que nos ocupa.

Malabo, 29 de Abril de 1.986

POR UNA GUINEA MEJOR,
EL MINISTRO,

MINISTERIO DE HACIENDAS EL MINISTRO

Señor FARZID MEIDANI, representante de la Asamblea Espiritual de los Baha'
de Guinea Ecuatorial. C I U D A D.-

3. Letter dated 29 April 1986, from the Ministry of Finance of Equatorial Guinea recognizing the right of the National Spiritual Assembly, as a religious organization, to be exempt from taxes.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

GOVERNMENT OF FIJI

Certificate of Recognition of a School

This is to Certify that LOMAIVUNA BAHAI KINDERGARTEN

School under LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHAIS OF LOMAIVUNA

as Controlling Authority has been recognised as a KINDERGARTEN

School under the provisions of the Education Act, to conduct courses for children aged 3 to 6 years.

Hon' Ram

Permanent Secretary for Education

Date 21 August, 1987

Recognition No. 9456

ED922

4. Certificate of recognition of the Lomaivuna Bahá'í Kindergarten by the Ministry of Education of the Government of Fiji, dated 21 August 1987.

MINISTERE DE L'ADMINISTRATION
DU TERRITOIRE, DES COLLECTIVITES
LOCALES ET DE L'IMMIGRATION

DIRECTION GENERALE
DE L'ADMINISTRATION DU TERRITOIRE

REPUBLIQUE GABONAISE
Union-Travail-Justice

N° 0045 /MATCLI/DGAT

LETTRE - CIRCULAIRE -

-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-

LE MINISTRE D'ETAT, MINISTRE DE
L'ADMINISTRATION DU TERRITOIRE, DES
COLLECTIVITES LOCALES ET DE L'IMMIGRATION

A MESSIEURS LES GOUVERNEURS

Par décrets n°s 00709/PR/MID du 30 Mai 1990 il est porté dissolution des Associations dites "Temoins de Jéhovah " et " Armée du Salut " et 00888/PR/MACTL/DGAT du 23 Mai 1985, celle des Associations réligieuses ci-après désignées :

- Association ECKANKAR Boîte Postale 3.767 Libreville.
- MIHIKARI, Filiale Gabonaise, Boîte Postale 448 Libreville.
- Eglise du Christianisme Céleste du Gabon, Boîte Postale 14.190 Libreville.
- L'Eglise Episcopale des Chérubins et des Séraphins du Nigéria Quartier Grande Poubelle Libreville.
- L'Association de l'Ordre Souverain et Militaire du Temple de Jérusalem Libreville.

Or, il me revient que certaines autorités administratives et militaires auraient interdit l'exercice de toute activité à l'Assemblée Spirituelle Nationale Des BAHA'IS du GABON et ce, certainement par confusion ou mauvaise interprétation des textes susvisés.

.../...

5. Circular Letter from the Minister for the Administration of the Territories of Gabon dated 6 May 1987, stating that the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Gabon may carry out any activities (first page).

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION OF A SEPARATE BUILDING, BEING A PLACE OF PUBLIC RELIGIOUS WORSHIP, UNDER S. 27 OF THE MARRIAGES (IRELAND) ACT, 1844

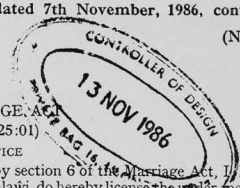
I, GORDON W. KERR JOHNSTON, Deputy, Registrar of the District of Dublin, do hereby certify that on the 9th day of May, 1988, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Ireland, 24 Burlington Road., Dublin 4, was duly registered for the solemnisation of marriages therein, in the presence of the Registrar, by P. J. Kehoe, An tArd-Chlaraitheoir-Cunta, who signed the requisite Certificate for that purpose.

Witness my hand this 8th day of September, 1988

Deputy Registrar.

6. Certificate dated 8 September 1988, duly registering the offices of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ireland as a place for the solemnisation of marriage.

The Malawi Gazette Supplement, dated 7th November, 1986, containing Regulations, Rules, etc. (No. 35A)



GOVERNMENT NOTICE No. 97

MARRIAGE ACT
(CAP. 25:01)
NOTICE

IN EXERCISE of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Marriage Act, I, NGWAZI DR. H. KAMUZU BANDA, Life President of Malawi, do hereby license the under-mentioned place of public worship for the celebration of marriages.

Baha'i Teaching Institute
Amalika Village
Thyolo District
Title Deed No. 36643

Given under my hand this 29th day of October, 1986.

H. KAMUZU BANDA
Life President

(FILE NO. SUB. D. 25:01)

GOVERNMENT NOTICE No. 98

MARRIAGE ACT
(CAP. 25:01)
NOTICE

IN EXERCISE of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Marriage Act, I, NGWAZI DR. H. KAMUZU BANDA, Life President of Malawi, do hereby license the under-mentioned place of public worship for the celebration of marriages.

Baha'i Centre
Plot No. CC 711
Limbe

Given under my hand this 29th day of October, 1986.

H. KAMUZU BANDA
Life President

(FILE NO. SUB. D. 25:01)

GOVERNMENT NOTICE No. 99

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS ACT
(CAP. 18:05)

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS (AMENDMENT OF SCHEDULE) ORDER, 1986

IN EXERCISE of the powers conferred by section 3 (1) of the Public Holidays Act, I, NGWAZI DR. H. KAMUZU BANDA, Life President of Malawi, make the following Order—

1. This Order may be cited as the Public Holidays (Amendment of Schedule) Order, 1986. Citation

2. The Schedule to the Public Holidays Act is amended by deleting the words "The first Monday in August" and substituting the words "National Tree Planting Day (21st December)". Amendment of Schedule to Cap. 18:05

Made this 27th day of October, 1986.

H. KAMUZU BANDA
Life President

(FILE NO. 11/02/6)

Printed and published by THE GOVERNMENT PRINTER, Zomba, Malawi—90095

7. The Malawi Gazette Supplement, dated 7 November 1986, giving notice of the licensing of the Bahá'í Centre in Limbe, and the Bahá'í Teaching Institute in Amalika Village, for the celebration of marriages.

JUON AGREEMENT ÑON KAJERBAL JUON JIKIN ITUÑÕK
IN ILOÑ JAPAN ÑO ILO SANTO ISLAND, NOI,
KWAJALEIN ATOLL, MARSHALL ILS.

Agreement in ear moj kowappen e im komormon e ikotan party ko emān :
Iroij, Alap, Dri-jerbal in Baha'i Property Incorporate eo.
Jikin eo naj kajerbalo ej bedr ilo weto eo irok in im jimen in an kar
ri-Japan ro, in bedr ion ene in Santo island, Kwajalein atoll, ilo
Marshall Islands District.

Ej komon Agreement in ilo wawein in kalikare ijin ilal:-

a) Bwe Baha'i Property Incorporate enaj wor an maroñ in kajerbale
jikin in kalikare ileñ, im ej kwalok an konan naj bar kajutak
juon im eo enaj Baha'i Centre, ak jikin kwelok eo an Baha'i ro
ilo Santo island.

b) Juon drettan rental eo kin kajerbale jikin in, enaj jerbal ekkar
ñon $12.00 dollar ilo juon year. Baha'i Property Incorporate ej
kalimur bwe enaj kolla drettan in iben Alap eo an jikin in ilo
jinoin October in year otemjoj. Im bwe drettan eo an mwin, enaj
192 square feet.

c) Bwe Baha'i Property eo ejjamin naj kollaik drettan in ilo jamin
aetok lok jen,ak rumij lok jen ran in moj kajejjete ijin ilen. Ne
Baha'ii Property Incorporate ejjamin naj komone ijoko konan im naj
rumij in kolla i loan jiilu(3) alliñ ko, inem riamnak ro naj wor air
maroñ in naj kajeblak jikin in na ibbeir im kajemlok loan agreement
in.

d) Ñen in ikotan Iroij, Alap im Dri-jerbal ro ilo weto in mwin ej bedr ie,
im Baha'i Property Incorporate eo, en naj kin ronoul-lalim(25) year
kin naj juon karok eo nae naj bar kakkal im komormon lok mwin ak
bar karok ko jet ikotan party kein ñon dron, im naj kajerbal nanlok
iloan bar 25 year manlok.

e) Im ilo an Party ko naj loe bwe wawein kein ijin rejjamin naj etal
wot einwot karok kein, inem renaj bar maroñ in komon jet karok ko
naj einjuon lok jen wawein kein ilo agreement in, im rej kile bwe
nemon lok.

Baha'i Property Incorporate eo elikin an naj komormon lok jikin in im
kajutak Centre eo ie, inem naj kamelim an jabrewot drolul ko an jabrewot
kajjojo naj kajerbale jikin in ikijien kowormanlok bedr ko air, ijellokin
ko rej ikijien bar kabuñ ko jet.

AGGREEMENT in ear moj an wappen im komormon e ien in kalikare ijin
iben rein rej uwan party ko im drodr air jain ijin ilal lok.

Kadreloñe rainin:_____19___

Kamua Kabua - Iroij

Joo Anitak - Alap

Andrijel Jop - Rijerbal

Baha'i Property Incorporate

Chairman, NSA, INC.

9/27/86

FILED
NOV 14 1986

ASST. CLERK OF COURTS

8. Rental agreement between the Bahá'í Property Incorporate and three individuals filed with the Clerk of Courts on the Island of Santo, Kwajalein Atoll, in the Marshall Islands on 14 November 1986, of a property for a Bahá'í Centre.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SAIPAN, CM 96950
Phone: 9812/9823/9827/9311

Cable Address:
Gov. NMI Saipan

September 10, 1987

Patricia Daniels
Secretary
National Spiritual Assembly
of the Baha'is of the Marianas
P.O. Box 20280
GMF, Guam 96921

Dear Ms. Daniels,

In response to your letter dated 8/20/87 about excusing students of the Baha'i' religious faith on certain Baha'i' Holy Days, please be advised that the Board of Education has adopted a school calendar that encompasses 180 days of instruction without regard to religious holidays, except Christmas and Good Friday.

Whenever a student misses a school day for a justifiable and excusable reason, the parent is responsible for providing the teacher with a written note explaining the absence. Students are required to make up all work for excused absences.

Baha'i' Holy Days fall on the following school days:

October 20	April 29
November 12	May 2
April 21	May 23

While teachers may consider these days as excused absences for certain students of the Baha'i' faith, I would like you and all parents to note that seven "holidays" constitute a significant number and would represent a high absentee rate.

By Board of Education policy, students who accumulate 35 or more absences in a school year may not pass to the next grade level.

I am providing a copy of this letter to all school principals so that they may pass this information about Baha'i' Holy Days on to their teachers.

Sincerely,

/s/

Henry I. Sablan
Superintendent of Education

cc: School Principals

9. Letter dated 10 September 1987 from the Department of Education for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands recognizing Bahá'í Holy Days as days when children may be excused from classes.

TO BE ISSUED IN THE NEXT
GAZETTE OF PAKISTAN(PART.III).

No.P.1(64)MA/POL/86-Recons)
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
AND MINORITIES AFFAIRS

*****

Islamabad, the 27th January, 1988.

Subject:- ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR MINORITIES AFFAIRS.

In continuation of this Ministry's notification of even number dated 26th October, 1987, Mr. Israr Hussain Siddiqui, Bhai from Karachi, is appointed as non-official member of the Advisory Council for Minorities Affairs against the seat fallen vacant due to death of Mr. Uttam Chand of Quetta.

S.d-

(Rao Fazal Khan Akhtar)
Joint Secretary(M)

The Manager,
Printing Corporation of Pakistan Press,
Karachi.

Copy is forwarded to:-

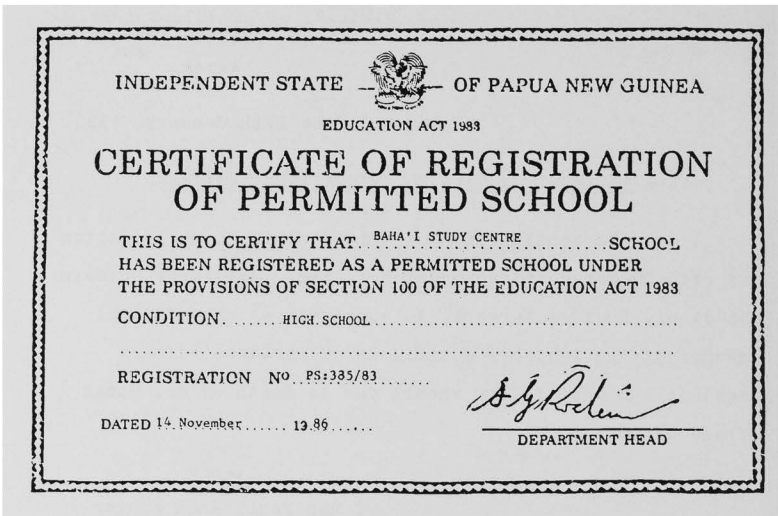
1) Mr. Israr Hussain Siddiqui, President National Spirtual of Assembly of Bhai's of Pakistan, Bhai's Hall, Karachi-5.

2) Mr. M.P. Bhandara, MNA, No.1, National Park Road, Rawalpindi.

3) P.S to Minister for Religious Affairs and Minorities Affairs, Islamabad.

(Rao Fazal Khan Akhtar)

10. Notification by the Government of Pakistan's Ministry of Religious Affairs and Minority Affairs on 27 January 1988 of the appointment of a Bahá'í on the Advisory Council for Minorities Affairs.



INDEPENDENT STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

EDUCATION ACT 1983

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION OF PERMITTED SCHOOL

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT BAHA'I STUDY CENTRE SCHOOL HAS BEEN REGISTERED AS A PERMITTED SCHOOL UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 100 OF THE EDUCATION ACT 1983

CONDITION. HIGH SCHOOL

REGISTRATION No. PS:385/83

DATED 14 November 19 86

DEPARTMENT HEAD

11. Certificate of Registration of a Permitted School in Papua New Guinea dated 14 November 1986 for the Bahá'í Study Centre to operate as a high school.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY of the BAHÁ'ÍS of the PHILIPPINES, INC.

REGISTER NO. .....

MARRIAGE CONTRACT

City or Municipality of ..... *Province of* .....

	HUSBAND	WIFE
Contracting Parties		
(a) Age		
(b) Nationality		
(c) Residence		
Single, widowed or divorced		
Father		
Nationality		
Mother		
Nationality		
Witnesses		
Residence		
Persons who gave consent or advice		
(a) Residence		
(b) Relation to contracting party		

Place of marriage { *Bahá'í Center of* / *House of* / *Barrio or barangay of* } .....

Date of marriage ..... *Officiated by* .....

Legalizing Officer for Baha'i marriages in the Philippines with residence at .....

.....

THIS IS TO CERTIFY: *That I,* ..... *and I,* ..... *on the date and at the place above given, of our own free will and accord, and in the presence of the person appointed by the NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE PHILIPPINES, INC. with license to officiate this marriage and of the two witnesses named below, both of age, take each other as husband and wife after uttering the sacred verse:*

"WE WILL ALL, VERILY, ABIDE BY THE WILL OF GOD."

And I, ..., *Bahá'í Marriage Officer,* CERTIFY: *That on the date and at the place above written the aforesaid* .... *and* ..... *were with their mutual consent joined together in marriage in accordance with the Laws of BAHÁ'Í FAITH in the presence of said witnesses, both of age; and I further certify that the Marriage License No.* ..... *issued at* ..... *on* ....., *19*..... *in favor of said parties was exhibited to me; and that consent or advice to such marriage was duly given as required by Bahá'í law, by the living parents above mentioned.*

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, *we signed, (or marked with our fingerprint) this certificate in quadruplicate this* ..... *day of* ..... *19*.....

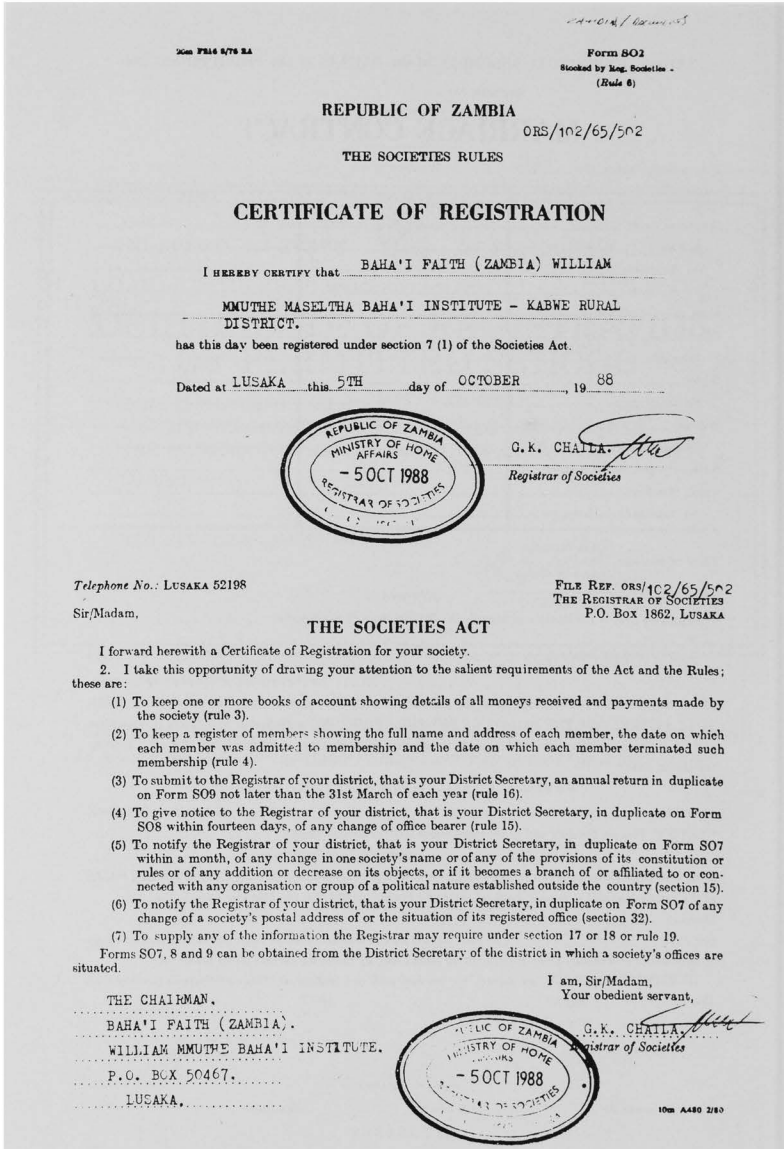
..... (Contracting Party) ..... (Contracting Party)

..... (Bahá'í Marriage Officer)

License No: ..... Date Issued: ..... Exp. Date: .....

WITNESSES

12. Marriage contract of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Philippines which was approved by the Government in 1987.



Form SO2
Stocked by Reg. Societies -
(Rule 6)

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

ORS/102/65/502

THE SOCIETIES RULES

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

I HEREBY CERTIFY that BAHA'I FAITH (ZAMBIA) WILLIAM MMUTHE MASELTHA BAHA'I INSTITUTE - KABWE RURAL DISTRICT.

has this day been registered under section 7 (1) of the Societies Act.

Dated at LUSAKA this 5TH day of OCTOBER, 19 88

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS - 5 OCT 1988 REGISTRAR OF SOCIETIES

G.K. CHAILA.
Registrar of Societies

Telephone No.: LUSAKA 52198

FILE REF. ORS/102/65/502
THE REGISTRAR OF SOCIETIES
P.O. BOX 1862, LUSAKA

Sir/Madam,

THE SOCIETIES ACT

I forward herewith a Certificate of Registration for your society.

2. I take this opportunity of drawing your attention to the salient requirements of the Act and the Rules; these are:

(1) To keep one or more books of account showing details of all moneys received and payments made by the society (rule 3).

(2) To keep a register of members showing the full name and address of each member, the date on which each member was admitted to membership and the date on which each member terminated such membership (rule 4).

(3) To submit to the Registrar of your district, that is your District Secretary, an annual return in duplicate on Form SO9 not later than the 31st March of each year (rule 16).

(4) To give notice to the Registrar of your district, that is your District Secretary, in duplicate on Form SO8 within fourteen days, of any change of office bearer (rule 15).

(5) To notify the Registrar of your district, that is your District Secretary, in duplicate on Form SO7 within a month, of any change in one society's name or of any of the provisions of its constitution or rules or of any addition or decrease on its objects, or if it becomes a branch of or affiliated to or connected with any organisation or group of a political nature established outside the country (section 15).

(6) To notify the Registrar of your district, that is your District Secretary, in duplicate on Form SO7 of any change of a society's postal address of or the situation of its registered office (section 32).

(7) To supply any of the information the Registrar may require under section 17 or 18 or rule 19.

Forms SO7, 8 and 9 can be obtained from the District Secretary of the district in which a society's offices are situated.

I am, Sir/Madam,
Your obedient servant,

G.K. CHAILA.
Registrar of Societies

THE CHAIRMAN,
BAHA'I FAITH (ZAMBIA).
WILLIAM MMUTHE BAHA'I INSTITUTE.
P.O. BOX 50467.
LUSAKA.

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS - 5 OCT 1988 REGISTRAR OF SOCIETIES

10m A480 2/80

13. Certificate of Registration by the Republic of Zambia of the William Mmuthe Maseltha Bahá'í Institute, dated 5 October 1988.



14. First Day Cover of a commemorative stamp issued by the Government of Western Samoa for Christmas 1988. There are four stamps in this series, the $2.00 stamp having the picture of the House of Worship in Apia.



15. The Postal Department in India has depicted the House of Worship in New Delhi on a postage stamp to mark the Diamond Jubilee of that city. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is featured on one of two stamps which portray well-known buildings in India's capital; October 1991.

4. THE GERMAN COURT'S LEGAL RECOGNITION OF ASSEMBLY STATUS

Department of the Secretariat 27 May 1991

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Decision of the German Federal Constitutional Court

In the Riḍván message of the Universal House of Justice, reference was made to an extremely significant decision of the Federal Constitutional Court in Germany. Since this decision may be of assistance to National Spiritual Assemblies in other countries where difficulties are experienced in obtaining recognition for the Faith, or where the Spiritual Assemblies meet with complications in acquiring legal incorporation, the House of Justice has instructed us to send you the enclosed three documents:

1. The decision of the Federal Constitutional Court, in German

2. A translation of this decision into English

3. An elucidation of the abbreviations used in the above

4. A brief outline of the background to the decision and indications of its importance, drawing on an article by Dr. Udo Schaefer published in "Bahá'í Nachrichten" (the newsletter of the German Bahá'í community).

We should mention that it proved very difficult indeed to translate the decision into English, since the forms and concepts of German Law differ radically from those of English Law. There is often, therefore, no exact equivalence of terminology. Nevertheless, the English translation is sufficiently faithful as to convey a clear impression of the original.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

For Department of the Secretariat

cc: International Teaching Centre
Boards of Counsellors

Leitsätze

zum Beschluß des Zweiten Senats vom 5. Februar 1991
– 2 BvR 263/86 –

1. Allein die Behauptung und das Selbstverständnis, eine Gemeinschaft bekenne sich zu einer Religion und sei eine Religionsgemeinschaft, können für diese und ihre Mitglieder die Berufung auf die Freiheitsgewährleistung des Art. 4 Abs. 1 und 2 GG nicht rechtfertigen; vielmehr muß es sich auch tatsächlich, nach geistigem Gehalt und äußerem Erscheinungsbild, um eine Religion und Religionsgemeinschaft handeln. Dies im Streitfall zu prüfen und zu entscheiden, obliegt—als Anwendung einer Regelung der staatlichen Rechtsordnung—den staatlichen Organen, letztlich den Gerichten.

2. a) Zur Religionsfreiheit im Sinne des Art. 4 Abs. 1 und 2 GG gehört auch die religiöse Vereinigungsfreiheit, wie sie sich aus dieser Bestimmung in Verbindung mit den einschlägigen, durch Art. 140 GG einbezogenen Weimarer Kirchenartikeln ergibt.

   b) Der Gewährleistungsinhalt der religiösen Vereinigungsfreiheit umfaßt die Freiheit, aus gemeinsamem Glauben sich zu einer Religionsgesellschaft zusammenzuschließen und zu organisieren. Damit ist kein Anspruch auf eine bestimmte Rechtsform gemeint, etwa die des rechtsfähigen Vereins oder einer sonstigen Form der juristischen Person; gewährleistet ist die Möglichkeit einer irgendwie gearteten rechtlichen Existenz einschließlich der Teilnahme am allgemeinen Rechtsverkehr.

BUNDESVERFASSUNGSGERICHT

– 2 BvR 263/86 –

IM NAMEN DES VOLKES

In dem Verfahren
über
die Verfassungsbeschwerden

1. des "Geistigen Rat der Bahá'í in Tübingen mit Sitz in Tübingen",
   vertr. durch den Vorsitzenden, Herrn S...,
2. des Herrn S ...,
3. der Frau S ...,
4. der Frau S ...

– Bevollmächtigte: Rechtsanwälte Dr. Michael Uechtritz,
Dr. Hans Schlarmann,
Birkenwaldstraße 149, Stuttgart 1 –

gegen a) den Beschluß des Oberlandesgerichts Stuttgart
vom 27. Januar 1986 – 8 W 252/85 –,
b) den Beschluß des Landgerichts Tübingen
vom 8. Mai 1985 – 5 T 34/84 (FGG) –,
c) die Beschlüsse des Amtsgerichts Tübingen
vom 8. Dezember 1983 und vom 2. Januar 1984 – GReg. II 922/83 –

hat das Bundesverfassungsgericht – Zweiter Senat – unter Mitwirkung der Richter

Vizepräsident Mahrenholz,
Böckenförde,
Klein,
Graßhof,
Kruis,
Franßen,
Kirchhof,
Winter

am 5. Februar 1991 beschlossen:

Die Beschlüsse des Oberlandesgerichts Stuttgart vom 27. Januar 1986 – 8 W 252/85 –, des Landgerichts Tübingen vom 8. Mai 1985 – 5 T 34/84 (FGG) – und des Amtsgerichts Tübingen vom 8. Dezember 1983 und vom 2. Januar 1984 – GReg. II 922/83 – verletzen die Beschwerdeführer in ihrem Grundrecht aus Artikel 4 Absatz 1 und 2 des Grundgesetzes. Sie werden aufgehoben. Die Sache wird an das Amtsgericht zurückverwiesen.

Das Land Baden-Württemberg hat den Beschwerdeführern die notwendigen Auslagen zu erstatten.

Gründe:

A.

Gegenstand der Verfassungsbeschwerden ist die Frage, wieweit es Art. 4 Abs. 1 und 2 GG gebietet, bei der Auslegung und Anwendung vereinsrechtlicher Vorschriften des Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuchs die Eigenart eines religiösen Vereins zu berücksichtigen, der sich als Teilgliederung einer Religionsgemeinschaft versteht und organisiert.

I.

Die Religionsgemeinschaft der Bahá'í, einer aus dem schiitischen Islam entstandenen Glaubensrichtung, ist in einer Vielzahl von Ländern vertreten. Sie ist hierarchisch gegliedert und wird derzeit durch das aus neun gewählten Mitgliedern bestehende "Universale Haus der Gerechtigkeit" mit Sitz in Haifa (Israel) geleitet. In Ländern mit einer größeren Anzahl von Ortsgemeinden wird jährlich von der Gesamtheit der Mitglieder ein neunköpfiger Nationaler Geistiger Rat in indirekter Wahl gewählt. Dieser ist in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland als eingetragener Verein errichtet; in anderen Staaten bedient er sich entsprechend den dort geltenden Gesetzen anderer vereins- oder gesellschaftsrechtlicher Rechtsformen. Als Leitungsorgane auf örtlicher Ebene werden von den Gläubigen der örtlichen Gemeinde ebenfalls aus neun Mitgliedern bestehende örtliche Geistige Räte gewählt, die für die Regelung der örtlichen Belange zuständig sind.

II.

1. Der Beschwerdeführer zu 2) ist Vorsitzender, die Beschwerdeführer zu 3) und 4) waren weitere Vorstandsmitglieder des Beschwerdeführers zu 1). Am 14. Februar 1983 meldete der Beschwerdeführer zu 2) als Vorsitzender des Vorstandes beim Amtsgericht Tübingen den Beschwerdeführer zu 1) zur Eintragung in das Vereinsregister an. Die dem Antrag zugrundeliegende Satzung enthält folgende, hier bedeutsame Vorschriften:

Artikel 2
Zweck des Vereins

I Der Zweck des Geistiges Rates der Bahá'í in Tübingen ist die Verwaltung aller Angelegenheiten der Bahá'í-Gemeinde in Tübingen nach den Lehren und Verwaltungsgrundsätzen der Bahá'í-Religion, wie sie sich aus dem der Satzung anschließenden Anhang ergeben. ...

II Der Geistige Rat verfolgt danach ausschließlich und unmittelbar gemeinnützige, mildtätige und religiöse Zwecke im Sinne des Abschnitts "Steuerbegünstigte Zwecke" der Abgabenordnung.

III Der Geistige Rat ist selbstlos tätig und verfolgt keine eigenwirtschaftlichen Zwecke.

Artikel 3
Entstehung der Mitgliedschaft

I ...

II Die Mitglieder des Geistigen Rates werden von den wahlberechtigten Mitgliedern der Bahá'í-Gemeinde aus deren Mitte in geheimer Wahl mit einfacher Stimmenmehrheit für die Dauer eines Jahres, längstens bis zur Wahl ihrer Nachfolger,

berufen. Diese Wahl findet am 21. April eines jeden Jahres auf der Jahrestagung der Bahá'í-Gemeinde statt. Das Nähere regelt Artikel 10.

III ...

Artikel 4
Beendigung der Mitgliedschaft

I Die Mitgliedschaft wird beendet
durch Zeitablauf und Neuwahl des Geistigen Rates,
durch Austritt,
durch Ausschluß,
durch Ausscheiden aus der Bahá'í-Gemeinde Tübingen.

II Der Ausschluß eines Mitgliedes des Geistigen Rates fällt in die Zuständigkeit des Nationalen Geistigen Rates der Bahá'í in Deutschland e.V.

Artikel 5
Nachwahl

I Ausfallende Mitglieder des Geistigen Rates werden auf einer zu diesem Zwecke durch den Geistigen Rat ordnungsgemäß einberufenen, besonderen Versammlung der Bahá'í-Gemeinde durch Wahl ergänzt. Solange die Zahl der Mitglieder des Geistigen Rates nicht unter 5 herabsinkt, bleibt seine Beschlußfähigkeit erhalten.

II Falls die Zahl der ausfallenden Mitglieder höher als vier ist, so daß der Geistige Rat nicht mehr beschlußfähig ist, wird die Wahl unter der Aufsicht des Nationalen Geistigen Rates vorgenommen.

Artikel 9
Mitgliederversammlung

I ...

II Alle folgenden Sitzungen werden durch den Sekretär des Geistigen Rates auf Antrag des Vorsitzenden oder bei dessen Verhinderung des stellvertretenden Vorsitzenden oder auf Antrag dreier Mitglieder des Rates formlos (schriftlich, telefonisch oder mündlich) einberufen oder durch Beschluß des Rates im voraus festgelegt. ...

III ...

IV ...

Artikel 11
Der Nationale Geistige Rat

I Die allen Geistigen Räten in der Bundesrepublik vorgeordnete Institution ist der Nationale Geistige Rat der Bahá'í in Deutschland e.V.
Er entscheidet
a) und b) ...;
c) über die Zuständigkeit eines örtlichen Geistigen Rates;
d) bis f) ...

Artikel 13
Satzungsänderungen

I ...

II Satzungsänderungen bedürfen der Genehmigung des Nationalen Geistigen Rates der Bahá'í in Deutschland e.V. Sie werden wirksam mit der Eintragung in das Vereinsregister.

Artikel 14
Auflösung

I Die Auflösung des Geistigen Rates kann erfolgen
  a) aufgrund eines mit absoluter Stimmenmehrheit gefaßten Beschlusses der Ratsmitglieder in einer ausschließlich zu diesem Zweck einberufenen Mitgliederversammlung,
  b) durch einen mit absoluter Stimmenmehrheit getroffenen Beschluß des Nationalen Geistigen Rates.

II Bei Auflösung des Geistigen Rates wird dessen Vermögen dem Nationalen Geistigen Rat der Bahá'í in Deutschland e.V. übereignet, der es unmittelbar und ausschließlich für gemeinnützige, mildtätige und religiöse Zwecke zu verwenden hat.

2. Das Amtsgericht wies im Eintragungsverfahren auf rechtliche Bedenken formeller und materieller Art hin und forderte zur Abhilfe auf. Dem Beschwerdeführer zu 1) ermangle es insbesondere an der erforderlichen rechtlichen Selbständigkeit, weil er in seinem Bestand einerseits von der örtlichen Gemeinde, andererseits vom Nationalen Geistigen Rat abhängig sei. Die Beschwerdeführer machten demgegenüber geltend, der institutionelle Aufbau der weltweiten Bahá'í-Gemeinschaft beruhe auf einem göttlichen Stiftungsakt und könne von ihnen nicht geändert werden. Da nach dem Verfassungsrecht der Bahá'í alle Jurisdiktionsgewalt bei den gewählten Körperschaften liege, müßten diese Rechtsfähigkeit erlangen, um im Rechtsverkehr tätig werden zu können. Den Eintragungsantrag wies das Amtsgericht mit Beschluß vom 8. Dezember 1983, eine weitere Anmeldung vom 22.12.1983 mit Beschluß vom 2. Januar 1984 zurück.

3. Die sofortige Beschwerde der Beschwerdeführer zu 2) bis 4) gegen die Beschlüsse des Amtsgerichts vom 8. Dezember 1983 und 2. Januar 1984 wies das Landgericht am 8. Mai 1985 als unbegründet zurück. Die vorgelegte Vereinssatzung verstoße gegen § 37 Abs. 1 BGB sowie gegen den Grundsatz der Vereinsautonomie. Art. 9 Abs. 2 der Satzung, der die Voraussetzungen für die Einberufung einer Mitgliederversammlung regle, werde dem durch § 37 Abs. 1 BGB geforderten Schutz der Minderheit nicht gerecht. Die Gesetzesvorschrift verlange, die Zahl der Mitglieder, auf deren Antrag eine Mitgliederversammlung einzuberufen sei, anteilsmäßig festzusetzen, damit auch künftigen Änderungen der Stärke des Vereins Rechnung getragen werde. Die Mitgliederzahl des Vereins könne bis auf fünf herabsinken, ohne daß Beschlußunfähigkeit eintrete. In diesem Fall repräsentiere die in Art. 9 Abs. 2 vorgesehene Zahl von drei Mitgliedern keine Minderheit mehr.

Vor allem aber enthalte die Satzung Regelungen, die eine organisationsrechtliche Abhängigkeit des Vereins von Dritten herbeiführten und deshalb mit dem Grundsatz der Selbständigkeit und Selbstverwaltung von Vereinen unvereinbar seien. Durch Art. 4 Abs. 2, 11 Abs. 1, 13 Abs. 2, 14 Abs. 1 Buchst. b und durch weitere Bestimmungen solle einerseits dem Nationalen Geistigen Rat als Nichtvereinsmitglied das Entscheidungsrecht über den Ausschluß von Mitgliedern, Satzungsänderungen, Vereinsauflösung und andere Vereinsbelange übertragen werden; andererseits solle nach Art. 3 Abs. 2 und 4 Abs. 1 die Bahá'í-Gemeinde durch Wahlen über den Erwerb und die Dauer der Mitgliedschaft bestimmen. Ein derart umfassender Fremdeinfluß auf die Organisation eines Vereins sei unzulässig.

4. Das Oberlandesgericht Stuttgart wies die sofortige weitere Beschwerde der Beschwerdeführer zu 2) bis 4) mit Beschluß vom 27. Januar 1986 (OLGZ 1986, S. 257) als unbegründet zurück. Art. 9 Abs. 2 der Satzung verletze § 37 Abs. 1 BGB, weil für eine mögliche Änderung der Mitgliederzahl nicht sichergestellt sei, daß die Einberufung der Mitgliederversammlung auf Verlangen einer Minderheit zu erfolgen habe. Die Satzung sei

überdies mit dem Grundsatz der Selbständigkeit und Selbstverwaltung des Vereins (Vereinsautonomie) nicht vereinbar. Art. 14 Abs. 1 Buchst. b, wonach der Nationale Geistige Rat den Verein auflösen könne, verstoße gegen § 41 BGB. Es sei nicht zulässig, einem außenstehenden Dritten das Recht zu übertragen, den Verein gegen den Willen seiner Mitglieder aufzulösen. Soweit die Rechtsprechung solche Bestimmungen vereinzelt als statthaft angesehen habe (KG, DJ 1936, S. 1948; OLG Karlsruhe, JW 1936, S. 3266; OLG Stuttgart, Das Recht 1936, Sp. 151), seien die Entscheidungen in nationalsozialistischer Zeit ergangen und überzeugten in der Begründung nicht. Die in Art. 3 Abs. 2 und Art. 4 Satz 1 der Satzung vorgesehene Wahl der Mitglieder durch die Bahá'í-Gemeinde verstoße gegen die §§ 38 und 58 Nr. 1 BGB. Zwar könne die Form des Beitritts eines neuen Mitglieds und die Aufnahmeerklärung in der Satzung beliebig geregelt und die Mitgliedschaft an bestimmte Voraussetzungen geknüpft werden. Es müsse jedoch grundsätzlich dem Verein freistehen, ob er jemanden als Mitglied aufnehmen wolle, sofern er nicht ausnahmsweise als existenzwichtiger Verein mit Monopolstellung zur Aufnahme von Mitgliedern verpflichtet sei. Abgesehen von diesen Einzelbestimmungen ergebe das Gesamtbild der Satzung einen so starken Fremdeinfluß, daß von einem eigenverantwortlichen Handeln des Vereins nicht mehr die Rede sein könne. Hierbei seien die Einwirkungsrechte des Nationalen Geistigen Rates nach Art. 4 Abs. 2 (Ausschluß eines Mitglieds), Art. 11 Abs. 1 Buchst. c (Entscheidungsbefugnis über die Zuständigkeit), Art. 13 Abs. 2 (Genehmigungsvorbehalt für Satzungsänderungen) und Art. 14 Abs. 2 (Übergang des Vermögens bei Vereinsauflösung auf den Nationalen Geistigen Rat) von Bedeutung. Die Satzung enthalte einen Verzicht auf die Vereinsautonomie, der mit dem geltenden Vereinsrecht nicht vereinbar sei.

III.

Die Verfassungsbeschwerden richten sich gegen die Beschlüsse des Oberlandesgerichts und des Landgerichts sowie—bei sachgerechter Auslegung der Verfassungsbeschwerde-Schrift—gegen beide Beschlüsse des Amtsgerichts. Die Beschwerdeführer haben hierzu ein Gutachten von Prof. Dr. Friedrich Müller vorgelegt und machen im wesentlichen geltend:

1. Die Verfassungsbeschwerden seien zulässig. Das erforderliche Rechtsschutzinteresse sei gegeben. Dem stehe nicht entgegen, daß die Zurückweisung des Eintragungsantrags auch auf eine Beanstandung des Art. 9 Abs. 2 der Satzung, zu dessen Änderung die Beschwerdeführer bereit seien, gestützt worden sei. Würde der Antrag nach der Änderung dieser Satzungsbestimmung erneut gestellt, so würde er wegen der anderen vom Oberlandesgericht beanstandeten Satzungsbestimmungen wieder abgelehnt werden, wobei voraussichtlich keine neue Sachprüfung stattfände.

2. Das Oberlandesgericht habe das Vereinsrecht des Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuchs unrichtig ausgelegt und hierbei insbesondere Inhalt und Tragweite der Art. 4 Abs. 1 und 2, Art. 140 GG in Verbindung mit Art. 137 Abs. 3, 4 WRV verkannt.

a) Entgegen der Auffassung des Oberlandesgerichts hindere § 41 Abs. 1 BGB nicht daran, das Recht, den Verein aufzulösen, auf einen Dritten zu übertragen. Dies gelte jedenfalls dann, wenn auch die Mitgliederversammlung diese Befugnis habe. Die Satzungsbestimmungen über die Wahl der Vereinsmitglieder durch die Bahá'í-Gemeinde und deren Ausscheiden infolge Neuwahl seien mit §§ 38 und 58 BGB vereinbar. Wie sich aus den §§ 25 und 40 BGB ergebe, stelle es das staatliche Recht in das Belieben des Vereins, derartige Regelungen zu treffen. Aus dem Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuch könnten auch keine Bedenken hergeleitet werden gegen die Kompetenz des Nationalen Geistigen Rates zum Ausschluß eines Mitglieds des örtlichen Geistigen Rates (Art. 4 Abs. 2 der Satzung) und zur

Bestimmung von dessen Zuständigkeit (Art. 11 Abs. 1 Buchst. c) sowie gegen die in Art. 13 Abs. 2 vorgesehene Genehmigungspflicht für Satzungsänderungen und die Übertragung des Vermögens des Geistigen Rates bei dessen Auflösung auf den Nationalen Geistigen Rat (Art. 14 Abs. 2). Insgesamt ließen die vom Oberlandesgericht beanstandeten Satzungsbestimmungen keinen unzulässigen Fremdeinfluß außenstehender Dritter auf den Beschwerdeführer zu 1) zu. Dessen Einbindung in den hierarchischen Aufbau der Religionsgemeinschaft der Bahá'í sei zwingend durch deren Grundsätze und Prinzipien vorgegeben, die auf göttlicher Offenbarung beruhten.

b) Die Versagung der Rechtsfähigkeit verletze den Beschwerdeführer zu 1) in seinen Grundrechten aus Art. 4 Abs. 1 und 2 GG und verstoße gegen Art. 140 GG in Verbindung mit Art. 137 Abs. 3 und 4 WRV. Von diesen Verfassungsbestimmungen sei auch der organisatorische Aufbau der Religionsgesellschaft erfaßt einschließlich des Rechts, für ein gemeindliches Leitungsorgan die Rechtsfähigkeit anzustreben. Für das hier maßgebliche Selbstverständnis der Bahá'í sei es unabdingbar, daß die Leitungsorgane der örtlichen Gemeinden, nicht aber die Gemeinden selbst, Rechtsfähigkeit erlangen. Das Grundgesetz räume in Art. 140 GG in Verbindung mit Art. 137 Abs. 2 bis 5 WRV den Religionsgemeinschaften ein grundsätzliches Wahlrecht in bezug auf die Rechtsform ein. Nachdem den Bahá'í der angestrebte Status einer Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts versagt werde, müsse dem Beschwerdeführer zu 1) die Rechtsfähigkeit nach bürgerlichem Recht zuerkannt werden. Selbst wenn die vom Oberlandesgericht gefundene Auslegung des Vereinsrechts für nichtreligiöse Vereine zutreffen sollte, wirke sie sich auf den Beschwerdeführer zu 1) aufgrund seiner religiösen Zielsetzung und der daraus zwingend folgenden Einbindung in die nationale und internationale Ordnung der Bahá'í härter aus als auf jene und könne daher für ihn nicht gelten.

Die Beschwerdeführer zu 2) bis 4) seien als Vorstandsmitglieder des Beschwerdeführers zu 1) in ihrem durch Art. 4 Abs. 2 GG geschützten Recht auf Wahrnehmung religionsgesellschaftlicher (Leitungs-)Aktivitäten verletzt.

IV.

Zu der Verfassungsbeschwerde haben sich der Bundesminister der Justiz und das Ministerium für Justiz, Bundes- und Europaangelegenheiten Baden-Württemberg geäußert. Beide halten die Verfassungsbeschwerde für unbegründet.

1. Der Bundesminister der Justiz trägt vor, aus Art. 4 Abs. 2 und Art. 140 GG in Verbindung mit Art. 137 Abs. 3 WRV könne nicht unmittelbar unter Berufung auf die Glaubensinhalte der Bahá'í-Religion ein Anspruch auf Erlangung der Rechtsfähigkeit für den Beschwerdeführer zu 1) hergeleitet werden. Art. 4 Abs. 2 GG verpflichte den Staat zur Respektierung des Glaubens und zum Schutz der Religionsausübung, nicht aber zur Schaffung rechtlicher Regelungen, die den jeweiligen Glaubensinhalten einzelner Religionsgesellschaften entsprächen. Fraglich sei bereits, ob Art. 137 Abs. 3 WRV den Erwerb der Rechtsfähigkeit durch den Beschwerdeführer zu 1) überhaupt erfasse; Art. 137 Abs. 4 WRV, der auf den Beschwerdeführer zu 1) als bloßer Untergliederung einer Religionsgemeinschaft allerdings nicht unmittelbar anwendbar sei, treffe nämlich gerade für diesen Bereich eine ausdrückliche Regelung. Jedenfalls könne der Geistige Rat die Rechtsfähigkeit nur nach den allgemeinen Vorschriften des bürgerlichen Rechtes erlangen; geringere Anforderungen, als sie Art. 137 Abs. 4 WRV für die Eintragung einer Religionsgesellschaft als Verein stelle, könnten insoweit nicht gelten. Die Gerichte hätten bei ihrer Entscheidung über die Eintragung des Beschwerdeführers zu 1) Bedeutung und Tragweite des Art. 140 GG in Verbindung mit Art. 137 Abs. 3 und 4 WRV nicht verkannt.

2. Nach Auffassung des Ministers für Justiz, Bundes- und Europaangelegenheiten Baden-Württemberg verstößt die Satzung nicht nur gegen einzelne Vorschriften des zwingenden Rechts. Sie weiche auch in ihrer Gesamtheit so erheblich von dem im Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuch geregelten Typus des autonomen Vereins ab und setze den Beschwerdeführer zu 1) so dominierenden Fremdeinflüssen aus, daß die Entscheidung des Oberlandesgerichts, gemessen an den vereinsrechtlichen Vorschriften des Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuchs, nicht beanstandet werden könne. Auch bei der gebotenen Berücksichtigung des einschlägigen Verfassungsrechts ergebe sich nichts anderes. Die Beschwerdeführer hätten auch bisher nicht schlüssig dargelegt, daß der Glaube der Bahá'í im einzelnen die Organisationsregeln fordere, die vom Oberlandesgericht als unvereinbar mit den Vorschriften des Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuchs erachtet wurden. Es liege vielmehr nahe, daß die Glaubenslehre eine gewisse Flexibilität in der Ausgestaltung der Organisationsstruktur einräume.

B.

Die Verfassungsbeschwerden sind zulässig.

1. Der Beschwerdeführer zu 1) ist zur Erhebung der Verfassungsbeschwerde befugt. Als Vereinigung von Personen kann er, unabhängig von gegebener Rechtsfähigkeit, die mögliche Verletzung eines Grundrechts geltend machen (vgl. BVerfGE 3, 383 <391>). Die Verfassungsbeschwerde betrifft gerade die Frage, ob dem Beschwerdeführer zu 1) die Eintragung als Verein und damit die Erlangung der Rechtsfähigkeit ohne Verletzung seines Grundrechts aus Art. 4 Abs. 1 und 2 GG verweigert werden darf.

Der Beschwerdeführer zu 1) behauptet, er werde in seiner Freiheit der Religionsausübung dadurch verletzt, daß ihm mit der Verweigerung seiner Eintragung in das Vereinsregister unmöglich gemacht werde, sich so zu organisieren, wie es seiner im wesentlichen durch den Glaubensinhalt der Bahá'í zwingend vorgegebenen inneren Verfassung entspreche. Damit ist der Schutzbereich des Grundrechts der Religionsfreiheit berührt. Das Vorbringen des Beschwerdeführers zu 1) ist auch hinreichend substantiiert; nach seinem Vortrag ist der Sach- und Lebensbereich der Religionsfreiheit betroffen und erscheint eine Verletzung des Gewährleistungsinhalts des Grundrechts möglich.

2. Die Beschwerdeführer zu 2) bis 4) bringen vor, die Ablehnung der Eintragung des Beschwerdeführers zu 1) mache es ihnen unmöglich, sich im Rahmen ihrer Glaubensgemeinschaft entsprechend den für die bindenden Vorgaben der ihr zuteil gewordenen Offenbarung zu organisieren und so ihre Religion auszuüben. Mit diesem Vortrag haben sie die Möglichkeit einer Verletzung ihres Grundrechts aus Art. 4 Abs. 1 und 2 GG, das gerade auch ein Individualgrundrecht ist, hinreichend dargetan. Daß die Beschwerdeführer zu 3) und 4) inzwischen nicht mehr dem örtlichen Geistigen Rat angehören, hat das ursprünglich bestehende Interesse an einer Sachentscheidung nicht entfallen lassen. Wie sich eine Änderung der Sachlage auf eine anhängige Verfassungsbeschwerde auswirkt, ist für den jeweiligen Einzelfall unter Berücksichtigung der Art des angegriffenen Hoheitsakts, der Bedeutung der geltend gemachten verfassungsrechtlichen Gewährleistung und der Zwecke des Verfassungsbeschwerde-Verfahrens zu entscheiden (BVerfGE 76, 1 <38>). Im vorliegenden Fall ist die grundsätzliche Bedeutung der aufgeworfenen verfassungsrechtlichen Frage und weiter zu berücksichtigen, daß die Beschwerdeführer zu 3) und 4) bei Wahlen erneut Mitglieder des örtlichen Geistigen Rates der Bahá'í werden können und weitere gerichtliche Verfahren bei erneuten Anträgen auf Eintragung in das Vereinsregister möglich sind (vgl. auch BVerfGE 21, 139 <143>).

3. Das Rechtsschutzbedürfnis für die Verfassungsbeschwerde fehlt nicht deshalb, weil das Oberlandesgericht seine Entscheidung auch auf die von den Beschwerdeführern nicht beanstandete Erwägung gestützt hat, Art. 9 Abs. 2 der Satzung gewährleiste hinsichtlich der Einberufung der Mitgliederversammlung nicht den von § 37 Abs. 1 BGB geforderten Minderheitenschutz. Insoweit handelt es sich ersichtlich um eine Frage, die im fachgerichtlichen Verfahren nur eine untergeordnete Rolle spielte. Die Beschwerdeführer sind zu einer Änderung der Satzung in diesem Punkt bereit. Es ist ihnen nicht zuzumuten, nach einer solchen Änderung erneut ein offensichtlich aussichtsloses Verfahren zu durchlaufen.

C.

Die Verfassungsbeschwerden sind begründet.

Die Entscheidungen der Gerichte werden der Bedeutung des in Art. 4 Abs. 1 und 2 GG in Verbindung mit Art. 140 GG/137 Abs. 2 und 4 WRV gewährleisteten Grundrechts der religiösen Vereinigungsfreiheit für die Auslegung (und Handhabung) des Vereinsrechts des Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuchs nicht gerecht und verletzen dadurch die Beschwerdeführer in ihren Grundrechten.

I.

Dem örtlichen Geistigen Rat der Bahá'í Tübingen und den Gläubigen der Bahá'í-Gemeinschaft steht das Grundrecht aus Art. 4 Abs. 1 und 2 GG zu. Zwar können nicht allein die Behauptung und das Selbstverständnis, eine Gemeinschaft bekenne sich zu einer Religion und sei eine Religionsgemeinschaft, für diese und ihre Mitglieder die Berufung auf die Freiheitsgewährleistung des Art. 4 Abs. 1 und 2 GG rechtfertigen; vielmehr muß es sich auch tatsächlich, nach geistigem Gehalt und äußerem Erscheinungsbild, um eine Religion und Religionsgemeinschaft handeln. Dies im Streitfall zu prüfen und zu entscheiden, obliegt —als Anwendung einer Regelung der staatlichen Rechtsordnung—den staatlichen Organen, letztlich den Gerichten, die dabei freilich keine freie Bestimmungsmacht ausüben, sondern den von der Verfassung gemeinten oder vorausgesetzten, dem Sinn und Zweck der grundrechtlichen Verbürgung entsprechenden Begriff der Religion zugrundezulegen haben. Im vorliegenden Fall braucht hierauf jedoch nicht näher eingetreten zu werden, da der Charakter des Bahá'í-Glaubens als Religion und der Bahá'í-Gemeinschaft als Religionsgemeinschaft nach aktueller Lebenswirklichkeit, Kulturtradition und allgemeinem wie auch religionswissenschaftlichem Verständnis offenkundig ist.

II.

Die Religionsfreiheit im Sinne des Art. 4 Abs. 1 und 2 GG umfaßt auch die religiöse Vereinigungsfreiheit, wie sie sich aus dieser Bestimmung in Verbindung mit den einschlägigen, durch Art. 140 GG einbezogenen Weimarer Kirchenartikeln ergibt.

1. Die religiöse Vereinigungsfreiheit ist in Art. 4 Abs. 1 und 2 GG nicht ausdrücklich benannt; eigens gewährleistet werden die Freiheit des Glaubens, des Gewissens, des religiösen und weltanschaulichen Bekenntnisses sowie die Freiheit der Religionsausübung. Nach der Rechtsprechung des Bundesverfassungsgerichts ist die in Art. 4 GG verbürgte Religionsfreiheit jedoch umfassend zu verstehen (vgl. BVerfGE 24, 236 <244 ff.>). Die Intention des Verfassungsgebers war nach der Erfahrung der Religionsverfolgung durch das

NS-Regime darauf gerichtet, Religionsfreiheit nicht nur in bestimmten Teilfreiheiten, sondern voll zu gewährleisten. Jedenfalls sollte keines der religiösen Freiheitsrechte, die als Ergebnis jahrhundertelanger geschichtlicher Entwicklung in der Weimarer Verfassung Anerkennung gefunden hatten, nunmehr ausgeschlossen sein. Zu diesen religiösen Freiheitsrechten gehörten die Glaubens- und Gewissensfreiheit einschließlich der Bekenntnisfreiheit, die Freiheit der privaten und öffentlichen Religionsausübung (Kultusfreiheit) und die religiöse Vereinigungsfreiheit (vgl. Art. 135, 136, 137 Abs. 2 WRV und G. Anschütz, Die Religionsfreiheit, in: Anschütz/Thoma (Hrsg.), HDStR, Bd. 2, 1932, § 106, S. 681 ff.).

Dies wird durch die Entstehungsgeschichte bestätigt. In den Beratungen des Parlamentarischen Rates enthielt der spätere Art. 4 seit der Vorlage des Grundsatzausschusses und der ersten Lesung im Hauptausschuß als Satz 2 des Abs. 1 ausdrücklich die Gewährleistung der religiösen Vereinigungsfreiheit ("Das Recht zur Vereinigung zu Religions- und Weltanschauungsgesellschaften wird anerkannt"). Erst in der vierten Lesung im Hauptausschuß am 4. Mai 1949—nach der Übernahme des Weimarer Kirchenkompromisses in das Grundgesetz—wurde dieser Satz mit der Begründung gestrichen, er sei nunmehr entbehrlich, weil Art. 137 Abs. 2 WRV Bestandteil des Grundgesetzes geworden sei (v.Doemming/Füßlein/Matz, Entstehungsgeschichte der Artikel des Grundgesetzes: JöR, N.F., Bd. 1, S. 73 ff.; Parl.Rat, HA-Prot., 57. Sitzung am 4.5.1949, S. 745). Daraus ergibt sich, daß nach dem Willen des Parlamentarischen Rats die religiöse Vereinigungsfreiheit verfassungsrechtlich gewährleistet sein und bleiben sollte. Es wäre diesem Befund und dem Willen des Verfassungsgebers gerade entgegengesetzt, ihr wegen der Herausnahme aus Art. 4, die nur erfolgte, um eine Doppelgewährleistung zu vermeiden, nunmehr die Zugehörigkeit zur grundrechtlich garantierten Religionsfreiheit abzusprechen. Vielmehr ist davon auszugehen, daß Art. 4 Abs. 1 und 2 GG sich für die Gewährleistung der religiösen Vereinigungsfreiheit auf Art. 140 GG/137 Abs. 2 WRV bezieht und sie in dessen normativem Gehalt mitumfaßt.

2. Der Gewährleistungsinhalt der religiösen Vereinigungsfreiheit umfaßt die Freiheit, aus gemeinsamem Glauben sich zu einer Religionsgesellschaft zusammenzuschließen und zu organisieren. Schon der Begriff der Religionsgesellschaft weist darauf hin, daß ein Zusammenschluß auf dem Boden der staatlichen Rechtsordnung gemeint ist und nicht etwa nur eine rein geistliche Kultgemeinschaft. Die Möglichkeit der Bildung einer Religionsgesellschaft soll den Weg eröffnen, sich als Vereinigung von Menschen zur Verwirklichung des gemeinsamen religiösen Zwecks zu organisieren, eine rechtliche Gestalt zu geben und am allgemeinen Rechtsverkehr teilzunehmen. Damit ist kein Anspruch auf eine bestimmte Rechtsform gemeint, etwa die des rechtsfähigen Vereins oder einer sonstigen Form der juristischen Person; gewährleistet ist die Möglichkeit einer irgendwie gearteten rechtlichen Existenz einschließlich der Teilnahme am allgemeinen Rechtsverkehr.

Dem entspricht es, daß Art. 140 GG in Verbindung mit Art. 137 Abs. 4 WRV den Religionsgesellschaften die Möglichkeit eröffnet und gewährleistet, die Rechtsfähigkeit nach den allgemeinen Vorschriften des bürgerlichen Rechts zu erwerben. Diese Vorschriften haben wie jedermann so auch die Religionsgesellschaften grundsätzlich zu beachten. Es verschlägt daher nichts, wenn eine Religionsgesellschaft oder eine ihrer Gliederungen wegen einer glaubensbegründeten besonderen Organisation eine bestimmte Rechtsform, die sie erstrebt, nicht erlangen kann. Die religiöse Vereinigungsfreiheit gebietet allerdings, das Eigenverständnis der Religionsgesellschaft, soweit es in den Bereich der durch Art. 4 Abs. 1 GG als unverletzlich gewährleisteten Glaubens- und Bekenntnisfreiheit wurzelt und sich in der durch Art. 4 Abs. 2 GG geschützten Religionsausübung verwirklicht, bei der Auslegung und Handhabung des einschlägigen Rechts, hier des Vereinsrechts des Bürgerlichen

Gesetzbuchs, besonders zu berücksichtigen (vgl. BVerfGE 53, 366 <401> m.w.N.). Das bedeutet nicht nur, daß die Religionsgesellschaft Gestaltungsspielräume, die das dispositive Recht eröffnet, voll ausschöpfen darf. Auch bei der Handhabung zwingender Vorschriften sind Auslegungsspielräume, soweit erforderlich, zugunsten der Religionsgesellschaft zu nutzen; dies darf allerdings nicht dazu führen, unabweisbare Rücksichten auf die Sicherheit des Rechtsverkehrs und auf die Rechte anderer zu vernachlässigen.

Unvereinbar mit der religiösen Vereinigungsfreiheit wäre ein Ergebnis, das eine Religionsgesellschaft im Blick auf ihre innere Organisation von der Teilnahme am allgemeinen Rechtsverkehr gänzlich ausschlösse oder diese nur unter Erschwerungen ermöglichte, die unzumutbar sind.

III.

Dem dargelegten normativen Gehalt der religiösen Vereinigungsfreiheit werden die angegriffenen Entscheidungen nicht gerecht. Das Vereinsrecht des Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuchs läßt es zu, besonderen Anforderungen an die innere Organisation Rechnung zu tragen, die sich aus der Eigenart von religiösen Vereinen ergeben, die Teilgliederungen einer Religionsgesellschaft sind oder mit ihr in besonderer Verbindung stehen. Dies ist, da den Bahá'í die Rechtsform der Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts nicht zur Verfügung steht (nachfolgend 1), im Blick auf den örtlichen Geistigen Rat aus Art. 4 Abs. 1 und 2 GG auch verfassungsrechtlich geboten (nachfolgend 2).

1. Die Bahá'í-Gemeinschaft kann die Eigenschaft als Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts gemäß Art. 140 GG/Art. 137 Abs. 5 WRV nicht erlangen. Mit dieser Organisationsform würden zwar die bestehenden Probleme gelöst, denn im Rahmen der "Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts", die im Regelungszusammenhang des Art. 137 Abs. 5 WRV nur als Mantelbegriff fungiert, ließe sich die Einfügung in eine hierarchische Struktur, wie sie für die Bahá'í von ihrer Glaubenslehre vorgegeben erscheint, organisatorisch voll verwirklichen. Das zeigt etwa das Beispiel der Römisch-Katholischen Kirche, für die insoweit eine hierarchische Organisationsstruktur bestimmend ist, die ohne Abstriche für das staatliche Recht Geltung gewinnt. So werden Pfarreien nach Anhörung des diözesanen Priesterrats allein durch den Ortsbischof errichtet und aufgelöst, ohne daß dafür der Rat oder die Zustimmung des Pfarrers, der Pfarrangehörigen oder eines von den Pfarrangehörigen gewählten Gremiums erforderlich wäre (Can. 515, § 2 i.V.m. Can. 127, §§ 1 und 2 CIC). Die Beschwerdeführer haben indes dargelegt, daß für die Bahá'í-Gemeinschaft nach den einschlägigen Empfehlungen der Kultusministerkonferenz und nach dem Ergebnis einer Anfrage beim Hessischen Kultusministerium die Anerkennung als Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts für sie nicht in Frage komme; sie habe im Jahre 1986 in der Bundesrepublik nur etwa 4.000 bis 5.000 Mitglieder, die sich zudem auf etwa 50 örtliche Bahá'í-Gemeinden verteilten. Es läßt sich nicht sagen, daß die Verweigerung der Anerkennung als Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts angesichts dieser Umstände im Blick auf die Kriterien des Art. 137 Abs. 5 WRV rechtsfehlerhaft oder gar mißbräuchlich wäre. Daher kann dahinstehen, ob die Bahá'í-Gemeinschaft, wäre die Erlangung der Eigenschaft einer Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts für sie möglich, ohne Einbuße in dem Freiheitsanspruch aus Art. 4 Abs. 1 und 2 GG darauf auch verwiesen werden könnte, oder ob ihr insoweit die Wahl der Rechtsform offenstünde.

2. Es ist im Rahmen des Vereinsrechts des Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuchs möglich und verfassungsrechtlich geboten, die glaubensbedingten Anforderungen an die innere Organisation des örtlichen Geistigen Rates der Bahá'í als religiöser Verein und Teilgliederung einer Religionsgesellschaft besonders zu berücksichtigen.

a) Die von den Gerichten mit dem Grundsatz der Selbständigkeit und Selbstverwaltung (Vereinsautonomie) für unvereinbar angesehenen Bestimmungen der vorgelegten Satzung über das Zustandekommen der Mitgliedschaft (Art. 3 Abs. 2), den Ausschluß von der Mitgliedschaft (Art. 4 Abs. 2) und die Auflösung des Vereins (Art. 14 Abs. 1 Buchst. b), die Erfordernisse einer Satzungsänderung (Art. 13 Abs. 2) und die Abgrenzung der Aufgaben des Vereins (Art. 11 Abs. 1 Buchst. c) betreffen nicht diejenigen Bestimmungen des Vereinsrechts, die im Interesse der Sicherheit und Klarheit des Rechtsverkehrs die nach außen wirkenden Angelegenheiten und Rechtsverhältnisse regeln (Bestellung und Abberufung des Vorstands, dessen Vertretungsmacht, Haftung des Vereinsvermögens, Liquidation bei Auflösung des Vereins u.a.m.). Sie beziehen sich allein auf die innere Organisation des Vereins.

b) Die beanstandeten Regelungen stehen nicht in Widerspruch zum Wortlaut vereinsrechtlicher Vorschriften über die innere Organisation des Vereins. Die in § 41 BGB geregelte Auflösung des Vereins durch Beschluß der Mitgliederversammlung wird nicht ausgeschlossen, sondern durch das Auflösungsrecht des Nationalen Geistigen Rates der Bahá'í ergänzt; über die Art und Weise des Zustandekommens der Mitgliedschaft enthält § 58 BGB ebensowenig eine Regelung wie über Ausschlußmöglichkeiten; die Bestimmung des § 33 BGB über Satzungsänderungen ist dispositiv (§ 40 BGB); über die Abgrenzung von Vereinsaufgaben besteht keine gesetzliche Regelung.

c) Die Gerichte begründen die Unzulässigkeit der genannten Satzungsbestimmungen denn auch allein aus der Unvereinbarkeit mit dem das Vereinsrecht prägenden Grundsatz der Vereinsautonomie. Dieser Grundsatz der Vereinsautonomie ist im Vereinsrecht des BGB nicht ausdrücklich festgelegt; er wird vielmehr durch Rechtsprechung und Lehre der Gesamtheit der Vorschriften entnommen, die die Konstituierung und Organisation des Vereins sowie die Wahrnehmung der Vereinsangelegenheiten auf den Willen der Vereinsmitglieder zurückführen, und als darin vorausgesetzt angesehen. Sein Ziel ist, der Privatautonomie vergleichbar, den Charakter des Vereins als eines vornehmlich von der Willensbestimmung und -betätigung seiner Mitglieder getragenen Personenverbandes zu wahren (KG, OLGZ 1974, S. 385 <387>; RGRK-Steffen, 12. Aufl., Rdnrn. 31 f. vor § 21, § 25 Rdnr. 1; Staudinger-Coing, 12. Aufl., Vorbem. zu §§ 21–54, Rdnr. 38 ; AK-Ott, § 25 Rdnrn. 15 f.; vgl. auch Flume, Allgemeiner Teil des Bürgerlichen Rechts I/2, 1983, S. 189 f.). Es gehört zu dieser Autonomie, den mit ihr ausgestatteten Einrichtungen das Recht einzuräumen, sich die ihren Zwecken entsprechende Organisation selbst zu geben und diese frei zu bestimmen, soweit dem nicht zwingende Vorschriften oder dem Wesen der entsprechenden Institution zu entnehmende Grundsätze entgegenstehen. In der Rechtsprechung wird hervorgehoben, daß diese Autonomie auch in der Weise ausgeübt werden kann, daß das Selbstverwaltungsrecht des Vereins satzungsmäßig beschränkt wird; auch eine solche Beschränkung stellt die Ausübung von Autonomie dar; es bedeutete daher eine Beschneidung von Autonomie, wenn solche Regelungen für unzulässig erklärt würden (vgl. KG, OLGZ 1974, S. 385 <387>; Dütz, 2. FS für Herschel, 1982, S. 55 <73 ff.>; a.A. Flume, a.a.O., S. 194 ff.).

Der Grundsatz der Vereinsautonomie, wie er in Rechtsprechung und Schrifttum verstanden wird, wird somit von zwei nicht notwendig parallel laufenden inhaltlichen Tendenzen geprägt: Einerseits schützt er die Autonomie in der Bildung und organisatorischen Gestaltung des Vereins nach der freien Selbstentscheidung der Mitglieder, wozu auch die Einfügung in eine hierarchisch organisierte Gemeinschaft gehören kann, andererseits bewahrt er die Selbstbestimmung des Vereins und seiner Mitglieder vor einer Entäußerung, die die eigene Willensbestimmung nahezu vollständig zum Erliegen bringt. Er schließt es nicht aus, ist vielmehr dafür offen, bei seiner Auslegung und Anwendung beide

Tendenzen unter Berücksichtigung des konkreten Falles, d.h. auch bezogen auf Zweckausrichtung und Eigenart des in Frage stehenden Vereins, zum Ausgleich zu bringen. So wird es mit der Vereinsautonomie für vereinbar gehalten, gestufte Verbände zu schaffen, innerhalb deren die Unterverbände—sei es als rechtsfähige, sei es als nichtrechtsfähige Vereine—zu Oberverbänden in Abhängigkeit stehen, ihren Vereinscharakter dadurch aber nicht verlieren, sofern sie auch eigenständig Aufgaben wahrnehmen (Reichert/ Dannecker/Kühr, Handbuch des Vereins- und Verbandsrechts, 4. Aufl. 1987, Rdnrn. 2098 ff.; Soergel-Hadding, Rdnrn. 53 vor § 21; BGHZ 90, S. 331).

d) Wird dabei die Eigenart religiöser Vereine, die sich als Teil einer Religionsgemeinschaft organisieren, bedacht, so liegt es im Blick auf die vielfach zu beobachtende glaubensgebundene hierarchische innere Organisation von Religionsgesellschaften nahe, daß Vereine, die Teilgliederungen von Religionsgesellschaften sind oder mit ihnen in besonderer Verbindung stehen, sich in die Hierarchie ihrer Religionsgemeinschaft einfügen wollen. Darin kann nicht ohne weiteres die Unterwerfung unter eine Fremdbestimmung von außen gesehen werden, die die Selbständigkeit und Selbstverwaltung des Vereins in ihrem Kern trifft.

aa) Die Autonomie in der Bildung und Organisation eines religiösen Vereins kann dahin betätigt werden, daß als Zweck des Vereins gewollt wird, eine Teilgliederung einer Religionsgemeinschaft zu sein und sich in deren religionsrechtlich bestimmte Struktur einzufügen. Solche selbstgesetzten Einordnungszwecke, die sich bei einem religiösen Verein gerade als Ausdruck der religiösen Selbstbestimmung der Mitglieder in ihrem gemeinsamen Glauben darstellen, müssen nicht schlechthin als Preisgabe der Selbstbestimmung des Vereins beurteilt werden. Die Grenze ist erst dort erreicht, wo Selbstbestimmung und Selbstverwaltung des Vereins nicht nur in bestimmten Hinsichten, wie sie sich aus der religionsrechtlich vorausgesetzten hierarchischen Einordnung ergeben, sondern darüber hinaus in weitem Umfang ausgeschlossen werden; der Verein würde dann nicht mehr vornehmlich vom Willen der Mitglieder getragen, sondern zur bloßen Verwaltungsstelle oder einem bloßen Sondervermögen eines anderen (vgl. KG, OLGZ 1974, S. 385 <390>; BayObLGZ 1979, S. 303 <308 ff.>).

Hiernach läßt es das Vereinsrecht zu, bei einem religiösen Verein, der sich als Teilgliederung einer Religionsgesellschaft konstituiert, Einschränkungen der autonomen Auflösungs-, Ausschließungs- oder Betätigungsbefugnis nicht als mit der Vereinsautonomie unvereinbare Fremdbestimmung von außen anzusehen, sofern sie der Sicherung der Einordnung in die größere Religionsgemeinschaft im Rahmen der bestehenden religionsrechtlichen Verknüpfung—etwa der Wahrung der Identität der Glaubenslehre und grundlegender glaubensbedingter Lebensführungspflichten—dienen und sich darauf begrenzen. Bei solcher Begrenzung der Eingriffsbefugnisse einer hierarchisch übergeordneten Instanz, die für sich nur eine Art Lehramt und entsprechende Jurisdiktionsbefugnisse beansprucht, bleibt noch ein hinreichender Bestand an Selbstbestimmung und Selbsttätigkeit des Vereins gewahrt.

bb) Indem die Gerichte den in der Satzung normierten Einfluß des Nationalen Geistigen Rates auf Bestand, Mitgliedschaft und Betätigung des örtlichen Geistigen Rates generell als unzulässige Fremdbestimmung des Vereins von außen ansehen, haben sie die Eigenart religiöser Vereine, die sich als Teilgliederung einer Religionsgesellschaft glaubensgebunden hierarchisch organisieren, und damit die Bedeutung des Grundrechts der religiösen Vereinigungsfreiheit für die Auslegung und Anwendung des Grundsatzes der Vereinsautonomie verkannt. Sie haben den Nationalen Geistigen Rat wie eine fremde, von anderen Zielen und Interessen bestimmte Organisation angesehen, die beherrschenden Einfluß ausübt, ohne die

durch die religionsrechtliche Verknüpfung gegebene Einheit und Gemeinsamkeit zu beachten. Nichts anderes gilt im Ergebnis hinsichtlich der Wahl der Mitglieder des örtlichen Geistigen Rates durch die Gläubigen der örtlichen Bahá'í-Gemeinde. Diese sind kraft der religionsrechtlichen Verknüpfung ebenfalls nicht Fremde, die den Verein einer andersgerichteten Bestimmung von außen unterwerfen und dadurch seine Selbstbestimmung aufheben; vielmehr steht diese Art der Begründung der Mitgliedschaft mit dem Zweck des Vereins, als hierarchische Leitungsinstanz die Angelegenheiten der örtlichen Bahá'í-Gemeinde zu verwalten (Art. 2 Abs. 1 der Satzung und die Präambel), in Einklang und dient gerade seiner Verwirklichung.

e) Ein unzulässiger Fremdeinfluß kann sich auch nicht daraus ergeben, daß bei Auflösung des Vereins durch den Nationalen Geistigen Rat das Vereinsvermögen diesem zufällt (Art. 14 Abs. 1 und 2 der Satzung). Zielrichtung dieser Satzungsbestimmung ist nicht, dem Nationalen Geistigen Rat unter Ausnutzung seiner Auflösungsbefugnis den Zugriff auf fremdes Vermögen zum Zweck eigener Vermögensmehrung zu eröffnen. Hiergegen spricht bereits, daß nach der Satzung keine Beiträge erhoben werden, die den Zweck einer Vermögensansammlung verfolgen; die Finanzierung des Vereins erfolgt allein durch freiwillige Spenden; zudem hat sich der Verein ausdrücklich den rechtlichen Bindungen der Gemeinnützigkeit unterstellt (Art. 2 Abs. 2 und 3 der Satzung).

IV.

Die genannten Entscheidungen verletzen danach die Beschwerdeführer in ihrem Grundrecht aus Art. 4 Abs. 1 und 2 GG in Verbindung mit Art. 140 GG/137 Abs. 2 und 4 WRV, indem sie die Eigenart des örtlichen Geistigen Rates als religiöser Verein und Teilgliederung einer Religionsgesellschaft bei der Auslegung und Anwendung des Begriffs der Vereinsautonomie nicht hinreichend berücksichtigen. Sie sind daher aufzuheben. Die Sache ist an das Amtsgericht zur erneuten Entscheidung zurückzuverweisen. Es wird dabei u.a. zu prüfen haben, ob das in der Satzung unbegrenzt formulierte Auflösungs- und Ausschließungsrecht durch den Nationalen Geistigen Rat schon durch den Zweck des Vereins und die Präambel der Satzung hinreichend eingeschränkt im Sinne der Darlegungen unter III 2 d) aa) erscheint oder ob es insoweit einer ausdrücklichen Festlegung in der Satzung bedarf.

Die Entscheidung über die Kosten folgt aus § 34a Abs. 2 BVerfGG.

Mahrenholz	Böckenförde	Klein
Graßhof	Kruis	Franßen
Kirchhof	Winter	

[TRANSLATION – FROM GERMAN]

Guiding Principles

for the decision of the Second Senate of 5th February 1991
– 2 BvR 263/86 –

1. A community's mere assertion and self-understanding of professing a religion and of being a religious community cannot justify reference for it and its members to the guarantee of religious freedom of Art. 4, par. 1 and 2 GG; rather it must be a religion and a religious community in fact, according to spiritual content and outward appearance. To examine and determine this in case of dispute is the duty of the organs of the State, of the courts in the final analysis, – in application of the ruling of the State's legal system.

2. a) To the freedom of religion in the meaning of Art. 4, par. 1 and 2 GG belongs also the freedom of religious association, arising from this regulation in connection with the relevant Weimar Church Articles included by Art. 140 GG.

   b) The guarantee of freedom of religious association contains also the freedom to form a religious association and organize according to one's common faith. This does not mean the right to a particular legal form, such as that of an incorporated association or some other form of corporation; what is guaranteed is the possibility of legal existence in some form or other, including participation in general legal proceedings.

[TRANSLATION – FROM GERMAN]

FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL COURT
– 2 BvR 263/86 –

IN THE NAME OF THE PEOPLE

In the Proceedings
on the
Constitutional Appeal

1. of the "Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Tübingen, with its seat in Tübingen", represented by the Chairman, Mr. S....
2. of Mr. S....
3. of Mrs. S....
4. of Mrs. S...

– Represented by: Attorneys Dr. Michael Uechtritz,
Dr. Hans Schlarmann,
Birkenwaldstraße 149, Stuttgart 1 –

against a) the decision of the High State Court Stuttgart
of 27 January 1986 – 8 W 252/85 –,
b) the decision of the State Court Tübingen
of 8 May 1985 – 5 T 34/84 (FGG) –,
c) the decision of the District Court Tübingen
of 8 December 1983 and of 2 January 1984 – GReg. II 922/83 –

the Federal Constitutional Court – Second Senate – with the participation of Judges
Vice-chairman Mahrenholz,
Böckenförde,
Klein,
Graßhof,
Kruis,
Franßen,
Kirchhof,
Winter

decided on 5 February 1991:

The Decisions of the High State Court Stuttgart of 27 January 1986 – 8 W 252/85 –, of the State Court Tübingen of 8 May 1985 – 5 T 34/84 (FGG) – and of the District Court Tübingen of 8 December 1983 and of 2 January 1984 – GReg. II 922/83 – violate the basic rights of the appellants accorded by Article 4, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Constitution. They are repealed. The case is referred back to the District Court.

The State of Baden-Württemberg has to reimburse the appellants for the necessary expenses.

Reasons :

A.

Subject of the Constitutional Appeal is the question to what extent Art. 4, par. 1 and 2 GG requires that the individuality of a religious association, considering and organizing itself as part of a religious community, must be taken into account in the interpretation and application of regulations of corporate law of the Code of Civil Law.

I.

The Religious Community of the Bahá'ís, constituting a religious movement arisen out of Shi'ih Islam, is represented in a multiplicity of countries. It is hierarchically organized and is currently governed by the "Universal House of Justice", consisting of nine elected members, with its seat in Haifa (Israel). In countries with a considerable number of local communities, a nine-member National Spiritual Assembly is elected annually in an indirect election by the totality of its members. In the Federal Republic of Germany this is established as a registered association; in other countries it makes use of other legal forms of association or incorporation according to the laws valid there. As governing bodies on a local level, Local Spiritual Assemblies also consisting of nine members are elected by the believers of the local community, and are responsible for regulating local affairs.

II.

1. The appellant under 2) is chairman, the appellants under 3) and 4) were further elected officers of the appellant under 1). On 14 February 1983 the appellant under 2) as chairman of the governing body applied to the District Court Tübingen for registration of the appellant under 1) in the Court's Register of Associations. The By-Laws on which this application is based contain the following regulations, which are significant here:

Article 2
Purpose of the Association

I The purpose of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Tübingen is the administration of all the affairs of the Bahá'í Community in Tübingen according to the teachings and administrative principles of the Bahá'í Religion, as they appear in the Appendix following the By-Laws. ...

II Accordingly the Spiritual Assembly exclusively and directly pursues charitable and religious purposes and purposes of public benefit in the sense of the paragraph on "Tax-favoured purposes" in Tax Law.

III The Spiritual Assembly acts in a disinterested capacity and does not pursue purposes for its own economic benefit.

Article 3
Establishment of Membership

I ...

II The members of the Spiritual Assembly are elected by the voting members of the Bahá'í Community from amongst their midst by secret ballot with simple plurality vote, for the duration of one year, or until the election of their successors. This

election takes place on 21 April of each year at the Annual Convention of the Bahá'í Community. Details are regulated by Article 10.

III ...

Article 4
Termination of membership

I Membership is terminated
by the expiration of time and new election of the Spiritual Assembly,
by resignation,
by removal,
by leaving the Bahá'í Community of Tübingen.

II The removal of a member of the Spiritual Assembly falls within the competence of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Germany.

Article 5
By-Election

I Vacancies in the membership of the Spiritual Assembly are replaced by election at a special meeting of the Bahá'í Community duly called by the Spiritual Assembly for this purpose. As long as the number of members of the Spiritual Assembly does not fall below 5, its decision-making competence is maintained.

II If the number of vacancies is higher than four, so that the Spiritual Assembly is no longer competent to make decisions, the election is carried out under the supervision of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Article 9
Meeting of the members

I ...

II All subsequent meetings are called informally (in writing, by telephone or orally) by the Secretary of the Spiritual Assembly at the request of the Chairman or, if he is prevented, by the Vice-chairman, or at the request of three members of the Assembly or by decision of the Assembly in advance. ...

III ...

IV ...

Article 11
The National Spiritual Assembly

I The institution superior to all the Spiritual Assemblies in the Federal Republic is the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Germany e.V.
It decides
a) and b) ...;
c) about the area of jurisdiction of the Local Spiritual Assembly;
d) to f) ...

Article 13
Amendment of the By-Laws

I ...

II Amendments to the By-Laws require the approval of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Germany. They become effective on registration in the Court's Register of Associations.

Article 14
Dissolution

I The dissolution of the Spiritual Assembly can result
a) from an absolute majority decision taken by the members of the Assembly in a meeting of the members called exclusively for this purpose,
b) from an absolute majority decision of the National Spiritual Assembly.

II In case of the dissolution of the Spiritual Assembly its assets are transferred to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Germany, which must use them directly and exclusively for charitable and religious purposes and purposes of public benefit.

2. The District Court indicated questionable legal points of a formal and material kind in the registration procedure and demanded rectification. The appellant under 1) was stated to lack particularly the necessary legal independence, because its existence is dependent on the one hand on the local community, and on the other on the National Spiritual Assembly. The appellants counter-claimed that the institutional structure of the world-wide Bahá'í Community rests on a divine foundation and cannot be changed by them. As, according to the Constitutional Law of the Bahá'ís, all power of jurisdiction lies with the elected bodies, these should be given legal capacity in order to be able to participate in legal proceedings. The District Court rejected the application for registration with the decision of 8 December 1983, and another application of 22.12.1983 with the decision of 2 January 1984.

3. The immediate appeal of the appellants under 2) to 4) against the decisions of the District Court of 8 December 1983 and 2 January 1984 was rejected as unjustified by the State Court on 8 May 1985. The Association's By-Laws presented were stated to violate § 37 par. 1 BGB, as well as the principle of corporate autonomy. Art 9 par. 2 of the By-Laws, which gives the provisions for calling a meeting of the members, was stated not to do justice to the protection of the minority called for in § 37 par. 1 BGB. The legal provision demands that the number of members at whose request a meeting of the members is to be called be fixed proportionately, so that allowance will be made for future changes in the strength of the Association. The membership of the Association could drop to five without resulting in legal incapacity to make decisions. In this case the number of three members fixed in Art. 9 par. 2 no longer represents a minority.

Above all it was pointed out that the By-Laws contain regulations leading to a legal and organizational dependence of the Association on a third party and are thus incompatible with the principle of independence and self-administration of associations. On the one hand through Art. 4 par. 2, 11 par. 1, 13 par. 2, 14 par. 1 letter b, and through further regulations, the National Spiritual Assembly as a non-member of the Association is to be given the right of decision-making in the removal of members, amendment of the By-Laws, dissolution of the Association and other matters concerning the Association; on the other hand the Bahá'í Community is to decide through elections on the establishment and the duration of the membership, according to Art. 3 par. 2 and 4 par. 1. Such wide-ranging influence by a third party in the organization of an association is inadmissible.

4. The High State Court Stuttgart rejected as unjustified the further appeal of the appellants under 2) to 4) with decision of 27 January 1986 (OLGZ 1986, p. 257). It noted that Art. 9 par. 2 of the By-Laws violates § 37 par. 1 BGB, because it does not ensure, with a possible change in the number of members, that the call for a meeting of the members has to follow the request of a minority. The By-Laws are furthermore not reconcilable with the principle of independence and self-administration of the Association (corporate autonomy). Art. 14

par. 2 letter b, according to which the National Spiritual Assembly can dissolve the Association, violates § 41 BGB. It is inadmissible to give the right to an external third party to dissolve the Association against the wish of its members. Insofar as jurisprudence had judged such regulations in individual cases to be admissible (KG, DJ 1936, p. 1948; OLG Karlsruhe, JW 1936, p. 3266; OLG Stuttgart, Das Recht [The Law] 1936, col. 151), these decisions had been made in the time of National Socialism and their reasoning was not convincing. The election of the members by the Bahá'í Community, as envisaged in Art. 3 par. 2 and Art. 4 par. 1 of the By-Laws, violates §§ 38 and 58 No. 1 BGB. The form by which a new member joins and the declaration of acceptance could indeed be regulated in the By-Laws in any way that is desired, and membership can be tied to certain pre-conditions. But in principle the Association is to be free to decide whether to accept someone as a member, as long as it is not, as a vitally important Association with monopoly status, exceptionally obliged to accept members. Apart from these individual regulations, the overall picture of the By-Laws shows such a strong third-party influence that there can no longer be a question of autonomous action on the part of the Association. Significant hereby are the National Spiritual Assembly's rights of intervention, according to Art. 4 par. 2 (removal of a member), Art. 11 par. 1 letter c (right of decision-making on the area of jurisdiction), Art. 13 par. 2 (reserving approval for amendment of the By-Laws), Art. 14 par. 2 (transfer of the assets to the National Spiritual Assembly in case of the dissolution of the Association). The By-Laws contain a renunciation of the autonomy of the Association not in accordance with corporate law.

III.

The Constitutional Appeals are addressed against the decisions of the High State Court and of the State Court as well as—in the relevant interpretation of the brief of the Constitutional Appeal—against both decisions of the District Court. The appellants presented an expert opinion by Prof. Dr. Friedrich Müller on this and claim essentially:

1. The Constitutional Appeals are admissible. The required interest for legal protection is established. This is not contravened by the fact that the rejection of the application to register was based also on an objection to Art. 9 par. 2 of the By-Laws, which the appellants had agreed to change. Should an application again be made after amendment of this provision of the By-Laws, it would again be rejected because of the other provisions of the By-Laws which were questioned by the High State Court, in which case there would probably be no re-examination of the case.

2. The High State Court has interpreted the corporate law of the Code of Civil Law incorrectly, and has especially misunderstood the content and significance of Art. 4 par. 1 and 2, Art. 140 GG in connection with Art. 137 par. 3, 4 WRV.

a) Contrary to the interpretation of the High State Court § 41 par. 1 BGB does not prevent the transfer to a third party of the right to dissolve the Association. This is certainly true when the assembly of the members has this right as well. The provisions of the By-Laws for the election of the members of the Association by the Bahá'í Community and the termination of their membership due to new elections are in accordance with §§ 38 and 58 BGB. As is shown from §§ 25 and 40 BGB, State Law leaves it to the Association to make such provisions. No objections can be derived from the Code of Civil Law either against the competence of the National Spiritual Assembly to remove a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly (Art. 4 par. 2 of the By-Laws), or to the definition of its area of jurisdiction (Art. 11 par. 1 letter c), or to the duty of approval for amendment of the By-Laws provided for in

Art. 13 par. 2, or to the transfer of assets of the Spiritual Assembly in case of its dissolution to the National Spiritual Assembly (Art. 14 par. 2). Altogether the provisions of the By-Laws contested by the High State Court did not grant an inadmissible outside influence of a third party on the appellant under 1). Its integration in the hierarchical structure of the Religious Community of the Bahá'ís is of necessity given by its rules and principles, which are based on divine Revelation.

b) The denial of legal capacity violates the constitutional rights of the appellant under 1) as derived from Art. 4 par. 1 and 2 GG and violates Art. 140 GG in connection with Art. 137 par. 3 and 4 WRV. These provisions of the Constitution comprehend an organizational structure for a religious community, including the right to seek legal capacity for an administrative institution of the community. In the understanding of the Bahá'ís, which is relevant here, it is an unyieldable principle that the administrative institutions of the local communities, but not the communities themselves, should attain legal capacity. The Constitution in Art. 140 GG in connection with Art. 137 par. 2 to 5 WRV gives religious communities the basic right of choice as regards their legal form. Since the Bahá'ís were denied the status of 'Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts' [Corporate Body under Public Law] which they sought, the appellant under 1) must be granted legal capacity under Civil Law. Even if the High State Court's interpretation of corporate law for non-religious associations should be correct, its effect on the appellant under 1) is more serious because of his religious aims and the necessity of integration in the national and international order of the Bahá'ís which they require, and thus it cannot be applied to him.

The appellants under 2) to 4) as officers of appellant under 1) suffer violation of their right, protected by Art. 4 par. 2 GG, to carry out administrative activities for the religious community.

IV.

On the Constitutional Appeal the Federal Minister of Justice and the Ministry for Justice, Federal and European Affairs of Baden-Württemberg have given their opinion. Both consider the Constitutional Appeal unjustified.

1. The Federal Minister of Justice explains that the right to be granted legal capacity for the appellant under 1) cannot directly be derived from Art. 4 par. 2 and Art. 140 GG in connection with Art. 137 par. 3 WRV by referring to the contents of belief of the Bahá'í Religion. Art. 4 par. 2 GG obliges the State to respect belief and to protect the practice of religion, but not to create legal regulations which correspond to the particular contents of belief of individual religious communities. It is questionable whether Art. 137 par. 3 WRV covers the attainment of legal capacity by the appellant under 1); Art. 137 par. 4 WRV, which is not directly applicable to the appellant under 1) as a mere sub-organization of a religious community, gives an explicit regulation just for this area. In any case, the Spiritual Assembly can attain legal capacity only according to the general prescriptions of Civil Law; lesser requirements than those demanded in Art. 137 par. 4 WRV for the registration of a religious community as an association, could not apply in this case. The Courts, in their decision on the registration of the appellant under 1), have not misunderstood the meaning and significance of Art. 140 GG in connection with Art. 137 par. 3 and 4 WRV.

2. According to the view of the Minister of Justice, Federal and European Affairs of Baden-Württemberg, the By-Laws violate not only individual regulations of the compulsory law. They also depart significantly in their totality from the type of autonomous association regulated in the Code of Civil Law, and so expose the appellant under 1) to dominating

third-party influences, that the decision of the High State Court cannot be contested in the light of the regulations of corporate law of the Code of Civil Law. Even when taking the relevant Constitutional Law into necessary consideration, no other result can obtain. The appellants have not so far proven conclusively that the belief of the Bahá'ís demands in particular the organizational rules considered irreconcilable with the regulations of the Code of Civil Law. It is suggested rather that the teachings of the Faith grant a certain flexibility in the arrangement of details of the organizational structure.

B.

The Constitutional Appeals are admissible.

1. The appellant under 1) is entitled to make the Constitutional Appeal. As a union of persons he can, independent of given legal capacity, claim the possible violation of a constitutional right (cf. BVerfGE 3, 383 <391>). The Constitutional Appeal specifically concerns the question whether the appellant under 1) can be denied registration as an association and thus the attainment of legal capacity, without violation of his constitutional right from Art. 4 par. 2 and 2 GG.

The appellant under 1) asserts that his freedom of religious practice is violated by the fact that with the denial of his registration in the Court's Register of Associations it has been made impossible for him to organize in accordance with the internal constitution prescribed essentially and imperatively by the belief of the Bahá'ís. Thus the protection of the Constitutional Law of religious freedom is infringed. The claim of the appellant under 1) is adequately substantiated; according to his presentation the material and vital areas of religious freedom are concerned and there appears a possible violation of the guarantee of the Constitutional Law.

2. The appellants under 2) to 4) claim that the denial of registration to the appellant under 1) makes it impossible for them to organize themselves in the framework of their religious community according to the binding prescriptions of the Revelation underlying it, and thus to practise their religion. With this presentation they have sufficiently proven the possibility of a violation of their constitutional right from Art. 4 par. 1 and 2 GG, which is also an individual constitutional right. That the appellants under 3) and 4) no longer belong to the Local Spiritual Assembly, has not lessened their original interest in a decision of the case. How a change in the situation affects a Constitutional Appeal already made, is to be decided in each individual case, taking into consideration the contested act of sovereignty underlying the appeal, the significance of the constitutional guarantee appealed to and the purposes of the Constitutional Appeal (BVerfGE 76, 1 <38>). In the present case the basic significance of the Constitutional Question brought up is to be considered, and further, that the appellants under 3) and 4) can again become members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís in elections, and further court proceedings in case of renewed applications for registration in the Court's Register of Associations are possible (cf. also BVerfGE 21, 139 <143>).

3. The legitimate interest to take legal action as basis for the Constitutional Appeal is not vitiated through the High State Court's having based its decision also on the consideration not contested by the appellants, namely that Art. 9 par. 2 of the By-Laws does not guarantee, as regards calling a meeting of the members, the protection of minorities required in § 37 par. 1 BGB. Thus, this is obviously a question which plays only a subordinate role in the court proceedings. The appellants are ready to amend the By-Laws on this point. They cannot be expected to again go through a hopeless application after such an amendment.

C.

The Constitutional Appeals are justified.

The decisions of the Courts do not do justice to the significance of the constitutional right of freedom of religious association, guaranteed in Art. 4 par. 2 and 2 GG in connection with Art. 140 GG/137 par. 2 and 4 WRV, for the interpretation (and application) of the corporate law of the Code of Civil Law, and they thereby violate the constitutional rights of the appellants.

I.

The Local Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Tübingen and the believers of the Bahá'í Community are entitled to the constitutional right from Art. 4 par. 1 and 2 GG. A community's mere assertion and self-understanding of professing a religion and of being a religious community cannot justify reference for it and its members to the guarantee of religious freedom of Art. 4, par. 1 and 2 GG; rather it must be a religion and a religious community in fact, according to spiritual content and outward appearance. To examine and determine this in case of dispute is the duty of the organs of the State, of the courts in the final analysis,—in application of the ruling of the State's legal system. These cannot decide freely in such a case, but must base their decision on the concept of religion to which the meaning and purpose of the fundamental guarantee refers, as intended or set forth in the Constitution. In the present case it is not necessary to go more deeply into this, as the character of the Bahá'í Faith as a religion and of the Bahá'í Community as a religious community is evident, in actual everyday life, in cultural tradition, and in the understanding of the general public as well as of the science of comparative religion.

II.

Religious freedom in the meaning of Art. 4 par. 1 and 2 GG also includes freedom of religious association as it follows from this regulation in connection with the relevant Weimar Church Articles which are included by Art. 140 GG.

1. Freedom of religious association is not expressly mentioned in Art. 4 par. 1 and 2 GG; specifically guaranteed are freedom of religion, conscience, religious and ideological belief, as well as the freedom of religious practice. According to the judgements of the Federal Constitutional Court the freedom of religion guaranteed in Art. 4 GG has to be understood in a comprehensive manner (cf BVerfGE 24, 236 <244 ff.>). The intention of the framer of the Constitution, after the experience of religious persecution by the National Socialist regime, was aimed at guaranteeing freedom of religion not just as particular partial freedoms, but fully. In any case none of the rights to religious freedom, which had been recognized in the Weimar Constitution as the result of hundreds of years of historical development, should now be excluded. A part of these rights to religious freedom was freedom of religion and conscience, including freedom of belief, freedom of private and public religious practice (freedom of worship) and freedom of religious association (cf. Art. 135, 136, 137 par. 2 WRV and G. Anschütz, Die Religionsfreiheit [The Freedom of Religion], in: Anschütz/Thoma (Publ.) HDStR, vol. 2, 1932, § 106, p. 681 ff.).

This is confirmed by the history of its development. In the consultations of the Parliamentary Council, what was later to be Art. 4 expressly contained the guarantee of the freedom of

religious association ("The right of association for religious and ideological societies is recognized"), from its presentation by the Committee of Principles and the first reading in the Main Committee as sentence 2 of par. 1. Only in the fourth reading in the Main Committee on 4 May 1949—after inclusion of the Weimar Church Compromise into the Constitution—this sentence was deleted with the reasoning that it is now unnecessary, because Art. 137 par. 2 WRV is now part of the Constitution (v.Doemming/ Füsslein/Matz, Entstehungsgeschichte der Artikel des Grundgesetzes [History of the Development of the Articles of the Constitution]: JöR, N.F., vol. 1, p. 73 foll.; Parl.Council, HA-Prot., 57th meeting on 4.5.1949, p. 745). From this it follows, according to the intention of the Parliamentary Council, that freedom of religious association is, and is to continue to be, guaranteed in Constitutional Law. It would be totally opposed to this ruling and to the intention of the framer of the Constitution, if it [freedom of religious association] were to be denied merely because of its deletion from Art. 4 which was only made in order to avoid a double guarantee, since it is part of the freedom of religion guaranteed in Constitutional Law. It is rather to be deduced that Art. 4 par. 1 and 2 GG refers for its guarantee of the freedom of religious association to Art. 140 GG/137 par. 2 WRV and includes its normative content.

2. The guarantee of freedom of religious association includes the freedom to form and organize as a religious association based on a common Faith. Even the concept of religious association points to the fact that a union on the basis of State Law is intended, and not just a mere spiritual community of worship. The possibility of forming a religious association is to open the way to organizing as a union of people for the realization of a common religious purpose, to give some legal form, and to participate in general legal proceedings. This is not meant as a right to a particular legal form, such as that of an incorporated association or some other form of legal person; guaranteed is, however, the possibility of a legal existence in some form or other, including participation in general legal proceedings.

It is in conformity with this that Art. 140 GG in connection with Art. 137 par. 4 WRV opens and guarantees to religious communities the possibility of acquiring legal capacity according to the general conditions of Civil Law. These conditions have to be observed by everyone on principle, including religious communities. Nothing is therefore lost, if a religious community or one of its parts cannot acquire a particular legal form it is aspiring to, because of a special organization rooted in its belief. Freedom of religious association demands, however, that the self-understanding of the religious community, insofar as it is rooted in the freedom of religious belief and confession guaranteed in Art. 4 par. 1 GG and is realized in the practice of the religion protected by Art. 4 par. 2 GG, is to be especially considered in the interpretation and application of the relevant law, here of corporate law of the Code of Civil Law (cf. BverfGE 53, 366 <401> m.w.N.). This means not only that the religious community is allowed to make full use of the leeway in organization opened to it by Dispositive Law [i.e. Law that is amenable to negotiation]. Even in the application of compulsory regulations leeways of interpretation are to be used in favour of the religious community if necessary; this must not, however, lead to neglect of imperative consideration of the security of legal proceedings or of the rights of others.

It would be incompatible with the freedom of religious association, if a religious community, in view of its internal organization, were to be denied participation in general legal proceedings entirely, or this were made possible only under unacceptable conditions

III.

The contested decisions do not satisfy the normative content of the freedom of religious association described. The corporate law of the Code of Civil Law admits of taking into account special requirements of internal organization resulting from the individuality of religious associations which are a part of a religious community or in some special relationship to it. Since the legal form of a 'Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts' [Corporate Body under Public Law] is not available to the Bahá'ís (1 following), this is applicable to the Local Spiritual Assembly, from Art. 4 par. 1 and 2 GG (2 following).

1. The Bahá'í Community cannot acquire the character of a Corporate Body under Public Law according to Art. 140 GG/Art. 137 par. 5 WRV. With this form of organization the existing problems would be solved, because in the framework of a "Corporate Body under Public Law" which in connection with the regulations of Art. 137 par. 5 WRV functions only as a blanket concept, the inclusion into a hierarchical structure, as it appears to be given for the Bahá'ís in their belief, could be fully realized organizationally. This is shown, for example, in the case of the Roman Catholic Church, for which a hierarchical organizational structure is determined which acquires validity in State Law without diminution. Thus, church parishes are established or dissolved by the local bishop alone, after a hearing in the Diocesan Council of Priests, without the advice or the agreement of the priest or the congregation of the church or of a body selected by the congregation being necessary (Can. 515, § 2 i.V.m. Can. 127, §§ 1 and 2 CIC). The appellants have, however, shown that recognition as a Corporate Body under Public Law is out of the question for the Bahá'í Community, according to the relevant recommendations of the Conference of the Ministers of Religion and as the result of an enquiry to the Ministry of Religion of Hessen; it had only about 4,000 to 5,000 members in the Federal Republic in the year 1986, who moreover were divided among approximately 50 local Bahá'í communities. It cannot be said that the denial of recognition as a Corporate Body under Public Law is legally incorrect or even wrong in view of these circumstances and of the criteria of Art. 137 par. 5 WRV. Therefore it is uncertain whether the Bahá'í Community, were the acquisition of the character of a Corporate Body under Public Law possible for it, could be referred to it without losing its right to freedom granted in Art. 4 par. 1 and 2 GG, or would have a choice of legal form.

2. It is possible in the framework of the corporate law of the Code of Civil Law, and it is demanded by Constitutional Law, that the religious requirements for the internal organization of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís as a religious association and as part of a religious community be especially considered.

a) The regulations of the By-Laws presented, which were considered by the Courts to be incompatible with the principle of independence and self-administration (autonomy of the Association), on the establishment of membership (Art. 3 par. 2), removal from membership (Art. 4 par. 2) and the dissolution of the Association (Art. 14 par. 1 letter b), the requirements for amendment of the By-Laws (Art. 13 par. 2) and the definition of the tasks of the Association (Art. 11 par. 1 letter c), do not concern those regulations of corporate law which, in the interest of the security and clarity of legal proceedings, regulate the affairs and legal relations with external effects (appointment or removal of the officers, their power of representation, liability of the assets of the Association, liquidation in case of dissolution of the Association etc). They refer solely to the internal organization of the Association.

b) The regulations contested are not in contradiction to the wording of the regulations of corporate law on the internal organization of the Association. The dissolution of the Association regulated in § 41 BGB by decision of the general meeting of members is not excluded

but supplemented by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís' right of dissolution; on neither the manner of the establishment of membership, nor on the possibilities for removal, does § 58 BGB contain any regulation; the regulation of § 33 BGB on amendment of the By-Laws is dispositive [not obligatory] (§ 40 BGB); on the definition of the tasks of the Association there is no legal regulation.

c) The courts justify the inadmissibility of the mentioned By-Laws merely on the basis of their incompatibility with the principle of corporate autonomy characterizing corporate law. This principle of corporate autonomy is not expressly laid down in the corporate laws of the BGB; rather it is deduced from jurisprudence and from the doctrine of the totality of regulations, which trace back the bringing into being and organization of an association, as well as the conduct of its affairs, to the will of the members of the association. Its aim, similar to that of private autonomy, is to preserve the character of the association as a union of persons carried on mainly by the will and action of its members (KG, OLGZ 1974, p. 385 <387>; RGRK-Steffen, 12th ed., marginal No. 31 f. before § 21, § 25 marginal No. 1; Staudinger-Coing, 12th ed., introd. remark to §§ 21–54, marginal No. 38; AK-Ott, § 25 marginal No. 15 f.; cf. also Flume, Allgemeiner Teil des Bürgerlichen Rechts [General Part of Civil Law] I/2, 1983, p. 189 f.). Part of this autonomy is to give institutions which are provided with it the right to give themselves the organization suitable to their aims, and to freely determine it, as long as there are no binding provisions or principles derived from the character of the particular institution which are contrary to it. It is emphasized in jurisdiction that this autonomy can also be practised in such a way, that the right of self-administration of the association is limited by its Constitution; such a limitation also represents a practice of autonomy; it is therefore a curtailment of autonomy when such regulations are declared inadmissible (cf. KG, OLGZ 1974, p. 385 <387>; Dütz, 2. FS for Herschel, 1982, p. 55 <73 ff.>; a.A. Flume, a.a.O., p. 194 ff.).

The principle of corporate autonomy, as it is understood in legal judgements and literature, is thus marked by two tendencies in regard to its content, which do not necessarily run parallel: on the one hand it protects autonomy in the formation of the organizational structure of the association according to the free self-determination of the members, to which can also belong integration in a hierarchically organized community; on the other hand it protects the self-determination of the association and its members from a renunciation which almost totally defeats their own self-determination. It does not exclude the possibility, rather it opens up the way, to an equalization in the interpretation and application of both tendencies, by taking into consideration the concrete case, i.e. in relation to the aims and individuality of the Association in question. Thus it is considered consistent with corporate autonomy, to create associations at different levels, inside which the lower-level associations—be they of legal capacity or not—are in a relation of dependency to the superior associations, but do not thereby lose their character as associations, as long as they also pursue tasks independently (Reichert/ Dannecker/Kühr, Handbuch des Vereins- und Verbandsrechts [Handbook of the Law governing Associations and Unions], 4th ed. 1987, marginal No. 2098 ff.; Soergel-Hadding, marginal No. 53 before § 21; BGHZ 90, p. 331).

d) If, in this connection, one considers the individuality of religious associations which are organized as parts of a religious community, it is obvious, in view of the frequently observable hierarchical internal organization rooted in the belief of religious communities, that associations which are part of religious communities, or in a particular relationship to them, wish to be integrated into the hierarchy of their religious community. This cannot automatically be considered as submission to outside third-party influence which threatens the essential independence and self-administration of the association.

aa) Autonomy in the formation and organization of a religious association can be practised in such a way, that one of the aims of the association is to be part of a religious community and to integrate into the structure determined by its religious laws. Such self-determined aims of integration which, in the case of a religious association, may well represent an expression of the religious self-determination of the members in their common Faith, must not be judged simply as surrender of the self-determination of the association. A limit is reached only when the self-determination and self-administration of the association is ruled out, not only in certain respects as a consequence of the hierarchical integration arising from the religious law, but greatly beyond that; the association would then no longer be carried on mainly by the will of its members, but would become a mere administrative centre or would be run for the separate estate of another party (cf. KG, OLGZ 1974, p. 385 <390>; BayObLGZ 1979, p. 303 <308 ff.>).

According to the above, corporate law permits, in the case of a religious association constituted as part of a religious community, that limitations in the autonomous rights of dissolution, removal or activity shall not be considered as inadmissible external third-party influence incompatible with corporate autonomy, as long as they serve, and are limited to, safeguarding integration into the greater religious community in the framework of existing ties of religious law—such as the preservation and identity of belief and basic duties of daily living. With such a limitation to the powers of intervention of a hierarchically superior institution, which only claims for itself some kind of authority over the teachings and corresponding rights of jurisdiction, a sufficient share of self-determination and self-administration of the association is preserved.

bb) By considering the influence of the National Spiritual Assembly specified in the By-Laws in regard to the continuance, membership and activities of the Local Spiritual Assembly as constituting in general an inadmissible third-party influence over the Association, the courts have misunderstood the character of religious associations which, as part of their belief, organize themselves hierarchically as part of a religious community, and thus have misconstrued the significance of the Constitutional Law of freedom of religious association for the interpretation and application of the principle of corporate autonomy. They have considered the National Spiritual Assembly to be an extraneous organization, characterized by different aims and interests, exercising a dominating influence, without considering the unity and mutuality linked to religious law. It is no different with the conclusion concerning the election of the members of the Local Spiritual Assembly by the believers of the local Bahá'í community. These, by virtue of the ties of religious law, are not third parties subjecting the Association to an alien influence from outside and thereby annulling its self-determination; rather, this manner of establishing membership is in accordance with the purpose of the Association to administer the affairs of the local Bahá'í Community as a hierarchical governing body (Art. 2 par. 1 of the By-Laws and Preamble), and it precisely serves its realization.

e) Nor can an inadmissible third-party influence be deduced from the fact that, in case of dissolution of the Association by the National Spiritual Assembly, the assets will fall to it (Art. 14 par. 1 and 2 of the By-Laws). The purpose of this provision of the By-Laws is not that of enabling the National Spiritual Assembly, by making use of its right of dissolution, to seize another's assets for the purpose of increasing its own assets. This is contradicted by the fact that according to the By-Laws no contributions are levied with the purpose of accumulating assets; the financing of the Association is solely through voluntary donations; moreover, the Association has expressly subordinated itself to the legal conditions of charitable purpose (Art. 2 par. 2 and 3 of the By-Laws).

IV.

The cited decisions therefore violate the appellants' constitutional right from Art. 4 par. 1 and 2 GG in connection with Art. 140 GG/137 par. 2 and 4 WRV, in that they do not sufficiently consider, in the interpretation and application of the meaning of corporate autonomy, the character of the Local Spiritual Assembly as a religious Association and as part of a religious community. They are therefore to be revoked. The case is to be referred back to the District Court for renewed consideration. It will have to examine, among other things, whether the right of dissolution and removal accorded the National Spiritual Assembly, expressed without limits in the By-Laws, is sufficiently limited by the purpose of the Association and the Preamble to the Constitution, in the sense of the explanations under III 2 d) aa), or if an express definition in the By-Laws is needed.

The decision on the costs follows from § 34a par. 2 BVerGG.

Mahrenholz	Böckenförde	Klein
Graßhof	Kruis	Franßen
Kirchhof	Winter	

(DECISION OF THE GERMAN FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL COURT)

ELUCIDATION OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	*Elucidation in German*	*Elucidation in English*
a.A.	andere Ansicht	Other opinion or view
a.a.O.	am angegeben Ort (bereits vorher zitierte Quelle)	idem. (from the source already cited)
AK-Ott	Kommentar zum Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuch (Reihe Alternativkommentare), 1. Auflage1979ff. Ott = Bearbeiter	Commentary on the Code of Civil Law (series of alternative commentaries), 1st edition 1979ff. Ott = name of author
BayObLGZ	Bayerisches Oberstes Landesgericht, Enscheidungssammlung in Zivilsachen	Bavarian Supreme State Court, Collection of decisions in civil matters.
BGB	Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch	Book of the code of civil law
BGHZ	Bundesgerichtshof, Entscheidungen in Zivilsachen	Federal Court, decisions in civil matters
BverfGE	Bundesverfassungsgericht, Entscheidungen	Federal Constitutional Court, Decisions
BverfGG	Gesetz über das Bundesverfassungsgericht in der Fassung vom 3.2.1971	Law on the Federal Constitutional Court in the draft of 3 February 1971
BvR	Registerzeichen des Bundesverfassungsgerichts für Verfassungsbeschwerden	Registration symbol of the Federal Constitutional Court for constitutional appeals
Can.	Canon	Canon (i.e. in relation to the Canon Law of the Church)
CIC	Codex Iuris Canonici	Codex of Canon Law
FGG	Reichsgesetz über die freiwillige Gerichtsbarkeit vom 17.5.1898	Imperial Law on voluntary jurisdiction of 17 May 1898

(continued)

Abbreviation	*Elucidation in German*	*Elucidation in English*
FS für Herschel	Festschrift für Herschel	Publication in honour of Herschel
GG	Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland vom 23.5.1949	Basic Law (Constitution) of the Federal Republic of Germany of 23 May 1949
GReg	Gerichtsregister	Court Register
HA-Prot	Protokolle des Hauptausschusses des Parlamentarischen Rates	Minutes of the Main Committee of the Parliamentary Council
HDStR	Handbuch des deutschen Staatskirchenrechts	Handbook of German State Church Law
i.V.m.	in Verbindung mit	In connection with
m.w.N.	mit weiteren Nachweisen	With further indications
OLGZ	Entscheidungen der Oberlandesgerichte in Zivilsachen	Decisions of the High State Courts in civil matters
RGRK-Steffen	Das Bürgerliche Gesetzbuch mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Rechtsprechung, des Reichsgerichts und des Bundesgerichtshofes, Kommentar, 12. Auflage 1974ff. Steffen = Bearbeiter	The Code of Civil Law with special reference to legal pronouncements, to the Imperial Court and to the Federal Court, Commentary, 12th edition 1974ff. Steffen = Name of author
WRV	Weimarer Verfassung vom 11.8.1919	Weimar Constitution of 11 August 1919

DECISION OF THE GERMAN FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

In a decision handed down on 5 February 1991 the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany upheld a constitutional appeal made by the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Tübingen. This decision is of such far-reaching importance that the Universal House of Justice has asked that the following summary of its background and effects be sent to all National Spiritual Assemblies. This summary is freely based on an article prepared by Dr. Udo Schaefer at the request of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Germany for publication in "Bahá'í Nachrichten", the newsletter of the German Bahá'í community.

I.

The Bahá'í Administrative Order has so many unique features, and is so different from the organizational structure of most other religions, that not infrequently difficulties are experienced in conveying to the authorities in some countries a clear understanding of the nature of our institutions, and thus of obtaining a status that is accorded to other similar bodies under civil law.

In Germany, for example, 95% of all associations are recognized as being "of public benefit". This is similar to what is known as "charitable status" in other countries, and is the basis for the granting of various tax exemptions. Over the years the Spiritual Assemblies in Germany repeatedly experienced difficulty with the Inland Revenue offices until the National Spiritual Assembly turned to the Federal Minister of Finance, who issued a decree on 6 August 1990 clarifying that the Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís "serve the promotion of religious purposes" and thus have public-benefit status. Even after this, one of the Revenue Offices continued to insist that the By-Laws of a Spiritual Assembly needed to be amended.

A second problem was that of the form under which Bahá'í Spiritual Assemblies could be incorporated. This was the problem that eventually came before the Federal Constitutional Court, namely, whether the Local Spiritual Assemblies could be incorporated under German Law using the By-Laws that are the universal Bahá'í standard. When different legal systems collide there are always problems, and this was the case here, where Bahá'í constitutional law seemed to be incompatible with German civil law. In order to make these problems intelligible and to explain the decision of the Federal Constitutional Court, it is necessary to consider the historical background.

II.

Firstly, it is necessary to understand that the Bahá'í Community is not only a religious community but also a community of law. The believers are linked together not only by the tie of belief and love, but also by the legal norms with which the Founder of our Faith has endowed His community, legal norms which govern the structure of the community, its administrative organs and its functions. The main sources of these legal norms, which are to be found throughout the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, are the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Kitáb-i-'Ahd and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament, as well as the works of Shoghi Effendi who, as the Authorized Interpreter, expounded and

elaborated these norms in his letters (especially in those published in *Bahá'í Administration* and *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*).

The revelation of the laws of the Faith, and their application in practice has been a very gradual process. Bahá'u'lláh had appointed four Hands of the Cause of God during His own lifetime, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá had brought into being embryonic Local Spiritual Assemblies, but the raising up of the institutions of the Administrative Order really started with the ministry of Shoghi Effendi.

In the establishment of the Administrative Order the American Bahá'í Community played a leading role. In the twenties, under the unerring guidance of the Guardian, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada formulated a constitution for itself, consisting of a Declaration of Trust and By-Laws, and one for Local Spiritual Assemblies, comprising a set of By-Laws, all based on the laws and principles of the Faith, and in a form through which these institutions could incorporate (obtain legal capacity) under American law. In doing this, the difficulty was to mould the non-codified Bahá'í laws and principles into forms made available by civil law for the attainment of legal capacity. With the expert help of American jurists, constitutions were worked out for the National Assembly and the Local Assemblies which were endorsed by Shoghi Effendi and prescribed by him as the pattern for the establishment of the Bahá'í Administration in other parts of the world.

III.

When, after the Second World War, the Spiritual Assemblies that had been dissolved under the Nazi regime were re-established in Germany, the National Spiritual Assembly adopted the Declaration of Trust and By-Laws which formed the national Bahá'í constitution, and the By-Laws of a Local Spiritual Assembly which were the standard local Bahá'í constitution, simply translating them from English into German. Wherever the Local Assemblies attained legal capacity, they were incorporated with these By-Laws.

As the establishment of the judicial system of the German Federal Republic progressed, the scrutiny of articles of incorporation became increasingly strict, and Local Spiritual Assemblies which wished to incorporate met with more and more difficulties. The standard By-Laws corresponded to American legal concepts and were expressed in American legal language. These were radically at variance with the concepts of German law and thus, in many instances barely comprehensible to German lawyers.

Under the pressure of this experience the German Bahá'í institutions acquired the understanding that, while the fundamental structures and principles of our law as "Divine Law" are unalterable, they have to be expressed in different terminology according to the legal systems of particular countries. This experience was shared by other Bahá'í communities around the world.

Thus, in the seventies, with the agreement of the Universal House of Justice, new By-Laws, which are faithful to the Bahá'í standard constitution and are also in accordance with German Law, were drafted and introduced as a pattern for all Local Spiritual Assemblies in Germany. All Spiritual Assemblies in the Federal Republic are today incorporated according to these sample By-Laws. The National Spiritual Assembly also prepared a new constitution for itself, but this has not yet been registered, because the Court of Registration concerned was awaiting the decision of the Federal Constitutional Court.

Although this development placed the German Spiritual Assemblies in an incomparably better position in relation to the Courts of Registration, it soon became clear that the legal construction of the By-Laws was still not easily conveyed to the courts concerned. It is not the community (with the Assembly as its managing body) which is the association, but the Assembly itself, which is elected by the members of the community; this is an

unusual construction in Germany. Normally, membership in an association is attained by joining it, but membership in a Spiritual Assembly is through election by a "third party", the community. Normally in Germany, an Association has a minimum size (7 members) and has no upper limit. As against that the membership of the Assembly is limited in number: it has nine members, no fewer and no more. In spite of these difficulties it was usually possible to overcome the Registrar's objections and obtain legal incorporation. Sometimes this required proceedings in the law courts.

IV.

The legal administrator of the District Court of Tübingen was especially obstinate. He objected to no less than eight points in the By-Laws and finally, on 8 December 1983, refused incorporation. The legal measures taken against this decision were unsuccessful. The State Court of Tübingen rejected the further appeal of 5 May 1985. The High State Court in Stuttgart, to which the case was subsequently appealed, rejected it on 27 January 1986.

With that the legal measures were exhausted, and this would have meant that the Spiritual Assembly of Tübingen would never be able to incorporate with the By-Laws of the standard local Bahá'í constitution. Beyond this, when the decision of the High State Court in Stuttgart was published in the legal literature, a number of other courts, alerted by this decision, demanded that incorporated Local Assemblies amend their By-Laws or else face cancellation of their existing incorporation.

The decision of the High State Court in Stuttgart was founded on the principle of corporate autonomy which applies to associations under German civil incorporation law. According to this, an association is an autonomous body free from third-party influence and is subject only to the law of the land. The fact that Local Spiritual Assemblies are linked in a hierarchy and that their superior institutions, the National Assembly and the Universal House of Justice, have a series of rights of intervention according to the By-Laws, is seen to violate this principle of corporate autonomy.

Thus a critical situation had arisen for the German Bahá'í Community. There was a great danger that all incorporated Spiritual Assemblies, including the National Spiritual Assembly, would be deprived of their legal capacity.

The German Constitution provides a possibility for recognized religious communities to incorporate, in certain circumstances, under "public law" rather than as associations under civil law. But this presupposes a minimum number of members which the German Bahá'í community is still far from having reached.

The Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís must therefore have recourse to the corporate law of the German Code of Civil Law to achieve legal capacity. But, to obtain such registration the Spiritual Assemblies would have had to change the basic structures of their By-Laws. Such changes the Bahá'ís cannot and will not accept, because the essential structures of the constitutional law of our community are the Law of God and are therefore not open to compromise. These essential structures include the vertical form of institutional organization.

With all other legal means exhausted, the Federal Constitutional Court presented the last resort for the German Bahá'í community, but this presupposed that the decisions previously passed by the courts had violated the constitutional rights of the Spiritual Assembly of Tübingen. The National Spiritual Assembly was convinced that this was unmistakably the case. Article 4 of the German Constitution guarantees not just freedom of religious practice, which includes freedom of belief and worship, but also freedom of organization. The decisions passed by the courts, and the interpretation of civil law underlying them, had led to the result that hierarchical integration within the framework of the

Bahá'í Administration was made impossible for the Bahá'ís. Were these decisions to be enforced, each local Bahá'í community would be isolated from the rest of the Administrative Order. The community as a whole would no longer exist, it would be only an amorphous collection of autonomous bodies with no links to one another. The Bahá'í Community as the "People of God" embodied in a legal structure, would no longer exist. In this the National Assembly saw a violation of Article 4 of the Federal Constitution and concluded that the submission of a Constitutional Appeal was advisable.

Although, from the outset, this constitutional question had been referred to in writing, the courts concerned with the successive appeals on the case had not considered them at all.

After receiving the Constitutional Appeal, which was submitted in March 1986, the Federal Constitutional Court considered this extremely unusual matter very intensively. It even requested original literature from the German Bahá'í Publishing Trust, asked for and examined numerous By-Laws of other associations, Christian and Islamic, and solicited views from the Federal Minister of Justice and from the Ministry of Justice of Baden-Württemberg, the Evangelical Church in Germany and the Institute for State Church Law of the Dioceses of Germany (on the question of corporate autonomy in the case of church associations). The two Ministries of Justice expressed an opinion very unfavourable to the Bahá'ís, concluding that the contested decisions had been passed correctly and so the Constitutional Appeal was unfounded.

The Federal Constitutional Court took a long time to reach its decision. It had to consider the far-reaching consequences which a decision in our favour could have. Would it not open wide the floodgates for organizations unjustifiably calling themselves "religions" to make use of this decision in future?

V.

The decision which the Federal Constitution Court reached, wholly in our favour, on 5 February 1991, is a relatively rare decision in the field of State Church Law in Germany, and for this alone it constitutes a highly significant precedent in the formulation and development of German Law.

For the German Bahá'í Community this decision, as shown by the above explanations, is of far-reaching significance and cannot be overestimated: It ensures the legal status of the community and brings to an end all attempts by the courts to require the amendment of the basic structures of our By-Laws. It confirms once and for all the right of the Bahá'ís to be organized as a hierarchically structured legal community according to the revealed Law of God.

The decision first of all sets a limit to its application, in a statement that is of the greatest importance as a testimony to the widespread recognition of the Bahá'í Faith as an independent religious community. It explains that the mere assertion of a community that it is a religious community is not sufficient for it to submit such a constitutional appeal. The authorities and courts have to examine in each specific case whether it is really a religion and a religious community, according to spiritual content and external appearances. Here the Court states: "In the present case it is not necessary to go more deeply into this, as the character of the Bahá'í Faith as a religion and the Bahá'í Community as a religious community is evident, in actual everyday life, cultural tradition, and in the understanding of the general public as well as of the science of comparative religion."

In its decision, the Federal Constitutional Court reviewed in detail the constitutional right of freedom of religious organization and came to the conclusion that the lower courts, in arriving at their decisions, had not done justice to this constitutional right; that it is possible, within the framework of the German civil law governing incorporations,

to give special consideration to the religious requirements governing the internal organization of the Local Spiritual Assembly as a religious association and as part of a religious community; and, moreover, that Constitutional Law demands that such special consideration be given.

The Court pointed out that, because associations which are part of religious communities wish to be integrated into the hierarchy of their religious community, the granting of the right of intervention to superior institutions cannot be considered as submission to an external influence which would threaten the essential independence of the association or its right to administer itself. The Federal Constitutional Court concluded that the courts acting in this case had misunderstood the constitutional right of freedom of religious organization in the interpretation and application of the principle of corporate autonomy, in that they had considered the National Spiritual Assembly "to be an extraneous organization, characterized by different aims and interests, exercising a dominating influence, without considering the unity and mutuality linked to religious law". The same was true, the Court explained, for the election of the members of the Local Spiritual Assembly by the believers in the local community, who are not "third-parties".

From the reasons given for the decision it can be inferred that a positive decision was possible only because the Bahá'í Law, which underlies our constitutions as revealed Law, is an indispensable part of our Faith.

VI.

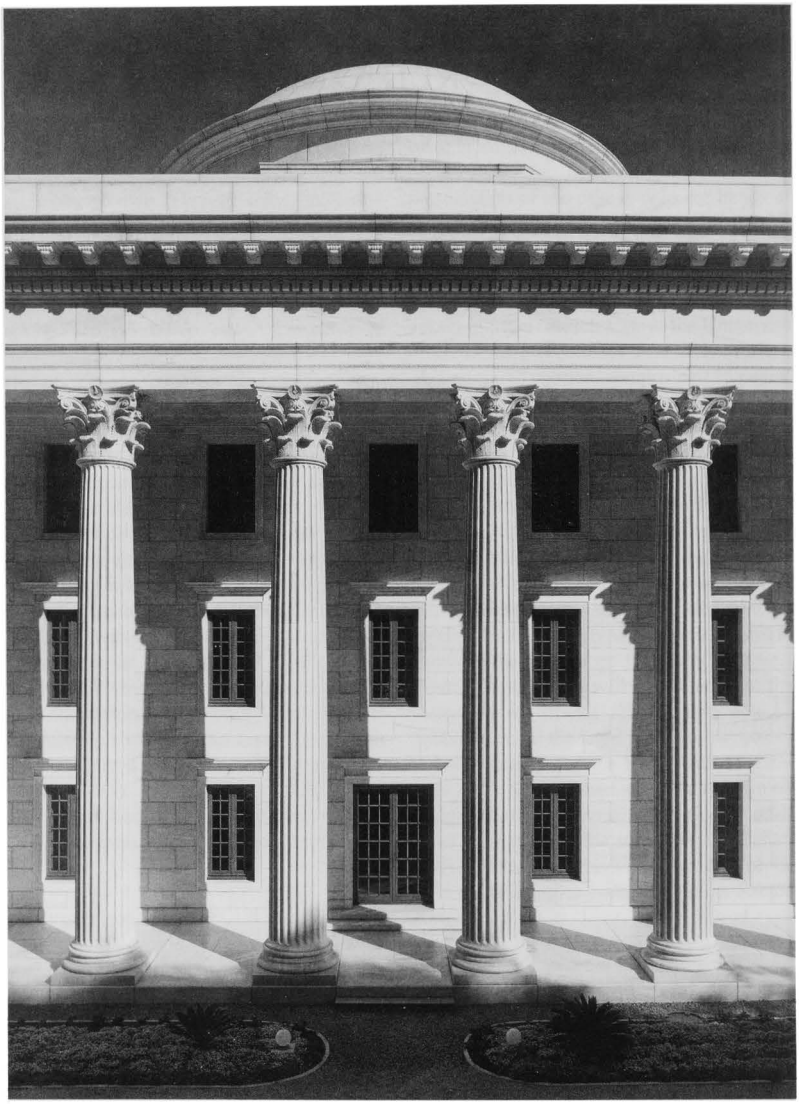
The magnitude of the achievement this judgement represents in the efforts to preserve and ensure the legal status of the Spiritual Assemblies in Germany can be judged from the fact that only 1.5% of all Constitutional Appeals meet with success.

The National Spiritual Assembly had the wisdom to shrink from no effort or cost in order to ensure the best presentation of the case. It engaged a renowned Stuttgart firm of attorneys for its legal protection. The presentation of the case was in the hands of an expert in the fields of Constitutional Law, Administrative Law and State Church Law. Beyond that the National Spiritual Assembly solicited an opinion from a highly regarded expert in State Church Law at the University of Heidelberg (Professor Friedrich Müller). This profound opinion, comprising 115 pages, which clearly and convincingly sets forth the legal position of the Bahá'ís, was a great support for this Appeal and surely had an effect in helping to bring it to a successful conclusion. A gratifying side-effect of the work and funds devoted to this Appeal is to be found in the number of highly-placed ministerial officials, professors and scientific collaborators, who had to concern themselves intensively with the Faith, not to mention the judges of Germany's highest Court. The decision will be included in the collection of official records and will be published in all the legal journals.

Undoubtedly further fruits will be gathered in the years ahead when this landmark decision assists judicial authorities in other lands to appreciate the stature of the Bahá'í Faith and the fundamental importance of the laws and principles embedded in its Sacred Scriptures.

PART FOUR

THE WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH



Partial view of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice from the south.

I
THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

1. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

DECLARATION OF TRUST

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE ONE, THE INCOMPARABLE, THE ALL-POWERFUL, THE ALL-KNOWING, THE ALL-WISE.

The light that is shed from the heaven of bounty, and the benediction that shineth from the dawning-place of the will of God, the Lord of the Kingdom of Names, rest upon Him Who is the Supreme Mediator, the Most Exalted Pen, Him Whom God hath made the dawning-place of His most excellent names and the dayspring of His most exalted attributes. Through Him the light of unity hath shone forth above the horizon of the world, and the law of oneness hath been revealed amidst the nations, who, with radiant faces, have turned towards the Supreme Horizon, and acknowledged that which the Tongue of Utterance hath spoken in the Kingdom of His knowledge: 'Earth and heaven, glory and dominion, are God's, the Omnipotent, the Almighty, the Lord of grace abounding!'

WITH joyous and thankful hearts we testify to the abundance of God's Mercy, to the perfection of His Justice and to the fulfilment of His Ancient Promise.

Bahá'u'lláh, the Revealer of God's Word in this Day, the Source of Authority, the Fountainhead of Justice, the Creator of a new World Order, the Establisher of the Most Great Peace, the Inspirer and Founder of a world civilization, the Judge, the Lawgiver, the Unifier and Redeemer of all mankind, has proclaimed the advent of God's Kingdom on earth, has formulated its laws and ordinances, enunciated its principles, and ordained its institutions. To direct and canalize the forces released by His Revelation, He instituted His Covenant, whose power has preserved the integrity of His Faith, maintained its unity and stimulated its world-wide expansion throughout the successive ministries of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi. It continues to fulfil its life-giving purpose through the agency of the Universal House of Justice whose fundamental object, as one of the twin successors of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is to ensure the continuity of that divinely appointed authority which flows from the Source of the Faith, to safeguard the unity of its followers, and to maintain the integrity and flexibility of its teachings.

The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion, declares Bahá'u'lláh, *is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men. Suffer it not to become a source of dissension and discord, of hate and enmity. This is the straight Path, the fixed and immovable foundation. Whatsoever is raised on this foundation, the changes and chances of the world can never impair its strength, nor will the revolution of countless centuries undermine its structure.*

Unto the Most Holy Book, 'Abdu'l-Bahá declares in His Will and Testament, *every one must turn, and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice.*

The provenance, the authority, the duties, the sphere of action of the Universal House of Justice all derive from the revealed Word of Bahá'u'lláh which, together with the interpretations and expositions of the Centre of the Covenant and of the Guardian of the Cause—who, after 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is the sole authority in the interpretation of Bahá'í

Scripture—constitute the binding terms of reference of the Universal House of Justice and are its bedrock foundation. The authority of these Texts is absolute and immutable until such time as Almighty God shall reveal His new Manifestation to Whom will belong all authority and power.

There being no successor to Shoghi Effendi as Guardian of the Cause of God, the Universal House of Justice is the Head of the Faith and its supreme institution, to which all must turn, and on it rests the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the unity and progress of the Cause of God. Further, there devolve upon it the duties of directing and coordinating the work of the Hands of the Cause, of ensuring the continuing discharge of the functions of protection and propagation vested in that institution, and of providing for the receipt and disbursement of the Ḥuqúqu'lláh.

Among the powers and duties with which the Universal House of Justice has been invested are:

> To ensure the preservation of the Sacred Texts and to safeguard their inviolability; to analyse, classify, and coordinate the Writings; and to defend and protect the Cause of God and emancipate it from the fetters of repression and persecution;
>
> To advance the interests of the Faith of God; to proclaim, propagate and teach its Message; to expand and consolidate the institutions of its Administrative Order; to usher in the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh; to promote the attainment of those spiritual qualities which should characterize Bahá'í life individually and collectively; to do its utmost for the realization of greater cordiality and comity amongst the nations and for the attainment of universal peace; and to foster that which is conducive to the enlightenment and illumination of the souls of men and the advancement and betterment of the world;
>
> To enact laws and ordinances not expressly recorded in the Sacred Texts; to abrogate, according to the changes and requirements of the time, its own enactments; to deliberate and decide upon all problems which have caused difference; to elucidate questions that are obscure; to safeguard the personal rights, freedom and initiative of individuals; and to give attention to the preservation of human honour, to the development of countries and the stability of states;
>
> To promulgate and apply the laws and principles of the Faith; to safeguard and enforce that rectitude of conduct which the Law of God enjoins; to preserve and develop the Spiritual and Administrative Centre of the Bahá'í Faith, permanently fixed in the twin cities of 'Akká and Haifa; to administer the affairs of the Bahá'í community throughout the world; to guide, organize, coordinate and unify its activities; to found institutions; to be responsible for ensuring that no body or institution within the Cause abuse its privileges or decline in the exercise of its rights and prerogatives; and to provide for the receipt, disposition, administration and safeguarding of the funds, endowments and other properties that are entrusted to its care;
>
> To adjudicate disputes falling within its purview; to give judgement in cases of violation of the laws of the Faith and to pronounce sanctions for such violations; to provide for the enforcement of its decisions; to provide for the arbitration and settlement of disputes arising between peoples; and to be the exponent and guardian of that Divine Justice which can alone ensure the security of, and establish the reign of law and order in, the world.

The members of the Universal House of Justice, designated by Bahá'u'lláh 'the Men of Justice', 'the people of Bahá who have been mentioned in the Book of Names', 'The Trustees of God amongst His servants and the daysprings of authority in His countries', shall in the discharge of their responsibilities ever bear in mind the following standards set forth by Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Cause of God:

In the conduct of the administrative affairs of the Faith, in the enactment of the legislation necessary to supplement the laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the members of the Universal House of Justice, it should be borne in mind, are not, as Bahá'u'lláh's utterances clearly imply, responsible to those whom they represent, nor are they allowed to be governed by the feelings, the general opinion, and even the convictions of the mass of the faithful, or of those who directly elect them. They are to follow, in a prayerful attitude, the dictates and promptings of their conscience. They may, indeed they must, acquaint themselves with the conditions prevailing among the community, must weigh dispassionately in their minds the merits of any case presented for their consideration, but must reserve for themselves the right of an unfettered decision. *God will verily inspire them with whatsoever He willeth*, is Bahá'u'lláh's incontrovertible assurance. They, and not the body of those who either directly or indirectly elect them, have thus been made the recipients of the divine guidance which is at once the life-blood and ultimate safeguard of this Revelation.

The Universal House of Justice was first elected on the first day of the Festival of Riḍván in the one hundred and twentieth year of the Bahá'í Era[1], when the members of the National Spiritual Assemblies, in accordance with the provisions of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and in response to the summons of the Hands of the Cause of God, the Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth, brought into being this "crowning glory" of the administrative institutions of Bahá'u'lláh, the very "nucleus and forerunner" of His World Order. Now, therefore, in obedience to the Command of God and with entire reliance upon Him, we, the members of the Universal House of Justice, set our hands and its seal to this Declaration of Trust which, together with the By-Laws hereto appended, form the Constitution of the Universal House of Justice.

[1] 21 April 1963 A.D.

Hugh E. Chance

Hushmand Fatheazam

Amoz E. Gibson

David Hofman

H. Borrah Kavelin

Ali Nakhjavani

David S. Ruhe

Ian C. Semple

Charles Wolcott

Signed in the City of Haifa on the fourth day of the month of Qawl in the one hundred and twenty-ninth year of the Bahá'í Era, corresponding to the twenty-sixth day of the month of November in the year 1972 according to the Gregorian calendar.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Facsimile of signatures on the Constitution of the Universal House of Justice: 26 November 1972.

BY-LAWS

PREAMBLE

The Universal House of Justice is the supreme institution of an Administrative Order whose salient features, whose authority and whose principles of operation are clearly enunciated in the Sacred Writings of the Bahá'í Faith and their authorized interpretations. This Administrative Order consists, on the one hand, of a series of elected councils, universal, secondary and local, in which are vested legislative, executive and judicial powers over the Bahá'í community and, on the other, of eminent and devoted believers appointed for the specific purposes of protecting and propagating the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh under the guidance of the Head of that Faith.

This Administrative Order is the nucleus and pattern of the World Order adumbrated by Bahá'u'lláh. In the course of its divinely propelled organic growth its institutions will expand, putting forth auxiliary branches and developing subordinate agencies, multiplying their activities and diversifying their functions, in consonance with the principles and purposes revealed by Bahá'u'lláh for the progress of the human race.

I. MEMBERSHIP IN THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY

The Bahá'í Community shall consist of all persons recognized by the Universal House of Justice as possessing the qualifications of Bahá'í faith and practice.

1. In order to be eligible to vote and hold elective office, a Bahá'í must have attained the age of twenty-one years.
2. The rights, privileges and duties of individual Bahá'ís are as set forth in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi and as laid down by the Universal House of Justice.

II. LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

Whenever in any locality the number of Bahá'ís resident therein who have attained the age of twenty-one exceeds nine, these shall on the First Day of Riḍván convene and elect a local administrative body of nine members to be known as the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of that locality. Every such Assembly shall be elected annually thereafter upon each successive First Day of Riḍván. The members shall hold office for the term of one year or until their successors are elected. When, however, the number of Bahá'ís as aforesaid in any locality is exactly nine, these shall on the First Day of Riḍván constitute themselves the Local Spiritual Assembly by joint declaration.

1. The general powers and duties of a Local Spiritual Assembly are as set forth in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi and as laid down by the Universal House of Justice.
2. A Local Spiritual Assembly shall exercise full jurisdiction over all Bahá'í activities and affairs within its locality, subject to the provisions of the Local Bahá'í Constitution.[2]
3. The area of jurisdiction of a Local Spiritual Assembly shall be decided by the National Spiritual Assembly in accordance with the principle laid down for each country by the Universal House of Justice.

III. NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

Whenever it is decided by the Universal House of Justice to form in any country or region a National Spiritual Assembly, the voting members of the Bahá'í community of that country or region shall, in a manner and at a time to be decided by the Universal House of

[2] By-Laws of a Local Spiritual Assembly

Justice, elect their delegates to their National Convention. These delegates shall, in turn, elect in the manner provided in the National Bahá'í Constitution[3] a body of nine members to be known as the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of that country or region. The members shall continue in office for a period of one year or until their successors shall be elected.

1. The general powers and duties of a National Spiritual Assembly are as set forth in the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi and as laid down by the Universal House of Justice.
2. The National Spiritual Assembly shall have exclusive jurisdiction and authority over all the activities and affairs of the Bahá'í Faith throughout its area. It shall endeavour to stimulate, unify and coordinate the manifold activities of the Local Spiritual Assemblies and of individual Bahá'ís in its area and by all possible means assist them to promote the oneness of mankind. It shall furthermore represent its national Bahá'í community in relation to other national Bahá'í communities and to the Universal House of Justice.
3. The area of jurisdiction of a National Spiritual Assembly shall be as defined by the Universal House of Justice.
4. The principal business of the National Convention shall be consultation on Bahá'í activities, plans and policies and the election of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly, as set forth in the National Bahá'í Constitution.
   (a) If in any year the National Spiritual Assembly shall consider that it is impracticable or unwise to hold the National Convention, the said Assembly shall provide ways and means by which the annual election and the other essential business of the Convention may be conducted.
   (b) Vacancies in the membership of the National Spiritual Assembly shall be filled by a vote of the delegates composing the Convention which elected the Assembly, the ballot to be taken by correspondence or in any other manner decided by the National Spiritual Assembly.

[3] Declaration of Trust and By-Laws of a National Spiritual Assembly

IV. Obligations of Members of Spiritual Assemblies

Among the most outstanding and sacred duties incumbent upon those who have been called upon to initiate, direct and co-ordinate the affairs of the Cause of God as members of its Spiritual Assemblies are: to win by every means in their power the confidence and affection of those whom it is their privilege to serve; to investigate and acquaint themselves with the considered views, the prevailing sentiments and the personal convictions of those whose welfare it is their solemn obligation to promote; to purge their deliberations and the general conduct of their affairs of self-contained aloofness, the suspicion of secrecy, the stifling atmosphere of dictatorial assertiveness and of every word and deed that may savour of partiality, self-centredness and prejudice; and while retaining the sacred right of final decision in their hands, to invite discussion, ventilate grievances, welcome advice and foster the sense of interdependence and co-partnership, of understanding and mutual confidence between themselves and all other Bahá'ís.

V. The Universal House of Justice

The Universal House of Justice shall consist of nine men who have been elected from the Bahá'í community in the manner hereinafter provided.

1. *Election*

   The members of the Universal House of Justice shall be elected by secret ballot by the members of all National Spiritual

Assemblies at a meeting to be known as the International Bahá'í Convention.

(a) An election of the Universal House of Justice shall be held once every five years unless otherwise decided by the Universal House of Justice, and those elected shall continue in office until such time as their successors shall be elected and the first meeting of these successors is duly held.

(b) Upon receiving the call to Convention each National Spiritual Assembly shall submit to the Universal House of Justice a list of the names of its members. The recognition and seating of the delegates to the International Convention shall be vested in the Universal House of Justice.

(c) The principal business of the International Convention shall be to elect the members of the Universal House of Justice, to deliberate on the affairs of the Bahá'í Cause throughout the world, and to make recommendations and suggestions for the consideration of the Universal House of Justice.

(d) The sessions of the International Convention shall be conducted in such manner as the Universal House of Justice shall from time to time decide.

(e) The Universal House of Justice shall provide a procedure whereby those delegates who are unable to be present in person at the International Convention shall cast their ballots for the election of the members of the Universal House of Justice.

(f) If at the time of an election the Universal House of Justice shall consider that it is impracticable or unwise to hold the International Convention it shall determine how the election shall take place.

(g) On the day of the election the ballots of all voters shall be scrutinized and counted and the result certified by tellers appointed in accordance with the instructions of the Universal House of Justice.

(h) If a member of a National Spiritual Assembly who has voted by mail ceases to be a member of that National Spiritual Assembly between the time of casting his ballot and the date of the counting of the ballots, his ballot shall nevertheless remain valid unless in the interval his successor shall have been elected and the ballot of such successor shall have been received by the tellers.

(i) In case by reason of a tie vote or votes the full membership of the Universal House of Justice is not determined on the first ballot, then one or more additional ballots shall be held on the persons tied until all members are elected. The electors in the case of additional ballots shall be the members of National Spiritual Assemblies in office at the time each subsequent vote is taken.

2. *Vacancies in Membership*

A vacancy in the membership of the Universal House of Justice will occur upon the death of a member or in the following cases:

(a) Should any member of the Universal House of Justice commit a sin injurious to the common weal, he may be dismissed from membership by the Universal House of Justice.

(b) The Universal House of Justice may at its discretion declare a vacancy with respect to any member who in its judgement is unable to fulfil the functions of membership.

(c) A member may relinquish his membership on the Universal House of Justice only with the approval of the Universal House of Justice.

3. *By-Election*

If a vacancy in the membership of the Universal House of Justice occurs, the

Universal House of Justice shall call a by-election at the earliest possible date unless such date, in the judgement of the Universal House of Justice, falls too close to the date of a regular election of the entire membership, in which case the Universal House of Justice may, at its discretion, defer the filling of the vacancy to the time of the regular election. If a by-election is held, the voters shall be the members of the National Spiritual Assemblies in office at the time of the by-election.

4. *Meetings*

   (a) After the election of the Universal House of Justice the first meeting shall be called by the member elected by the highest number of votes or, in his absence or other incapacity, by the member elected by the next highest number of votes or, in case two or more members have received the same highest number of votes, then by the member selected by lot from among those members. Subsequent meetings shall be called in the manner decided by the Universal House of Justice.

   (b) The Universal House of Justice has no officers. It shall provide for the conduct of its meetings and shall organize its activities in such manner as it shall from time to time decide.

   (c) The business of the Universal House of Justice shall be conducted by the full membership in consultation, except that the Universal House of Justice may from time to time provide for quorums of less than the full membership for specified classes of business.

5. *Signature*

   The signature of the Universal House of Justice shall be the words "The Universal House of Justice" or in Persian "Baytu'l-'Adl-i-A'ẓam" written by hand by any one of its members upon authority of the Universal House of Justice, to which shall be affixed in each case the Seal of the Universal House of Justice.

6. *Records*

   The Universal House of Justice shall provide for the recording and verification of its decisions in such manner as it shall, from time to time, judge necessary.

VI. Bahá'í Elections

In order to preserve the spiritual character and purpose of Bahá'í elections the practices of nomination or electioneering, or any other procedure or activity detrimental to that character and purpose shall be eschewed. A silent and prayerful atmosphere shall prevail during the election so that each elector may vote for none but those whom prayer and reflection inspire him to uphold.

1. All Bahá'í elections, except elections of officers of Local and National Spiritual Assemblies and committees, shall be by plurality vote taken by secret ballot.
2. Election of the officers of a Spiritual Assembly or committee shall be by majority vote of the Assembly or committee taken by secret ballot.
3. In case by reason of a tie vote or votes the full membership of an elected body is not determined on the first ballot, then one or more additional ballots shall be taken on the persons tied until all members are elected.
4. The duties and rights of a Bahá'í elector may not be assigned nor may they be exercised by proxy.

VII. The Right of Review

The Universal House of Justice has the right to review any decision or action of any Spiritual Assembly, National or Local, and to approve, modify or reverse such decision or action. The Universal House of Justice also has the right to intervene in any

matter in which a Spiritual Assembly is failing to take action or to reach a decision and, at its discretion, to require that action be taken, or itself to take action directly in the matter.

VIII. Appeals

The right of appeal exists in the circumstances, and shall be exercised according to the procedures, outlined below:

1. (a) Any member of a local Bahá'í community may appeal from a decision of his Local Spiritual Assembly to the National Spiritual Assembly which shall determine whether it shall take jurisdiction of the matter or refer it back to the Local Spiritual Assembly for reconsideration. If such an appeal concerns the membership of a person in the Bahá'í community, the National Spiritual Assembly is obliged to take jurisdiction of and decide the case.
   (b) Any Bahá'í may appeal from a decision of his National Spiritual Assembly to the Universal House of Justice which shall determine whether it shall take jurisdiction of the matter or leave it within the final jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly.
   (c) If any differences arise between two or more Local Spiritual Assemblies and if these Assemblies are unable to resolve them, any one such Assembly may bring the matter to the National Spiritual Assembly which shall thereupon take jurisdiction of the case. If the decision of the National Spiritual Assembly thereon is unsatisfactory to any of the Assemblies concerned, or if a Local Spiritual Assembly at any time has reason to believe that actions of its National Spiritual Assembly are affecting adversely the welfare and unity of that Local Assembly's community, it shall, in either case, after seeking to compose its difference of opinion with the National Spiritual Assembly, have the right to appeal to the Universal House of Justice, which shall determine whether it shall take jurisdiction of the matter or leave it within the final jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly.
2. An appellant, whether institution or individual, shall in the first instance make appeal to the Assembly whose decision is questioned, either for reconsideration of the case by that Assembly or for submission to a higher body. In the latter case the Assembly is in duty bound to submit the appeal together with full particulars of the matter. If an Assembly refuses to submit the appeal, or fails to do so within a reasonable time, the appellant may take the case directly to the higher authority.

IX. The Boards of Counsellors

The institution of the Boards of Counsellors was brought into being by the Universal House of Justice to extend into the future the specific functions of protection and propagation conferred upon the Hands of the Cause of God. The members of these boards are appointed by the Universal House of Justice.

1. The term of office of a Counsellor, the number of Counsellors on each Board, and the boundaries of the zone in which each Board of Counsellors shall operate, shall be decided by the Universal House of Justice.
2. A Counsellor functions as such only within his zone and should he move his residence out of the zone for which he is appointed he automatically relinquishes his appointment.
3. The rank and specific duties of a Counsellor render him ineligible for service on local or national administrative bodies. If elected to the Universal House of Justice he ceases to be a Counsellor.

X. The Auxiliary Boards

In each zone there shall be two Auxiliary Boards, one for the protection and one for the propagation of the Faith, the numbers of whose members shall be set by the Universal House of Justice. The members of these Auxiliary Boards shall serve under the direction of the Continental Boards of Counsellors and shall act as their deputies, assistants and advisers.

1. The members of the Auxiliary Boards shall be appointed from among the believers of that zone by the Continental Board of Counsellors.
2. Each Auxiliary Board member shall be allotted a specific area in which to serve and, unless specifically deputized by the Counsellors, shall not function as a member of the Auxiliary Board outside that area.
3. An Auxiliary Board member is eligible for any elective office but if elected to an administrative post on a national or local level must decide whether to retain membership on the Board or accept the administrative post, since he may not serve in both capacities at the same time. If elected to the Universal House of Justice he ceases to be a member of the Auxiliary Board.

XI. Amendment

This Constitution may be amended by decision of the Universal House of Justice when the full membership is present.

2. The Sixth International Convention for the Election of the Universal House of Justice

Riḍván 1988

The sixth International Bahá'í Convention was held from 29 April to 2 May 1988 to elect the members of the Universal House of Justice.

As prescribed in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the people charged with this sacred duty were the members of the world's National Spiritual Assemblies and the selection was by plurality vote taken by secret ballot. As there were 148 National Spiritual Assemblies in 1988, each with nine members, the number of possible electors was 1,332. Representatives unable to attend, including the full memberships of sixteen National Spiritual Assemblies, cast their ballots by mail.

The election was the first item on the agenda when the meeting was opened by the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum. After a few words of greeting, prayers were read in four languages. Then the 663 delegates present in the Haifa Auditorium continued to pray and meditate silently as they considered the people who would be best suited to serve for the next five years. All waited with reverence until each delegate had finished voting.

When all ballots were ready, the delegates began to walk across the stage one by one, in alphabetical order by country, to deposit their ballot papers as their names were read by the Head Chief Teller, Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh. Men and women, young and old, people of all racial and ethnic origins, all came silently to the stage—a potent testimony to the power of Bahá'u'lláh to unite humanity in a new World Order.

A highlight of the balloting was the presence of two delegates from Cuba, a country never before represented at an International Bahá'í Convention. They were enthusiastically applauded by the other delegates as they crossed the stage to cast their ballots.

The results of the voting were announced to the assembled delegates at noon on Saturday, 30 April. Of the 1,296 ballots cast, only one was invalid. The members were elected by a total of 7,880 of the 11,655 individual votes cast. The uniformly high percentage of votes received from delegates unable to attend was pointed out by Amatu'l-Bahá as a reflection of the maturity of the Bahá'í world.

The members elected were: Mr. 'Alí Nakhjavání, Mr. Glenford Mitchell, Mr. Hushmand Fatheazam, Mr. Ian Semple, Dr. Peter Khan, Dr. David Ruhe, Mr. Hugh Chance, Mr. Hooper Dunbar, and Mr. Adib Taherzadeh. The nine members were called to the stage and were greeted with wave after wave of sustained applause.

Further applause swept the auditorium as the two members of the Universal House of Justice who had been permitted to resign by reason of their advanced years, Mr. David Hofman and Mr. H. Borrah Kavelin, were called to the stage and saluted for their long and dedicated service.

Loving tribute was also paid to the three former members of the Universal House of Justice who have ascended to the next world: Dr. Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím, Mr. Amoz Gibson, and Mr. Charles Wolcott. Mr. Gibson's daughter and Dr. Ḥakím's granddaughter were present as delegates to the Convention.

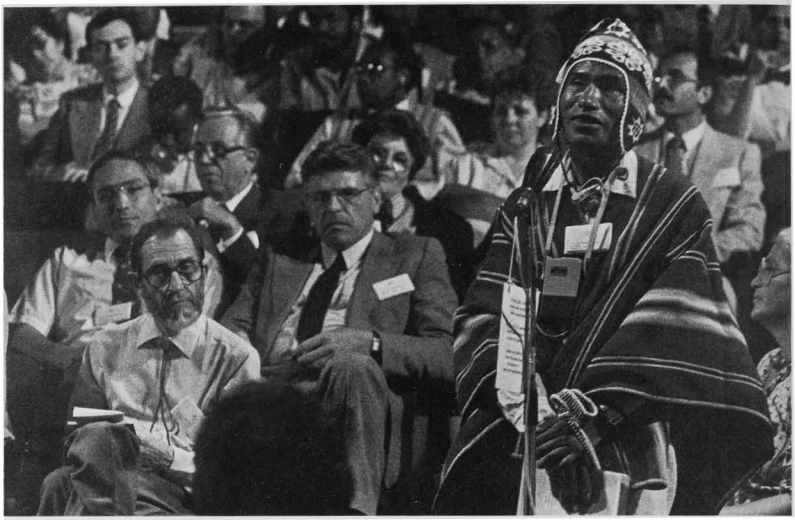
Sadness, coupled with a feeling of pride, pervaded the hall as the friends in Írán were remembered. 'We will miss with all our hearts the oldest Bahá'í community... the friends in Persia', Amatu'l-Bahá said. She paid tribute to the sacrifices and continued suffering of 'our brothers and sisters in Írán', and announced that a closing prayer would be offered on their behalf. Then she



Five Hands of the Cause of God leading the delegates to the sixth International Bahá'í Convention toward the Shrine of the Báb during the celebration of the Ninth Day of Riḍván, 29 April 1988.



The first item on the agenda of the International Convention was the election of the members of the Universal House of Justice. One of the delegates depositing her votes. Haifa, Israel. 29 April 1988.



Five consultative sessions were held during the sixth International Convention. Delegates exchanged thoughts about the Riḍván message, issues of special concern to their countries, and on subjects suggested in advance by the Universal House of Justice.



Five special sessions for members of each of the Continental Boards of Counsellors and delegates from the National Spiritual Assemblies in those areas were held during the International Convention. The session on Australasia was held in the Haifa Pilgrim House.

called for an enormous bowl of 120 red roses, a gift from the Bahá'ís in Írán, to be brought to the centre of the stage.

Five Hands of the Cause of God were present for the opening session, lending a special dignity and spiritual force to the occasion: Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá, William Sears, and H. Collis Featherstone. Each participated in a unique and significant way during the Convention. Mr. Sears also brought special greetings from those Hands of the Cause who could not be not present, Dr. Ugo Giachery, Mr. Jalál Kházeh, and Mr. John Robarts.

Amatu'l-Bahá read the Riḍván message of the Universal House of Justice at the beginning of the Convention's first consultative session, on 30 April:

> A silver lining to the dark picture which has overshadowed most of this century now brightens the horizon. It is discernible in the new tendencies impelling the social processes at work throughout the world, in the evidences of an accelerated trend towards peace. In the Faith of God, it is the growing strength of the Order of Bahá'u'lláh as its banner rises to more stately heights. It is a strength that attracts.

"...a new paradigm of opportunity has emerged," the message continued. "New prospects for teaching the Cause at all levels of society have unfolded.... The present challenge calls for teaching on a scale and of a quality, a variety, and intensity outstripping all current efforts." These themes were often repeated in the consultations of the delegates.

Five consultative sessions were held from 30 April to 2 May. All of these general meetings were chaired by Counsellors: Dr. Magdalene Carney of the International Teaching Centre; Mrs. Zena Sorabjee from Asia; Dr. Wilma Brady from the Americas; Mrs. Joy Stevenson from Australasia; Mrs. Lucretia Mancho Warren from Africa; and Mrs. Polin Rafat from Europe.

In addition to the Riḍván message and issues of special concern to them, the delegates consulted on the following subjects suggested in advance by the Universal House of Justice:

1) the development of the Bahá'í community as a model, strengthening of unity, and the Covenant in all its aspects;

2) what the Bahá'í community needed to do to further promote peace, the development of external affairs agencies, the promotion of social and economic development, and the concept of a Year of Service;

3) relating the Teachings of the Faith to the needs and concerns of the world at large through the development of Bahá'í expertise and scholarship;

4) winning increasing numbers of new adherents to the Faith and consolidating the gains; and,

5) the development of the funds of the Faith, and the Arc Projects Fund.

Under the gilt emblem of the Greatest Name, and occupying the entire centre stage, a magnificent full-colour aerial photograph featuring the Shrine of the Báb—set against a skilfully overlaid architect's rendering of the future terraces with their myriad young cypresses, paths, fountains, and shrubs, and the Arc with its five edifices completed—constantly reminded the delegates of the compelling needs of the Arc Project.

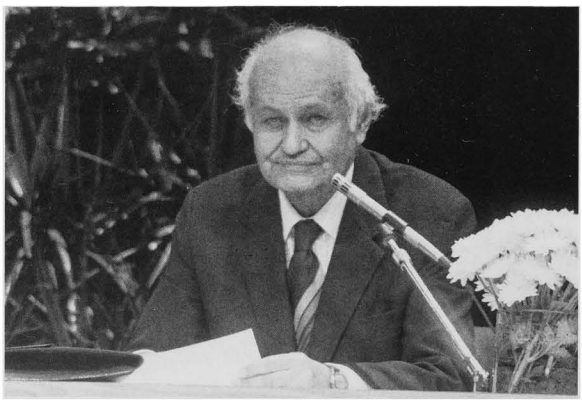
The architect of the buildings, Mr. Ḥusayn Amánat, and the architect of the terraces and project manager, Mr. Faríburz Ṣahbá, drew further attention to the detail, grandeur, and financial needs of the project in their slide presentations.

Two other slide presentations were shown to the delegates. One was a retrospective of the development of the Faith during the previous five years, and the other looked ahead to the upcoming Bahá'í World Congress to be held in New York City in 1992.

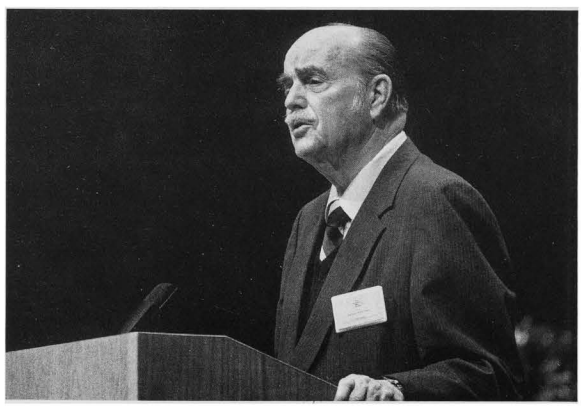
A historic talk on the subject of Ḥuqúqu'lláh was given by the Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Varqá, who pointed out that this law



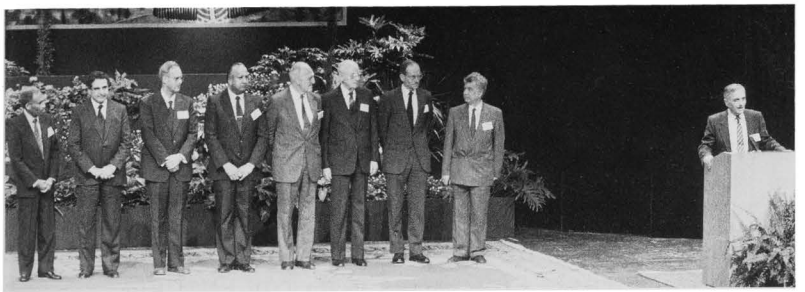
The presence of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum and the other Hands of the Cause of God added a special dignity and spiritual force to the sixth International Convention.



The Hand of the Cause of God Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá talking to the delegates about the law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh during the International Convention.



The Hand of the Cause of God William Sears brought special greetings to the International Convention from those Hands of the Cause not present, Dr. Ugo Giachery, Mr. Jalál Kházeh, and Mr. John Robarts.



Mr. 'Alí Nakhjavání, at the podium, with the other members of the Universal House of Justice elected at Riḍván 1988. Left to right: Mr. Glenford Mitchell, Mr. Ḥushmand Fatheazam, Mr. Ian Semple, Dr. Peter Khan, Dr. David Ruhe, Mr. Hugh Chance, Mr. Hooper Dunbar, Mr. Adib Taherzadeh.

should be viewed as a spiritual obligation based on the believer's love for God; that it is a tangible aspect of the Covenant of God; and that it strengthens the relationship between God and man.

Two Holy Days were celebrated during the Convention period. The ninth Day of Riḍván was commemorated in the forecourt and gardens of the Haifa Pilgrim House adjacent to the Shrine of the Báb, with the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears presiding. Readings in five languages—Arabic, English, Spanish, French, and Persian—were followed by the recitation of the Tablet of Visitation. Then the friends reverently circumambulated the Shrine of the Báb.

Following the close of the last Convention session on the Twelfth Day of Riḍván, all the distinguished participants gathered in the Ḥaram-i-Aqdas at Bahjí where the gardens were in their full spring splendour. The celebration was opened with forceful comments by the Hand of the Cause Collis Featherstone about the significance of the occasion. Readings in five languages were followed by the silent and joyous circumambulation of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh by more than 1,000 of His followers.

For four days prior to the Convention, the delegates enjoyed a series of visits arranged for them to the Holy Places of the Faith in Haifa and 'Akká. These included time spent in the Shrines of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb, the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí, the Cell of Bahá'u'lláh, the House of 'Abbúd, and the House of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá in 'Akká, and the International Archives Building, the House of the Master, and the Seat of the Universal House of Justice in Haifa.

Many members of National Spiritual Assemblies took the opportunity provided by the Convention to meet with members of other National Assemblies to discuss a wide range of subjects of mutual interest. Scores of these meetings took place before the Convention opened and in the evenings after the general sessions.

Counsellors from all five Continental Boards attended the Convention (16 from Africa, 16 from the Americas, 12 from Asia, 8 from Australasia, 9 from Europe), 61 in all.

The visiting Counsellors took part in various special meetings and events including five 'continental' sessions held for members of each of the Continental Boards and the delegates from the National Spiritual Assemblies of their areas.

Following the Convention, from 3 to 8 May, the Hands of the Cause and the Counsellors stayed on in Haifa to participate in a Counsellors' conference held under the auspices of the International Teaching Centre.

II
THE HANDS OF THE CAUSE OF GOD

1. THE HANDS OF THE CAUSE OF GOD AND THE EXTENSION OF THEIR FUNCTIONS INTO THE FUTURE

A. THE RULERS AND THE LEARNED

In every society and community of human beings there are those who are revered for their learning and wisdom, and there are those who are invested with authority to govern. In religious communities it has been usual for the legislative and governing authority to be held by the learned who have thus, as priests or as doctors of religious law, combined both capacities in the same persons. Other communities have, only too often, been riven by the conflict between church and state, between priests and kings, or, in more modern terms, between intellectuals and the establishment. In the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh these two extremes, of the over-concentration of authority on the one hand and of division and conflict on the other, are eliminated. The way this is achieved is one of the unique features of that Order and confers unimagined benefits upon the Bahá'í community.

In the Kitáb-i-'Ahd (The Book of the Covenant) Bahá'u'lláh wrote, *"Blessed are the rulers and the learned in Bahá."* The Guardian, interpreting this passage, stated on 4 November 1931:

> In this holy cycle the 'learned' are, on the one hand the Hands of the Cause of God, and, on the other, the teachers and diffusers of His teachings who do not rank as Hands, but who have attained an eminent position in the teaching world. As to the 'rulers' they refer to the members of the Local, National and International Houses of Justice. The duties of each of these souls will be determined in the future. (Translated from the Persian.)

Since those words were written the Bahá'í Administrative Order has developed rapidly and is now functioning throughout the world. Under the supreme authority of the revealed Law of God the Bahá'í community is governed by its elected institutions: Local and National Spiritual Assemblies and the Universal House of Justice, while the institutions of the 'learned', which exercise no governing authority over the believers, are accorded an exalted rank which enables them to exert their beneficent influence over all parts of the community. Commenting on this feature of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, the Universal House of Justice wrote in its message of 24 April 1972:

> The existence of institutions of such exalted rank, comprising individuals who play such a vital role, who yet have no legislative, administrative or judicial authority, and are entirely devoid of priestly functions or the right to make authoritative interpretations, is a feature of Bahá'í administration unparalleled in the religions of the past....

Developing this theme, the Universal House of Justice referred in that same message to a letter written on behalf of the Guardian on 14 March 1927, to the Spiritual

Assembly of Istanbul, in which he expounded the Bahá'í principle of action by majority vote. In this letter Shoghi Effendi points out how, in the past, it was certain individuals who 'accounted themselves as superior in knowledge and elevated in position' who caused division, and that it was those 'who pretended to be the most distinguished of all' who 'always proved themselves to be the source of contention'. He praises God that Bahá'u'lláh had withdrawn authority from 'the unyielding and dictatorial views of the learned and the wise', rejected the assertions of individuals, even though recognized as the most accomplished and learned among men, as authoritative criteria, and 'ordained that all matters be referred to authorized centres and assemblies'. Thus the institutions of the learned in the Bahá'í Faith, while invested with high rank and exercising invaluable moral authority and influence, have no executive power other than in the direction of their own institutions.

The difficulty of establishing a clear understanding of this administrative concept, new in the history of religoin, is reflected in the concluding passage of the message of the Universal House of Justice, of 24 April 1972, quoted above:

> ...The newness and uniqueness of this concept make it difficult to grasp; only as the Bahá'í community grows and the believers are increasingly able to contemplate its administrative structure uninfluenced by concepts from past ages, will the vital interdependence of the 'rulers' and 'learned' in the Faith be properly understood, and the inestimable value of their interaction be fully recognized.

Only now, as these two arms of the world-embracing system of Bahá'u'lláh begin to function in their separate but complementary roles towards a common achievement, are intimations caught of the divine beneficence of that system.

B. The Hands of the Cause of God

Bahá'u'lláh Himself created the institution of the Hands of the Cause and appointed a few of His followers to serve Him as Hands in His own lifetime. In the *Tablet of the World* He refers to the Hands of the Cause in words descriptive of the station of service to which they are called:

> *Light and glory, greeting and praise be upon the Hands of His Cause, through whom the light of fortitude hath shone forth and the truth hath been established that the authority to choose rests with God, the Powerful, the Mighty, the Unconstrained, through whom the ocean of bounty hath surged and the fragrance of the gracious favours of God, the Lord of mankind, hath been diffused. We beseech Him—Exalted is He—to shield them through the power of His hosts, to protect them through the potency of His dominion and to aid them through His indomitable strength which prevaileth over all created things. Sovereignty is God's, the Creator of the heavens and the Lord of the Kingdom of Names.*

The Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá contains many references to the Hands of the Cause, including explicit definitions of their station and functions, as well as various admonitions addressed to them:

> *Salutation and praise, blessing and glory rest... upon the Hands of the Cause of God that have diffused widely the Divine Fragrances, declared His Proofs, proclaimed His Faith, published abroad His Law, detached themselves from all things but Him, stood for righteousness in this world, and kindled the Fire of the Love of God in the very hearts and souls of His servants;... the Hands of the Cause of God*

must be ever watchful and so soon as they find anyone beginning to oppose and protest against the Guardian of the Cause of God, cast him out from the congregation of the people of Bahá and in no wise accept any excuse from him...

...The Hands of the Cause of God must elect from their own number nine persons that shall at all times be occupied in the important services in the work of the Guardian of the Cause of God. The election of these nine must be carried either unanimously or by majority from the company of the Hands of the Cause of God and these, whether unanimously or by a majority vote, must give their assent to the choice of the one whom the Guardian of the Cause of God hath chosen as his successor...

O friends! The Hands of the Cause of God must be nominated and appointed by the Guardian of the Cause of God. All must be under his shadow and obey his command...

The obligations of the Hands of the Cause of God are to diffuse the Divine Fragrances, to edify the souls of men, to promote learning, to improve the character of all men and to be, at all times and under all conditions, sanctified and detached from earthly things. They must manifest the fear of God by their conduct, their manners, their deeds and their words. This body of the Hands of the Cause of God is under the direction of the Guardian of the Cause of God. He must continually urge them to strive and endeavor to the utmost of their ability to diffuse the sweet savors of God, and to guide all the peoples of the world, for it is the light of Divine Guidance that causeth all the universe to be illumined. To disregard, though it be for a moment, this absolute command which is binding upon everyone, is in no wise permitted, that the existent world may become even as the Abhá Paradise, that the surface of the earth may become heavenly, that contention and conflict amidst peoples, kindreds, nations and governments may disappear, that all the dwellers on earth may become one people and one race, that the world may become even as one home.

'Abdu'l-Bahá did not Himself appoint any additional Hands of the Cause. He did, however, refer to certain outstanding teachers of the Faith as Hands.

During the first three decades of his ministry as Guardian of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi designated certain outstanding Bahá'ís as Hands posthumously. Then, in December 1951, he raised twelve living believers to this exalted rank, a development of the Administrative Order which thrilled the entire Bahá'í world. In February 1952 he appointed a further seven, and in 1957 eight more, bringing the total number to twenty-seven.[1] In these brief six years the Guardian not only established this institution on a firm foundation throughout the world, with a body of four Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land to act as the liaison between himself and the Hands in each continent, but he brought into being in each continent two Auxiliary Boards, one for the protection and one for the propagation of the Faith, to act as the 'assistants, deputies and advisers' of the Hands of that continent.

The epic story of how in November 1957, the Hands of the Cause of God, called by the Guardian the 'Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth', rallied the grief-stricken and stunned Bahá'ís of the world, guided them to the victorious accomplishment of the Ten Year Crusade which he had launched, and convened the members of the National Spiritual Assemblies for the first election of the Universal House of Justice in April 1963, has been told in befitting detail in Volume XIII of this publication.

[1] See 'The Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIII, p. 334.

C. The Continental Boards of Counsellors

The establishment of the Universal House of Justice in 1963 ushered in a new phase in the evolution of the institution of the Hands of the Cause. In October 1963 the House of Justice decided 'that there is no way to appoint or legislate to make it possible to appoint a second Guardian to succeed Shoghi Effendi'. Therefore, among the first questions which it was necessary for it then to consider were the manner in which the institution of the Hands of the Cause was to continue to perform its appointed functions, the relationship which should exist between the House of Justice and the Hands of the Cause, and how the indispensable functions of the Hands of the Cause could be extended into the future, since, according to the text of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Hands of the Cause of God must be nominated and appointed by the Guardian of the Cause of God.*

Following consultation with a conclave of the Hands in October–November 1964, the Universal House of Justice announced to the believers in its message of November 1964 the following decision:

> There is no way to appoint, or to legislate to make it possible to appoint, Hands of the Cause of God.
>
> Responsibility for decisions on matters of general policy affecting the institution of the Hands of the Cause, which was formerly exercised by the beloved Guardian, now devolves upon the Universal House of Justice as the supreme and central institution of the Faith to which all must turn.

That same message announced increases in the number of the members of the Auxiliary Boards for propagation in every continent, and the Hands were requested to appoint one or more members of each Auxiliary Board to act in an executive capacity on their behalf and in the name of each Hand, for the direction of the work of the Boards. The message continued:

> The exalted rank and specific functions of the Hands of the Cause of God make it inappropriate for them to be elected or appointed to administrative institutions, or to be elected as delegates to national conventions. Furthermore, it is their desire and the desire of the House of Justice that they be free to devote their entire energies to the vitally important duties conferred upon them in the Holy Writings.

At the same time the House of Justice confirmed the request of the Hands of the Cause that, henceforth, members of the Auxiliary Boards should be freed from administrative responsibilities, including service on committees and as delegates to conventions.

On 21 June 1968 the House of Justice announced by cable to the Bahá'í world the decision to establish eleven Continental Boards of Counsellors for the protection and propagation of the Faith and, in a written message issued on 24 June, outlined in detail the nature and scope of this action. Because of its great significance to the evolution of the Administrative Order, the entire text of this message is quoted:

> The majestic unfoldment of Bahá'u'lláh's world-redeeming administrative system has been marked by the successive establishment of the various institutions and agencies which constitute the framework of that divinely-created Order. Thus, more than a quarter-of-a-century after the emergence of the first National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'í world the institution of the Hands of the Cause was formally established, with the appointment by the beloved Guardian, in conformity with the provisions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament, of the first contingent of these high-ranking officers of the Faith. Following the passing of the Guardian of the Cause of God, it fell to the House of Justice to devise a way, within the Administrative Order, of developing

'the institution of the Hands of the Cause with a view to extension into the future of its appointed functions of protection and propagation', and this was made a goal of the Nine Year Plan. Much thought and study has been given to the question over the past four years, and the texts have been collected and reviewed. During the last two months, this goal, as announced in our cable to the National Conventions, has been the object of prolonged and prayerful consultation between the Universal House of Justice and the Hands of the Cause of God. All this made evident the framework within which this goal was to be achieved, namely:

The Universal House of Justice sees no way in which additional Hands of the Cause of God can be appointed.

The absence of the Guardian of the Faith brought about an entirely new relationship between the Universal House of Justice and the Hands of the Cause and called for the progressive unfoldment by the Universal House of Justice of the manner in which the Hands of the Cause would carry out their divinely-conferred functions of protection and propagation.

Whatever new development or institution is initiated should come into operation as soon as possible in order to reinforce and supplement the work of the Hands of the Cause while at the same time taking full advantage of the opportunity of having the Hands themselves assist in launching and guiding the new procedures.

Any such institution must grow and operate in harmony with the principles governing the functioning of the institution of the Hands of the Cause of God.

In the light of these considerations the Universal House of Justice decided, as announced in its recent cable, to establish Continental Boards of Counsellors for the protection and propagation of the Faith. Their duties will include directing the Auxiliary Boards in their respective areas, consulting and collaborating with National Spiritual Assemblies, and keeping the Hands of the Cause and the Universal House of Justice informed concerning the conditions of the Cause in their areas.

Initially eleven Boards of Counsellors have been appointed, one for each of the following areas: Northwestern Africa, Central and East Africa, Southern Africa, North America, Central America, South America, Western Asia, Southeastern Asia, Northeastern Asia, Australasia and Europe.

The members of these Boards of Counsellors will serve for a term, or terms, the length of which will be determined and announced at a later date, and while serving in this capacity, will not be eligible for membership on national or local administrative bodies. One member of each Continental Board of Counsellors has been designated as Trustee of the Continental Fund for its area.

The Auxiliary Boards for protection and propagation will henceforth report to the Continental Boards of Counsellors who will appoint or replace members of the Auxiliary Boards as circumstances may require. Such appointments and replacements as may be necessary in the initial stages will take place after consultation with the Hand or Hands previously assigned to the continent or zone.

The Hands of the Cause of God have the prerogative and obligation to consult with the Continental Boards of Counsellors and National Spiritual Assemblies on any subject which, in their view, affects the interests of the Cause. The Hands residing in the Holy Land will act as liaison between the Universal House of Justice and the Continental Boards of Counsellors, and will also assist the Universal House of Justice in setting up, at a propitious time, an international teaching centre in the Holy Land, as anticipated in the Guardian's writings.

The Hands of the Cause of God are one of the most precious assets the Bahá'í

world possesses. Released from administration of the Auxiliary Boards, they will be able to concentrate their energies on the more primary responsibilities of general protection and propagation, 'preservation of the spiritual health of the Bahá'í communities' and 'the vitality of the faith' of the Bahá'ís throughout the world. The House of Justice will call upon them to undertake special missions on its behalf, to represent it on both Bahá'í and other occasions and to keep it informed of the welfare of the Cause. While the Hands of the Cause will, naturally, have special concern for the affairs of the Cause in the areas in which they reside, they will operate increasingly on an intercontinental level, a factor which will lend tremendous impetus to the diffusion throughout the Bahá'í world of the spiritual inspiration channelled through them—the Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth.

With joyful hearts we proclaim this further unfoldment of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh and join our prayers to those of the friends throughout the East and the West that Bahá'u'lláh may continue to shower his confirmations upon the efforts of His servants in the safeguarding and promotion of His Faith.

A clarification of the status of Counsellors and their relationship to National Spiritual Assemblies was made by the House of Justice in a letter to a National Spiritual Assembly in May 1975:

> ...(it) must be one of warm and active collaboration, a full sharing in the excitement and the challenge of the teaching work and the establishment of living and growing Bahá'í communities... While the role of the Counsellors is normally to advise, encourage and reinforce, and they have no legislative or administrative authority, they nevertheless occupy a rank superior to that of the National Assembly or its members and each individual Counsellor is a high officer of the Faith entitled to the respect, honour and courtesy due to his rank. Each country which is privileged to have a resident Counsellor should prize that privilege. Each National Assembly which has a Counsellor at hand for frequent consultations should, without relinquishing any portion of its divinely assigned authority, call upon him often for his views and accord great weight to his advice.

On 8 June 1973 a further directive was sent to the Continental Boards of Counsellors which answered the need discussed by the Counsellors during their sessions in the Holy Land, at the time of the International Convention of that year, for some method to enable their institution to reach more deeply into the fabric of the Bahá'í world community. The House of Justice authorized each Board of Counsellors, at its discretion, to permit Auxiliary Board members to appoint assistants, whose duties would be to activate and encourage Local Spiritual Assemblies, to call the attention of Local Spiritual Assembly members to the importance of regular meetings, to encourage local communities to gather for Nineteen Day Feasts and Holy Days, to help deepen their fellow-believers' understanding of the teachings, and generally to assist the Auxiliary Board members in the discharge of their duties. The advice, at that time, was to proceed gradually with this new step so that experience could indicate the most effective manner of its operation. Since then, as a result of the proven value of this expanded service, appointments of assistants in each zone have been steadily and rapidly augmented. The letter of 8 June 1973 stated that 'believers can serve at the same time both as assistants to Auxiliary Board members and on administrative institutions'.

Adjustments to the number of Continental Boards of Counsellors are made as the Universal House of Justice deems necessary, entailing adjustments to zones assigned to

the Boards, to the number of Counsellors and to the number of Auxiliary Boards and Auxiliary Board members.* Thus the institution operates at all levels throughout the world, reaching into the basic structure of local community life and exerting its encouraging and uplifting influence upon the lives of individuals and the deliberations of institutions, constantly watching over the security of the Faith, pointing the way to the promotion of its best interests, and to the ever wider dissemination of its healing message.

D. The International Teaching Centre

Assurance of the extension into the future of the appointed functions of protection and propagation conferred upon the Hands of the Cause was accomplished by the establishment of the Continental Boards of Counsellors. However, that vital goal having been accomplished, the problem remained of ordering the work of the new institution so that it would grow organically with the Faith itself.

In a letter addressed to all National Spiritual Assemblies on 24 June 1968 the Universal House of Justice confirmed that 'the relationship of Continental Boards of Counsellors to National Spiritual Assemblies will follow the pattern of the relationship between the Hands of the Cause and National Spiritual Assemblies, outlined by the beloved Guardian in various communications'.

The cablegram addressed by the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies on 21 June 1968 announcing the establishment of Continental Boards of Counsellors had contained a reference to the 'future establishment international teaching centre Holy Land foreshadowed writings beloved Guardian.'

In October 1971 the Hands of the Cause were notified that after the International Convention for the election of the Universal House of Justice during Riḍván 1973, their presence in the Holy Land for a period of time in order to consult on a number of important subjects would be most welcome.

The foremost topic would be the establishment of the international teaching centre about which the Hands had previously been requested to submit their written views. The Universal House of Justice, in its letter to the Hands of the Cause in October 1971, cited, amongst others, the following three quotations from the Guardian which anticipated the evolution of the World Administrative Centre of the Faith on Mount Carmel and the establishment there of an international teaching centre as the seat of the Hands of the Cause of God:

> ...it must be clearly understood, nor can it be sufficiently emphasized, that the conjunction of the resting-place of the Greatest Holy Leaf with those of her brother and mother incalculably reinforces the spiritual potencies of that consecrated Spot which, under the wings of the Báb's overshadowing Sepulchre, and in the vicinity of the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, which will be reared on its flank, is destined to evolve into the focal centre of those world-shaking, world-embracing, world-directing administrative institutions, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh and anticipated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and which are to function in consonance with the principles that govern the twin institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice. Then, and then only, will this momentous prophecy which illuminates the concluding passages of the Tablet of Carmel be fulfilled: *Ere long will God sail His ark upon thee (*Carmel) *and will manifest the people of Bahá who have been mentioned in the Book of Names.*[1]

*In November 1980 the thirteen Boards of Counsellors were consolidated into five, each continental Board having two Auxiliary Boards, one for protection and one for propagation; and each Auxiliary Board member having assistants as needed and authorized.

In this great Tablet which unveils divine mysteries and heralds the establishment of two mighty, majestic and momentous undertakings—one of which is spiritual and the other administrative, both at the World Centre of the Faith—Bahá'u'lláh refers to an 'Ark', whose dwellers are the men of the Supreme House of Justice, which, in conformity with the exact provisions of the Will and Testament of the Centre of the Mighty Covenant is the body which should lay down laws not explicitly revealed in the Text. In this Dispensation, these laws are destined to flow from this holy mountain, even as in the Mosaic Dispensation the law of God was promulgated from Zion. The 'sailing of the Ark' of His laws is a reference to the establishment of the Universal House of Justice, which is indeed the Seat of Legislation, one of the branches of the World Administrative Centre of the Bahá'ís on this holy mountain. It will be housed in a separate building near the International Archives building, now under construction, on a site in the neighbourhood of the Shrine of the Báb, and overlooking the sacred and illumined Monuments. In the neighbourhood of these two stately edifices and two mighty Institutions (i.e. the Archives Building and the edifice for the House of Justice), another edifice will gradually be erected which will be the Seat of the Guardianship, the Centre which will interpret, expound and prepare commentaries on explicitly revealed laws, and will reinforce and supplement the legislative body. Yet another edifice to supplement these three edifices will be the Centre for the propagation and teaching of the Faith, the Seat for the Hands of the Cause, who, in accordance with the explicit text of the Will and Testament are charged with the security, the preservation and protection of the Cause, the safeguarding of the unity of the community, the promotion of God's religion and the spread of His Word. These majestic and mighty edifices, which will be constructed gradually in accordance with a beautiful and unique style of architecture around the sacred Monuments, are all considered as branches of this highly-exalted, firmly-grounded and broadly-based World Administrative Centre of the followers of the Cause of Him Who is the Lord of this Age and the Ruler of Creation.[1]

The raising of this edifice (International Bahá'í Archives) will in turn herald the construction, in the course of successive epochs of the Formative Age of the Faith, of several other structures, which will serve as the administrative seats of such divinely appointed institutions as the Guardianship, the Hands of the Cause, and the Universal House of Justice. These edifices will, in the shape of a far-flung arc, and following a harmonizing style of architecture, surround the resting places of the Greatest Holy Leaf, ranking as foremost among the members of her sex in the Bahá'í Dispensation, of her brother, offered up as a ransom by Bahá'u'lláh for the quickening of the world and its unification, and of their mother, proclaimed by Him to be His chosen '*consort in all the worlds of God*'. The ultimate completion of this stupendous undertaking will mark the culmination of the development of a world-wide divinely-appointed Administrative Order whose beginnings may be traced as far back as the concluding years of the Heroic Age of the Faith.[2]

On 5 June 1973, following the International Convention and the consultations with

[1] Shoghi Effendi, letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, 21 December 1939; see *Messages to America*, pp. 32–33.

[1] Shoghi Effendi, letter in Persian to the Bahá'ís of the East, Naw-Rúz 111 (1954).

[2] Shoghi Effendi, letter to the Bahá'ís of the world, 27 November 1954; see *Messages to the Bahá'í World*, p. 74.

the Hands of the Cause, and less than a month after the Counsellors had left the Holy Land to resume their services within their zones, the following announcement was cabled by the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies:

> ANNOUNCE ESTABLISHMENT HOLY LAND LONG ANTICIPATED INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE DESTINED EVOLVE INTO ONE THOSE WORLD SHAKING WORLD EMBRACING WORLD DIRECTING ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTIONS ORDAINED BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH ANTICIPATED BY 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ ELUCIDATED BY SHOGHI EFFENDI STOP MEMBERSHIP THIS NASCENT INSTITUTION COMPRISES ALL HANDS CAUSE GOD AND INITIALLY THREE COUNSELLORS WHO WITH HANDS PRESENT HOLY LAND WILL CONSTITUTE NUCLEUS ITS VITAL OPERATIONS STOP CALLING UPON HOOPER DUNBAR FLORENCE MAYBERRY AZIZ YAZDI PROCEED HOLY LAND ASSUME THIS HIGHLY MERITORIOUS SERVICE STOP OFFERING PRAYERS HEARTFELT GRATITUDE SACRED THRESHOLD THIS FURTHER EVIDENCE ORGANIC EVOLUTION ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

It was followed three days later by this expanded announcement to the Bahá'ís of the world:

> The centennial year of the revelation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas has already witnessed events of such capital significance in the annals of the Bahá'í Dispensation as to cause us to contemplate with awe the rapidity with which Divine Providence is advancing the Cause of the Most Great Name. The time is indeed propitious for the establishment of the International Teaching Centre, a development which, at one and the same time, brings to fruition the work of the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land and provides for its extension into the future, links the institutions of the Boards of Counsellors even more intimately with that of the Hands of the Cause of God, and powerfully reinforces the discharge of the rapidly growing responsibility of the Universal House of Justice.
>
> This International Teaching Centre now established, will, in due course, operate from that building designated by the Guardian as the Seat for the Hands of the Cause, which must be raised on the arc on Mount Carmel in close proximity to the Seat of the Universal House of Justice.
>
> The duties now assigned to this nascent institution are:
>
> - To co-ordinate, stimulate and direct the activities of the Continental Boards of Counsellors and to act as liaison between them and the Universal House of Justice.
> - To be fully informed of the situation of the Cause in all parts of the world and to be able, from the background of this knowledge, to make reports and recommendations to the Universal House of Justice and give advice to the Continental Boards of Counsellors.
> - To be alert to possibilities, both within and without the Bahá'í community, for the extension of the teaching work into receptive or needy areas, and to draw the attention of the Universal House of Justice and the Continental Boards of Counsellors to such possibilities, making recommendations for action.
> - To determine and anticipate needs for literature, pioneers and travelling teachers and to work out teaching plans, both regional and global, for the approval of the Universal House of Justice.
> - All the Hands of the Cause of God will be members of the International Teaching Centre. Each Hand will be kept regularly informed of the activities of the Centre through reports or copies of its minutes, and will be able, wherever he may be residing or travelling, to convey suggestions, recommendations and information to the Centre and, whenever he is in the Holy Land, to take part in the consultations and other activities of the Centre.
> - In addition, we now appoint Mr. Hooper Dunbar, Mrs. Florence Mayberry and

Mr. 'Azíz Yazdí to membership of the International Teaching Centre, with the rank of Counsellor. These believers, who have been serving with distinction on the Continental Boards of Counsellors in South America, North America and Central and East Africa respectively, will henceforth reside in Haifa and will, together with the Hands present in the Holy Land, constitute the nucleus of the operations of the Centre. Authority for the expulsion and reinstatement of Covenant-breakers remains with the Hands of the Cause of God. All such matters will be investigated locally by the relative Continental Board of Counsellors in consultation with any Hand or Hands who may be in the area. The Continental Board of Counsellors and the Hands concerned will then make their reports to the International Teaching Centre where they will be considered. The decision whether or not to expel or reinstate will be made by the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land who will, as at present, submit their decision to the Universal House of Justice for approval....

> The decisions now announced are the outcome of deliberation extending over a number of years, reinforced by consultations with the Hands of the Cause of God, and especially with the Hands residing in the Holy Land who were requested in 1968 to assist the Universal House of Justice in the establishment of the International Teaching Centre, a task that now increases in magnitude as that Centre begins its work

One of the first tasks assigned by the Universal House of Justice to the International Teaching Centre was to devise the broad outlines of the global teaching plan to begin at Riḍván 1974 and conclude five years later at Riḍván 1979. This comprehensive and detailed survey of the entire Bahá'í world community provided an opportunity for the Teaching Centre to become thoroughly acquainted with the conditions, needs and potentialities of the one hundred and thirteen national Bahá'í communities which made up the Bahá'í international community at Riḍván 1973. A greatly increased flow of vital information from the Continental Boards of Counsellors was called for by the International Teaching Centre, which promised, in turn, the development of an increasingly close relationship between itself and the Boards through a similarly increased flow of materials from the Teaching Centre. At the request of the House of Justice the Teaching Centre also evolved a plan for international collaboration on travelling teaching projects.

The divinely ordained institution of the Hands of the Cause of God, having been brought into active reality by the Guardian of the Faith according to the directives of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament, was confronted in its infancy with an appalling crisis in the life of that Faith whose protection was its prime duty. During the interregnum between the passing of the Guardian and the election of the Universal House of Justice, the Hands of the Cause as its Chief Stewards, maintained the integrity and unity of the Faith. The functions of protection and propagation appointed to this great institution have now been extended into the future in a manner consonant with the principles of the Faith. The Continental Boards of Counsellors with their attendant Auxiliary Boards for protection and propagation, the assistants to the Auxiliary Board members, all co-ordinated and kept in relationship to the Universal House of Justice by the International Teaching Centre, form the fabric of the appointive arm of the Administrative Order of the Faith, which will in increasing measure exert its spiritualizing influence upon the development of the Bahá'í community and of all mankind.

2. THE WORK AND TRAVELS OF THE HANDS OF THE CAUSE

THE Hands of the Cause of God, freed in 1968 of continental administrative duties, were able increasingly to devote their efforts to serving as standard-bearers for the Bahá'ís of the world in support of the teaching activities launched by National Spiritual Assemblies and other institutions of the Bahá'í Faith.

During the course of the Six Year Plan, no less than in the teaching plans that preceded it, these remarkable individuals were fonts of inspiration, encouragement and reinforcement. Their contribution to the achievement of the goals and the influence of their example upon the Bahá'í friends took effect on numerous levels, both manifest and intangible. Their universal service in protecting the Cause of God; in proclaiming its truths; in deepening the knowledge of its adherents; in galvanizing the rank and file to greater heights of accomplishment; in awakening to an appreciation of the Bahá'í Cause a large segment of the public, often uninformed of its true nature and its relevance to the spiritual and social perils confronting society; and in presenting Bahá'í literature to Heads of State and others in authority, continued unabated.

Not alone through their travels, but also through their consultation, their presence at gatherings large and small, including inaugural Conventions of new National Spiritual Assemblies and the annual Conventions of established national communities, their correspondence, their writings and addresses, their association with Bahá'í pilgrims and their interaction with Bahá'ís in the field, often in farflung and remote areas, they have...*diffused widely the Divine Fragrances, declared His proofs, proclaimed His Faith, published abroad His Law, detached themselves from all things but Him, stood for righteousness in this world, and kindled the Fire of the Love of God in the very hearts and souls of His servants....*

In the period covered by this volume of *The Bahá'í World*, the years 143–148 of the Bahá'í Era (21 April 1986 to 20 April 1992), the Bahá'í community mourned the tragic loss of six of these precious souls. The following is a record, in chronological order, of the beloved Hands of the Cause who passed away during this period: Dhikru'lláh Khadem (November 1986), Dr. Ugo Giachery (July 1989), Jalál Khazeh (February 1990), H. Collis Featherstone (September 1990), John Robarts (June 1991), and William Sears (March 1992).

Although these pages lack scope to chronicle the full range of the services of the Hands—some frail or in ill health but of undiminished spiritual power—let the following excerpts culled from *Bahá'í International News Service* bulletins, and other sources, suggest in brief outline some of their major travels as well as a few of their other activities which are less amenable to documentation.

1986

April

MONACO: In a letter addressed to Bahá'ís in every land in April 1986, the Hand of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery said, "The Seven Year Plan has just ended in the midst of celestial strains and the plaudits of the Divine Concourse, ushering in with grace and joy another plan, the Six Year Plan

(1986–1992) which will pass into history bearing the name of 'Accomplishment and Triumph.'...I have served the Faith of God for many decades, and I am going to hand down the secrets of my blessed wife and myself to all of you. Devote your life to the service of the Cause of God. The highest station man can aspire to is that of service... 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in a Tablet addressed to the North American believers in 1898, said that ambition that is not applied to the service of mankind is an abomination..." (From *The American Bahá'í*, August 1986)

June

UNITED STATES: The Hand of the Cause John Robarts was the honoured guest at the Southeastern Regional Bahá'í Youth Conference held 18–22 June 1986 near Huntsville, Alabama. This first American Regional Youth Conference of the Six Year Plan was attended by approximately 150 Bahá'ís from various Southern States. Held at Alabama A and M University, a school dedicated to the advancement of the minorities, the conference dedicated much of one day to the issue of racial harmony. Bernice King, the daughter of slain civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who spoke on 'Civil Rights Today', was visibly moved as she accepted a copy of *The Promise of World Peace*, Gayle Morrison's biography of the Hand of the Cause Louis Gregory, and a silver commemorative plate engraved with the admonition found in the Bahá'í Writings, *close your eyes to racial differences and welcome all with the light of oneness.* (From *The American Bahá'í*, August 1986)

July

SWEDEN: Bahá'ís attending the Swedish Summer School in Solbacka in July wrote, "The friends were richly blessed by the penetrating wisdom and delightful humour of our beloved Hand of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery in whose honour a 90th birthday party was held. There were approximately 120 participants including friends from at least 12 other countries.' (From report of Summer School Committee 10 August)

CANADA: On 30 July, reporting to the Universal House of Justice, the Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum described a month of intense and productive activity in the Canadian north. A Montreal visit held two outstanding events, first a very cordial meeting for almost two hours on the Kahnawake Mohawk Reserve with Grand Chief Joseph Norton and Chief Eugene Montour. On 3 July a large gathering of Montreal Bahá'ís was held in the new Local Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds, located at the east end of Pine Avenue. (The historic Maxwell House, the Bahá'í Shrine, is at the extreme west end of the same street.) In Québec City Amatu'l-Bahá gave two talks in French, one for the public and one for the Bahá'ís. She was interviewed on radio in English and for a Québec newspaper in French. She travelled in the private plane of a Canadian Bahá'í with the same crew of friends as in a 1982 visit to the north. Her own enthusiastic account is given in the following excerpts from her message.

"July 7th Violette [Mrs. Nakhjavání] and I left Québec City... and flew to Frobisher Bay where we attended part of Spirit North Council before continuing our journey. I consider entire Frobisher Bay events could not possibly have been better... Over 100 believers and guests attended, approximately 60 percent native Eskimos and Indians....

"Moving commemoration Martyrdom beloved Báb held outside on hill overlooking unbelievably beautiful Frobisher Bay full of scintillating pack ice, touched all hearts, and I was able share petals from Threshold Bahá'u'lláh's Shrine in Bahjí with friends....

"Radio and newspaper coverage was complete, English but also in Eskimo, some broadcasts nationwide, others Northern region only, and aroused local and throughout North strong opposition clergy various denominations....

"On 11th July... flying on to Baker Lake for one night and having very happy meeting group devoted pioneers there and also some important Eskimo elders. Three-day visit Yellowknife, present administrative centre Northwest Territories, highly successful, large unity Feast included friends from as far as British Columbia and Alberta; following night... dinner reception attended by outstanding leader, Stephan Kakfwi, president of Dene Nation who... became very friendly; on this occasion a number of prominent politicians and other leaders including members of the legislature were present, radio interview and newspaper publicity also excellent....

"Had wonderful visit with Whitehorse and other friends at large, well-attended meetings, one huge potlatch dinner over 250 present, many non-Bahá'í leaders, another equally large public meeting in Whitehorse. We stayed three nights in beautiful new well-built, well-designed Yukon Institute, pride of the North and used not only by Bahá'ís but on befitting occasions facilities rented to suitable organizations creating excellent impression Faith. At special lunch the Commissioner for Yukon Territory, the Mayor of Whitehorse, the Minister of Health and Human Resources, the leader of the opposition, a member of the legislature, and three ranking representatives of the Council of Yukon Indians, as well as the captain of Salvation Army in the Yukon, were among distinguished guests. Radio and newspaper coverage was likewise excellent.

"We interrupted Whitehorse stay to fly above the Arctic Circle to Inuvik...spending one night there with devoted group pioneers and local friends, returning next day to Whitehorse via Old Crow, small, charming entirely native Indian village mostly hunters and fishermen unreachable by road and on no regular airline, a great relief to have pleasant sociable evening with many of their leaders at potlatch dinner in their meeting hall....

"We flew July 19 to Pincher Creek, Alberta, for happy event official opening new Peigan Bahá'í Centre in heart Blackfoot Indian area, attending large powwow first night, and following day impressive auspicious opening ceremony presided over by Chief Crowshoe who is the only surviving chief of those five chiefs who gave me the name Natuocist in 1960 on the Peigan Reserve. Over 300 were present from all parts Canada, including members Canadian National Spiritual Assembly.... Afternoon 20th, official dedication new centre took place, a deeply religious Indian pipe ceremony presided over by Chief Crowshoe, lasting over one hour, created remarkable feeling spiritual oneness. I was permitted smoke sacred pipe with small group tribal leaders, unique honour rarely conferred on a woman. Feel very strongly world-wide community Bahá'ís especially pioneers, teachers, must learn show proper respect profound customs and spiritual associations indigenous peoples if we desire share bounties Bahá'u'lláh's message with them. All too often, alas, we neglect follow beloved Master's footsteps who showered deep love and understanding, sincere praise and respect on those of different backgrounds. Such loving respect other people's way and deep feeling essential if we intend pass healing cup this Revelation to other lips....

"Arriving 21st [Regina, Saskatchewan]... for three-day visit first night addressed over 150 Bahá'ís... next day after early television interview was received officially by delegation representing Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan at the Legislative Building built by my father and uncle 1908–10.... It was a happy, gracious, cordial occasion followed by some of these officials attending formal luncheon... Mayor Larry Schneider who had proclaimed that week official Peace Week in Regina in honour of the Bahá'í Peace Message from the Universal House of Justice. A personal representative of the absent Premier... prominent Indian Heads of various bands in the Province as well as other dignitaries were present."

There followed an interview on CBC radio, a newspaper interview, a public talk

for 200 persons, and a final day spent at Fort Qu'Appelle and a lunch with prominent Indian leaders, especially women. In the afternoon Bahá'ís and friends gathered on a beautiful 70-acre property where an Institute will be built for native and other Bahá'ís and their friends to meet, study, and conduct activities related to the progress of the Faith in Canada. One stop was made in the United States at the prior request of the National Spiritual Assembly. Rúḥíyyih Khánum complied with the wish that she meet the believers on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, the location of a massive teaching plan carried out for the previous two years by U.S. Bahá'ís. "We slept at the Oglalla Community College", she wrote, "and held a large potlatch and powwow in this important centre in the heart of Sioux Indian territory. Sioux believers and others from as far away as Navajo Reservation [Arizona] ensured a most happy and memorable evening for us all. This important reservation now has 19 Local Assemblies, one of the all-Indian ones showering me with special gifts. ... Having left for the North from Québec City July 7th, we arrived in Toronto on July 25th tired but blissful, our cup running over with love from all our dear ones." (Based on report received from the Hand of the Cause 30 July)

AUSTRIA: On 1 August a telex reached the World Centre from "the beautiful mountainous area of Spital" where 160 Bahá'ís and their guests from 8 countries enjoyed the Austrian Bahá'í Summer School for 7 days: UNIQUE SPIRIT HONOURED AND ENRICHED THROUGH PRESENCE HAND OF CAUSE OF GOD MR. FURUTAN AND HIS BELOVED WIFE...'

SWITZERLAND: The Bahá'í Youth Movement in Europe made a beginning in July when youth from 15 countries gathered at Landegg Centre, Switzerland, for a conference organized by the Austrian National Youth Committee.... The movement now boasts a newsletter (in English) emanating from Doetinchem, the Netherlands, head office of the movement, and fed by reports from groups in many parts of Europe. The second issue of the publication gives an account of the original conference at which the movement was born and tells of the inspiration the participants received from the presence of the Hand of the Cause 'Alí-Akbar Furútan who was accompanied by Mrs. Furútan and whose presence was 'a source of joy and enthusiasm that prevailed in that school.' (Based on *Bahá'í Youth Newsletter*)

August

NORTHERN IRELAND: The second Northern Ireland Bahá'í Summer School at Inniskillen was an inspiring occasion. One hundred and thirty participants attended. The guest of honour, the Hand of the Cause John Robarts, brought great warmth to the sessions. The theme of the school "And I Saw A New Earth" paid tribute to the memory of the Hand of the Cause George Townshend. A sculptured portrait of Mr. Townshend was sent to his son, Brian, in recognition of his historic donation of the Townshend library to the Faith. (Message from the participants received 15 August)

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND: What a wonderful two weeks the Irish Bahá'í community has just experienced with the visit of the Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts. His tour of Ireland has touched the hearts of all those who met him. His stories about prayer have fired us with a deeper faith in the power of prayer and a greater confidence in the key role which it will play in our teaching endeavours.... Mr. Robarts was present for two programmes of teaching conducted in the Limerick/Clare region on weekends. One of these, a Peace Concert organized by the Bahá'ís, drew an attendance of approximately 200 non-Bahá'ís. (From *Feast Newsletter* 8 September)

CANADA: The Eleventh Annual Conference of the Association for Bahá'í Studies was held from 20–24 August on the campus of the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, with approximately 2,000



The Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts (right) and his wife, Audrey, (second from left) planting a tree during their visit to Northern Ireland in August 1986.

participating. The largest annual conference to date had as its theme 'Beyond the Quest for Peace: Creating a New World Order' and was planned to mark the United Nations International Year of Peace. The keynote speech opening the sessions was given by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum. A guest of the conference was Dr. Ervin Laszlo of the Club of Rome who, with Amatu'l-Bahá and other dignitaries, took part in a Native Indian peace pipe ceremony which is seldom performed outside Native communities and rarely with non-Native participants.... An auxiliary conference for young people was addressed by the Hand of the Cause Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá, who "showered his young audience with universal love and visibly increased their love of learning about the Faith and the solution it offers for the ills of humanity." (From message received 7 September)

ITALY: The participation of the Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum and Counsellors Leo Niederreiter and Sohrab Youssefian inspired the 25th Italian Summer School in Sicily, held from 31 August to 7 September 1986. Amatu'l-Bahá, accompanied by members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy, presented *The Promise of World Peace* to the President of the Region of Sicily in a dignified official ceremony. The attendance of 1,000 Bahá'ís from 25 countries created a great proclamation opportunity on local and national television, the broadcasts giving rise to new requests for information about the Faith. (From report received 9 September)

October

AUSTRALIA: A special service in the Australian House of Worship in celebration of the International Year of Peace was held on 19 October 1986 with the participation of the Governor General of Australia, Sir Ninian Stephen, who read from Isaiah 2:1–5. Lady Stephen was also present at the service. Approximately 850 people attended and, simultaneously, a programme for 200 children took place in a marquee on the Temple grounds. The National Spiritual Assembly cabled that it was overjoyed that the beloved Hand of the Cause Collis Featherstone was

well and able to participate by escorting the distinguished guests into the House of Worship. (From report received 24 October)

November

WORLD CENTRE: WITH SORROWFUL HEARTS ANNOUNCE PASSING INDEFATIGABLE FEARLESS DEFENDER FAITH, DEEPLY LOVED HAND CAUSE ZIKRULLAH KHADEM. HIS STERLING SERVICES TO THE CAUSE, HIS TOTAL CONSECRATION TO TASKS ASSIGNED TO HIM BY BELOVED GUARDIAN, HIS OUTSTANDING EFFORTS AS MEMBER NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY CRADLE FAITH, HIS VALUABLE, SOUL-UPLIFTING STIMULATION IMPARTED BODY BELIEVERS NORTH AMERICA, PARTICULARLY UNITED STATES BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY, HIS UNTIRING ENDEAVOURS THROUGH HIS TALKS AND WRITINGS IN SAFEGUARDING COVENANT AND IN INSTILLING APPRECIATION LOVE FOR SHOGHI EFFENDI, SHED UNDYING LUSTRE OVER PERIOD HIS ADMIRABLE STEWARDSHIP CAUSE GOD. OFFERING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM. URGE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS HIS NAME AT ALL HOUSES OF WORSHIP AS WELL AS IN ALL LOCAL BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES. (Message from the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies 13 November)

UNITED STATES: The Hand of the Cause of God Dhikru'lláh Khadem was laid to rest, Skokie, Illinois, following a 10:00 a.m. service attended by the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears; members of the Continental Board of Counsellors, Dr. Wilma Brady, Mr. Robert Harris, Mrs. Lauretta King, Mr. Donald O. Rogers, Mr. Fred Schechter, and Mr. Arturo Serrano; the members of the National Spiritual Assemblies of the United States and of Canada; and members of the Auxiliary Board and of the committees of the National Assembly. Five hundred sorrowing friends joined in paying tribute to the departed Hand of the Cause. (From *Bahá'í International News Service,* No. 160, November 1986)

CANADA: Two Hands of the Cause, Dr. 'Alí Muḥammad Varqá and Mr. John Robarts, were honoured participants in an historic meeting in Québec City, on 23 November, sponsored by the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Québec City for all the believers in the Province. The Covenant was the subject of the successful gathering. (Message from the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Québec City received 26 November)

December

INDIA: THE PLACING OF SACRED DUST HOLY SHRINES BY AMATULBAHA RUHIYYIH KHANUM THIS AUSPICIOUS DAY HAS SANCTIFIED OUR MASHRIQULADHKAR HAS BROUGHT TO INDIA PRICELESS BOUNTY AND DEEPLY STIRRED PROJECT TEAM NOW DISBANDING TO YIELD THANKS SACRED THRESHOLD UNIQUE PRIVILEGE RAISE MASHRIQULADHKAR AND TO EXPRESS HEARTFELT GRATITUDE ENCOURAGEMENT INSPIRATION BELOVED UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE THROUGHOUT CONSTRUCTION PERIOD. DEEPEST LOVE JOYOUS MOMENTOUS DEDICATION. (Cable dated 24 December 1986 from Indian Temple Project)

On the morning of 24 December 1986, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, dedicated the first Bahá'í House of Worship of the Indian Subcontinent, in the presence of 400 illustrious guests including the Hands of the Cause William Sears and Collis Featherstone. Eight thousand Bahá'ís from 114 nations, with Indian believers from every State and Territory, were present for three consecutive services of dedication held that day, ending at six in the evening. On the afternoon of 23 December, thousands had gathered at Indira Gandhi Stadium in New Delhi for a unity feast at which Amatu'l-Bahá read a message from the Universal House of Justice. At a press conference held on 22 December, Rúḥíyyih Khánum captured the hearts and minds of India's press and media representatives with her dynamic style and incisive responses to questions. On the morning of 27 December, dawn prayers were held at the House of Worship. Services of worship open

to the public were held for the first time on 1 January 1987.

MALAYSIA: After participating in the dedication of the Temple at New Delhi in December, the Hand of the Cause Collis Featherstone, accompanied by his wife, travelled to Malaysia on 30 December, where he spent an active ten days. He spoke to several communities in the Kuala Lumpur area, in Selangor, and in Negri Sembilan—gatherings of up to 100 persons. Mrs. Featherstone also addressed some community groups. In the capital, Mr. Featherstone and Counsellor Chellie Sundram held consultation with five members of the National Spiritual Assembly. On another occasion, Mr. Featherstone met with 70 members of the Auxiliary Boards and of National and State Teaching Committees. A proclamation meeting was arranged at the Pure Life Society on 9 January at which 80–100 teachers and pupils were shown the videotape the Featherstones had brought of the special 19 October peace service in the Sydney Temple, and heard a talk on the Faith. Another gathering addressed by Mr. Featherstone was the Interfaith Fellowship which met in a Bahá'í home. A stop in Singapore for one night was the occasion for a talk to a roomful of believers who gathered to greet the Hand of the Cause. From there the Featherstones went to Adelaide and Melbourne, where Mr. Featherstone addressed the Australian National Youth Conference. (From report received 15 February from the Hand of the Cause)

1987

January

THAILAND: The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum returned to the World Centre on 2nd February 1987 after the dedication of the India Temple, and then left again to visit Thailand. In less than a month Amatu'l-Bahá, accompanied by Mrs. Violette Nakhjavání, criss-crossed Thailand from south to north and east to west, fulfilling an active schedule prepared for her. She spoke to seven major gatherings of Bahá'ís and the public; held personal interviews with at least eight officials and dignitaries; addressed the media in two cities; held consultations with the Spiritual Assembly; and met with the rank and file of the believers in city and village. In Bangkok Amatu'l-Bahá was cordially received by the Minister of Education, who also held the portfolio of Religious Affairs, and discussed with him the interests of the Faith in Thailand. She met with the Governor of Bangkok, addressed a small gathering of notables at a World Religion Day meeting and reception, and gave interviews to press and television. At the National Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds she engaged in consultation with the Spiritual Assembly on three occasions. Near the Eastern Border, during what she called "the highlight" of her trip, Amatu'l-Bahá visited the refugee camps of Khao-I-Dang and Site 2 South, where there were large communities of Bahá'ís, numbered in the thousands, who had enrolled there since mid-1984, having fled war-torn areas of other southeast Asian countries. Though able to meet with relatively few of the many Bahá'ís in the immense camps, she was impressed with the sincerity and devotion to the Cause of those who were able to come to the gatherings. In Yasothon, in the northeastern region of Thailand, Amatu'l-Bahá visited the Yasothon Bahá'í School and had "three happy village meetings" in the area. She also met with the Governor of the Province in his home. In Songkhla Province, in the far south, she spoke to a conference for believers of the southern region attended by two members of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Asia, Dr. Chellie Sundram and Dr. Iraj Ayman. Five hundred believers

came from Malaysia and thirteen from Singapore, travelling many hours by bus. In Songkhla, Amatu'l-Bahá met with the Deputy Governor who, "like all Thai officials", she wrote, "was courteous, cordial and interested". The Hand of the Cause addressed an audience of more than 700 at the Sirnakron Wirot University at a peace conference sponsored jointly by the University and the Bahá'í community, sharing the platform with a professor of sociology. For joint consultations with the three Spiritual Assemblies Amatu'l-Bahá was joined by the two Counsellors. The meetings included Auxiliary Board members and their assistants, and members of national teaching committees. She was able also to make a trip to an active Bahá'í community on Tha Wa Island before leaving the southern region. Chiengmai, in the far north near Burma and Laos, is an important city with an active Bahá'í community. There Amatu'l-Bahá met with the Vice-Governor, was cordially received by the president of a teacher training college, and was invited to address students of a comparative religions class. She also met local Bahá'ís and friends at a large gathering, and addressed local dignitaries at a luncheon. On leaving Thailand, Amatu'l-Bahá noted that in this "immensely promising area", pioneers can make an effective contribution. (Based on a telex from the Hand of the Cause received 26 January)

April

UNITED STATES: The 78th Bahá'í National Convention, held 23–26 April 1987 within the sacred precincts of the Mother Temple of the West in Wilmette, Illinois, was imbued with a maturity of deliberation and a sense of purpose perhaps unprecedented in the history of the American Bahá'í community.... This year's Convention was blessed by the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears, who delivered the closing address Sunday morning, exhorting the friends to follow in the hallowed footsteps of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and to emulate His teaching methods as we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Master's historic visit to North America.... Mr. Sears, who attended most of the Convention sessions and who is to be present 27 June at the Souvenir Picnic in Teaneck, New Jersey, urged his audience to appreciate the glorious privilege of living in this day, and to seize the opportunity now to follow the example of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and carry the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to every corner of this country and around the world. (From *The American Bahá'í*, June)

May

CANADA: Dr. Varqá attended a Unity Conference held in Kingston, Ontario, in May, "contributing greatly to the love and inspiration" felt by the 200 who gathered for the meeting. (From report in *Bahá'í Canada*, August 1987)

May/June

AFRICA: In the months of May and June, the Hand of the Cause H. Collis Featherstone, accompanied by Mrs. Featherstone, travelled to eight countries of Africa, visiting Bahá'í communities and inspiring the friends "in his usual lively and informative way", in the words of an Auxiliary Board member, recording the visit. Going first to Mauritius for the National Convention on 1 May, Mr. Featherstone was able also to make a three-minute TV news recording while there, and to visit the communities of Flacq, Camp de Masque (where they celebrated his 74th birthday), Mare d'Albert, and Plaint Magnien. He also gave a press conference. On 8 May the Featherstones went to Zimbabwe, where meetings were held in Harare and Bulawayo. In Bulawayo they called on the Deputy Mayor and presented a copy of *The Promise of World Peace*; and in the evening at the Bahá'í Centre, whose rooms were filled to capacity, about 80 Bahá'ís attentively and gratefully listened to Mr. Featherstone's discourse on the greatness of the Cause and the blessings of



The Hand of the Cause H. Collis Featherstone, and Mrs. Madge Featherstone, with friends gathered for the National Convention in Mauritius; 1 May 1987.

serving it. Malawi believers gave heartfelt thanks for the gift of Mr. Featherstone's four-day visit, beginning on 15 May. Meetings at the centre brought eager believers from the north and centre of the country to hear his talks on the institutions and on progressive revelation, both illustrated by charts. A talk on Bible prophecy had the believers busy taking notes. Mrs. Featherstone gave an inspired talk on the role of women in the world today. Choirs from several communities entertained at the meetings, to the Featherstones' great delight. To Mwinilunga, Zambia, a remote but fertile and receptive area in the heart of Africa, the Featherstones were taken in an aircraft chartered by the National Assembly. "As the plane carrying the Hand of the Cause approached the air strip", *African Highlights* for June relates, "the huge crowd of Bahá'ís colourfully dressed, started to dance. It was an unforgettable view. They were welcomed by almost 400 adults and over 100 children who had dressed most colourfully and were happy and excited to see their distinguished guests. These Bahá'ís had come from 19 Assembly areas, and some had walked as far as 80 kilometres to see the Hand of the Cause. As the Featherstones stepped from the plane, the joyful crowd rushed toward them and flanked them, touched them, shook hands with them and showed them their heartfelt love and appreciation." In Lusaka, Zambia, Mr. Featherstone talked to Rotarians, and was interviewed on radio and television. The five-minute programme in which he talked of world peace, removal of prejudice, and progressive revelation was shown after his departure from Zambia. After eight days of a tight schedule which took them to four provinces, the Featherstones left Zambia, "their exemplary, dedicated and tireless service to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh an inspiration to the friends in Zambia", as reported in *African Highlights*. On 27 May in Tanzania, the Hand of the Cause met with the National Spiritual Assembly, the Auxiliary Board members and assistants. At a public meeting on peace held on 30 May, Mr. Featherstone addressed a full hall and answered many questions. He shared the platform with a speaker from the United Nations Development

Programme. In Kenya, on 31 May, he was met by all members of the National Spiritual Assembly. He visited the towns of Kusumu, Chango (meeting with 451 Bahá'ís), and Kakamega. In Uganda on 5 June, the Featherstones were met at the border by Mrs. Vi Gilbert, a member of the Auxiliary Board, and taken to Tororo where she teaches at a school for girls. The next day they went to Kampala where they stayed in the former home of the Hand of the Cause Músá Banání which later became the home of the Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga. On 7 June they visited the House of Worship for morning service and met with the believers in the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds in the afternoon. On 10 June the Featherstones arrived in Ethiopia where Mr. Featherstone met many believers in the course of several days. Mrs. Featherstone spoke to the women on many occasions and also addressed general gatherings of the friends. (Compiled from various reports received through July)

June

CANADA: Two Hands of the Cause, Dr. 'Alí Muḥammad Varqá and Mr. John Robarts, were present in Montreal for three days in June when 60 Bahá'ís from all parts of French Canada met in a Francophone Policy Conference to consult on two themes put forward by the National Assembly: teaching the Faith and building the Bahá'í community in the Province of Québec. They spoke with the friends assembled at the Bahá'í Shrine (the Maxwell Home) during the two evenings of the Conference. Dr. Varqá told of the period of the Ten Year Crusade after the passing of the Guardian when the Hands of the Cause executed his Plan. He encouraged the study of the Tablets of the Divine Plan, written by 'Abdu'l-Bahá after His visit to North America. Mr. Robarts spent precious moments recalling happy memories of 1948 when he was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada. He reminded the assembled friends of the bounty of meeting in the Shrine hallowed by the presence and the prayers of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Francophone group noted the presence "in spirit" of the Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, who, in a cable, appealed to the Québec believers to arise and vindicate the unique position of the first place where the Faith was established in Canada in 1902. She recalled her mother's great love for the French-speaking people and her wish to see the French-Canadians embrace and serve the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. (From *Bahá'í International News Service,* No. 169, August–September 1987)

HUNGARY: A number of Bahá'ís participated in a scientific conference organized by the International Society for General Systems Research in Budapest, Hungary, from 1–5 June 1987. At the request of the Universal House of Justice, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum headed the Bahá'í delegation which included Mrs. Violette Nakhjavání and Dr. Janet Khan from Haifa, and Dr. Ingeborg Franken and Dr. Udo Schaefer from Germany. The conference, held in a city visited by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and much admired by Him, attracted some of the foremost systems scientists from Eastern Europe and the West. They were drawn from such disciplines as mathematics, physics, engineering, economics, management, and the biological and social sciences. A featured speaker was the President of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. At the conclusion of the conference, the Bahá'í delegation met informally with some of the members of Dr. Lazlo's Research Group to discuss subjects of mutual interest. As a result of this meeting, Dr. Laszlo requested that materials on aspects of the Bahá'í Faith be sent to all members of his Group. (From report received 11 June from Dr. Janet Khan)

UNITED STATES: More than 1,000 Bahá'ís and their guests gathered on 27 June 1987 at the Wilhelm properties in Teaneck, New Jersey, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Unity Picnic hosted there by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His historic visit to

North America in 1912. The day-long event was but one of about 1,500 such picnics held across the country at the request of the Hand of the Cause William Sears, whose presence greatly blessed this one. The keynote address was presented by Mr. Sears, who presented a plaque to Mayor Bernard E. Brooks of Teaneck for his work in promoting unity among all the people in that city. (From *Bahá'í News*, August)

UNITED STATES: As part of its commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the first Souvenir Picnic in Teaneck, the Bahá'í Public Information Office of Northern New Jersey produced a video recording including live narration and original still photographs of the first picnic which was hosted by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Hand of the Cause William Sears agreed to narrate the video. Its premiere showing took place during the Diamond Jubilee picnic in Teaneck on 27 June. (From *The American Bahá'í,* August)

July

FINLAND: Summer School 1987 held in Salo on 10–18 July was honored by the visit of Mr. Featherstone, one of the principal speakers who inspired the school sessions. Attendance came to 224 adults, youth, and children. Public outreach was a main feature of this school: a public meeting advertised in the newspaper, Bahá'í participation in a concert of international songs and a second public meeting held at the school. (From report received 18 August from the National Spiritual Assembly of Finland)

SWEDEN: Three Hands of the Cause of God were present at the Scandinavian Bahá'í Summer School which opened in Sweden on 19 July and marked the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the separate National Spiritual Assemblies of the Scandinavian countries and Finland. The Hands of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery, 'Alí Akbar Furútan, and H. Collis Featherstone participated in the gala event with 500 believers from Scandinavia and many other countries of Europe, the Americas and Africa. (From *Bahá'í International News Service*, No. 169, August–September 1987)

August:

UNITED KINGDOM: Dr. Giachery attended the landmark Youth Conference held at Manchester University in the United Kingdom in August, with 1,300 participants from 42 countries. "The Conference has been greatly blessed by the presence of our beloved Hand of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery. His sacrificial participation in view of ill health has been a tremendous source of inspiration." (From report from the participants received 15 September)

ITALY: Reports from events enriched by the attendance of Hands of the Cause include the 26th annual Summer School of Northern Italy, attended by Mr. Furútan who gave the 440 friends present a "new vision of the great horizons of the historic fourth epoch of the Faith". (From telex received 30 August from the participants)

GERMANY: Participants in the German Summer School at Kastell Windsor held from 2–9 August telexed their loving appreciation of the participation of Mr. and Mrs. Furútan. During the school, handcrafted items made by the children were sold to provide three scholarships for the Anís Zunúzí School in Haiti. (From telex received 12 August from the participants)

CANADA: The Hand of the Cause William Sears visited all ten provinces of Canada and two territories in just eleven days, from 30 August to 9 September—the period corresponding to Abdu'l-Bahá's sojourn in Canada seventy-five years ago. The trip was a "matchless tour de force of love, inspiration and encouragement", as reported in *Bahá'í Canada* for November. In spite of poor health, Mr. Sears journeyed from coast to coast and through the northern territories, "a living demonstration of the capacity of the spirit to triumph over physical limitations." Some highlights of the 11 days were: firesides in Montreal, in French and English, where Mr. Sears shook the hand of each

child present and gave each one a souvenir; nightly firesides in Halifax and throughout Nova Scotia; Bahá'ís from the entire province of Winnipeg gathered at the new Bahá'í Centre; over 1,000 attending the Calgary event; a moving meeting in Vancouver in which the friends were urged to become more heroic, more saintly, and appreciate their station as Bahá'ís; a presentation to the Hand of the Cause by children of Whitehorse in which they gave their impressions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in prose and poetry; and a two-day conference for the Northwest Territories; two new believers embracing the Faith in Toronto during the visit of the Hand of the Cause. (From *Bahá'í Canada* for November)

September

CANADA: "Kaa-Taan" or "Strong Man" was the tribal name given to the Hand of the Cause William Sears by a small band of Tlingit Indians during his visit to Lake La Berge near Whitehorse, on 6 September 1987. Hazel Lovelace, who served as spokesman for the Eagle and Raven Tribes, expressed her feelings about the consultation that proceeded the presentation. "We wanted to shower our love on Mr. Sears... but we didn't have anything to offer him. Nothing but our love. So we decided to adopt him and give him a Tlingit name." As tradition dictated, Laurie Hill of the Raven Tribe was chosen to announce the name three times, with the audience repeating the name, thereby acknowledging their affirmation and acceptance. Mr. Sears was also presented with an Eagle vest and wool lap blanket by his new tribal family. Jens Lyberth chanted and played a traditional Eskimo drum as part of the ceremony. (Based on report in *Alaska Bahá'í News*, January 1988)

HAWAIIAN ISLANDS: The Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone and Mrs. Featherstone, continuing a journey that began in April and took in 18 countries, arrived in Honolulu on 12 September. In a five-day stay, Mr. Featherstone addressed a capacity crowd at the National Bahá'í Centre on Oahu, visited Maui on 14 September, the Big Island of Hawaii on the 15th, and returned to Oahu on the 16th to meet over dinner with the Chinese Teaching Committee and to give an interview to the religion editor of the *Star-Bulletin.* This resulted in a ten-inch article in the Saturday edition. (From *Hawaii Bahá'í News* for October-November)

October

CANADA: In late October and early November, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum visited Canada, speaking to the friends in Montreal and Toronto while she was there. On 1 November, the Hands of the Cause of God John Robarts and Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá joined more than 250 Bahá'ís from the Montreal area, Québec City and Ottawa at the Montreal Centre to greet Rúḥíyyih Khánum, who spoke to the friends in English and French about the need for teaching the Faith, and the education of Bahá'í children. In Toronto, she spoke on the same subjects on 5 November.... (From *Bahá'í Canada*, Vol. 9, No. 11, January)

UNITED STATES: "Let's All Get Involved" was the theme, and the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears the featured speaker, at a regional mini-youth conference held from 30 October to 1 November 1987 in Tucson and sponsored by the District Youth Committee of Southern Arizona. Mr. Sears met each of the 50 young people from Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and California, all of whom agreed that the event was helpful in deepening their understanding of the Faith through talks and workshops. (Based on report in *The American Bahá'í,* April)

November

FRANCE: The Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum's visit to France was primarily undertaken in memory of her mother, May Maxwell, who established the Faith there and was the first Bahá'í in Europe. Arriving on 11 November 1987, during her 33-day tour she visited 17 communities, attending a two-day National

Teaching Conference held in Paris; seven regional gatherings throughout the country; and a National Youth Conference in Lyon. She gave all of her talks in French. Throughout France the Bahá'ís took full advantage of Amatu'l-Bahá's visit to invite friends and relatives who were not Bahá'ís to attend special meetings and receptions; as a result a number of those already interested accepted the Faith. On her arrival in Paris, accompanied by Mrs. Violette Nakhjavání, all nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly met Amatu'l-Bahá at the airport, where she had a three-hour stopover en route to Nice, the first place she visited. On successive weekends, Regional Teaching Conferences were held in Nice and Marseille, with more than 140 attending from 21 localities in Nice, and 80 friends from 11 places in Marseille. Coverage by the media in France is difficult to obtain; however, in Marseille, Amatu'l-Bahá had a press interview with a well-known columnist published in one of the big papers of southern France. This was followed by a number of other articles published in different cities. The third Regional Conference was in Annecy on the Swiss border; over 200 friends participated, mostly from Switzerland. A social evening and concert concluded the events, attended by the Deputy Mayor of Annecy and his wife. His remarks to the gathering were cordial and full of praise for the teachings and objectives of the Bahá'ís. A meeting for the friends in the Chambéry district took place in the home of a believer in Chapareillan. From Annecy, Rúḥíyyih Khánum went to Lyon to address a National Youth Conference attended by more than 100 people from all parts of France, Switzerland, and Belgium; many excellent questions were asked. A meeting and dinner also took place with 45 Bahá'ís from Lyon and neighbouring communities. The National Assembly had arranged for the Hand of the Cause to have a number of interviews with officials in Paris. Madame Albanel Delagard met with Rúḥíyyih Khánum on behalf of the Prime Minister of France. Madame Delagard was in charge of Religious Affairs. She was very intelligent, very agreeable, and evidently had little knowledge of the Faith, but was very interested in the material Amatu'l-Bahá was able to show her, and particularly to note that the Bahá'í International Community had recently joined the Conservation and Religion Network of the World Wide Fund for Nature. Another important engagement in Paris was with Madame Simone Veil, representative of the Republic of France in the European Parliament and formerly its President. On that body she had raised her voice publicly in defense of the persecuted Bahá'ís of Persia and was keenly interested in events affecting the Faith in that country. She was very interested to hear from Rúḥíyyih Khánum the history of the relationship of the Faith with the State of Israel. A National Teaching Conference took place in Paris 28 and 29 November, the largest of its kind ever held. Between 450 and 500 people attended from all parts of France and other countries, including the Counsellor, Dr. Agnes Ghaznavi, and a number of Board members. In addition to talks given by Amatu'l-Bahá, the gathering was addressed by Counsellor Ghaznavi and by members of the French National Spiritual Assembly, all of whom underlined the needs of the Six Year Plan. There was a remarkable sense of oneness and enthusiasm, to which, undoubtedly, the spirit of the many Bahá'í youth present contributed. The Paris Local Spiritual Assembly, after entertaining Rúḥíyyih Khánum at lunch, touchingly commemorated her visit by going to the Eiffel Tower for a photograph in the same place where, 75 years ago, the beloved Master had been photographed. Also in Paris, Amatu'l-Bahá and Mrs. Nakhjavání were able to attend the meeting in the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds commemorating the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. About 200 of the friends were present at the beautifully conducted meeting. The National Spiritual Assembly rented a hall in Paris for a general meeting which about 100 people

attended. After Amatu'l-Bahá's talk many questions were asked. On another occasion, about 80 Bahá'í youth had an evening meeting with Amatu'l-Bahá following a dinner with her at the National Centre. In addition to all the Paris activities, Rúḥíyyih Khánum was able to have two meetings with communities near Paris. In Rouen, a very active and devoted group of friends, many of them refugees from Írán, entertained her and all the friends at lunch. In La Celle-Saint-Cloud, some 50 people gathered in the home of one of the believers to greet the Hand of the Cause. After the eventful days in Paris, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum left for Bordeaux where the small but active community had arranged an interview with the Mayor, Jacques Chabon Delmas, who had previously been Prime Minister of France, and who then was Speaker of the House of Representatives. They met in his private office at City Hall, where Amatu'l-Bahá was able to introduce Mr. Delmas to the Faith. He had, however, heard of the persecutions in Írán, which he strongly deplored. He was also interested to learn that the Bahá'í International Community had just been accepted, on an equal basis with other world religions, into the WWF Network on Conservation and Religion. It was an extremely cordial interview. After Bordeaux, Rúḥíyyih Khánum went to Nantes to participate in the fifth Regional Conference, which had about 100 friends attending from 11 localities. In Nantes, she was deeply touched to meet a member of the Auxiliary Board from Niger, whom she and Mrs. Nakhjavání had met on their African safari, and who had come all the way from Niger just to see her again. From Nantes Rúḥíyyih Khánum went to Rennes, the capital of Brittany. Then, crossing the country once again, she went to Strasbourg, the seat of the European Parliament, which was the last of her engagements in France. Two interviews with officials had been arranged for her in Strasbourg. The first was with Madame Knorr, who was in charge of religious affairs and education in the local government of the Department of Alsace. She spent a long time with Rúḥíyyih Khánum, showing a lively interest in the Faith. The other interview was with Mr. Hoeffel, a Senator, who is also the President of the Conseil General of the Bas-Rhin District. After introductions, he said to Rúḥíyyih Khánum, "What can I do for you?" "Do for me?", she asked. "I didn't come here to have anything done for me; I don't want anything." He looked absolutely astonished; he had evidently thought he had an appointment with somebody who had some kind of a demand, or a petition, or a complaint. Rúḥíyyih Khánum went on: "I have come here to pay my respects to you as a member of the Government; I haven't come to ask for anything; I don't want anything at all." He was really taken aback and said, "Well, won't you sit down?" They had a worthwhile and pleasant chat about the Faith and mention was made of the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Írán. Amatu'l-Bahá spent two nights in Strasbourg, where the local Bahá'ís held a dinner in her honour in their Bahá'í Centre on the first evening, followed by an informal and happy meeting with all the friends. On the second night, over 200 friends from France, Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Switzerland, gathered.... Returning to Paris, Amatu'l-Bahá had a long meeting with the National Spiritual Assembly during which she not only commented on her trip and experiences in France, but expressed her deep conviction that it was the time to push forward as never before with teaching the Faith, as there was new receptivity stirring in the land. The next day, the entire National Spiritual Assembly saw her off most lovingly at the airport, just as they had greeted her so lovingly on her arrival. (Based on report from the Hand of the Cause received 2 February 1988)

UNITED STATES: A crowd of 1,000 or more Bahá'ís gathered on 29 November 1987 in the auditorium of the Los Angeles Center to greet the Hand of the Cause William Sears, who had promised that he

would be present to celebrate the triumphant march of the Los Angeles teaching campaign "even if he had to be carried in on a stretcher." Mr. Sears had come from his sick-bed, but despite his discomfort he lit up the room with his humor and inspired his hearers to a new and deeper resolve to conquer the hearts of the populace of the City of the Angels. (From *The Los Angeles Bahá'í Journal,* January)

1988

January

AUSTRALIA: From every State in Australia, 360 youth went to Perth in January to attend a national youth conference, a highlight of which was the participation of the Hand of the Cause Collis Featherstone. Proclamation activities and favourable media coverage were specially noted in the report, the Youth Year of Service was said to be gaining momentum, and a teaching team set out from the conference to visit most parts of Western Australia. (From *Bahá'í International News Service*, No. 174, February)

HAWAIIAN ISLANDS: A capacity audience that included virtually every active Bahá'í on the island of Kauai joyously greeted the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears and Marguerite Sears... on the evening of 15 January. Mr. Sears' stay in the Islands produced wonderful results in the Hawaiian Bahá'í community and inspired the deliberations of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia and the National Spiritual Assembly of Hawaii, both bodies receiving the benefit of his vision of the grandeur of the Cause of God and the majesty of its institutions. Mr. Sears' separate meetings with each were followed by a joint meeting of the Counsellors and the National Spiritual Assembly, which exemplified the growing collaboration between institutions characteristic of the Fourth Epoch. The National Assembly praised the behind-the-scenes Bahá'í workers in Kauai who helped to make the weekend with the Hand of the Cause "dynamic, inspiring, joyous, and radiant with overpowering spirit." In Oahu, on 23 January, in an informal meeting, Mr. Sears inspired the Bahá'ís with promises of victory. A giant fireside teaching event hosted by the National Teaching Committee was held in the National Center on the evening of 30 January and the Bahá'ís were invited to bring interested seekers to hear this beloved guest-speaker. Major newspapers of both Kauai and Oahu interviewed the Hand of the Cause. (From telex reports received from the National Spiritual Assembly of Hawaii through 6 March)

February

UNITED STATES: Mr. Sears addressed the 25th Anniversary Council Fire in Tucson, Arizona, on 26–28 February. Six hundred were in attendance for the meeting to commemorate the Great Council Fire held in southern Arizona in 1963. Mr. Sears' talk emphasized the references to American Indians in the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi and spoke of Bahá'u'lláh's promises of victory for all Bahá'í teachers. (From telex received 6 March report from the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States)

AUSTRALIA: The Hand of the Cause H. Collis Featherstone and Mrs. Featherstone visited the Erriba Community development experiment in Tasmania, Australia, in February to officially open the Albert Benson Memorial Cottage, a hospitality centre named after one of the founding members of the N.W. Tasmania Bahá'í community. The presence of the Hand of the Cause and the strength and assurance in his addresses kept his audiences inspired and spellbound. Approximately 80–100 people attended the ceremony.... (From *Bahá'í International News Service*, No. 175, March 1986)

April

GERMANY: About 1,200 believers gathered in Stuttgart on 9 April at a special conference honouring the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum. Also present were member of the International Teaching Centre, Counsellor Anneliese Bopp, Continental Counsellor Ursula Mühlschlegel, and members of the National Spiritual Assembly. The conference, the largest national Bahá'í conference ever held in Germany, took place during the festivities related to the 75th anniversary of the Master's visit to that country. The participation of the Hand of the Cause, in particular her address to the Bahá'ís in the German language, stirred the entire community. The candid, challenging elucidations relating to "how to present the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh to the public"; "our Bahá'í life"; and "our dedication to the Cause", inspired the audience with new insights and the awareness that "entry by troops" needs to incorporate changes in the current approach to presenting the Faith. Nearly 900 friends and guests gathered on 10 April at the historic Kurhaus in Bad Cannstatt, Stuttgart, for the gala event commemorating the 75th anniversary of the visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Germany.... In her ceremonial address Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum lovingly recalled the time she spent in Germany in 1936–37 and the early followers of Bahá'u'lláh in that land. Counsellor Anneliese Bopp, Dr. Massoud Berdjis, and Werner Gollmer spoke of the life, teachings and travels of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Press conferences were attended by major newspapers and broadcast services. (From telex received 12 April from the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany)

AUSTRIA: On 16 April the Austrian community celebrated the 75th anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Vienna in the presence of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, Counsellors Ursula Mühlschlegel and Leo Niederreiter, and friends from many parts of Austria and Europe. Rúḥíyyih Khánum lovingly encouraged the Austrian community to teach with greater effort and awareness, and to live the Bahá'í life.

On 9, 10 and 17 April, a most festive commemoration to mark the 75th anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Budapest was held in that city with Amatu'l-Bahá attending. (From telex received 18 April from the National Spiritual Assembly of Austria)

PAKISTAN: The Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone and Mrs. Featherstone were present for the joyful inauguration of a National Teaching Conference in Hyderabad, Sind, Pakistan, on 15 April. Counsellor Ṣábir Áfáqí, members of the National Spiritual Assembly, and three members of the Auxiliary Board also gathered with Bahá'ís from 36 different centres in Pakistan. The conference participants reviewed the achievements of the first phase of the Six Year Plan and consulted on second-phase goals to be announced at the forthcoming National Convention. (Telex received 18 April from conference participants)

July

CHINA: On 19 July, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, accompanied by Mrs. Violette Nakhjavání, left the Holy Land for a long-anticipated, private visit to China. Beginning in Canton, they travelled to Urumqi, Beijing, Shanghai, Suzhou, Guilin, and finally returned to Canton. (From report received October from the Hand of the Cause)

August

HONG KONG: Following her trip to China, Amatu'l-Bahá travelled to Hong Kong for five days where she held a press conference; a private interview with a Bahá'í reporter from the *South China Post* newspaper; an interview with a columnist for the *Hong Kong Tattler*; and a large meeting at which she addressed the Bahá'ís of both Hong Kong and the adjacent New Territories, stressing the supreme importance of teaching the Faith. She also met with the

devoted travelling teachers from Malaysia, of Chinese background, who were very actively engaged in the teaching work. At a luncheon given by the National Spiritual Assembly, at which Counsellor Bijan Farid, and some Auxiliary Board members were present, Amatu'l-Bahá again spoke of the urgency of teaching.

The highlight of Amatu'l-Bahá's visit to Hong Kong was a large, formal banquet the Spiritual Assembly gave in honour of the passage by the Hong Kong Legislative Council of "the Bahá'í Ordinance" to incorporate the Faith by act of Parliament. The guests of honour—in addition to Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum—were Mr. Desmond Lee Xu Tai, a member of the Legislative Council who proposed the vote in favour of the Bahá'ís, other Hong Kong notables, and a number of Bahá'ís, including a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Japan. The occasion opened with a traditional Chinese ceremony, followed by speeches by Amatu'l-Bahá and two Council members, music, and a memorable Chinese dinner. Amatu'l-Bahá was presented with a beautiful painted porcelain plate, designed by a very well-known Chinese artist. After dinner a videotape of the San Francisco Peace Conference was shown on well-placed television sets throughout the dining hall; it attracted much praise and admiration from everyone, particularly the guests. (From report received October from the Hand of the Cause)

MACAU: During a three-day visit to Macau, Amatu'l-Bahá officially opened a newly acquired Bahá'í Centre in one of the most densely populated areas. This joyous event was preceded in the traditional Chinese way, by a lion dance, with its amusing antics accompanied by a terrifying explosion of firecrackers in the public street. Amatu'l-Bahá also met with all the Bahá'ís in a large meeting and spoke to them about the importance of teaching in Macau and the influence this would have on the neighbouring areas. The highlight of her visit was the official opening of the Bahá'í school called School of the Nations, which occupies the entire second floor of a large modern building. Although it had been in operation for the past few months, the friends took the opportunity of her visit to hold a reception in the School and officially and ceremoniously inaugurate the institution. Many prominent and influential members of the public were among the invited guests. In her speech, Amatu'l-Bahá spoke of the important role of the teacher in society, as stressed by the Bahá'í teachings, and the great importance of moral and spiritual education for children. She stressed the point that while the School is run by Bahá'ís, and spiritual and moral concepts will be taught, the Bahá'ís will never force their beliefs on the children or try to change the children's religious convictions. In addition to the above events, there was a well-attended press conference. (Based on a report from Mrs. Nakhjavání)

TAIWAN: Ever since the exciting news of "entry by troops" in Taiwan, Amatu'l-Bahá had longed to see for herself what was happening there. She therefore arranged a five-day visit to some of the new teaching areas. The Counsellors in Asia took advantage of her visit and called a three-day conference for their Auxiliary Board members and assistants. Three of the Counsellors particularly concerned with this area were able to attend: Mr. Rúhu'lláh Mumtazí, Mr. Bijan Farid, and Mrs. Shantha Sundram. At this conference Amatu'l-Bahá strongly emphasized that nothing must be allowed to slow down the dynamic spiritual impetus of mass teaching. In Taipei, Amatu'l-Bahá was received by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Lien Chan. She presented him with an exquisite copy of the Hidden Words in Chinese and English, in a special box of silk brocade. He was very impressed by it and astonished to hear that the book was produced in Taiwan by the Bahá'í Publishing Trust! She also presented him with a special copy of the Peace Statement, in Chinese.

During the very cordial interview she stressed that Bahá'ís are non-political and obedient to their governments. When Amatu'l-Bahá thanked him for the generous time he had given her, he said, "It is I who must thank you to have honoured me with this audience." Amatu'l-Bahá had a long interview on a feature programme on the national radio, and two press conferences—one in Taipei and one in a new teaching area in the south, Taitung. She also had a long, dynamic and enlightening meeting with the National Spiritual Assembly. It had been nine years since her previous visit to Taiwan; it rejoiced her heart to see so many old friends, particularly in the large meeting with the Taipei Bahá'ís. Among the happiest events of this short visit were her meetings with the friends—most of them new Bahá'ís—in the communities of Keelung, Chiayi, and Taitung. These are all areas of mass teaching. In Keelung, prior to the warm official greeting by the Mayor of the city, amid music and firecrackers, she was received by the local Bahá'ís in their Centre and given a delicious dinner provided by all the friends. In Taitung, the Magistrate of the county, who is also the Mayor, officially welcomed her and highly praised the Bahá'ís in his county. The joy, the excitement, and the encouragement Amatu'l-Bahá poured into these meetings created great hope and promise for the immediate future of the Faith in Taiwan. (Based on report from the Hand of the Cause received October)

THAILAND: The Hand of the Cause H. Collis Featherstone and Mrs. Featherstone undertook a two-and-a-half-month-long trip through Asia starting in August. They spent the first three weeks visiting schools, local dignitaries, and Bahá'ís in refugee camps and communities throughout Thailand. After their arrival in the country on 26 August, two days were spent meeting with the Bahá'ís of Bangkok. From there they flew to Ubon Ratchathani, in southeast Thailand, before travelling 100 kilometres by bus to the Yasothon Hotel. After an evening with the local Bahá'ís, Mr. Featherstone presented the Peace Statement to the Governor with an information folder on the Bahá'í Faith, both in the Thai language. During the same day two talks were given; one at a school and one to a gathering of Bahá'ís. The following day, before returning to Bangkok to take the flight to Vientiane, Laos, they visited Kumngen Village and were shown the skillful weaving of the local craftspeople and were showered with the loving hospitality of the community. (Based on report from the Hand of the Cause received 2 October)

September

LAOS: Two Auxiliary Board members, eight members of the Spiritual Assembly of Laos, members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Vientiane, and other members of the Laos Bahá'í community made up the enthusiastic group which welcomed Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone and Mrs. Featherstone with bouquets of red roses at the Vientiane airport on 1 September. After the first evening meeting with members of the Auxiliary Board and the Spiritual Assembly, Mr. Featherstone began a series of deepenings on many different topics to capacity audiences in the National Centre, and Mrs. Featherstone spoke on the vital role of women to the progress of the Cause. Humorous stories from the widely-travelled visitors punctuated each session and Mr. Featherstone often supplemented his talks with illustrated charts, photographs, brochures, photocopies of newspaper cuttings, and underlined passages from Bahá'í books. Four senior government officials of Sikhottabhong District expressed their open appreciation for the deepening session they attended, in which Mr. Featherstone explained the Bahá'í teachings on loyalty to government and the Faith's involvement in United Nations Non-Governmental Organization activities through the Bahá'í International Community. On 5 September

the Bahá'ís of Ban Nonsavanh (formerly Ban Hongsouphaph), a village eight kilometres east of Vientiane, stood to greet their special guests as they entered the local Bahá'í Centre. Mr. Featherstone spoke about the principles of the Faith and the paramount importance of teaching the Cause in order to see these principles realized. He also emphasized the value of presenting the Peace Statement to government officials and leaders of thought. Local officers attended this meeting and Mr. Featherstone again explained the Bahá'í teachings on loyalty to government and the Faith's involvement with United Nations NGO activities. The permission given for the Hand of the Cause and Mrs. Featherstone's visit to Ban Nonsavanh was of great significance as this area is usually firmly barred to foreigners. The report concludes, "The incomparable husband and wife teaching partners left Vientiane on 8 September, garlanded by a group of friends". (From report received on 23 November from the Spiritual Assembly)

THAILAND: Returning to Thailand on 10 September, the Featherstones were taken to a refugee camp, the population of which was approximately 180,000 people, mainly Cambodians. They met with the Local Spiritual Assembly and the Bahá'í community in this camp. At another meeting a short distance away, a translator facilitated for the Khmer, Vietnamese, and Chinese speaking audience. At a meeting on the following day, in a different camp, which had just formed its Local Spiritual Assembly, 100 people gathered to listen to the visitors. At the opening of the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds in the afternoon the Hand of the Cause read a message from the Universal House of Justice. After visiting the refugee camps the Featherstones travelled to Chiang Mai in the north of Thailand. As a result of a meeting with the owner of a newspaper, a large photograph and article about the Faith were published. During the same day a meeting was arranged with the Deputy-Governor of Chiang Mai Province. He responded very favourably to the presentation of an information folder on the Faith and the Peace Statement, both in the Thai language, and remembered warmly his meeting with Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum in the past. (From report received 2 October from the Hand of the Cause)

November

CANADA: One hundred and thirty Bahá'ís from all parts of the French-speaking province of Québec gathered at a conference for unity, protection, and teaching. The conference was inspired by the Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá... (From *Bahá'í International News Service*, No. 189, December 1988)

JAPAN/KOREA/TAIWAN/MALAYSIA: The Hand of the Cause Collis Featherstone and Mrs. Featherstone returned to Australia on 9 November after spending the last month of their visit to the Asian Bahá'í communities, in Japan, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, and Malaysia. Throughout their busy sojourn in Korea, Mr. and Mrs. Featherstone presented talks at the National Teaching Conference, were interviewed by the press, and presented the Peace Statement to the Chancellor of Kyung Hee University. Mr. Featherstone met with Counsellor Kim Myung Jung and members of the Auxiliary Board, and when speaking at the many gatherings with the Bahá'ís, always stressed the importance of teaching. In Taiwan Mr. and Mrs. Featherstone spoke at firesides, participated in a conference at the university in Taichung, and uplifted the friends at many gatherings before making a short visit to Malaysia en route to their home in Australia. (From report received 29 December from the Hand of the Cause)



Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum presents a copy of the Peace Statement to the Governor of Macau during her visit to that territory in April 1989.



The Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Ugo Giachery with Mrs. Lilian Alai (left) and Tosi Maliatoa (right) during the National Convention held in Apia, Western Samoa, in April 1989.

1989

February

UNITED STATES: The Hand of the Cause of God William Sears lent brilliant support to the "Vision to Victory" conferences sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly. He was among the distinguished speakers who addressed the gathering held at Pasadena City College which attracted an audience of approximately 2,000. (From *The American Bahá'í*, March)

April

SAMOA: The Hand of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery arrived in Western Samoa on 16 April to a moving, formal welcome by the Head of State, His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II. "His Highness walked a long distance to the plane while a very large crowd of arriving and departing passengers and their friends watched.... Accompanying His Highness was the acting Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice, who also extended a warm welcome to Dr. Giachery and placed a garland of flowers upon him.

"Dr. Giachery was immediately ushered to the royal limousine which was awaiting him. Scores of Bahá'ís lined the road of exit from the VIP area waving...as the limousine passed slowly by." The Malietoa expressed deep gratitude for the honour bestowed on him and the people of Samoa by the visit of Dr. Giachery, and the acting Prime Minister referred to the occasion as touching and unforgettable. (From report received through Continental Board of Counsellors 18 April)

MACAU: Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum represented the Universal House of Justice on the occasion of the formation of the first Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Macau. Three representatives of the "mother" Assembly of Hong Kong, Steven Townsend, Meena Datwani Tsui, and Choy Choong Yew also participated, as did a representative of the National Assembly of Australia, Phillip Hinton; of Japan, Abbas Katirai; and of Malaysia, Lilly Ong.

"Honoured by the presence of our much loved and cherished Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum,...eight of the nine delegates and 131 believers participated, among them Harry Yim, the first Chinese believer of Macau; Counsellor Bijan Farid; some early pioneers and guests from other countries.

"The Convention was preceded by two highly significant events. One, the presentation by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum of the Peace Statement to the Governor of Macau. The other, a formal dinner...honouring Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum and the inaugural election of the Spiritual Assembly of Macau, attended by the Chief of the Cabinet of the Governor of Macau, who was the Governor's representative; officials of the Xinhua News Agency...and other Government officials and community leaders. The Chief of the Cabinet expressed high regard for the Faith and support for our ideals and work.

"We are confident that the formation of the first ...Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Macau has infused a new spirit into the entire community and lent greater impetus to the new challenges and opportunities that face us at the present time, particularly in the field of teaching." (Report received from the Convention 1 May)

UNITED STATES: The Hand of the Cause of God William Sears participated in the 80th annual Convention of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, sharing with his "unfailing spirit" remembrances of the exemplary lives of service of former member of the Universal House of Justice Mr. H. Borrah Kavelin, and the late Mrs. Edna M. True. (From report received 30 April from the National Assembly)

GERMANY: This year's National Convention was enriched by the participation of the Hand of the Cause 'Alí Akbar Furútan, who spoke one evening about the needs of the Fund. (From report received 2 May from the National Spiritual Assembly)

CANADA: The atmosphere of the Canadian National Convention was lifted by the presence and participation of the Hands of the Cause Dr. 'Ali Muḥammad Varqá, William Sears, and John A. Robarts. (From report received 4 May from the Convention)

May/June

CHINA/MONGOLIA/HONG KONG/MACAU: Following the Convention in Macau, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum made an historic trip to mainland China, where she was met with great courtesy. In Beijing, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum showed slides from her "Green Light Expedition" to 27 prominent Chinese guests. One of these distinguished persons invited her to his home for lunch, and showed sincere friendliness towards her. Beginning 15 May, she spent one week in Ulaan Baatar, capital of the People's Republic of Mongolia. She had been invited to give lectures about her travels and about world peace to students of English at a university. "Mongolians are a singularly fine, very impressive, talented and upright, distinguished people", she said. On 22 May, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum travelled to Shanghai where she stayed for five nights. There, she dined in the home of the Dean of the Department of Foreign Languages of a prominent university. While in Shanghai she also attended a concert where one of China's best-known artists performed. After the concert the Hand of the Cause met the singer, whom she was happy to meet again during another part of her journey. From Shanghai, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum visited as a tourist the beautiful lake city of Hangzhou for three nights, then spent four nights in Xi'an. On 3 June she returned to Beijing, and on 4 June serious troubles began in that city. However, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum did not experience any difficulties. On 6 June the Hand of the Cause flew to Dalian, where she again showed the slides of her "Green Light Expedition" and met with a number of prominent people of the area. She stayed in Dalian until 14 June, then flew to Hong Kong and back to Macau. During this second visit to Macau, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum was very active, meeting with the new Spiritual Assembly and with other believers. While in Macau she also had the opportunity to "modestly participate a few times in the mass teaching activities which have been so successful in Macau. This success is largely due to the hard-working task force teams' efforts." The Hand of the Cause also met twice with the Spiritual Assembly of Hong Kong to discuss plans for their teaching work. (From reports from the Hand of the Cause of God received 15 June and 4 July)

UNITED STATES: The following are excerpts from a book review of *Run to Glory!* by the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears, recently published by Naturegraph: "The newest book from the gifted pen of the Hand of the Cause... is a heartwarming and hilarious adventure tale filled with drama, suspense, and excitement. While it is not a book that makes specific reference to the Bahá'í Faith, it is filled with the spirit of the revelation." The book draws upon some of Mr. Sears' own background and childhood experiences. "This is a book to be read aloud and enjoyed by the whole family...".

AUSTRALIA: The Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone and Mrs. Madge Featherstone attended the first intensive teaching institute ever held for Aboriginal and Islander people in Australia. There were regularly scheduled talks and activities, with the indigenous friends taking an active part and asking many questions. Altogether 55 people attended the institute, of whom 25 were of Aboriginal and Islander descent, while the remainder included Indians, Persians, and Maoris, as well as other Australians. "The friends left with the desire for more such gatherings." (From report from the National Spiritual Assembly)

July

WORLD CENTRE: Deeply grieved loss valiant, indefatigable, dearly loved distinguished

Hand Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery. His passing in course historic visit Samoa adds fresh laurels to crown already won during ministry beloved Guardian, and reinforces spiritual distinction vast Pacific region, already blessed by interment four other Hands. His magnificent accomplishments as Member at Large of International Bahá'í Council in connection raising superstructure Shrine of the Báb, which prompted Guardian to name one of the doors of that noble edifice after him, his painstaking efforts in promoting on the local, national and international levels, paramount interests of the Faith, his notable achievement in establishment Italo-Swiss National Spiritual Assembly on eve launching Ten Year Crusade, his outstanding qualities of zeal, fidelity, determination and perseverance, which characterized imperishable record his arduous labours—all combine to richly adorn annals Faith over periods his superb, assiduous exertions, and undoubtedly assure him bountiful reward in Kingdom on High. Advise all National Spiritual Assemblies hold befitting memorials gatherings his name, particularly in Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs in recognition his unique position, splendid services. (Message from the Universal House of Justice to all National Assemblies 7 July)

WESTERN SAMOA: The Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Ugo Giachery was laid to rest at noon on Wednesday 5 July in Tiapapata, Apia, Western Samoa, at a beautiful spot overlooking the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and the blue Pacific Ocean. His interment followed a deeply moving service at the Ancillary Building near the House of Worship. The Head of State of Samoa, His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II, attended the funeral services, as did the Prime Minister, four Ministers of Cabinet, and many other non-Bahá'í dignitaries. Also present were four Counsellors, five Auxiliary Board members, representatives of six national communities of the Pacific, and more than 200 believers from many parts of Samoa. The Samoan Bahá'í community exerted every effort to ensure that the beauty, dignity and high quality of the service were befitting of the exalted rank of the dearly loved Hand of the Cause of God. Counsellor Suhayl Ala'i, in an eloquent and loving



The Hand of the Cause H. Collis Featherstone and Mrs. Madge Featherstone with friends at the Aboriginal Bahá'í Institute in Forsayth, Australia. June 1989.

eulogy, spoke of Dr. Giachery's unique relationship with the growth of the Faith in Samoa. Prayers were read in Italian, Persian, English, Maori, Tongan, Fijian, and Samoan, and the Temple choir provided inspiring music. (From report received July from the National Spiritual Assembly of Samoa)

UNITED STATES: The Hand of the Cause of God William Sears and Mrs. Marguerite Sears have recorded a story about the pets in their lives, along with many humorous accounts of their experiences serving the Faith. Read by Mr. and Mrs. Sears, this set of four cassette tapes is a "tribute to all of the four-legged, feathered, and finned friends of the Bahá'í world—those 'servants of the servants' who have brought love, warmth, and enthusiasm into the lives of pioneers and Bahá'ís everywhere." The set of four tapes, called "Tokoloshe!", is being distributed by the Hawaiian Bahá'í National Library. (From *Bahá'í International News Service*, No. 204, 31 July 1989)

PHILIPPINES: Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum made a 33-day visit to the Philippines as part of her extended trip to the Far East. The tour, which began on 8 July, was organized by the National Spiritual Assembly, in consultation with Counsellor Vicente Samaniego. The itinerary "reached saturation point in exploiting every single possibility, whether media, meetings with highest officials, lectures at universities, or the five Bahá'í Regional Conferences". Of these five conferences, attended by over 1,000 believers from almost 100 localities, the first, in San José, Mindoro, was the most dramatic. There, police and military personnel on motorcycles escorted the Hand of the Cause from the airport, where she had been met by about 100 Bahá'ís, directly to the office of the Mayor of San José. Rúḥíyyih Khánum was introduced to the Mayor who along with the Vice-Mayor, and a crowd of believers and bystanders received her most cordially. Some hill tribesmen attended the Regional Conference in Mindoro, as did many local believers. During the conference a banquet was offered to local notables, which was attended by the Vice-Governor, the Mayor, and others. On another occasion the Governor visited Rúḥíyyih Khánum, welcoming her warmly and praising the Bahá'ís. The visit to a Bahá'í conference in Cagayan de Oro, Mindanao, was equally successful. Both the Governor of the State and the Mayor of the City received the Hand of the Cause very kindly, and a large press conference was held with 27 journalists and publishers attending. This meeting lasted three hours and included an exceptionally friendly discussion of the Faith. Rúḥíyyih Khánum visited Kisolon village in Mindanao, whose Bahá'í Vice-Mayor received her officially in the Municipal Offices. This reception was followed by a meeting, entertainment and lunch in the small, beautiful local Bahá'í Centre in Kisolon. Following these three days in Mindanao, Rúḥíyyih Khánum visited Cebu City for three days, where the third Bahá'í conference was held. In Cebu City she was cordially received by the Governor of the State, as well as by the young Mayor of Cebu City who accepted the courtesy call in spite of his obvious preoccupation and exhaustion. The Bahá'ís felt sorry for the Mayor and prayed for him during their conference. The Hand of the Cause inadvertently mentioned this in her press conference and it was reported in the newspapers, along with other favourable articles on the Faith. The fourth Bahá'í conference was held in Baguio, in the mountains of the Philippines. In spite of the monsoon season, and a hurricane that had preceded her arrival, the visit by Rúḥíyyih Khánum to this area was happy and eventful. Again she met the Governor, the Mayor, the Vice-Mayor, and other officials. A small but friendly press conference produced good publicity for the Faith.... As Manila is the pivotal airport city in the Philippines, Rúḥíyyih Khánum spent about two weeks in the capital. On 9 July, the day after her arrival in the country, she was one



Visit by the Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone and his wife to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, in August 1989.

of the key speakers at the Philippine World Peace Congress. Her talk on "Peace and Ecology" was well received. In both Manila and Baguio, the Hand of the Cause gave a number of talks at various prominent women's societies and many universities. Although her subject was usually "Peace", inevitably it was possible to give highlights of the Bahá'í Faith and its teachings. In Manila, a very important meeting was held with the Chief Justice of the Philippines, Marcello Fernan, who received Rúḥíyyih Khánum in his chambers. Another important visit was with the Speaker of the Senate, Jovito Salonga, who received the Hand of the Cause in his office in the Senate building. (From reports received 16 and 21 August from the Hand of the Cause and received 14 August from the Spiritual Assembly of Macau)

August

THAILAND: The Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone, and Mrs. Madge Featherstone, visited the Bahá'í community of Thailand 15–16 August. With Thailand's Spiritual Assembly member Siriporn Pillay, the Featherstones paid a courtesy call on Chow Pramoolpol, President of the Private School Teachers' Association of Thailand and member of the International Task Force on Literacy. This visit initiated efforts by Bahá'ís to co-operate with other non-governmental organizations in Thailand to fulfil goals set for the United Nations' International Year of Literacy. Mr. Featherstone also addressed the Bahá'í friends who had gathered for a special meeting at the Bahá'í Centre. "We are very grateful and long to welcome them once again." (From report received 17 August from the Spiritual Assembly of Thailand)

VIETNAM: On 17 August, the Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone and Mrs. Featherstone flew to Ho Chi Minh City for a historic series of meetings with the Bahá'ís there. No Bahá'ís from the West have been able to visit Vietnam for many years, and the friends of that country were filled with joy by the contact. About 50 Bahá'ís from Ho Chi Minh City and other provinces gathered enthusiastically each day to hear the inspiring talks by the Hand of the

Cause. Mr. Featherstone shared news of progress of the Faith around the world, and presented the Bahá'ís of Vietnam with copies of letters from United Nations' offices officially addressed to the Bahá'í International Community. He showed them photographs of the plans for the Arc on Mount Carmel, and extended to them the love of the Universal House of Justice. Some of the Bahá'ís in Vietnam are school teachers, and Mr. Featherstone talked with them about the help they could give with plans for the United Nations International Year of Literacy in 1990. The Hand of the Cause also read parts of the Bahá'í pamphlet entitled "Disarmament and Peace", and spoke about the Lesser Peace to come in the future. The Bahá'ís of Vietnam were deeply grateful for the guidance and encouragement given them by the Hand of the Cause. The Featherstones stayed in Ho Chi Mihn City for one week, leaving on 25 August. (From report received 5 September from the Hand of the Cause)

UNITED KINGDOM: The Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Akbar Furútan visited the Bahá'í community of the United Kingdom during the month of August. He spoke first at the "Peace Moves '89" youth conference, held in Sheffield from 4–8 August, then met with Bahá'ís across the country. Mr. Furútan talked with hundreds of the friends during separate meetings in London, Liverpool, and Edinburgh. He addressed two vital subjects: Ḥuqúqu'lláh, and the privilege and obligation of every Bahá'í to teach the Faith. "This he did with so much love, encouragement, and his unique brand of humour.... His words penetrated our hearts and moved us to begin the process of personal transformation in order that we may fulfil the vision of the Universal House of Justice of us as the spiritual conquerors of this blessed continent." Mr. Furútan also attended the national memorial service for the late Hand of the Cause, Dr. Ugo Giachery, held in Manchester on 20 August. He shared some of his personal memories of Dr. Giachery, illustrating Dr. Giachery's spirit of devotion and total dedication to the Cause of the Blessed Beauty, and especially to his beloved Shoghi Effendi. (From report received 18 September from the National Spiritual Assembly)

TAIWAN: The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum made a five-week-long tour of Taiwan, after her arrival there on 9 August from the Philippines. During her stay she travelled about 2,000 kilometres, driving around the entire island to visit key centres of intensive Bahá'í teaching activity. The Hand of the Cause spent an average of three nights in each of six cities on Taiwan: Taichung, Kaohsiung, Tainan, Taitung, Chiai, and Hualien. Meetings were also held in Tsaotun and Keelung; and in local Bahá'í Centres in these cities she met many new Bahá'ís, some of whom had only been Bahá'ís for a few weeks, or a few days, or even a few hours! In each of the six cities she visited, as well as in the capital city of Taipei, Rúḥíyyih Khánum was cordially received by the Mayors in their offices. She also called upon a number of high Government officials, each of whom she presented with a beautiful Chinese-English edition of the Hidden Words and a Chinese edition of the Peace Statement. Of her meetings, perhaps the most important were the interviews the Hand of the Cause had with the Minister of the Interior for Taiwan, and with the Secretary-General of the National House of Representatives. Rúḥíyyih Khánum also held six press conferences during her stay, which resulted in favourable publicity for the Faith. Upon her arrival in Taipei, a special meeting was held for the Hand of the Cause with about 400 Bahá'ís, including 35 travelling teachers from abroad who were very enthusiastic about their teaching experiences in Taiwan. At the end of her visit a similar meeting took place, as well as a gathering attended by most of Taiwan's pioneers. Taiwan has a large native tribal population on the east coast of the country near Taitung. Bahá'í pioneers live in the village of the Beinan tribe, and Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum

spoke with these people in their community hall. She told them of the great importance the Bahá'í Faith places on the preservation of cultural identity for minority peoples, and of how a list of all tribes represented in the Faith is carefully kept at the Bahá'í World Centre. On another occasion, Rúḥíyyih Khánum met three deaf Bahá'ís during an outdoor meeting. She invited them, with an interpreter in sign language, to come to the hotel in which she was staying and they all spent a happy evening together. In Tainan, the Hand of the Cause visited and prayed at the graves of Mr. and Mrs. Suleimani, long-standing and devoted pioneers to Taiwan. Each evening, meetings were held in their home which is now a Bahá'í Centre. Toward the end of her visit, Rúḥíyyih Khánum attended the two-day Bahá'í Summer School in Taiwan. Counsellor Bijan Farid was present, as were about 140 participants of whom about 53 were new Bahá'ís. In all, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum met about 1,700 Bahá'ís during her tour of Taiwan, with almost 100 new believers being enrolled on the joyous occasions of her meetings. (From reports received 21 and 29 September from the Hand of the Cause)

September

HONG KONG: Following her visit to Taiwan, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum went to Hong Kong, where she spent two weeks. During her visit there she met with the Spiritual Assembly of Hong Kong and was the guest of honour at a large and happy meeting with the local believers. She visited a number of centres in the New Territories, meeting Local Assembly members and many new believers. In Hong Kong, She had two radio interviews, and shared the platform with the Head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees during a celebration of International Day of Peace. (From reports received 21 and 29 September from the Hand of the Cause)

UNITED STATES: The Hand of the Cause William Sears was the special guest at the Green Lake Bahá'í Conference, held in Green Lake, Wisconsin, from 15–17 September 1989. On a stage set to look like a living room to which all had been invited, Mr. Sears shared stories about teaching and about early believers. The theme of the conference was "Coming of Age: Rights of Passage". On the final day of the gathering, Mr. Sears gave an address citing the promises of victory given by the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith. (From *Bahá'í International News Service,* 30 September)

October

CHINA: On 16 October, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum ended a 17-day visit to China—her fourth journey to this country. During this tour, she travelled with Native American Bahá'í Kevin Locke and his daughter who were in China to present a series of performances of traditional Native American hoop dances. Rúḥíyyih Khánum flew first to Chongqing, where the Lockes were scheduled to dance for five consecutive nights. The Hand of the Cause was received by the Vice-Mayor, who welcomed her to the city on behalf of its 14,000,000 inhabitants. From Chongqing, Rúḥíyyih Khánum travelled to Chengdu, then flew to Guiyang, in Guizhou Province, where she spent seven nights. Upon her arrival at the airport for Guiyang, situated 30 kilometres from the city, she was met by two officials of the city's Cultural Bureau. Guizhou Province is largely a tribal area, and the Hand of the Cause was taken by officials of the Cultural Bureau to visit an ethnic museum, a batik factory, a dance studio, and an art institute. She was also taken on an all-day excursion to a town where Buyi and Miao tribal people live. The Lockes performed their hoop dances for the tribal people, who, in turn, performed their traditional dances for the visitors. A highlight of Rúḥíyyih Khánum's visit to Guiyang was a gathering of about 25 prominent people who went to meet her at her hotel. Among those present were the

Chief of the Art Section of Guiyang's Cultural Bureau; the Manager of the Society of Calligraphers and Chinese Traditional Painters of Guizhou; the Chief of the Academy of Traditional Chinese Paintings and Research of Old Calligraphy; the Deputy Director of the Society of Education, Department of the Guizhou Provincial Museum; a member of the Council of the Artists' Association of China; the Director of the Guiyang Foreign Affairs Office; the Executive Vice-Chairman of the Union of Philosophy and Social Science of Guizhou Province; the Director of Guizhou's Cultural Bureau and Chairman of the Board for Arts Planning in Guizhou; and a member of the Council of the Chinese Traditional Opera Society. The meeting was very cordial. On leaving China, the Hand of the Cause returned to Macau before continuing on to Hong Kong on her return journey to the Holy Land. (From report received 22 October from the Hand of the Cause)

1990

January

NEW ZEALAND: The Hand of the Cause H. Collis Featherstone and Mrs. Madge Featherstone attended the Pacific Bahá'í Youth Conference in Auckland. Addressing the Conference, Mr. Featherstone stressed the importance of teaching. Twenty-three youth arose to volunteer a year of service to the Faith and more than 60 offered to travel and teach. (From report dated 4 January from the Hand of the Cause)

TONGA/FIJI: After the Pacific Bahá'í Youth Conference in New Zealand, Mr. and Mrs. Featherstone flew to Tonga and Fiji where they both addressed the believers, telling them of the greatness of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation and the importance of this present time. They told of the urgency of the teaching work and shared with the friends the exciting news of the large-scale enrolment now taking place in a number of locations around the world. (From report dated 4 January from the Hand of the Cause)

February

ARGENTINA: As a prelude to her participation in the conference commemorating the 50th anniversary of the passing of her martyr-mother, May Bolles Maxwell, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum visited the Toba communities in Chaco, Argentina, from 17–20 February. Upon her arrival in Camp Medina, Toba Indian Bahá'ís choked the road as they came toward her car. Soon she and her company were engulfed by the friends. Singing, dancing and embracing her, they had gathered from many distant communities on the third day of a special "campaign" to welcome Rúḥíyyih Khánum, named by them, "Chi-I-Shi" (the Morning Star). In the mornings, the Hand of the Cause joined the Toba friends under the shade of the trees to study the prayers from a newly published translation into the Toba language of the "Words of God", which they learned by heart. At these meetings with Bahá'ís and their friends, eight souls embraced the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. In the evening the meetings were large gatherings of 150–200 people and lasted well beyond midnight. Amatu'l-Bahá spoke to them on many subjects, including their place in the Faith, future civilization, women, children and youth, Bahá'í Centres, and socio-economic development. An exchange of gifts expressed the love to and from the Toba people. Praying, singing and tribal dancing linked together the hearts of the Toba Bahá'ís, their friends and Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum. (From report through the International Teaching Centre received 27 February)

WORLD CENTRE: DEEPLY GRIEVED ANNOUNCE PASSING STAUNCH TIRELESS PROMOTER FAITH HAND CAUSE GOD JALAL KHAZEH. HIS STRENUOUS ENDEAVOURS CRADLE FAITH



Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum meeting Argentina's President, Dr. Carlos Menem, during the 'Uniting the Americas' conference. 26 February 1990.

HOLY LAND LATIN AMERICA AND WORLDWIDE TRAVELS AFTER PASSING BELOVED GUARDIAN SET SHINING EXAMPLE OF UNSHAKEABLE DEDICATION AND COURAGE, OF UNDEVIATING LOYALTY AND PERSEVERANCE. IMPERISHABLE RECORD HIS STERLING SERVICES AS GIFTED TEACHER DEFENDER CAUSE NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN. HIS NOBLE SPIRIT NOW ABHA KINDGOM WILL UNDOUBTEDLY INTERCEDE BEHALF PERSIAN BAHA'I COMMUNITY WHOSE VITAL INTERESTS HE SERVED WITH SUCH HIGH DISTINCTION OVER SEVERAL DECADES. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES FOR PROGRESS HIS ILLUMINED SOUL IN REALMS ON HIGH. ADVISE FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS HIS HONOUR PARTICULARLY ALL HOUSES OF WORSHIP. (Cable from the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies 25 February 1990)

CANADA: The Hand of the Cause of God Jalál Kházeh passed away in Toronto, Ontario, on 21 February. His funeral and subsequent interment were held at 1:00 P.M. on 27 February in Toronto. Prayers were recited in both French and English and chanted in Persian. Dr. Hossain Danesh, Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, offered remarks at the service, which was attended by approximately 200 to 250 people. Following the grave-side service many friends remained to greet Mr. Kházeh's daughter, Nura, and other members of the family. On the same evening at 8:00 P.M. a memorial service for Mr. Kházeh was held in a large auditorium at the Ontario Science Centre attended by some 500 people. Music, both performed and recorded, was played throughout the memorial service. Also heard were taped excerpts from two speeches given by the Hand of the Cause which accompanied a series of slides showing Mr. Kházeh at different times during his later life. (From report received 11 March from the National Spiritual Assembly)

March

AUSTRIA: The Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Akbar Furútan travelled to Austria from 7–16 March to attend a joint meeting of the National Spiritual Assembly and its Teaching Committees for Eastern Europe.

Detailed consultation was held on teaching, and everyone was very enthusiastic. Eleven youth who had recently accepted the Faith in Eastern Europe made a special trip to Vienna to be with Mr. Furútan. The Hand of the Cause of God met with them twice, and a young lady who had accompanied them from Hungary accepted the Faith. On 10 March, Mr. Furútan spoke to 250 friends gathered from all over Austria about the importance of teaching, especially at this crucial time. (From report received 30 April from the Hand of the Cause)

March/April

SOVIET UNION: On 16 March the Hand of the Cause 'Alí-Akbar Furútan left Austria to visit the Bahá'ís in the Soviet Union. Before his departure, Mr. Furútan said, "My heartfelt wish for many years has been that once again my eyes might behold the vast rich land of Russia, especially because in 1930 I received a letter from the beloved Guardian which he penned himself, stating the following: 'It is my hope that you will, in the future, be able to render great services in Russia.'" Mr. Furútan and his group visited Ashqabad, Tashkent, Dushanbe, Samarkand, Mary, Moscow, Leningrad, and Murmansk. A total of 15 days were spent in Ashqabad, where 25 meetings were held with the friends, including three especially for youth. The Minister of Religious Affairs attended one meeting. Mr. Furútan also visited the site of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár several times, and said prayers at the resting place of the first martyrs of Ashqabad, Nabíl-i-Akbar, Áqá Shaykh Muḥammad-'Alí, Jináb-i-Gulpaygání and others. In Tashkent, the Hand of the Cause visited two elderly Bahá'í women and their non-Bahá'í families. Family members accepted literature about the Faith from him, promising to study it. In Dushanbe from 27–30 March, Mr. Furútan met with about 25 Bahá'ís and gave a lecture in Persian on psychology at the University of Dushanbe. About 400 people heard him explain the principles of the Faith. On 30 March the Hand of the Cause went to Samarkand, where he remained until the first day of April. The friends in this historic city, who are mostly from very old Bahá'í



The Hand of the Cause Mr. 'Alí-Akbar Furútan is shown in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, Soviet Union, visiting with members of the Mamedof family in March 1990.

families, are very spiritual and dedicated to Bahá'u'lláh. There are about 25 of them. Two youth from Baku went to visit Mr. Furútan. He was able to spend a long time with them and explain the teachings in detail. In Moscow on 19 April, Mr. Furútan was interviewed by an official of Soviet Television for a half-hour programme about the Bahá'í Faith. Also in Moscow, the directors of the Progress Publishing House offered to translate and publish Mr. Furútan's book *Mothers, Fathers and Children* into Russian and Asiatic languages. Mr. Furútan wanted to visit Moscow University, where he had studied in his youth. The student who acted as his host and guide liked him so much he suggested that he attend a seminar to be held at the Institute of Psychology and Pedagogy. Mr. Furútan was prepared to see about 30 people but found over 300 students gathered. He addressed the group on the relationship of psychology to religion from a scientific point of view. In addition he was able to speak for some 20 minutes directly on the Faith. A woman in the audience whose particular interest was the connection of science and religion asked to interview him later in order to write an article for a journal. The highlight of his visit was the election of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Moscow in the presence of 30 friends. The following message was telephoned to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany on 24 April and relayed to the Universal House of Justice by electronic mail: "After 60 years, the Local Spiritual Assembly of Moscow has been reformed in the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Akbar Furútan. ...the Local Spiritual Assembly was honoured to meet with the Hand of the Cause and Counsellor Polin Rafat. Heavy agenda and great responsibilities await us. Yours in His service, the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Moscow." On 24 April in Leningrad, Mr. Furútan spoke to 36 members of the Society for the Advancement of Peace. The audience seemed most interested and asked many questions. On the 25th, ten teachers were invited to hear about the Bahá'í teachings on education. In Murmansk on the 26th, an announcement on television news welcomed "a great personality of the Bahá'í Faith, 'Alí-Akbar Furútan", and suggested the viewers watch for an interview at a later date. The next day, Murmansk television and Radio sent reporters to interview the Hand of the Cause, and all discussion was about the Faith. Mr. Furútan was invited to address the Murmansk Institute of Pedagogy, the school of Marxist-Leninist studies on 28 April. Faculty members and trainee teachers were enabled to hear about Bahá'í education for more than one and a half hours. On the Ninth Day of Riḍván, he attended a happy gathering held in Moscow which included a performance by a prize-winning cellist. Mr. Furútan and his party arrived in Vienna on 30 April, and on 1 May about 200 friends from all over Austria met for a happy reunion with him before his return to the Holy Land. (From reports received 30 April and 7 May from the Hand of the Cause)

May

CANADA / UNITED STATES / AUSTRALIA: The Hands of the Cause of God Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá, William Sears and H. Collis Featherstone attended the National Conventions of Canada, the United States and Australia, respectively.

August/September

SPAIN: The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum left the Holy Land at the end of August for a trip which included attendance at two conferences. The first was a women's conference held in Madrid, Spain, from 30 August to 3 September. Counsellor Agnes Ghaznavi attended as did over 400 Bahá'ís from 20 countries. By the end of the conference, five people had declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh. The second conference took place from 7–9 September in Bastia,

Corsica, and welcomed about 500 attendants from 15 countries. Counsellors Agnes Ghaznavi and Louis Hénuzet were present. In Bastia the large and handsome Municipal Theatre was placed at the disposal of the Bahá'ís. During the three evenings of the conference, cultural entertainment was well attended by many visitors. During the conference three people embraced the Faith. Publicity for the Faith was unprecedented in both countries. In Spain, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum was received by the Deputy Governor of the Province of Madrid, Signore Vincente Tudor, for a most cordial interview. In Corsica, the Mayor of Bastia, who is also the Corsican member of the French Parliament, gave a reception at the municipality for the Bahá'í delegation to the conference. (From reports received 10 September from the National Women's Committee of Spain and an individual)

September

WORLD CENTRE: DEEPLY GRIEVED ANNOUNCE PASSING VALIANT HAND CAUSE GOD COLLIS FEATHERSTONE WHILE VISITING KATHMANDU, NEPAL COURSE EXTENSIVE JOURNEY ASIA. HIS NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS STAUNCH, FEARLESS DEFENDER COVENANT, HIS UNCEASING COMMITMENT PROPAGATION CAUSE ALL PARTS WORLD, ESPECIALLY PACIFIC REGION, HIS UNREMITTING PERSEVERANCE FOSTERING ESTABLISHMENT LOCAL, NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER, HIS EXEMPLARY DEVOTION TO WRITINGS FAITH, HIS OUTSTANDING PERSONAL QUALITIES UNSWERVING LOYALTY, ENTHUSIASM, ZEAL AND DEDICATION, DISTINGUISH HIS MANIFOLD SERVICES THROUGHOUT MANY DECADES. OFFERING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES BOUNTIFUL REWARD HIS RADIANT SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM. ADVISE FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS, PARTICULARLY IN MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR, RECOGNITION HIS MAGNIFICENT ACHIEVEMENTS. (Message from the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies)

NEPAL: The Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone passed away on Saturday morning, 29 September 1990, in Kathmandu, Nepal. At the time of his passing, Mr. Featherstone was on an extensive trip he had undertaken on behalf of the Faith. He had left his home in Australia on 14 September, accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Madge Featherstone. They were to attend a youth conference in Lahore, Pakistan, spending a few days in New Delhi, Rawalpindi and Karachi en route. Their plan had been to visit Bahá'í communities in Bangladesh and Malaysia on their way back to Australia, where they were due to arrive in mid-November. Mr. Featherstone was buried in a peaceful spot overlooking rice fields and surrounded by mountains in northeast Kathmandu. Mrs. Featherstone, their son, three daughters and two sons-in-law were able to attend the funeral, as were representatives of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Australia, India, Nepal, and Thailand, and more than 50 Nepalese Bahá'ís. For the first time media—both English and Nepalese newspapers—published articles on the Faith in relation to the passing and funeral of the Hand of the Cause of God. (From *Bahá'í International New Service*, No. 232, 31 September 1990)

ASIA: During the last week of September, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum visited Sakhalin Island in the Soviet Union as part of an extensive journey through Asia. During the first week of October she visited Tibet. From Tibet, Amatu'l-Bahá travelled to Beijing, China, then went on to Dalian, in the northeastern region, to visit the Bahá'ís there. Next she went to Tianjin and gave a lecture at Nankai University, where both Martha Root and Agnes Alexander had spoken. After these visits, Rúḥíyyih Khánum spent four days in Hainan, the southernmost province of China. She went to both ends of Hainan Island and, as the Governor himself was away at the time, she established cordial relations with the Deputy Governor, who gave a dinner in her honour. Travelling north again, she spent three days in Guangzhou (Canton) where

she held continuous meetings for two nights with the believers who, she found, are "firmly rooted in the Faith and eager and devoted". Leaving mainland China, Amatu'l-Bahá held meetings with the Spiritual Assemblies of both Macau and Hong Kong, as well as with various local Bahá'í communities. She had radio and press interviews, and attended a large banquet in Hong Kong which was held to celebrate the Birthday of Bahá'u'lláh on 12 November. (From report received 14 November from the Hand of the Cause)

November

UNITED STATES: The Hand of the Cause of God Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá visited several Bahá'í communities in southern California in November at the invitation of the National Spiritual Assembly. In his talks Dr. Varqá explained the significance of the times and the importance of achieving the goals of the Six Year Plan. Dr. Varqá also spoke to Bahá'ís in Los Angeles, San Diego, Irvine, and Oceanside about the role the buildings of the Arc will play in the process of the maturation of institutions, the interrelatedness of the various agencies at the Bahá'í World Centre, and the urgency of increasing the number of adherents of the Faith. Counsellor Fred Schechter travelled to several of the communities to help welcome and introduce the Hand of the Cause of God. (From report received 17 December from the National Spiritual Assembly)

On 22 November, Dr. Varqá went from southern California to Tucson, Arizona, where he joined the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears at the third annual Desert Rose Bahá'í School. The School was sponsored by the Local Spiritual Assembly of North Pima County, and was attended by 738 Bahá'ís from 20 states, as well as from Canada, England, Guatemala, Jamaica, and Mexico. The School this year was dedicated to the Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone, and the devotional opening was dedicated to Counsellor Hidáyatu'lláh Aḥmadíyyih. Each of the Hands in attendance addressed the friends on several



The Hands of the Cause of God Dr. 'Ali-Muḥammad Varqá and William Sears surrounded by many of the children and youth who attended the Desert Rose Bahá'í School held in Tucson, Arizona, in November 1990.

occasions, and two public meetings were held in conjunction with the School. (From report received 13 December from the Desert Rose Bahá'í School)

1991

April

ROMANIA: Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum represented the Universal House of Justice at the Convention in Romania.... Arrangements for a 40-minute-long national television programme covering the Convention activities included an interview with the Hand of the Cause. A dynamic press conference was held with 24 journalists and media representatives. There were also interviews with two important journalists. Accompanied by Mr. Sohrab Youssefian and Mrs. Violette Nakhjavání, Amatu'l-Bahá was received by both the Minister for Religious Affairs and Director General, responsible for Bahá'í affairs who was very cordial. Rúḥíyyih Khánum was also received by the Mayor of Bucharest and had a pleasant and informative interview with him. A sumptuous banquet offered by the Bahá'ís was attended by about 60 people, including the Ambassador to Romania from Venezuela, and many government officials, prominent professors, intellectuals, and writers. It was a great success. Following the Convention, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum visited the grave of Queen Marie of Romania with the Counsellor and National Spiritual Assembly members. (From report received 2 May from the Hand of the Cause of God)

SOVIET UNION: "The Convention was greatly blessed and enriched by the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Akbar Furútan as the official representative of the Universal House of Justice who, more than 60 years after his exile from Moscow, witnessed with his own eyes the historic election and formation of the first 'Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Soviet Union'. "In the three major addresses he gave to the Convention in the Russian language, he related some of his early experiences in Moscow; spoke about the spiritual importance of the election of a National Spiritual Assembly for the largest country of the world; reflected the high expectations of the beloved Guardian concerning the progress of the Faith in the Soviet Union; and prepared the delegates for their heavy responsibility. "Mr. Furútan also read, in Russian, the message from the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the USSR for Riḍván 1991. "On the eve of the Ninth Day of Riḍván... Mr. Furútan gave a special address, followed by a banquet given by the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany to which close friends of the Faith and journalists were invited. (Excerpts from a report by the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany)

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: "In one chorus of universal jubilation the 110 participants drawn from 13 countries and from the length and breadth of Czechoslovakia, gathered in Prague...for the first annual National Convention of the Bahá'ís of Czechoslovakia, extend to you on this auspicious occasion their profound love and deepest appreciation for your unfailing guidance.

"Blessed beyond measure by the inestimable presence of our beloved, precious Hand of the Cause of God, Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá...we have witnessed, here in the soul of Central Europe, with overwhelming feelings of joy and thanksgiving to the Blessed Beauty for the continued outpourings of His abundant grace, the birth of the child of this Convention—the first National Spiritual Assembly of Czechoslovakia." (From report received 30 April from the participants)



The Hand of the Cause of God William Sears meeting with the friends in Worcester, Massachusetts, in October 1991, to encourage them to fill their goals for the Six Year Plan. Mr. Manny Reimer is seated left.

June

WORLD CENTRE: WITH SADDENED HEARTS ANNOUNCE PASSING MUCH-LOVED STAUNCH PROMOTER FAITH, KNIGHT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, HAND CAUSE JOHN ROBARTS. HIS DISTINGUISHED ADMINISTRATIVE TEACHING, PIONEERING ACTIVITIES IN HIS NATIVE CANADA, IN AFRICA AND EUROPE, DURING MINISTRY BELOVED GUARDIAN AND SUBSEQUENTLY ON WORLD SCALE THROUGH HIS INTERNATIONAL TRAVELS WERE SOURCE ABUNDANT INSPIRATION COUNTLESS FRIENDS MANY LANDS. HIS RELIANCE AND EMPHASIS ON PRAYER IN ALL EFFORTS PROMOTION CAUSE AND HIS SUSTAINED SERVICES PATH LOVE FOR BLESSED BEAUTY WERE CHARACTERIZED BY SPIRIT CERTITUDE, SELF-EFFACEMENT AND VIGOUR WHICH SET A STANDARD OF STEWARDSHIP THAT HAS ENRICHED ANNALS FAITH. HE HAS ASSUREDLY EARNED BOUNTIFUL REWARD ABHÁ KINGDOM. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL. ADVISE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS IN HIS HONOUR THROUGHOUT WORLD INCLUDING ALL HOUSES WORSHIP. (Message from the House of Justice to all National Assemblies 19 June)

CANADA: The Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts passed away on Tuesday afternoon, 18 June 1991, in Québec, Canada. Mr. Robarts was buried on 22 June in Rawdon—a small French Canadian town north of Montreal. Between 250 and 300 people were present at the grave-side, as well as at the gathering later in a local hall. (From *Bahá'í International News Service*, No. 250, 30 June 1991)

November

UNITED STATES: In mid-November, the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears concluded a historic tour of five areas chosen by the National Spiritual Assembly as among the most prominent centres of teaching activity in the country: Boca Raton, Florida; Worcester, Massachusetts; Tolleson, Arizona; San Francisco, California; and Portland, Oregon. The unifying theme of his tour was the spiritual assistance available to all those who arise to teach the Cause of God. Surveying the century-and-a-half of almost uninterrupted divine guidance enjoyed

by the Faith since its inception, Mr. Sears recalled the promises of victory given by the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, and by the Universal House of Justice. "With all this guidance at our disposal, and with the sure promises of assistance from our Lord, we should be able to work miracles in the teaching field," he said. (Report from *The American Bahá'í* for January 1992)

December

CANADA: On 10 December, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum was an honored guest at a banquet which accompanied the private opening of the Exhibition of the Architecture of Edward and W. S. Maxwell, in the presence of His Excellency, The Right Honourable Ramon John Hnatyshyn, Governor General of Canada. Sponsored by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, it was opened to the public on 13 December. It remained in Montreal for three months, and then travelled to several other locations across Canada. Among the items included in the Exhibition, alongside original paintings, drawings and models of buildings, was a professionally made, finely detailed model of the Shrine of the Báb.

Following the exhibition opening Amatu'l-Bahá cabled: OPENING LAST NIGHT AT MONTREAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS OF THE EXHIBITION OF THE ARCHITECTURE OF EDWARD AND W.S. MAXWELL BY GOVERNOR HNATYSHYN AND ATTENDED BY APPROXIMATELY 600–700 INVITED GUESTS WAS FOLLOWED BY MUSEUM BANQUET FOR ABOUT 70 SPECIAL GUESTS, ALL GREAT SUCCESS.

(From report received 11 December from the Hand of the Cause)

BERMUDA: The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum spent 12 days in Bermuda, from 21 December to 1 January. Her visit included a "...happy reunion at the National Centre with the island community...and a meeting with its mature and harmonious National Spiritual Assembly was rewarding in every way." (From report received 13 January from the Hand of the Cause)

1992

January

CANADA: From Bermuda, Amatu'l-Bahá flew to Canada on 2 January. There she had two meetings with the friends in Toronto—one meeting on 2 January and the other on 3 January—which she described as "...outstanding in warmth and enthusiasm. I feel the Canadian Bahá'í community is united, consecrated, and alert to winning its goals with a dynamic spirit that cheers my heart. The promises and hopes of 'Abdu'l-Bahá for my native and much-loved land are beginning to bear fruit and this harvest will undoubtedly enrich the entire Bahá'í world. The first meeting [in Toronto], ostensibly for the Persian speaking friends, was attended by over 1,000 and the following night 2,000 came. There was an unusually joyous warm feeling on both occasions and I felt a strong determination to win Canada's goals and raise the standard of victory. This now highly multiracial and ethnic Canada must surely hold unique possibilities for becoming a showpiece for the pattern for future society designed by Bahá'u'lláh, and I hope she will fulfil the destiny 'Abdu'l-Bahá foresaw for her in *The Tablets of the Divine Plan....*" (From report received 13 January from the Hand of the Cause)

March

WORLD CENTRE: OUR HEARTS DEEPLY SADDENED, BAHÁ'Í WORLD GREATLY DEPRIVED, BY PASSING HAND CAUSE GOD WILLIAM SEARS, VIBRANT, CONSECRATED, STOUT-HEARTED STANDARD-BEARER FAITH BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. HIS MORE THAN HALF-CENTURY UNBROKEN SERVICE MARKED BY UNFLINCHING DEVOTION

TO BELOVED GUARDIAN, INFECTIOUS ENTHUSIASM FOR TEACHING, GALVANIZING SENSE DRAMA, DISARMING HUMOUR, SPECIAL LOVE FOR CHILDREN, UNFLAGGING DETERMINATION IN FACE DIFFICULTIES. HE WILL EVER BE REMEMBERED FOR DEDICATING FULL RANGE HIS CREATIVE AND ENERGETIC CAPACITIES AS WRITER, EDITOR, LECTURER, RADIO AND TELEVISION PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, TO HIS VARIED SERVICES AS TRAVELLING TEACHER TO NUMEROUS COUNTRIES PARTICULARLY IN THE AMERICAS, AND AS PIONEER TO AFRICA WHERE HE WAS MEMBER OF AUXILIARY BOARD AND THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY SOUTH AND WEST AFRICA WHEN IN 1957 HE WAS ELEVATED RANK HAND CAUSE. HE LATER SERVED AS MEMBER, BODY HANDS HOLY LAND. HIS LOSS ACUTELY FELT IN NORTH AMERICA WHERE HE EXPENDED LAST MEASURE HIS EBBING STRENGTH PROMOTION TEACHING ACTIVITIES. DYNAMIC EFFECTS HIS WORK ENDURE THROUGH HIS MANY BOOKS AND RECORDINGS. GENERATIONS TO COME WILL REJOICE IN RICH LEGACY LEFT THEM THROUGH HIS HISTORIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS ILLUSTRIOUS SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM. ADVISE FRIENDS THROUGHOUT WORLD COMMEMORATE HIS PASSING. REQUEST BEFITTING MEMORIAL SERVICES IN HIS HONOUR ALL HOUSES WORSHIP. (Message from the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies)

UNITED STATES: The Hand of the Cause of God William Sears passed away on Wednesday, 25 March 1992, in Tucson, Arizona, and was buried on 28 March in Tucson. The funeral procession was over one mile long, with about 330 Bahá'ís and other friends joining his family at the graveside. (From *Bahá'í International News Service*, No. 267, 31 March 1992)

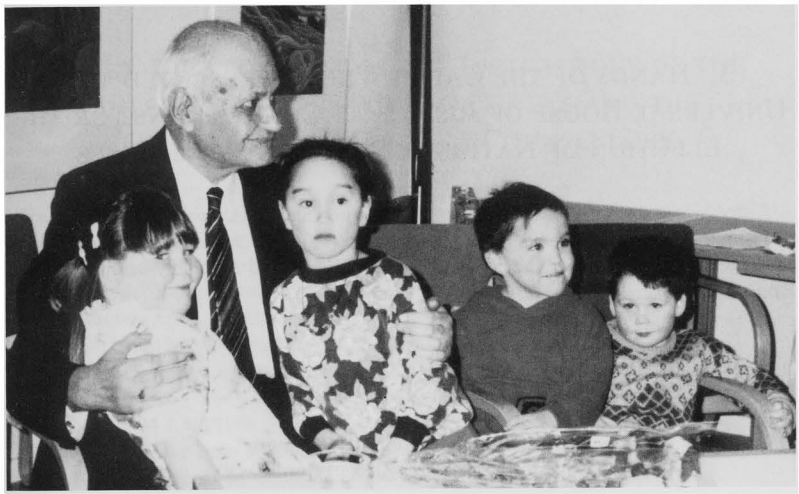
April

POLAND: Poland's first National Convention was an "immense success". Held in Warsaw from 24 to 26 April, it was attended by more than 150 friends including almost the whole Polish Bahá'í community and guests from an estimated 34 countries. "At the Convention, we had the honour of the presence of the representative of the Universal House of Justice, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, who, through her talks and advice, attracted our attention to what is essential for the development of our young Bahá'í community in Poland." (From Convention reports)

BALTIC STATES: One hundred Bahá'ís from the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and 10 other countries attending the historic first Convention (25–26 April)... announce with uplifted hearts and gratitude, the formation of the first Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Baltic States. The Convention was blessed with the participation of the Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí Akbar Furútan whose message of love and encouragement from the Universal House of Justice emphasized the spiritual significance of the formation of this pillar of the administrative order of Bahá'u'lláh on the threshold of the Holy Year. Mr. Furútan spoke in the Russian language when conveying the love and greetings of the Supreme Body to the friends. The Convention was held in Tallinn, Estonia, on the shores of the Baltic Sea. The beautifully decorated hall with the Greatest Name and a portrait of 'Abdu'l-Bahá gracing the walls was filled to capacity despite the freezing cold and snow. (From *Bahá'í International News Service*, No. 270, 15 May 1992)

GREENLAND: The Hand of the Cause of God Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá attended the first National Convention of Greenland on 25 April. Seventy-six years after the revelation of The Tablets of the Divine Plan, the desire of the Beloved Master concerning the rise of the call of God in the "icy regions of far North", was fulfilled by the establishment of that National Spiritual Assembly. (From *Bahá'í International News Service*, No. 270, 15 May 1992)

BULGARIA: Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum represented the Universal House of Justice at the first National Convention of Bulgaria,



The Hand of the Cause Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá with Bahá'í children in Nuuk, Greenland, in April 1992.

held in Sofia from 1 to 3 May.... During the Convention's last evening, Rúḥíyyih Khánum spoke with the friends about Shoghi Effendi. The meeting opened with music and ended with music, highlighted by violin and accordion beautifully played by new Gypsy Bahá'ís.... "We are extremely grateful for the inspiration and encouragement so generously shared by your much loved representative, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum. She enabled us to visualize the brilliant future of the Faith in this country, which is already so richly blessed by the sacrifices made by Georg Adam Benke and Marion Jack." (From *Bahá'í International News Service*, No. 270, 15 May 1992)

HUNGARY: "With our hearts full of joy we send you our deepest love and admiration from our first National Convention in Budapest, blessed by the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí Akbar Furútan, Counsellor Louis Hénuzet, and representatives of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Austria." The Convention was held on 1 and 2 May, with about 150 to 170 friends attending including some 70 Hungarians and Bahá'í friends from 19 countries all over the world. "The Hand of the Cause of God A. A. Furútan inspired the Convention with his unique talks, and the love and guidance of the Universal House of Justice was always felt." (From *Bahá'í International News Service*, No. 270, 15 May 1992)

UKRAINE: The first Convention of the Bahá'ís of the Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, which took place in Kiev on 1 May, was held in an atmosphere of devotion and dedication.... "The momentous message of the Supreme Body uplifted the hearts and inspired the friends with greater awareness of their responsibilities for the tasks that lay ahead." The message was followed by comments from the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá, who represented the Universal House of Justice. (From *Bahá'í International News Service*, No. 270, 15 May 1992)

3. Hands of the Cause Who Represented the Universal House of Justice at Conventions for the Election of National Spiritual Assemblies

Listed below are the Hands of the Cause who represented the Universal House of Justice at inaugural Conventions held in the period 1986–1992, the name of the new National Spiritual Assembly, its seat, the parent or sponsoring National Assembly, and the dates of the Conventions.

Riḍván 1989

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum
Macau—Macau (Hong Kong) April 29–30

Riḍván 1991

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum
Romania—Bucharest (Germany) April 26–29

'Alí-Akbar Furútan
USSR—Moscow (Germany) April 26–29

'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá
Czechoslovakia—Prague (Austria) April 27–28

Riḍván 1992

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum
Poland—Warsaw (Germany) April 24–26
Bulgaria—Sofia (Germany) May 1–3

'Alí-Akbar Furútan
Baltic States—Tallinn, Estonia (Commonwealth of Independent States, Baltic States, and Georgia) April 25–26
Hungary—Budapest (Austria) May 1–2

'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá
Greenland—Nuuk (Denmark) April 25–26
Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova—Kiev (Commonwealth of Independent States, Baltic States, and Georgia) May 1–2

4. The Development of the Institutions of the International Teaching Centre and the Continental Boards of Counsellors

21 June 1968

REJOICE ANNOUNCE MOMENTOUS DECISION ESTABLISH ELEVEN CONTINENTAL BOARDS COUNSELLORS PROTECTION PROPAGATION FAITH THREE EACH FOR AFRICA AMERICAS ASIA ONE EACH FOR AUSTRALASIA EUROPE...

The Universal House of Justice

24 June 1968

...those who have been appointed to the first Continental Boards of Counsellors for the Protection and Propagation of the Faith:

Northwestern Africa

Ḥusayn Ardikání (Trustee, Continental Fund), Muḥammad Kebdani, William Maxwell.

Central and East Africa

Oloro Epyeru, Kolonario Oule, Isobel Sabri, Mihdí Samandarí, 'Azíz Yazdí (Trustee, Continental Fund).

Southern Africa

Seewoosumbur-Jeehoba Appa, Shidán Fatḥ-i-A'ẓam (Trustee, Continental Fund), Bahiyyih Ford.

North America

Lloyd Gardner, Florence Mayberry, Edna True (Trustee, Continental Fund).

Central America

Carmen de Burafato, Artemus Lamb, Alfred Osborne (Trustee Continental Fund).

South America

Athos Costas, Hooper Dunbar (Trustee, Continental Fund), Donald Witzel.

Western Asia

Masíḥ Farhangí, Mas'úd Khamsí, Ḥádí Raḥmání (Trustee, Continental Fund), Manúchihr Salmánpúr, Sankaran-Nair Vasudevan.

Southeast Asia

Yan Kee Leong, Khudáraḥm Paymán (Trustee, Continental Fund), Chellie Sundram.

Northeast Asia

Rúḥu'lláh Mumtází (Trustee, Continental Fund), Vicente Samaniego.

Australasia

Suhayl 'Alá'í, Howard Harwood, Thelma Perks (Trustee, Continental Fund).

Europe

Erik Blumenthal, Dorothy Ferraby (Trustee, Continental Fund), Louis Hénuzet.

The Universal House of Justice

24 June 1968

...The number of Auxiliary Board members to be assigned to each continental zone is as follows:

	Protection	*Propagation*
AFRICA		
Northwestern	3	6
Central and East	4	7
Southern	2	5
	9	18
AMERICA		
North	4	9
Central	2	8
South	3	10
	9	27
ASIA		
Western	4	15
Southeastern	2	7
Northeastern	1	7
	7	29
AUSTRALASIA	2	7
EUROPE	9	18

The Universal House of Justice

10 July 1969

With great joy we announce that we have decided to increase the total number of

members of the Continental Boards of Counsellors for the Protection and Propagation of the Faith to thirty-eight by adding John McHenry III to the Continental Board of Counsellors in North East Asia and Mas'úd Khamsí to the Continental Board of Counsellors in South America...

We also rejoice to announce the appointment of Mrs. Shirin Boman to the Continental Board of Counsellors of Western Asia to fill a vacancy on that Board...

The Universal House of Justice

RIḌVÁN 1970

...IN VIEW EFFECTIVE REINFORCEMENT THIS NOBLE WORK BY ABLE DEDICATED CONTINENTAL BOARDS COUNSELLORS THEIR AUXILIARY BOARDS TOGETHER WITH GROWING NEED AND EXPANSION WORLD COMMUNITY ANNOUNCE AUGMENTATION VITAL INSTITUTION THROUGH APPOINTMENT THREE ADDITIONAL COUNSELLORS IRAJ AYMAN WESTERN ASIA ANNELIESE BOPP BETTY REED EUROPE AND AUTHORIZATION APPOINTMENT FORTY FIVE ADDITIONAL AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBERS NINE AFRICA SIXTEEN ASIA TWO AUSTRALASIA EIGHTEEN WESTERN HEMISPHERE...

The Universal House of Justice

5 JUNE 1973

ANNOUNCE ESTABLISHMENT HOLY LAND LONG ANTICIPATED INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE DESTINED EVOLVE INTO ONE THOSE WORLD SHAKING WORLD EMBRACING WORLD DIRECTING ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTIONS ORDAINED BY BAHAULLAH ANTICIPATED BY ABDULBAHA ELUCIDATED BY SHOGHI EFFENDI. MEMBERSHIP THIS NASCENT INSTITUTION COMPRISES ALL HANDS CAUSE GOD AND INITIALLY THREE COUNSELLORS WHO WITH HANDS PRESENT HOLY LAND WILL CONSTITUTE NUCLEUS ITS VITAL OPERATIONS. CALLING UPON HOOPER DUNBAR FLORENCE MAYBERRY AZIZ YAZDI PROCEED HOLY LAND ASSUME THIS HIGHLY MERITORIOUS SERVICE...

The Universal House of Justice

8 JUNE 1973

The number of zones has been raised to twelve by ... the new zone of South Central Asia... 'The number of Counsellors is now raised to fifty-seven by the appointment of Mr. Friday Ekpe and Mr. Dhikru'lláh Káẓimí in Northwestern Africa, Mr. Húshang 'Ahdíyyih and Mr. Peter Vuyiya in Central and East Africa, Dr. Sarah Pereira and Mrs. Velma Sherrill in North America, Mr. Rowland Estall and Mr. Paul Lucas in Central America, Mrs. Leonora Armstrong, Mr. Peter McLaren and Mr. Raúl Pavón in South America, Mr. Dipchand Khianra and Mrs. Zena Sorabjee in South Central Asia, Mr. Firaydún Míthágiyán in Southeastern Asia, Mr. Richard Benson and Miss Elena Marsella in North-eastern Asia and Miss Violet Hoehnke in Australasia. Dr. William Maxwell who has been rendering distinguished service as a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Northwestern Africa has been obliged to return to the United States...

The Universal House of Justice

7 OCTOBER 1973

...the number of Auxiliary Board members throughout the world is to be raised to two hundred and seventy, of whom eighty-one will serve on the Auxiliary Boards for the Protection of the Faith and one hundred and eighty-nine will serve on the Auxiliary Boards for the Propagation of the Faith. In all there will be fifty-four Auxiliary Board members in Africa, eighty-one in the Western Hemisphere, eighty-one in Asia, eighteen in Australasia and thirty-six in Europe.

The Universal House of Justice

30 SEPTEMBER 1974

...Mrs. Salisa Kermani was appointed by the House of Justice to the Board of Counsellors for South Central Asia in place or Mr. Vasudevan who is presently furthering his education in the United States. Mr. John McHenry...has returned to the United States

...He has tendered his resignation as a Counsellor...

International Teaching Centre

6 JANUARY 1975

...The decision has been taken, therefore, after consultation with the International Teaching Centre, to break the present zone of North-western Africa into two separate zones of Northern and Western Africa, to each of which will be transferred parts of the Central and East African zone...

Because of the creation of a new Board[1] for Northern Africa, the Counsellors in this and the one for Western Africa must be regrouped, new appointments made to the Northern Board, and the number of Auxiliary Board members increased. We decided, therefore, that the Board for Northern Africa will consist of Mr. Muḥammad Kebdani, already serving as a Counsellor, Mr. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá, and Mr. 'Imád Sábirán. The Board for Western Africa will consist or Mr. Ḥusayn Ardikání (Trustee), Mr. Friday Ekpe, Mr. Dhikru'lláh Káẓimí, and Dr. Mihdí Samandarí (transferred from the Central and East African Board).

We are also increasing the number of Auxiliary Board members in Africa, adding 9 members to the Board for Protection, and 9 to that for Propagation, bringing the totals for that continent to 27 and 45 respectively...

The Universal House of Justice

17 MARCH 1976

The membership of six of the Boards of Counsellors has been increased by the appointment of one additional Counsellor in each case, as follows: Western Africa, Mrs. Thelma Khelghati; Southern Africa, Mr. William Masehla; South Central Asia, Mr. Burháni'din Afshín; North-eastern Asia, Mr. Hideya Suzuki; Australasia, Mr. Owen Battrick; Europe, Mr. Adib Taherzadeh. 'The number of Auxiliary Board members throughout the world has been raised from 288 to a new total of 378, 117 of which are for protection and 261 for propagation...

International Teaching Centre

24 MARCH 1976

...the Universal House of Justice has authorized the appointment of ninety more Auxiliary Board members...

On behalf of the Universal House of Justice

31 OCTOBER 1976

The Universal House of Justice announces with pleasure that it has appointed three new Counsellors as follows: Dr. Peter Khan—to the Continental Board of Counsellors in Australasia Dr. Hidáyatu'lláh Aḥmadíyyih —to the Continental Board of Counsellors in Central America Mr. Angus Cowan—to the Continental Board of Counsellors in North America.

On behalf of the Universal House of Justice

24 MARCH 1977

ANNOUNCE AUTHORIZATION INCREASE MEMBERSHIP BOARDS BY 297 RAISING TOTAL TO 675 OF WHICH 279 ARE AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBERS FOR PROTECTION AND 396 FOR PROPAGATION OF FAITH...

On behalf of the Universal House of Justice

29 AUGUST 1977

KINDLY CABLE MR IMBUM CHINNIAH... QUOTE INFORM YOU WITH PLEASURE YOUR APPOINTMENT CONTINENTAL BOARD COUNSELLORS SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA...

The Universal House of Justice

29 JUNE 1979

...MOMENT PROPITIOUS ANNOUNCE DURATION TERMS SERVICE MEMBERS CONTINENTAL BOARDS COUNSELLORS AS ANTICIPATED IN ANNOUNCEMENT ESTABLISHMENT THAT INSTITUTION AND IN CONSTITUTION UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, DECISION NOW TAKEN THAT TERMS WILL BE OF FIVE YEARS STARTING DAY COVENANT 26 NOVEMBER 1980...

The Universal House of Justice

[1] Raising the total to thirteen.

4 JULY 1979

JOYFULLY ANNOUNCE APPOINTMENT COUNSELLOR ANNELIESE BOPP TO MEMBERSHIP INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE

The Universal House of Justice

7 FEBRUARY 1980

...DEEPLY GRIEVED UNTIMELY PASSING DEVOTED COWORKER INPERAJU CHINNIAH...

The Universal House of Justice

20 OCTOBER 1980

HEARTS SADDENED PASSING DISTINGUISHED COUNSELLOR LEONORA STIRLING ARMSTRONG...

The Universal House of Justice

3 NOVEMBER 1980

...we have decided that the time is ripe for a further step in the development of the institution itself that will, at one and the same time, accord greater discretion and freedom of action to the Continental Boards of Counsellors in the carrying out of their duties, and widen the scope of each Board to embrace an entire continent. In accordance with this decision, the zones of the Continental Boards of Counsellors will, from the Day of the Covenant of the year 137 [26 November 1980] be as follows:

1. Africa, comprising the areas of the four present zones on that continent.
2. The Americas, comprising the present zones of North, Central and South America.
3. Asia, comprising the present zones of Western, South Central and Southeastern Asia, together with the present zone of North-eastern Asia without the Hawaiian Islands and Micronesia.
4. Australasia, comprising the present zone of Australasia plus the Hawaiian Islands and Micronesia.
5. Europe.

Those who are now appointed as Counsellors to serve on these Continental Boards for the next five years are:

Africa: Dr. Húshang Ahdieh (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mr. Ḥusayn Ardekání, Mr. Friday Ekpe, Mr. Oloro Epyeru, Mr. Shidan Fat'he-Aazam, Mr. Zekrollah Kazemi, Mr. Muḥammad Kebdani, Mrs. Thelma Khelghati, Mr. William Masehla, Mr. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá, Mr. Kolonario Oule, Mrs. Isobel Sabri, Dr. Mihdí Samandarí, Mr. Peter Vuyiya, Mrs. Bahíyyih Winckler.

The Americas: Dr. Hidáyatu'lláh Aḥmadíyyih, Dr. Farzam Arbáb, Mrs. Carmen de Burafato, Mr. Athos Costas, Mr. Angus Cowan, Mr. Lloyd Gardner (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mr. Mas'úd Khamsí, Mrs. Lauretta King, Mr. Artemus Lamb, Mr. Peter McLaren, Mr. Raúl Pavón, Dr. Sarah Pereira, Mrs. Ruth Pringle, Mr. Fred Schechter, Mrs. Velma Sherrill, Mr. Donald Witzel.

Asia: Mr. Burháni'd-Dín Afshín, Mrs. Shirin Boman, Dr. Masih Farhangí, Dr. John Fozdar, Mr. Zabíḥu'lláh Gulmuḥammadí, Mr. Aydin Güney, Mr. Dipchand Khianra, Mr. Rúḥu'lláh Mumtází, Mr. S. Nagaratnam, Mr. Khudáraḥm Paymán (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mr. Manúchihr Salmánpúr, Mr. Vicente Samaniego, Mrs. Zena Sorabjee, Dr. Chellie Sundram, Mr. Hideya Suzuki, Mr. Yan Kee Leong.

Australasia: Mr. Suhayl 'Alá'í, Mr. Ben Ayala, Mr. Owen Battrick (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mr. Richard Benson, Mrs. Tinai Hancock, Dr. Peter Khan, Mr. Lisiata Maka.

Europe: Mr. Erik Blumenthal, Mrs. Dorothy Ferraby, Dr. Agnes Ghaznavi, Mr. Hartmut Grossmann, Mr. Louis Hénuzet (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mrs. Ursula Mühlschlegel, Dr. Leo Niederreiter, Mrs. Betty Reed, Mr. Adib Taherzadeh.

A number of friends who have rendered highly valued services as Counsellors are not being reappointed for the coming term, and we wish to express here our profound gratitude for the devoted labours they have rendered and are rendering in the path of the Cause. These dearly-loved believers are: Mr. Seewoosumbur-Jeehoba Appa, Dr. Iraj Ayman, Mr. Rowland Estall, Mr. Howard Harwood, Miss Violet Hoehnke, Mrs. Salisa

Kermani, Mr. Paul Lucas, Miss Elena Marsella, Mr. Alfred Osborne, Miss Thelma Perks, Mr. Hádí Raḥmání, Mr. 'Imád Sábirán, Miss Edna True...

The Universal House of Justice

14 NOVEMBER 1980

The Universal House of Justice has requested that we inform the Boards that the number of Auxiliary Board members allotted to each continent is as follows:

	Protection	*Propagation*
Africa	81	99
Americas	54	117
Asia	99	117
Australasia	18	27
Europe	27	36
Totals	279	396

International Teaching Centre

27 NOVEMBER 1980

In consideration of the extension of the area of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia we have decided to increase the number of Auxiliary Board members allocated to that continent by nine on each Board, raising the totals to twenty-seven Protection Board members and thirty-six Propagation Board members...'

The Universal House of Justice

24 JUNE 1981

...ANOTHER FOUR DISTINGUISHED BELIEVERS NOW GATHERED ABHA KINGDOM ON BEING MARTYRED ... DR. MASIH FARHANGI MEMBER BOARD COUNSELLORS ASIA...

On behalf of the Universal House of Justice

17 AUGUST 1981

...DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING EMINENT DISTINGUISHED SERVANT BLESSED BEAUTY MEMBER BOARD COUNSELLORS AFRICA ... MUHAMMAD MUSTAFA...

The Universal House of Justice

13 MAY 1982

The Universal House of Justice announces with pleasure the appointment of Dr. Ṣabir Áfáqí to the Continental Board of Counsellors in Asia to replace Dr. Masíḥ Farhangi, who was martyred last year.

On behalf of the Universal House of Justice

19 MAY 1983

For ten years the International Teaching Centre has rendered invaluable services at the World Centre of the Faith, and it is with great joy that we now announce a number of major steps in the evolution of this vital institution of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

Since the tragic death of Mr. Paul Haney there have been only two Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land. We have therefore decided to call upon Dr. 'Alí Muḥammad Varqá and Mr. Collis Featherstone to participate in the discharge of the special duties of the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land when the occasion requires, as for example, in dealing with matters of Covenant-breaking. They will be able to perform these functions either by correspondence or by periodic sojourns at the World Centre.

We have decided to raise the number of resident members of the International Teaching Centre to nine. For reasons of health Mrs. Florence Mayberry is leaving the World Centre, bringing to an end her highly valued services on this institution. Four new Counsellor members have therefore been appointed: Dr. Magdalene Carney, Mr. Mas'úd Khamsí, Dr. Peter Khan and Mrs. Isobel Sabri, whom we now call upon to transfer their residences to the Holy Land, where they will join the Hands of the Cause of God, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum and 'Alí-Akbar Furútan and Counsellors Anneliese Bopp, Hooper Dunbar and 'Azíz Yazdí.

We have further decided, as foreshadowed in previous announcements, to institute a five-year term for the Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre. Each term will start on 23 May immediately following the International Bahá'í Convention,

and the current term will end on 23 May 1988. Should circumstances prevent the Universal House of Justice from making new appointments at the end of any five-year term, the Counsellors will remain in office until such time as new appointments can be made.

With the rapid growth of the Faith, its emergence from obscurity, and the diversification of the activities that the believers in many lands must undertake in such fields as education, rural development, radio and public relations—matters which must increasingly occupy the attention of the Universal House of Justice—we have decided that the time is ripe to devolve increased responsibility upon the International Teaching Centre, in the fields of protection and propagation of the Faith. The duties of the International Teaching Centre, including those announced previously and those now being assigned to it, are as follows:

- To assume full responsibility for coordinating, stimulating and directing the Continental Boards of Counsellors, acting also as liaison between them and the Universal House of Justice.
- To be fully informed of the situation of the Cause in all parts of the world and, from this knowledge, to make reports and recommendations to the Universal House of Justice and give advice to the Continental Boards of Counsellors.
- To watch over the security and ensure the protection of the Faith of God.
- To be alert to possibilities for the extension of the teaching work and the development of economic and social life both within and without the Bahá'í community, and to draw the attention of the Universal House of Justice and the Continental Boards of Counsellors to such possibilities, making recommendations for action.
- To determine and anticipate needs for literature, pioneers and travelling teachers and to work out teaching plans, both regional and global, for the approval of the Universal House of Justice.
- To direct the work of the Continental Pioneer Committees.
- To administer the expenditure of the International Deputization Fund.
- To administer an annual budget that will be provided from the Bahá'í International Fund, allocating therefrom to the Continental Boards of Counsellors monies for special teaching projects and literature subvention, and, when necessary, contributions to the Continental Funds...

In the near future the International Teaching Centre will be moving into its new offices near the House of the Master, in the building which served for several decades as the Western Pilgrim House, later as the seat of the International Bahá'í Council and, for the past twenty years, as that of the Universal House of Justice. Now, most befittingly, it will serve as the office of the International Teaching Centre until the permanent building for that mighty institution can be raised on Mount Carmel in close proximity to the Universal House of Justice.

The Universal House of Justice

27 JUNE 1983

The Universal House of Justice announces with pleasure the appointment of the following Continental Counsellors:

In Africa: Mr. Gila Michael Bahta
Mr. Kassimi Fofana

In the Americas: Mr. Shapoor Monadjem

In Australasia: Mrs. Joy Stevenson

The Universal House of Justice

4 AUGUST 1983

DEEPLY MOURN LOSS OUTSTANDING PROMOTER FAITH WILLIAM MASEHLA.

The Universal House of Justice

24 OCTOBER 1983

DEEPLY DEPLORE LOSS ZEALOUS SERVANT CAUSE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH RAÚL PAVÓN DISTINGUISHED PROMOTER FAITH AND INDEFATIGABLE

WORKER IN TEACHING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES LATIN AMERICA.

The Universal House of Justice

6 DECEMBER 1983

...announces with pleasure the appointment of the following Continental Counsellors:

In Africa: Mr. Mabuku Wingi

In the Americas: Mrs. Isabel P. de Calderón.

The Universal House of Justice

RIḌVÁN 1984

...The International Teaching Centre, operating from its world seat, has provided loving and wise leadership and direction to the Boards of Counsellors. Its sphere of service has been immensely extended by the assignment of new responsibilities and by raising the number of its Counsellor members to seven. The dedicated services of the Counsellors in all the continents, ably supported by the Auxiliary Board members, have been invaluable in fostering the spiritual health and integrity of the world-wide community. To develop further this vital organ of the Administrative Order, it has been decided to establish a term of five years' service for those appointed to the Auxiliary Boards, commencing November 26, 1986...

The Universal House of Justice

7 MARCH 1985

DEEPLY GRIEVED UNTIMELY PASSING ESTEEMED LLOYD GARDNER STALWART DEFENDER INTERESTS FAITH AMERICAS.

The Universal House of Justice

24 OCTOBER 1985

It gives us great happiness to announce the membership of the Continental Boards of Counsellors as from the Day of the Covenant, 26 November 1985. The number of Counsellors has been increased from 63 to 72 and adjustments have been made in their geographical distribution in consonance with the development of the Faith around the world.

The membership of the Continental Boards of Counsellors as now appointed is:

Africa (18 Counsellors):

Mr. Húshang Ahdieh (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mr. Ḥusayn Ardekání, Mrs. Beatrice O. Asare, Mr. Gila Michael Bahta, Mr. Friday Ekpe, Mr. Oloro Epyeru, Mr. Shidan Fat'he-Aazam, Mr. Kassimi Fofana, Mr. Zekrollah Kazemi, Mr. Muḥammad Kebdani, Mrs. Thelma Khelghati, Mr. Roddy Dharma Lutchmaya, Mr. Daniel Ramoroesi, Dr. Mihdi Samandarí, Mrs. Edith Senoga, Mr. Peter Vuyiya, Mrs. Lucretia Mancho Warren, Mr. Mabuku Wingi.

The Americas (17 Counsellors):

Dr. Hidáyatu'lláh Aḥmadíyyih, Mr. Eloy Anello, Dr. Farzam Arbáb (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Dr. Wilma Brady, Mrs. Isabel P. de Calderon, Mr. Rolf von Czekus, Mr. Robert Harris, Mrs. Lauretta King, Dr. Peter McLaren, Mr. Shapoor Monadjem, Mrs. Ruth Pringle, Mr. Donald O. Rogers, Mr. Fred Schechter, Dr. Arturo Serrano, Mr. Alan Smith, Dr. David R. Smith, Mr. Rodrigo Tomás.

Asia (19 Counsellors):

Dr. Ṣábir Áfáqi, Mr. Burháni'd-Din Afshín, Dr. Iraj Ayman, Mr. Bijan Fareed, Dr. John Fozdar, Mr. Zabiḥu'lláh Gulmuḥammadí, Mr. Bharat Koirala, Mr. Rúḥu'lláh Mumtázi, Mr. S. Nagaratnam, Dr. Perin Olyai, Mrs. Rose Ong,. Mr. Khudáraḥm Paymán (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mr. Masíh Rawḥání, Mr. Vicente Samaniego, U Soe Tin, Dr.Ilhan Sezgin, Mrs. Zena Sorabjee, Dr. Chellie J. Sundram, Mr. Michitoshi Zenimoto.

Australasia (9 Counsellors):

Mr. Suhayl 'Alá'í, Mr. Ben Ayala, Justice Richard Benson, Dr. Kamran Eshraghian, Mrs. Tinai Hancock, Mr. Lisiate Maka, Mrs. Gayle Morrison, Dr. Sírús Naráqí, Mrs. Joy Stevenson (Trustee of the Continental Fund).

Europe (9 Counsellors):

Dr. Agnes Ghaznavi, Mr. Hartmut Grossmann, Mr. Louis Hénuzet (Trustee of the

Continental Fund), Mrs. Ursula Mühlschlegel, Dr. Leo Niederreiter, Mrs. Polin Rafat, Mr. Adib Taherzadeh, Mr. Adam Thorne, Mr. Sohrab Youseffian.

The following nineteen devoted believers who are now being relieved of the onerous duties of membership on the Boards of Counsellors, will, as distinguished servants of the Cause, continue through their outstanding capacities and experience to be sources of stimulation and encouragement to the friends.

Mr. A. Owen Battrick, Mr. Erik Blumenthal, Mrs. Shirin Boman, Mrs. Carmen de Burafato, Mr. Athos Costas, Mr. Angus Cowan, Mrs. Dorothy Ferraby, Mr. Aydin Güney, Dr. Dipchand Khianra, Mr. Artemus Lamb, Mr. Kolonario Oule, Dr. Sarah Pereira, Mrs. Betty R. Reed, Dr. Manúchihr Salmánpúr, Mrs. Velma Sherrill, Mr. Hedeya Suzuki, Mrs. Bahíyyih Winckler, Mr. Donald Witzel, Mr. Yan Kee Leong.

We express to each and every one of these dear friends our heartfelt gratitude and assure them of our prayers in the Holy Shrines for the confirmation of their highly meritorious and self-sacrificing services to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

The Universal House of Justice

24 OCTOBER 1985

At this time when the Bahá'í world is facing the challenge of the International Year of Peace, on the point of completing the Seven Year Plan and standing on the threshold of a new Six Year Plan, we have felt it important to call upon the Counsellors from all the continents to gather at the World Centre for a conference to deliberate on the tasks and opportunities of the years immediately ahead. This conference will take place from 27 December 1985 through 2 January 1986 and is yet one more sign of the rapid advance and consolidation of the institutions of the Cause of God.

The Universal House of Justice

1 JANUARY 1986

The presentation of the condition of the Bahá'í International Fund at the Counsellors' Conference has precipitated many requests for information...

It is essential that the friends throughout the world be educated in the importance of the funds: local, national, continental and international... Such education can be greatly assisted by the Counsellors and their Auxiliary Boards, and should be adapted to the conditions of every Bahá'í community...

The Universal House of Justice

2 JANUARY 1986

The eager expectation with which we welcomed to the World Centre, on 27 December, sixty-four Counsellors from the five continents to discuss, with the International Teaching Centre, the challenges and opportunities facing the Bahá'í world community, has, at the conclusion of their historic conference, been transmuted into feelings of deepest joy, gratitude and love.

'Graced by the presence of the Hands of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, Ugo Giachery, 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá and Collis Featherstone, the Conference was organized and managed with admirable foresight and efficiency by the International Teaching Centre...

The beloved Counsellors, strengthened and enriched by their experience in the Holy Land, will, as early as possible, consult with all National Spiritual Assemblies on measures to conclude triumphantly the current Plan, and on preparations to launch the Six Year Plan. In anticipation of those consultations, National Spiritual Assemblies will receive the full announcement of the aims and characteristics of that Plan, so that together with the Counsellors they may formulate the national plans which will, for each community, establish its pursuit of the overall objectives.

This new process, whereby the national goals of the next Plan are to be largely formulated by National Spiritual Assemblies

and Boards of Counsellors, signalizes the inauguration of a new stage in the unfoldment of the Administrative Order. Our beloved Guardian anticipated a succession of epochs during the Formative Age of the Faith; we have no hesitation in recognizing that this new development in the maturation of Bahá'í institutions marks the inception of the fourth epoch of that Age.

The Universal House of Justice

MARCH 1986

HEARTS GRIEFSTRICKEN PASSING OUTSTANDING PROMOTER CAUSE ANGUS COWAN.

The Universal House of Justice

25 MAY 1986

...On the Day of the Covenant, 26 November 1986, a new term of five years will begin for those appointed to the Auxiliary Boards. In preparation for that event, we find it propitious to announce the following decisions.

As from last Riḍván, Turkey has been transferred from the area of responsibility of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Asia to that of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Europe. Counsellor Ilhan Sezgin is, therefore, a member of the European Board of Counsellors. It has also been decided to increase the size of the European Auxiliary Board for the Protection of the Faith to 36 members, which is the same as the number currently authorized for the Propagation Board in the continent.

In view of the growth of the Bahá'í community and its emergence from obscurity, we have decided to make the following further changes in the number of members of the Auxiliary Boards, to be effective from 26 November 1986:

	Present Number	Added Number	New Number
AFRICA			
Protection	81	9	90
Propagation	99	9	108
AMERICAS			
Protection	54	9	63
Propagation	117	0	117
ASIA			
Protection	99	0	99
Propagation	117	9	126
AUSTRALASIA			
Protection	27	9	36
Propagation	36	9	45
EUROPE			
Protection	36	0	36
Propagation	36	0	36
TOTAL	702	54	756
Protection	297	27	324
Propagation	405	27	432

This further expansion of the institution of the Auxiliary Boards reflects the recent increase of the number of Continental Counsellors from 63 to 72 and is required by the marked growth in the size of Bahá'í communities, a growth which it is confidently expected will accelerate during the Six Year Plan as the impact of the Faith's emergence from obscurity begins to make itself evident in a growing interest in its teachings by people in all walks of life.

The Universal House of Justice

18 MAY 1988

REJOICE ANNOUNCE APPOINTMENT COUNSELLOR MEMBERS INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE FOR FIVE-YEAR TERM BEGINNING 23 MAY 1988: DR. FARZAM ARBAB, DR. MAGDALENE CARNEY, MR. HARTMUT GROSSMANN, MR. MAS'UD KHAMSI, MRS. LAURETTA KING, MR. DONALD ROGERS, MRS. ISOBEL SABRI, MRS. JOY STEVENSON, MR. PETER VUYIYA. VIEW SUPREME IMPORTANCE ACCELERATION TEACHING WORK THIS STAGE FORMATIVE AGE NUMBER COUNSELLOR MEMBERS NOW RAISED TO NINE. EXPRESS PROFOUND GRATITUDE MR. 'AZIZ YAZDI AND MISS ANNELIESE BOPP FOR THEIR ASSIDUOUS DEVOTED SELF-SACRIFICING SERVICES TEACHING CENTRE OVER SO MANY YEARS.

The Universal House of Justice

30 MAY 1988

The burgeoning potential for immediate progress in the field of teaching, affirmed by the expectant and resolute spirit displayed at the Sixth International Convention, and the



The members of the Universal House of Justice, five Hands of the Cause of God, and Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre join members of the Continental Boards of Counsellors after the International Convention in Haifa, Israel, in May 1988.



Counsellor Beatrice Asare being welcomed by member of the Universal of Justice Peter Khan to a special reception held for Counsellors at the Seat of the International Teaching Centre during the sixth International Conventionl in Haifa, Israel, 1988.



From left to right: the Hands of the Cause of God Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá, William Sears, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, 'Alí-Akbar Furútan and H.Collis Featherstone visit the Mansion in Mazra'ih as part of the Counsellors Conference in May 1988.



Counsellors Robert Harris and Arturo Serrano consult with Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre Magdalene Carney during the Post Convention Counsellors Conference. Haifa, Israel, May 1988.

awakening of a new consciousness among the believers as to the unusual possibilities and urgency of the times compel a further thrust in the development of the capacity of the International Teaching Centre to carry out its indispensable, sacred functions. Thus, with the benefit of recent consultations with the Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land, we have reached the decision, as announced in our message of 18 May 1988 to the Bahá'ís of the world, to raise the number of Counsellor members of the Teaching Centre to nine. This is one of a number of related steps responding to the necessity for new modes of action on the part of the Universal House of Justice and of the Hands of the Cause in relation to the work of the Teaching Centre, at this time of new opportunities and new challenges for the Cause of God occasioned by the growing maturation of the Administrative Order and rapidly accelerating change in the conditions of mankind.

The regular work of the Teaching Centre will be decided upon through consultative action of the Counsellors; and since corporate action is fundamental to the direction of the Teaching Centre, it will be necessary for a quorum of five Counsellors to be present at the World Centre at all times...

Released from the confining, day-to-day involvement in the administration of the work of the International Teaching Centre, the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land can concentrate to a greater degree on the unique services that they alone can render and, from the knowledge and perspective which over 30 years of uninterrupted service at the World Centre have given them, be able to advise the International Teaching Centre and the Universal House of Justice on those matters in which they feel that the work of the Teaching Centre and the Counsellors throughout the world needs direction and development. In this regard, the Hands of the Cause may request reconsideration by the International Teaching Centre of a decision it has made.

In the matter of protection, the current procedure should be maintained by which the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land, together with the two non-resident Hands designated to participate in their work, have the responsibility of deciding on questions of Covenant-breaking, or of the reinstatement of Covenant-breakers, for the ultimate approval of the Universal House of Justice.

These important adjustments in the operation of the International Teaching Centre, while affording the Hands of the Cause greater freedom from administrative duties, preserve their prerogatives in influencing the development of the institution, and also make for a deeper exploration and wider manifestation of its functions, as amplified in our letter of 19 May 1983 addressed to the followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the world.

The Universal House of Justice

16 JUNE 1988

Recent events have given rise to eleven vacancies in the membership of the Continental Boards of Counsellors. Mr. Adib Taherzadeh has been elected to the Universal House of Justice; Dr. Farzám Arbáb, Mr. Harmut Grossmann, Mrs. Lauretta King, Mr. Donald Rogers, Mrs. Joy Stevenson and Mr. Peter Vuyiya have been appointed as Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre.

In addition, ill health has sadly made it impossible for Dr. Chellie Sundram to continue his services as a Counsellor for Asia, Dr. Iraj Ayman and Mrs. Thelma Khelghati have been compelled by circumstances beyond their control to leave, respectively, the continents of Asia and Africa in which they were serving, and Mr. Adam Thorne has had to resign, for personal reasons, from the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe. We wish first to express our profound appreciation of the contributions these dear friends have made to the advancement of the Cause of God during their years of



The members of the International Teaching Centre in front of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice in June 1988. Left to right: Mrs. Joy Stevenson, Mr. Hartmut Grossmann, Mrs. Lauretta King, Mr. Mas'ud Khamsi, the Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, Dr. Magdalene Carney, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, Mr. Donald Rogers, Mr. Peter Vuyiya, Dr. Farzam Arbáb, Mrs. Isobel Sabri.

service as Counsellors, and we pray that the blessings of Bahá'u'lláh will surround them in all they undertake in the future.

We now have great happiness in announcing the appointment of the following believers as Continental Counsellors:

Africa:	Mr. George Allen and Mr. Hizzaya Hissani
The Americas:	Mr. Gustavo Correa, Mrs. Jacqueline Delahunt and Dr. William Roberts.
Asia:	Dr. Kim Myung-Jung and Mrs. Shantha Sundram
Australasia:	Mrs. Violette Haake
Europe:	Mr. Patrick O'Mara, Mrs. Elisabeth Mühlschlegel and Dr. Shapoor Rassekh.

Furthermore, as two of the Counsellors now appointed to the International Teaching Centre had been Trustees of their respective Continental Funds, we now appoint Counsellor Peter McLaren to be Trustee of the Continental Fund in the Americas, and Counsellor Ben Ayala to be Trustee in Australasia.

The Universal House of Justice

16 JUNE 1988

WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS CONVEY TO THE FOLLOWERS OF BAHA'U'LLAH THROUGHOUT WORLD JOYFUL NEWS FIRST MEETING NEWLY APPOINTED INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE. ON MORNING OF FRIDAY THIRD JUNE THE HANDS OF THE CAUSE AMATUL-BAHA RUHIYYIH KHANUM AND ALI AKBAR FURUTAN, THE MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE AND THE NINE COUNSELLOR MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE GATHERED IN BAHJI AND ENTERED THE MOST HOLY SHRINE FOR PRAYERS BEFORE PROCEEDING TO THE MANSION OF BAHA'U'LLAH WHERE THEIR FIRST JOINT MEETING WAS HELD IN ROOM ASSOCIATED WITH SHOGHI EFFENDI. ALL WERE ACUTELY CONSCIOUS OF THE INESTIMABLE BLESSING OF

INITIATING THEIR CONSULTATIONS IN THESE SACRED PRECINCTS. IN THIS AND SUBSEQUENT CONSULTATIONS DURING THE DAYS WHICH FOLLOWED, THE TASKS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE IN FACE OF THE TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHING NOW BEFORE THE BAHA'I WORLD WERE REVIEWED, AND NEW PATTERNS OF OPERATION WERE FORMULATED. REJOICE NEW VISTAS OPENING FOR VICTORIOUS PROMOTION CAUSE GOD.

The Universal House of Justice

30 OCTOBER 1989

The untimely passing of Mr. Roddy Lutchmaya on 25 September 1989 left a vacancy on the Continental Board of Counsellors in Africa. By the appointment of Mr. Gilbert Robert of Reunion to membership of that Board we have now filled this vacancy.'

The Universal House of Justice

29 AUGUST 1990

PROFOUNDLY DEPLORE TRAGIC CIRCUMSTANCES SUDDEN PASSING DEARLY LOVED, WHOLLY DEVOTED, INDEFATIGABLE SERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH HEDAYATOULLAH AHMADIYEH....

The Universal House of Justice

25 OCTOBER 1990

It gives us great pleasure to announce the membership of the Continental Boards of Counsellors as from the Day of the Covenant, 26 November 1990. The number of continental Counsellors remains at 72, but adjustments have been made in their geographical distribution in consonance with the development of the Faith around the world.

The membership of the Continental Boards of Counsellors as now appointed is:

Africa (18 Counsellors):

Dr. Hushang Ahdieh (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mr. George Allen, Mrs. Beatrice O. Asare, Mr. Gila Michael Bahta, Mr. Kiser Barnes, Mrs. Parvin Djoneidi, Mr. Mehraz Ehsani, Mr. Friday Ekpe, Mr. Shidan Fat'he-Aazam, Mr. Kassimi Fofana, Mr. Hizzaya Hissani, Mr. Zekrollah Kazemi, Mr. Muḥammad Kebdani, Mr. Daniel Ramoroesi, Mr. Gilbert Robert, Mrs. Edith Senoga, Mrs. Lucretia M. Warren, Mr. Mabuku Wingi.

The Americas (17 Counsellors):

Mr. Eloy Anello, Mr. Gustavo Correa, Mr. Rolf von Czékus, Mrs. Jacqueline Delahunt, Dr. Wilma M. Ellis, Dr. Peter McLaren (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mr. Shapoor Monadjem, Mrs. Linda Neufeld, Mrs. Ruth Pringle, Dr. William Roberts, Mrs. Isabel de Sanchez, Mr. Fred Schechter, Mr. Errol Sealy, Dr. Arturo Serrano, Mr. Alan Smith, Dr. David R. Smith, Mr. Rodrigo Tomás.

Asia (17 Counsellors):

Dr. Sabir Afaqi, Mr. Burháni'd-Dín Afshín, Mr. Faḍil Ardikání, Mr. Jabbar Eidelkhani, Mr. Bijan Farid, Dr. John Fozdar, Mr. David Huang, Mr. 'Abbás Katirai, Dr. Kim Myung Jung, Mrs. Lee Lee Ludher, Mr. S. Nagaratnam, Dr. Perin Olyai, Mrs. Rose Ong, Mr. Vicente Samaniego, Mrs. Kimiko Schwerin, Mrs. Zena Sorabjee, Mrs. Shantha Sundram (Trustee of the Continental Fund).

Australasia (10 Counsellors):

Mr. Ben Ayala, Mrs. Beatrice Benson, Mr. Afemata Moli Chang, Dr. Kamran Eshraghian (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mrs. Violette Haake, Mrs. Tinai Hancock, Mrs. Betra Majmeto, Mrs. Gayle Morrison, Dr. Sírús Naráqí, Mr. Bruce Saunders.

Europe (10 Counsellors):

Mr. Louis Hénuzet, Mr. Foad Kazemzadeh, Mrs. Elisabeth Mühlschlegel, Mr. Patrick O'Mara (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mr. Nabil Perdu, Mrs. Polin Rafat, Dr. Shapour Rassekh, Mr. Paul Semenoff, Dr. Ilhan Sezgin, Mr. Sohrab Youssefian.

The following eighteen devoted believers who are now being relieved of the onerous duties of membership on the Boards of Counsellors will, as distinguished servants of the Cause, continue through their outstanding capacities and experience to be

sources of stimulation and encouragement to the friends.

Mr. Suhayl Alá'í, Mr. Husayn Ardekani, Justice Richard Benson, Mrs. Isabel de Calderón, Mr. Oloro Epyeru, Dr. Agnès Ghaznavi, Mr. Zabíḥu'lláh Gulmuḥammadí, Mr. Robert Harris, Mr. Bharat Koirala, Mr. Lisiate Maka, Mr. Rouhollah Momtazi, Mrs. Ursula Mühlschlegel, Dr. Leo Niederreiter, Mr. Khudáraḥm Paymán, Mr. Masíḥ Rawḥání, Dr. Mihdi Samandari, U Soe Tin, Mr. Michitoshi Zenimoto.

We express to each and every one of these dear friends our heartfelt gratitude and assure them of our prayers in the Holy Shrines for the confirmation of their highly meritorious and self-sacrificing services to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

Throughout all the continents the influential and energetic services of the Counsellors have demonstrated the progressive development of their essential sphere of operation. The effective manner in which they inspire both the believers and institutions with a greater sense of vision and direction; the extensive consultations they carry out with National Spiritual Assemblies in the prosecution of the objectives of the Six Year Plan; the part they play in the vanguard of believers addressing the needs of the supplementary Two Year Plan in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, Mongolia and China; the widespread support they offer to the consolidation efforts at the grass roots of the communities through the dedicated untiring efforts of their Auxiliary Board members and their assistants; the steady encouragement they lend to both the enrolment and deepening of youth and children; the generous assistance they extend to the teaching work through the allocation of subvention funds to special projects and the publication and dissemination of Bahá'í literature and audio-visual materials—in all these activities we witness the manifold evidences of the vital role exercised by these high-ranking officers of the Faith in the protection and propagation of the Cause of God.

We are calling upon the Counsellors from all continents to gather at the World Centre from 28 December 1990 through 3 January 1991 for a conference to deliberate on the tasks and opportunities of the years immediately ahead, as we approach the end of the Six Year Plan and the observance of the Holy Year marking the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh and of the inauguration of His Covenant.

It is our fervent hope that from this Conference will flow a stream of guidance and inspiration to the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in every land, reinforcing a hundredfold their endeavours to achieve the triumph of the Cause of God.

The Universal House of Justice

RIḌVÁN 1991

...We are delighted and encouraged beyond measure by the vigorous beginning which the Boards of Counsellors have made as they entered the new term of their indispensable and highly appreciated services to the Bahá'í world. The fresh initiatives to which, with the whole-hearted encouragement and splendid support of the International Teaching Centre, they now bend their energies, augur well for a gratifying completion of the Six Year Plan. May their exertions be greatly bolstered by the increase, as of the Day of the Covenant this year, in the number of Auxiliary Board members to 846—90 more than exist at present. The world-wide community will certainly welcome the strength which this action will bring to the scope and quality of the spiritual duties assigned to the Auxiliary Board members and their assistants, whose operation at the grass roots is a guarantee of the continued expansion and consolidation of our glorious Faith.

The Universal House of Justice

14 MAY 1991

Well nigh four decades have elapsed since the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, asked the Hands of the Cause of God



Members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa in 1991. Seated, left to right: Parvin Djoneidi, Friday Ekpe, Lucretia Warren, Edith Senoga, Muḥammad Kebdani, Beatrice Asare, Gilbert Robert. Standing, left to right: Shidan Fat'he-Aazam, Kassimi Fofana, Mehraz Ehsani, Mabuku Wingi, Kiser Barnes, George Allen, Daniel Ramoroesi, Zekrollah Kazemi, Gila Michael Bahta, Húshang Ahdieh.



Members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Americas in 1991. Front row, left to right: Jacqueline Delahunt, Isabel de Sanchez, Alan Smith, Eloy Anello, Wilma Ellis, Ruth Pringle, Rodrigo Tomás. Middle row: Linda Neufeld, David Smith, Errol Sealy, William Roberts, Arturo Serrano. Back row: Fred Schechter, Peter McLaren, Rolf von Czékus, Shapoor Monadjem, Gustavo Correa. (Top left is Mr. Robert Henderson.)

residing outside the Holy Land to appoint, in each continent, resident Bahá'ís who would serve as members of an Auxiliary Board, referred to by him as a "vital and indispensable organ of the embryonic and steadily unfolding Bahá'í Administrative Order"....

In addition to the qualities usually sought in members of the Auxiliary Board, a primary characteristic called for at this time is a willingness to approach their work in a style and manner that will truly arouse and release the power that resides in the believers, thus enabling them to arise and serve the Cause with fervour and devotion reminiscent of the dawn-breakers of the Heroic Age....

It is awe-inspiring to contemplate the invigorating actions that will devolve upon our arm of the Administrative Order in connection with the forthcoming festivities, commemorations, and celebrations of the Holy Year; also to realise that soon after the conclusion of these momentous events, the International Bahá'í Convention will take place during Riḍván 1993 and a new chapter in the prosecution of the Tablets of the Divine Plan will be opened. Considering the implications of these events for our institution, we have decided to request you to call, on our behalf, special conferences in regions of your continent for the members of the Auxiliary Boards sometime during January and February 1992. A member of the International Teaching Centre will join you and participate in these gatherings, which we envision may take up to five days...

As we contemplate the transition from the days in 1954 when thirty-six Auxiliary Board members were assigned for the entire Bahá'í world, to today when eight hundred and forty-six have been allocated and thousands of assistants appointed, we bow our heads in wonder at the developments in the Cause that have generated this tremendous increase. This fact bolsters our eagerness to reflect and consult with you on ways to make ever more effective and efficient the operation of this vital agency of the Administrative Order.

International Teaching Centre

7 OCTOBER 1991

We are happy to announce the appointment of Dr. Payman Mohajer as a new member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Asia.

He is replacing Mr. S. Nagaratnam who, due to ill health and personal circumstances, found it necessary to resign from the Board of Counsellors. His resignation was regretfully accepted and his many years of dedicated service in his capacity as a Counsellor are warmly remembered.

The Universal House of Justice

10 OCTOBER 1991

DEEPLY GRIEVED SUDDEN PASSING STALWART MAIDSERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH MEMBER INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE MAGDALENE M. CARNEY. HER WELL NIGH THREE DECADES UNBROKEN SERVICE CAUSE GOD EXERTED IMMENSE INFLUENCE TEACHING WORK SOUTHERN REGION UNITED STATES, INVOLVED THIRTEEN YEARS MEMBERSHIP NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY THAT COUNTRY UNTIL HER APPOINTMENT IN 1983 TO INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE. INDOMITABLE FAITH, UNSWERVING DEVOTION COVENANT, SELFLESS SPIRIT, OPEN CANDOUR, WHOLEHEARTED COMMITMENT EDUCATION CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE AMONG QUALITIES THAT WILL EVER BE ASSOCIATED WITH GOLDEN MEMORIES HER HIGHLY ACTIVE LIFE. ARDENTLY PRAYING HOLY THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER STERLING SOUL THROUGHOUT DIVINE WORLDS. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL SERVICES HER HONOUR ALL HOUSES WORSHIP AND IN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT WORLD.

The Universal House of Justice

16 APRIL 1992

The members of the International Teaching Centre returned from the Auxiliary Board conferences filled with admiration for the magnificent services that Auxiliary Board members and their assistants are rendering to the Cause everywhere....

In each conference the greater part of the consultation revolved around the imperative to translate high ideals and ardent love into action. We have no doubt that the Auxiliary



Members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Asia in 1991. Seated, left to right: Ṣábir Áfáqí, Lee Lee Ludher, 'Abbás Katirai, Kimiko Schwerin, Faḍil Ardikání, Jabbar Eidelkhani. Standing: S. Nagaratnam, Shantha Sundram, Kim Myung Jung, Perin Olyai, David Huang, Rose Ong, Bijan Farid, Zena Sorabjee, John Fozdar, Burháni'd-Dín Afshín.



Members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia in 1991. Seated, left to right: Ben Ayala, Violette Haake, Sírús Naráqí, Tinai Hancock, Kamran Eshraghian. Standing, left to right: Beatrice Benson, Gayle Morrison, Bruce Saunders, Afemata Moli Chang, Betra Majmeto.



Members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe in 1991. From left to right: Polin Rafat, Sohrab Youssefian, Shapour Rassekh, Nabil Perdu, Paul Semenoff, Louis Hénuzet, Ilhan Sezgin, Foad Kazemzadeh, Patrick O'Mara, Elisabeth Mühlschlegel.

Board members and their assistants will be instrumental during the Holy Year in creating an atmosphere that will generate manifold activities to emblazon the Name of Bahá'u'lláh throughout every region. We ardently hope that the momentum gained during the Holy Year will usher the Bahá'í community into a period of unprecedented victories during the Three-Year Plan....

International Teaching Centre

RIḌVÁN 1992

...The advances in the consolidation of the Bahá'í administrative system are evident from the marked improvement in the internal development and collaborative efforts of its two arms.... The growth in confidence and strength of the Boards of Counsellors and their auxiliaries, backed by a reinforced and vigorous International Teaching Centre, assured to the Spiritual Assemblies, whom they are charged to stimulate and advise, a buttressing indispensable to the welfare of the entire system; while the extension of the span of activities of the National and Local Spiritual Assemblies, themselves charged with guiding the destinies of their communities, significantly broadened the base of that system. Collaterally, the work of these institutions has facilitated and boosted the evolution of the Administrative Order. Even more: they have demonstrated a creative energy that bodes well for their continued maturation.

The Universal House of Justice



In Suriname, Counsellor Jacqueline Delahunt (left) consults with Mrs. Terry Madison during the National Convention held in Paramaribo in April 1990.



In Czechoslovakia, Counsellor Rúḥu'lláh Mumtázi (standing right) visits friends in Prague in December 1986.



In Hawaii, Counsellor Gayle Morrison (standing fifth from right) attending a joint meeting between the National Spiritual Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands and the Local Assembly of Honolulu held in February 1987.



In Korea, Counsellor Kim Myung Jung (standing third from right) joins in celebrating the Seventieth Anniversary of the Introduction of the Faith in Korea during an event held in Seoul on 18 Feburary 1992.



In Guatemala, members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Americas and some Auxiliary Board members meeting with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies in Central America; 1990.



In Bophuthatswana, Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre Dr. Magdalene Carney (front left) meets joyful co-workers Counsellor Daniel Ramoroesi and Lally Warren (front) and Auxiliary Board members Enos Makhele (back left) and Sohail Rowhani; 1989.

III
THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

1. INTRODUCTION

IN this Day a great festival is taking place in the Realm above; for whatsoever was promised in the sacred Scriptures hath been fulfilled. This is the Day of great rejoicing.[1]

The primary mission of the Bahá'í Faith is the establishment of a Divine Civilization—the Kingdom of God on earth. "For Bahá'u'lláh," Shoghi Effendi wrote,

> ...has not only imbued mankind with a new and regenerating Spirit. He has not merely enunciated certain universal principles, or propounded a particular philosophy, however potent, sound and universal these may be. In addition to these He, as well as 'Abdu'l-Bahá after Him, has, unlike the Dispensations of the past, clearly and specifically laid down a set of Laws, established definite institutions, and provided for the essentials of a Divine Economy. These are destined to be a pattern for future society, a supreme instrument for the establishment of the Most Great Peace, and the one agency for the unification of the world, and the proclamation of the reign of righteousness and justice upon the earth.[2]

National Spiritual Assemblies are among the pillars of the evolving edifice of the Bahá'í World Order and were first elected in response to a letter written by Shoghi Effendi on 12 March 1923 to the followers of Bahá'u'lláh *throughout America, Great Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, Japan and Australasia:*

> ... it is of vital importance that in every country, where the conditions are favorable and the number of the friends has grown and reached a considerable size, such as America, Great Britain and Germany, that a "National Spiritual Assembly" be immediately established, representative of the friends throughout that country. Its immediate purpose is to stimulate, unify and coordinate by frequent personal consultations, the manifold activities of the friends as well as the local Assemblies; and by keeping in close and constant touch with the Holy Land, initiate measures, and direct in general the affairs of the Cause in that country. It serves also another purpose, no less essential than the first, as in the course of time it shall evolve into the National House of Justice (referred to in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will as the "secondary House of Justice"), which according to the explicit

[1] Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978), p. 78.

[2] Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, Selected Letters* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 19.

> text of the Testament will have, in conjunction with the other National Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í world, to elect directly the members of the International House of Justice, that Supreme Council that will guide, organize and unify the affairs of the Movement throughout the world.[2]

The response to the Guardian's direction was immediate. The National Spiritual Assemblies of the British Isles, Germany and Austria, and India and Burma were recognized by him in 1923 as having fulfilled the electoral requirements for formation. The first National Assembly of Egypt and Sudan was formed in 1924, and the National Assemblies of the Caucasus, Turkistan, and the United States and Canada were established in 1925.

In 1927, the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada adopted a Declaration of Trust, with its attendant by-laws, which was recognized under common law to give substance and character to the institution and the administrative processes embodied in the Bahá'í teachings. This Declaration of Trust became the model to be followed, with adaptions as local laws and circumstances required, by other National Spiritual Assemblies.

The years following the election of the Universal House of Justice witnessed a great increase in the number of National Spiritual Assemblies (from 56 in 1963 to 165 by Riḍván 1992) and the House of Justice itself provided a model document, largely based on the one devised by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, to be followed as closely as possible by all new National Spiritual Assemblies as they become incorporated. It is this model document which is printed below.

Bahá'í administration is an evolving structure, however, as Shoghi Effendi counselled the friends in a letter written on 21 March 1930:

> It should also be borne in mind that the machinery of the Cause has been so fashioned, that whatever is deemed necessary to incorporate into it in order to keep it in the forefront of all progressive movements, can, according to the provisions made by Bahá'u'lláh, be safely embodied therein.[3]

> That the Spiritual Assemblies of today will be replaced in time by the Houses of Justice, and are to all intents and purposes identical and not separate bodies, is abundantly confirmed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself.... For reasons which are not difficult to discover, it has been found advisable to bestow upon the elected representatives of Bahá'í communities throughout the world the temporary appellation of Spiritual Assemblies, a term which, as the position and aims of the Bahá'í Faith are better understood and more fully recognized, will gradually be superseded by the permanent and more appropriate designation of House of Justice. Not only will the present-day Spiritual Assemblies be styled differently in future, but they will be enabled also to add to their present functions those powers, duties, and prerogatives necessitated by the recognition of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, not merely as one of the recognized religious systems of the world, but as the State Religion of an independent and Sovereign Power.[4]

[2] Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1960), p. 39.

[3] *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 22–23.

[4] ibid., pp. 6–7.

2. A Model Declaration Of Trust And By-Laws FOR A National Spiritual Assembly

Foreword

THE 1926–27 National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada completed a task which, while pertaining to the outer and more material aspects of the Cause, nevertheless has a special significance for its spirit and inward sacred purpose. This task consisted in creating a legal form which gives proper substance and substantial character to the National Spiritual Assemblies and the administrative processes embodied in the Bahá'í teachings by a form of incorporation recognized under common law. This Declaration of Trust, with its attendant By-Laws, became the model to be followed, with adaptations as local laws and circumstances required, by other National Spiritual Assemblies. The years following the election of the Universal House of Justice witnessed a great increase in the number of National Spiritual Assemblies (from 57 in 1963 to 135 by Riḍván 1983) and the House of Justice itself provided a model document, largely based on the one devised by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, to be followed as closely as possible by all new National Spiritual Assemblies as they became incorporated, which they were required to do under the Nine Year Plan.

Careful examination of the Declaration and its By-Laws will reveal the fact that this document contains no arbitrary elements nor features new to the Bahá'í Cause. On the contrary, it represents a most conscientious effort to reflect those very administrative principles and elements already set forth in the letters of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, and already determining the methods and relationships of Bahá'í collective association. The provision both in the Declaration and in the By-Laws for amendments in the future will permit the National Spiritual Assemblies to adapt this document to such new administrative elements or principles as may at any time be given forth. The Declaration, in fact, is nothing more nor less than a legal parallel of those moral and spiritual laws of unity inherent in the fullness of the Bahá'í Revelation and making it the fulfilment of the ideal of religion in the social as well as spiritual realm. Because, in the Bahá'í Faith, this perfect correspondence exists between spiritual and social laws, the Bahá'ís believe that administrative success is identical with moral success, and that nothing less than the true Bahá'í spirit of devotion and sacrifice can inspire with effective power the world-wide body of unity revealed by Bahá'u'lláh.

Declaration Of Trust

By the NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF ....

WE,

duly chosen by the representatives of the Bahá'ís of ... at the Annual Meeting held at ..., on ..., to be the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of ..., with full power to establish a Trust as hereinafter set forth, hereby declare that from this date the powers, responsibilities,

rights, privileges and obligations reposed in said National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of ... by Bahá'u'lláh, Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, its Interpreter and Exemplar, by Shoghi Effendi, its Guardian, and by the Universal House of Justice, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh in His sacred Writings as the supreme body of the Bahá'í religion, shall be exercised, administered and carried on by the above-named National Spiritual Assembly and their duly qualified successors under this Declaration of Trust.

The National Spiritual Assembly in adopting this form of association, union and fellowship, and in selecting for itself the designation of Trustees of the Bahá'ís of ..., does so as the administrative body of a religious community which has had continuous existence and responsibility for ... In consequence of these activities the National Spiritual Assembly is called upon to administer such ever-increasing diversity and volume of affairs and properties for the Bahá'ís of ..., that we, its members, now feel it both desirable and necessary to give our collective functions more definite legal form. This action is taken in complete unanimity and with full recognition of the sacred relationship thereby created. We acknowledge in behalf of ourselves and our successors in this Trust the exalted religious standard established by Bahá'u'lláh for Bahá'í administrative bodies in the utterance: *Be ye Trustees of the Merciful One among men*; and seek the help of God and His guidance in order to fulfil that exhortation.

(*Signatures of the nine members*)

Date

ARTICLE I

The name of said Trust shall be 'the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of ...'

ARTICLE II

Sharing the ideals and assisting the efforts of our fellow Bahá'ís to establish, uphold and promote the spiritual, educational and humanitarian teachings of human brotherhood, radiant faith, exalted character and selfless love revealed in the lives and utterances of all the Prophets and Messengers of God, Founders of the world's revealed religions—and given renewed creative energy and universal application to the conditions of this age in the life and utterances of Bahá'u'lláh—we declare the purposes and objects of this Trust to be to administer the affairs of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh for the benefit of the Bahá'ís of ... according to the principles of Bahá'í affiliation and administration created and established by Bahá'u'lláh, defined and explained by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, interpreted and amplified by Shoghi Effendi, and supplemented and applied by the Universal House of Justice.

These purposes are to be realized by means of devotional meetings; by public meetings and conferences of an educational, humanitarian and spiritual character; by the publication of books, magazines and newspapers; by the construction of temples of universal worship and of other institutions and edifices for humanitarian service; by supervising, unifying, promoting and generally administering the activities of the Bahá'ís of ... in the fulfilment of their religious offices, duties and ideals; and by any other means appropriate to these ends, or any of them.

Other purposes and objects of this Trust are:

a. The right to enter into, make, perform and carry out contracts of every sort and kind for the furtherance of the objects of this Trust with any person, firm, association, corporation, private, public or municipal or body politic, or any state, territory or colony thereof, or any foreign government; and in this connection, and in all transactions

under the terms of this Trust, to do any and all things which a copartnership or natural person could do or exercise, and which now or hereafter may be authorized by law.

b. To hold and be named as beneficiary under any trust established by law or otherwise or under any will or other testamentary instrument in connection with any gift, devise, or bequest in which a trust or trusts is or are established in any part of the world as well as in ...; to receive gifts, devises or bequests of money or other property.

c. All and whatsoever the several purposes and objects set forth in the written utterances of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, and enactments of the Universal House of Justice, under which certain jurisdiction, powers and rights are granted to National Spiritual Assemblies.

d. Generally to do all things and acts which in the judgement of said Trustees, i.e., the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of ..., are necessary, proper and advantageous to promote the complete and successful administration of this Trust.

ARTICLE III

SECTION 1. All persons, firms, corporations and associations extending credit to, contracting with or having any claim against the Trustees, i.e., the National Spiritual Assembly, and the members thereof, of any character whatsoever whether legal or equitable and whether arising out of contract or tort, shall look solely to the funds of the Trust and to the property of the Trust estate for payment or indemnity, or for payment of any debt, damage, judgement or decree or any money that may otherwise become due or payable from the Trustees, so that neither the Trustees nor any of them, nor any of their officers or agents appointed by them hereunder, nor any beneficiary or beneficiaries herein named shall be personally liable therefor.

SECTION 2. Every note, bond, proposal, obligation or contract in writing or other agreement or instrument made or given under this Trust shall be explicitly executed by the National Spiritual Assembly, as Trustees, by their duly authorized officers or agents.

ARTICLE IV

The Trustees, i.e., the National Spiritual Assembly, shall adopt for the conduct of the affairs entrusted to them under this Declaration of Trust, such by-laws, rules of procedure or regulations as are required to define and carry on its own administrative functions and those of the several local and other elements composing the body of the Bahá'ís of ..., not inconsistent with the terms of this instrument and all in accordance with the instructions and enactments of the Universal House of Justice.

ARTICLE V

The central office of this Trust shall be located in ... .

ARTICLE VI

The seal of this Trust shall be circular in form, bearing the following inscription: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of ... .

ARTICLE VII

This Declaration of Trust may be amended by majority vote of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of ... at any special meeting duly called for that purpose, provided that at least thirty (30) days prior to the date fixed for said meeting a copy of the proposed amendment or amendments is mailed to each member of the Assembly by the Secretary.

BY-LAWS OF THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

ARTICLE I

THE National Spiritual Assembly, in the fulfilment of its sacred duties under this Trust, shall have exclusive jurisdiction and authority over all the activities and affairs of the Bahá'í Cause throughout ..., including paramount authority in the administration of this Trust. It shall endeavour to stimulate, unify and coordinate the manifold activities of the Local Spiritual Assemblies (hereinafter defined) and of individual Bahá'ís in ... and by all possible means assist them to promote the oneness of mankind. It shall be charged with the recognition of such Local Assemblies, the scrutiny of all membership rolls, the calling of the Annual Meeting or special meetings and the seating of delegates to the Annual Meeting and their apportionment among the various electoral districts. It shall appoint all national Bahá'í committees and shall supervise the publication and distribution of Bahá'í literature, the reviewing of all writings pertaining to the Bahá'í Cause, the construction and administration of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and its accessory activities, and the collection and disbursement of all funds for the carrying on of this Trust. It shall decide whether any matter lies within its own jurisdiction or within the jurisdiction of any Local Spiritual Assembly. It shall, in such cases as it considers suitable and necessary, entertain appeals from the decisions of Local Spiritual Assemblies and shall have the right of final decision in all cases where the qualification of an individual or group for continued voting rights and membership in the Bahá'í body is in question. It shall furthermore represent the Bahá'ís of ... in all their co-operative and spiritual activities with the Bahá'ís of other lands, and shall constitute the sole electoral body of ... in the election of the Universal House of Justice provided for in the sacred Writings of the Bahá'í Cause. Above all, the National Spiritual Assembly shall ever seek to attain that station of unity in devotion to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh which will attract the confirmations of the Holy Spirit and enable the Assembly to serve the founding of the Most Great Peace. In all its deliberation and action the National Assembly shall have constantly before it as Divine guide and standard the utterance of Bahá'u'lláh:

It behooveth them (i.e., members of Spiritual Assemblies) *to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men and to regard themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth. It is incumbent upon them to take counsel together and to have regard for the interests of the servants of God, for His sake, even as they regard their own interests, and to choose that which is meet and seemly.*

ARTICLE II

The Bahá'ís of ... for whose benefit this Trust is established shall consist of all persons of the age of 15 years or over resident in ... who are accepted by the National Spiritual Assembly as possessing the qualifications of Bahá'í faith and practice required under the following standard set forth by the Guardian of the Faith:

> Full recognition of the station of the Báb, the Forerunner; of Bahá'u'lláh, the Author; and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the True Exemplar of the Bahá'í religion; unreserved acceptance of, and submission to, whatsoever has been revealed by their Pen; loyal and steadfast adherence to every clause of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's sacred Will; and close association with the spirit as well as the form of Bahá'í Administration throughout the world.

Those residing in the area of jurisdiction of any Local Spiritual Assembly recognized by the National Assembly may declare their faith to, and be enrolled by, the Local Spiritual Assembly; those living outside any such area of local Bahá'í jurisdiction shall be enrolled in such manner as shall be prescribed by the National Assembly.

Upon attaining the age of 21 years, a Bahá'í is eligible to vote and to hold elective office.

ARTICLE III

The National Assembly shall consist of nine members chosen from among the Bahá'ís of ..., who shall be elected by the said Bahá'ís in manner hereinafter provided, and who shall continue for the period of one year, or until their successors shall be elected.

ARTICLE IV

The officers of the National Spiritual Assembly shall consist of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, and such other officers as may be found necessary for the proper conduct of its affairs. The officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the entire membership of the Assembly taken by secret ballot.

ARTICLE V

The first meeting of a newly-elected National Assembly shall be called by the member elected to membership by the highest number of votes or, in case two or more members have received the same said highest number of votes, then by the member selected by lot from among those members; and this member shall preside until the permanent Chairman shall be chosen. All subsequent meetings shall be called by the Secretary of the Assembly at the request of the Chairman or, in his absence or incapacity, of the Vice-Chairman, or of any three members of the Assembly; provided, however, that the Annual Meeting of the Assembly shall be held at a time and place to be fixed by a majority vote of the Assembly, as hereinafter provided.

ARTICLE VI

Five members of the National Assembly present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum, and a majority vote of those present and constituting a quorum shall be sufficient for the conduct of business, except as otherwise provided in these By-Laws, and with due regard to the principle of unity and cordial fellowship involved in the institution of a Spiritual Assembly. The transactions and decisions of the National Assembly shall be recorded at each meeting by the Secretary, who shall supply copies of the minutes to the Assembly members after each meeting, and preserve the minutes in the official records of the Assembly.

ARTICLE VII

Whenever in any locality of ..., the number of Bahá'ís resident therein recognized by the National Spiritual Assembly exceeds nine, these shall on April 21st of any year convene and elect by plurality vote a local administrative body of nine members, to be known as the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of that community. Every such Spiritual Assembly shall be elected annually thereafter upon each successive 21st day of April. The members shall hold office for the term of one year or until their successors are elected and qualified.

When, however, the number of Bahá'ís in any authorized civil area is exactly nine, these shall on April 21st of any year, or in successive years, constitute themselves the Local Spiritual Assembly by joint declaration. Upon the recording of such declaration by the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, said body of nine shall become established with the rights, privileges and duties of a Local Spiritual Assembly as set forth in this instrument.

SECTION 1. Each newly-elected Local Spiritual Assembly shall at once proceed in the manner indicated in Articles IV and V of these By-Laws to the election of its officers, who

shall consist of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, and such other officers as the Assembly finds necessary for the conduct of its business and the fulfilment of its spiritual duties. Immediately thereafter the Secretary chosen shall transmit to the Secretary of the National Assembly the names of the members of the newly-elected Assembly and a list of its officers.

SECTION 2. The general powers and duties of a Local Spiritual Assembly shall be as set forth in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, and as laid down by the Universal House of Justice.

SECTION 3. Among its more specific duties, a Local Spiritual Assembly shall have full jurisdiction of all Bahá'í activities and affairs within the local community, subject, however, to the exclusive and paramount authority of the National Spiritual Assembly as defined herein.

SECTION 4. Vacancies in the membership of a Local Spiritual Assembly shall be filled by election at a special meeting of the local Bahá'í community duly called for that purpose by the Assembly. In the event that the number of vacancies exceeds four, making a quorum of the Local Assembly impossible, the election shall be held under the supervision of the National Spiritual Assembly.

SECTION 5. The business of the Local Assembly shall be conducted in like manner as provided for the deliberations of the National Assembly in Article VI above.

SECTION 6. The Local Assembly shall pass upon and approve the qualifications of each member of the Bahá'í community before such members shall be admitted to voting membership; but where an individual is dissatisfied with the ruling of the Local Spiritual Assembly upon his Bahá'í qualifications, such individual may appeal from the ruling to the National Assembly, which shall thereupon take jurisdiction of and finally decide the case.

SECTION 7. On or before the 1st day of November of each year the Secretary of each Local Assembly shall send to the Secretary of the National Assembly a duly certified list of the voting members of the local Bahá'í community for the information and approval of the National Assembly.

SECTION 8. All matters arising within a local Bahá'í community which are of purely local interest and do not affect the national interests of the Cause shall be under the primary jurisdiction of the Spiritual Assembly of that locality; but decision whether a particular matter involves the interest and welfare of the national Bahá'í body shall rest with the National Spiritual Assembly.

SECTION 9. Any member of a local Bahá'í community may appeal from a decision of his Spiritual Assembly to the National Assembly, which shall determine whether it shall take jurisdiction of the matter or leave it to the Local Spiritual Assembly for reconsideration. In the event that the National Assembly assumes jurisdiction of the matter, its findings shall be final.

SECTION 10. Where any dissension exists within a local Bahá'í community of such character that it cannot be remedied by the efforts of the Local Spiritual Assembly, this condition shall be referred by the Spiritual Assembly for consideration to the National Spiritual Assembly, whose action in the matter shall be final.

SECTION 11. All questions arising between two or more Local Spiritual Assemblies, or between members of different Bahá'í communities, shall be submitted in the first instance to the National Assembly, which shall have original and final jurisdiction in all such matters.

SECTION 12. The sphere of jurisdiction of a Local Spiritual Assembly, with respect to residential qualification of membership, and voting rights of a believer in any Bahá'í community, shall be the locality included within the recognized civil limits.

All differences of opinion concerning the sphere of jurisdiction of any Local Spiritual

Assembly or concerning the affiliation of any Bahá'í or group of Bahá'ís in ... shall be referred to the National Spiritual Assembly, whose decision in the matter shall be final.

ARTICLE VIII

The members of the National Spiritual Assembly shall be elected at an annual meeting to be known as the National Convention of the Bahá'ís of ... This Convention shall be held at a time and place to be fixed by the National Assembly. The National Convention shall be composed jointly of representatives chosen by the Bahá'ís of each ... under the principle of proportionate representation, and the members of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Notice of the annual meeting shall be given by the National Assembly sixty days in advance in the Convention Call which sets forth the number of delegates assigned to the various electoral units in proportion to the number of Bahá'ís resident in each such unit, to a total of ... delegates for the Bahá'ís of ... .

SECTION 1. All delegates to the Convention shall be elected by plurality vote. Bahá'ís who for illness or other unavoidable reasons are unable to be present at the election in person shall have the right to transmit their ballots to the meeting by mail. The meeting held in each ... for the election of delegates shall be called by the National Spiritual Assembly and conducted by the Bahá'ís present under whatever procedure may be uniformly laid down by said body. Immediately after the meeting a certified report of the election containing the name and address of each delegate shall be transmitted to the National Spiritual Assembly.

SECTION 2. All delegates to be seated at the Convention must be recognized Bahá'ís and residents of the . . . represented by them.

SECTION 3. The rights and privileges of a delegate may not be assigned nor may they be exercised by proxy.

SECTION 4. The recognition and seating of delegates to the National Convention shall be vested in the National Spiritual Assembly.

SECTION 5. Delegates unable to be present in person at the Convention shall have the right to transmit their ballots for election of the members of the National Assembly under whatever procedure is adopted by the National Assembly.

SECTION 6. If in any year the National Spiritual Assembly shall consider that it is impracticable or unwise to assemble together the delegates to the National Convention, the said Assembly shall provide ways and means by which the annual election and the other essential business of the Convention may be conducted by mail.

SECTION 7. The presiding officer of the National Spiritual Assembly present at the Convention shall call together the delegates, who after roll call shall proceed to the permanent organization of the meeting, electing by ballot a Chairman, a Secretary and such other officers as are necessary for the proper conduct of the business of the Convention.

SECTION 8. The principal business of the annual meeting shall be consultation on Bahá'í activities, plans and policies, and the election of the nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly. Members of the National Assembly, whether or not elected delegates, may take a full part in the consultation and discussion but only delegates may participate in the election of Convention officers or in the annual election of the members of the National Assembly. All action by the delegates, other than the organization of the Convention, the transmission of messages to the World Centre of the Bahá'í Faith, and the election of the National Assembly, shall constitute advice and recommendation for consideration by the said Assembly, final decision in all matters concerning the affairs of the Bahá'í Faith in ... being vested solely in that body.

SECTION 9. The general order of business to be taken up at the Annual Convention shall be prepared by the National Spiritual Assembly in the form of an agenda, but any matter pertaining to the Bahá'í Faith introduced by any of the delegates may upon motion and vote be taken up as part of the Convention deliberations.

SECTION 10. The election of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly shall be by plurality vote of the delegates recognized by the outgoing National Spiritual Assembly, i.e., the members elected shall be the nine persons receiving the greatest number of votes on the first ballot cast by delegates present at the Convention and delegates whose ballot has been transmitted to the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly by mail. In case, by reason of a tie vote or votes, the full membership is not determined on the first ballot, then one or more additional ballots shall be taken on the persons tied until all nine members are elected.

SECTION 11. All official business transacted at the National Convention shall be recorded and preserved in the records of the National Assembly.

SECTION 12. Vacancies in the membership of the National Spiritual Assembly shall be filled by a plurality vote of the delegates composing the Convention which elected the Assembly, the ballot to be taken by correspondence or in any other manner decided upon by the National Assembly.

ARTICLE IX

Where the National Spiritual Assembly has been given in these By-Laws exclusive and final jurisdiction, and paramount executive authority, in all matters pertaining to the activities and affairs of the Bahá'í Cause in ..., it is understood that any decision made or action taken upon such matters shall be subject in every instance to ultimate review and approval by the Universal House of Justice.

ARTICLE X

Whatever functions and powers are not specifically attributable to Local Spiritual Assemblies in these By-Laws shall be considered vested in the National Spiritual Assembly, which body is authorized to delegate such discretionary functions and powers as it deems necessary and advisable to the Local Spiritual Assemblies within its jurisdiction.

ARTICLE XI

In order to preserve the spiritual character and purpose of Bahá'í elections, the practice of nominations or any other electoral method detrimental to a silent and prayerful election shall not prevail, so that each elector may vote for none but those whom prayer and reflection have inspired him to uphold.

Among the most outstanding and sacred duties incumbent upon those who have been called upon to initiate, direct and co-ordinate the affairs of the Cause as members of Local or National Assemblies are:

To win by every means in their power the confidence and affection of those whom it is their privilege to serve, to investigate and acquaint themselves with the considered views, the prevailing sentiments and the personal convictions of those whose welfare it is their solemn obligation to promote, to purge their deliberations and the general conduct of their affairs of self-contained aloofness, the suspicion of secrecy, the stifling atmosphere of dictatorial assertiveness and of every word and deed that may savour of partiality,

self-centredness and prejudice; and while retaining the sacred right of final decision in their hands, to invite discussion, ventilate grievances, welcome advice and foster the sense of inter-dependence and co-partnership, of understanding and mutual confidence between themselves and all other Bahá'ís.

ARTICLE XII

These By-Laws may be amended by majority vote of the National Spiritual Assembly at any of its regular or special meetings, provided that at least fourteen days prior to the date fixed for the said meeting a copy of the proposed amendment or amendments is mailed to each member of the Assembly by the Secretary.

3. A Procedure for the Conduct of the Annual Bahá'í Convention

ARTICLE VIII of the Model Declaration of Trust and By-Laws of a National Spiritual Assembly (see pp.702–703) presents the essential elements which govern the election, functions and authority of a National Bahá'í Convention, the body which constitutes the electoral college for the National Spiritual Assembly of its country.

The purpose of consultation at the Annual Convention is threefold: to arrive at full and complete knowledge of the current conditions, problems and possibilities of the Faith in the country; to give the incoming National Assembly the benefit of the collective wisdom, guidance and constructive suggestions of the assembled delegates; and to contribute to the unity, in spirit and in action, of the entire Bahá'í community.

Over the years, national Bahá'í communities have evolved procedures which are followed at their National Conventions, and which vary according to the size of the Convention and the conditions of the country in which it is held. The following is an outline of the elements of a typical procedure.

Order of Business

The initial business of the Convention follows an order dictated by the priorities of the business:

- Call to order by the Presiding Officer of the outgoing National Spiritual Assembly (this is usually the Chairman, but could be any member of the Assembly designated by it for the purpose).
- Prayer and devotional readings provided by the outgoing National Spiritual Assembly.
- Opening of the Convention by the Presiding Officer of the National Spiritual Assembly.
- Roll call of the delegates by the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly.
- Election of the Chairman and Secretary of the Convention, and such other officers as may be required, by plurality vote in a secret ballot of the assembled delegates from among their own number.
- Adoption of the Agenda of Convention (see below).
- Reading of any message from the Universal House of Justice.

The remaining business of the Convention follows the order of the Agenda which is adopted, and includes the following elements, some of which are distributed throughout the period of the Convention.

- Presentation of the Annual Report of the National Spiritual Assembly, including its financial report, supplemented by the annual reports of its Committees. It is desirable for these reports to be supplied to the delegates in writing in advance so that only supplementary reports need to be given orally at the time of the Convention. Among these reports, presentations may be made on special subjects by well-qualified members or representatives of the National Assembly or its Committees or by non-Bahá'í experts whose exposition is necessary or desirable for the information of the delegates.
- Election of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly. This, in accordance with the express desire of the Guardian of the Faith, should take place approximately midway during the Convention sessions so that the delegates will have the opportunity to consult with both the outgoing and incoming Assemblies.
- Approval of any messages from the Convention to the Universal House of Justice and other institutions, agencies or persons.
- Consultation on the affairs of the Bahá'í Faith both national and international. Referring



Counsellor Ursula Mühlschlegel was among the participants in the National Convention held in Athens, Greece, on 25 and 26 April 1987.

to the role of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly in this consultation, Shoghi Effendi has written:

> Banishing every vestige of secrecy, of undue reticence, of dictatorial aloofness, from their midst, they should radiantly and abundantly unfold to the eyes of the delegates, by whom they are elected, their plans, their hopes, and their cares. They should familiarize the delegates with the various matters that will have to be considered in the current year, and calmly and conscientiously study and weigh the opinions and judgements of the delegates....

Agenda for Consultation

An agenda for the sessions of the Convention is usually prepared beforehand by the outgoing National Spiritual Assembly, including the various matters of national Bahá'í importance which it feels demand the attention of the delegates. This agenda will include the items mentioned above and below at appropriate times during the Convention. The Reports of National Committees are often presented at the times during the consultation when related subjects are to be discussed.

This agenda should be presented to the Convention immediately after the election of the Convention Officers and is usually adopted by majority vote of the assembled delegates. However, the Convention may, by majority vote, omit or add items, change the order, or even adopt an entirely new agenda.

Conduct of Business

Every deliberative body, to fulfil its functions, must conduct its deliberations in accordance with some established rules of order. The procedure here set forth for the National Convention is based upon the procedure already adopted for meetings of Local Assemblies and communities. It accordingly extends to sessions of the Annual Convention the same procedure under which the delegates, in their other Bahá'í activities, are accustomed to conduct discussions and consultation.

The freedom of each and every delegate to take part in discussion and to initiate motions is untrammelled save as the undue activity of one delegate might hamper the rights of the others. Any necessary limitation to be placed upon individual discussion shall be determined by the Chairman in the absence of any specific motion duly carried by majority vote of the delegates themselves. It is the duty of the Chairman to encourage general consultation and make possible the active participation of the greatest possible number of delegates.

The Chairman has the same power and responsibility for discussion and voting upon

motions as do other delegates. Members of the outgoing and incoming National Spiritual Assembly who are not delegates may participate in the consultation but not vote, as is also the case with any representative of the Continental Board of Counsellors who may have been deputed to attend on behalf of the Board.

Any other person may be given the right to address the Convention, by majority vote of the delegates present. But care must be taken that such permission is not abused, since the delegates have limited time at their disposal to engage in their vital deliberations.

The Chairman shall call for votes by a show of hands or similar means.

The transactions of the Convention shall be recorded by the Secretary, and when certified by the Convention officers, shall be given to the National Spiritual Assembly.

ANNUAL ELECTION

The outgoing National Spiritual Assembly provides the Convention officers with a roll of elected delegates, ballot-papers, a ballot-box and tellers' report forms.

The election is conducted by the Convention, but delegates unable to attend have the right to vote by mail.

The policy governing the appointment of tellers, like other details of Convention procedure which are not defined in the Constitution of the National Spiritual Assembly, is within the discretion of the National Assembly to decide. The usual practice is for the National Assembly either to ask the Convention Chairman to appoint the tellers, or to appoint them itself. Tellers may be appointed from among the assembled delegates or from among Bahá'ís who are present but are not delegates.

The electoral method is as follows:

1. After a period of prayer, the Convention Chairman calls upon the delegates to record their votes, during which time silence is observed. When all delegates have had reasonable time to complete their ballot-papers, the Chairman calls upon the Secretary to collect the ballots.
2. The Convention Secretary calls the roll of delegates, whereupon each delegate in turn places his or her ballot in the ballot-box; and as names are called, those ballots received by mail are also placed in the ballot-box by the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly.
3. When all ballots are cast, the ballot-box is handed to the tellers, who retire from the Convention hall to count the votes and determine the result of the election.
4. The result of the balloting is reported by the tellers to the Convention, and the tellers' report is accepted by vote of the Convention.
5. A tie vote for the ninth place may be broken by a revote between the persons tied, carried out by secret ballot of the delegates present at the Convention.
6. If a member duly elected to the National Spiritual Assembly submits his resignation to the National Assembly and his resignation is accepted, his place must be filled by a ballot of all the delegates, not merely those present in the Convention hall. If all delegates are present, then such a by-election can be held while the Convention is still in session.
7. The ballots, together with the tellers' report, certified by all the tellers, are given to the National Spiritual Assembly.

THE CONVENTION RECORD

The permanent record of each successive National Bahá'í Convention consists of the following:

1. Convention Call as issued by the National Spiritual Assembly.
2. List of accredited delegates.
3. Annual Reports of the National Spiritual Assembly and of its Committees.
4. Messages sent to and received from the Bahá'í World Centre and other institutions, agencies and persons.
5. Resolutions and other transactions of the assembled delegates.

6. The result of the election of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Duties of Delegates outside the Convention Sessions

The National Convention is not a continuously functioning institution, but the delegates do have three duties to perform before and after the Convention sessions.

Before the Convention each delegate should do his best to familiarize himself with the conditions of the Cause in his region and with the views of the Bahá'ís whom he is elected to represent.

After the Convention each delegate should, as far as possible, share his experiences and impressions of the Convention with the Bahá'ís in his area.

During the year, if there is a need for a by-election to the National Spiritual Assembly, the delegates will be called upon to vote to fill the vacancy.

4. New National Spiritual Assemblies

1989



The National Spiritual Assembly of Guinea-Bissau. Counsellor Husayn Ardekani is seen standing on the far left; Counsellor Rolf von Czékus is standing on the far right.

NEW NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

1989



The Spiritual Assembly of Macau. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥiyyih Khánum is seated centre; Counsellor Bijan Farid is seated third from right.

1991



The Spiritual Assembly of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

NEW NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

1991



The National Spiritual Assembly of Romania. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum is seated in the centre.



The National Spiritual Assembly of Czechoslovakia. The Hand of the Cause of God Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá is standing third from right.

NEW NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

1991



The National Spiritual Assembly of the West Leeward Islands. Counsellor Ruth Pringle is seen standing on the far left; Counsellor William Roberts is on the far right.

1992



The National Spiritual Assembly of Angola.

NEW NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

1992



The National Spiritual Assembly of the Baltic States. The Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Akbar Furután is seated centre; Counsellor Polin Rafat is standing third from right.



The National Spiritual Assembly of Albania.

NEW NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

1992



The National Spiritual Assembly of Hungary.



The National Spiritual Assembly of Poland. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum is seated second from left.

NEW NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

1992



The Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, with the Hand of the Cause Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá (front row) and Counsellor Paul Semenoff (back row second from right).



The National Spiritual Assembly of Greenland (one member absent). The Hand of the Cause of God Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá is seated centre.

NEW NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

1992



The National Spiritual Assembly of Bulgaria.

RE-ESTABLISHED NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

1987



The National Spiritual Assembly of Zaire; re-established 1987.

RE-ESTABLISHED NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

1992



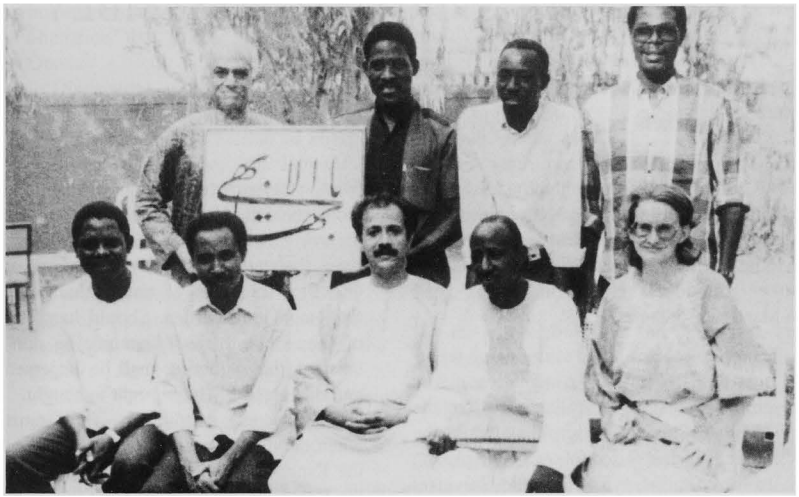
The National Spiritual Assembly of Azerbaijan; re-established 1992. Counsellor Mas'úd Khamsí is seen standing centre.



The National Spiritual Assembly of the Congo Republic; re-established 1992. Counsellor George Allen is seen standing on the far left.

RE-ESTABLISHED NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

1992



The National Spiritual Assembly of Niger; re-established 1992.



The Regional Assembly of Central Asia; re-established 1992 (one member absent).

IV
THE LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

1. INTRODUCTION

SHOGHI Effendi likened the Bahá'í Administrative Order to the monument marking the resting place of the Greatest Holy Leaf,[1] on Mount Carmel. A letter written on his behalf to an individual believer in Persia, dated 6 March 1945, states:

> The steps of her holy resting-place represent Local Spiritual Assemblies.... The columns, that is the pillars, are like the National Spiritual Assemblies, while the dome, which is raised following the placing of the columns, symbolizes the Universal House of Justice which, in accordance with the Master's Will and Testament must be elected by the secondary Houses of Justice, that is, the National Spiritual Assemblies of East and West.[2]

The Local Assemblies, then, are the base of the edifice of the Bahá'í World Order.

During the Ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, local Assemblies and boards of consultation had been initiated in Persia, Turkistan, the Caucaus, Egypt, India and Burma, England, France, Germany, and the United States.[3] 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote that the obligations incumbent upon the members of consulting councils included the following:

> The first condition is absolute love and harmony amongst the members of the assembly. They must be wholly free from estrangement and must manifest in themselves the Unity of God, for they are the waves of one sea, the drops of one river, the stars of one heaven, the rays of one sun, the trees of one orchard, the flowers of one garden. Should harmony of thought and absolute unity be non-existent, that gathering shall be dispersed and that assembly be brought to naught.
>
> The second condition: –They must when coming together turn their faces to the Kingdom on High and ask aid from the Realm of Glory. They must then proceed with the utmost devotion, courtesy, dignity, care and moderation to express their views. They must in every matter search out the truth and not insist upon their own opinion, for stubbornness and persistence in one's views will lead ultimately to discord and wrangling and the truth will remain hidden. The honored members must with all freedom express their own thoughts, and it is in no wise permissible for one to belittle the thought of another, nay, he must with moderation set forth the truth, and should differences of opinion arise a majority of voices must prevail, and all must obey and submit to the majority. It is again not permitted that any one of the honored members object to or censure, whether in or out of the meeting, any decision arrived at previously, though that decision be not right, for such criticism would prevent any decision from being enforced. In short, whatsoever thing is arranged in harmony and with love and purity of motive, its result is

1 Bahíyyih Khánum, the daughter of Bahá'u'lláh.

2 *Bahíyyih Khánum, The Greatest Holy Leaf* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982), p. 92.

3 Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987), p. 268-69.

light, and should the least trace of estrangement prevail the result shall be darkness upon darkness.... If this be so regarded, that assembly shall be of God, but otherwise it shall lead to coolness and alienation that proceed from the Evil One....

Discussions must all be confined to spiritual matters that pertain to the training of souls, the instruction of children, the relief of the poor, the help of the feeble throughout all classes in the world, kindness to all peoples, the diffusion of the fragrances of God and the exaltation of His Holy Word. Should they endeavour to fulfill these conditions the Grace of the Holy Spirit shall be vouchsafed unto them, and that assembly shall become the center of the Divine blessings, the hosts of Divine confirmation shall come to their aid, and they shall day by day receive a new effusion of Spirit.[1]

Shoghi Effendi formalized the creation of Local Spiritual Assemblies, calling for their election in a letter to the followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout America, Great Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, Japan and Australia dated 12 March 1923:

> And, now that this all-important Work may... function vigorously and continuously in every part of the Bahá'í world; that the unity of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh may remain secure and inviolate, it is of the utmost importance that in accordance with the explicit text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Most Holy Book, in every locality, be it city or hamlet, where the number of adult (21 years and above) declared believers exceeds nine, a local "Spiritual Assembly" be forthwith established. To it all local matters pertaining to the Cause must be directed and immediately referred for full consultation and decision.[2]

Bahá'ís around the world arose to the summons, "in complete unison, and despite the great diversity in their outlook, customs and languages, the double task of establishing and of consolidating their local councils..."[3] Shoghi Effendi was pleased, but felt compelled to remind the friends that "...all these administrative activities, however harmoniously and efficiently conducted, are but means to an end, and should be regarded as direct instruments for the propagation of the Bahá'í Faith."[4] As further guidance, on 27 February 1929, Shoghi Effendi wrote to the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada:

> ...the administration of the Cause is to be conceived as an instrument and not a substitute for the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, that it should be regarded as a channel through which His promised blessings may flow, that it should guard against such rigidity as would clog and fetter the liberating forces released by His Revelation. ...the whole machinery of assemblies, of committees and conventions is to be regarded as a means, and not an end in itself; that they will rise or fall according to their capacity to further the interests, to coördinate the activities, to apply the principles, to embody the ideals and execute the purpose of the Bahá'í Faith.[5]

In November, 1931, the New York Bahá'í community drafted a document containing by-laws for Bahá'í local assemblies which Shoghi Effendi accepted as a pattern for local Bahá'í communities. This became the basis for the model document provided by the Universal House of Justice and printed below.

[1] Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1960), p. 22-23.

[2] ibid., p. 37.

[3] *God Passes By*, p. 330.

[4] *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 103.

[5] Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 9.

2. By-Laws of a Local Spiritual Assembly

WE, the undersigned members of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of..., desiring to incorporate this body do hereby adopt the following By-Laws:

Article I

The Trustees, i.e., the members of the Spiritual Assembly, recognize that this action has been taken in full unanimity and agreement. They acknowledge for themselves and on behalf of their successors the sacred meaning and universal purpose of the Bahá'í Faith, the teachings and principles of which fulfil the divine promise of all former revealed religions.

Article II

In administering the affairs of the Bahá'í religion under this Corporation for the benefit of the Bahá'ís of... in accordance with the religious teachings and administrative principles of this Faith, the Spiritual Assembly shall act in conformity with the functions of a Local Spiritual Assembly as defined in the By-Laws adopted by the National Spiritual Assembly and published by that body for the information and guidance of Bahá'ís throughout...[1]

Article III

The Spiritual Assembly, in the fulfilment of its obligations and responsibilities under this Corporation, shall have exclusive jurisdiction and authority over all the local activities and affairs of the Bahá'í community of ..., including paramount authority in the administration of this Corporation. It shall be responsible for maintaining the integrity and accuracy of all Bahá'í teaching, whether written or oral, undertaken throughout the local community. It shall make available the published literature of the Faith. It shall represent the community in relationship to the National Spiritual Assembly, the Universal House of Justice, other local Bahá'í communities and the general public in ... . It shall be charged with the recognition of all applicants requesting membership in the local Bahá'í community. It shall pass upon the right of any and all members of the community whose membership is in question to retain their status as voting members of the community. It shall call the meetings of the community, including the Bahá'í Anniversaries and Feasts, the Meetings of consultation, and the Annual Meeting at which the members of the Assembly are elected. It shall appoint and supervise all committees of the Bahá'í community. It shall collect and disburse all funds intended for the maintenance of this Corporation. It shall have full and complete custody of the headquarters or meeting place of the Bahá'í community. It shall have exclusive authority to conduct Bahá'í marriage ceremonies and issue Bahá'í marriage certificates within the area of its jurisdiction. It shall report to the National Spiritual Assembly annually, or when requested, the membership roll of the Bahá'í community, for the information and approval of the National Assembly. The Spiritual Assembly, however, shall recognize the authority and right of the National Spiritual Assembly to declare at any time what activities and affairs of the Bahá'í community of ... are national in scope and hence subject to the jurisdiction of the National Assembly. It shall likewise recognize the right of any member of the

[1] Name of country or region.

community to appeal to the National Assembly for review and decision of any matter in which the previous decision of the Local Spiritual Assembly is felt by the member to be contrary to the explicit teachings of the Bahá'í Faith or opposed to its best interests. It shall, on the other hand, have the authority and right to appeal from the decision of the National Assembly to the Universal House of Justice for review and final decision of any matter related to the Faith in ... .

ARTICLE IV

The Spiritual Assembly, in administering this Corporation, shall ever bear in mind the ideals upheld in the sacred Writings of the Bahá'í Faith respecting the relationships of a Spiritual Assembly to its Bahá'í community, respecting the relations of Bahá'ís to one another in the community, and the relationships of Bahá'ís to all non-Bahá'ís, without prejudice of race, creed or nationality. The Assembly shall therefore above all recognize its sacred duty to maintain full and complete unity throughout the Bahá'í community, to relieve and comfort the sick and distressed, to assist the poor and destitute, to protect the orphans, the crippled and the aged, to educate the children of Bahá'ís according to the highest religious and intellectual standards, to compose differences and disagreements among members of the community, to promulgate the principles of Divine Civilization revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, and to promote in every way possible the Bahá'í aim of the oneness of mankind. It shall faithfully and devotedly uphold the general Bahá'í activities and affairs initiated and sustained by the National Spiritual Assembly. It shall co-operate wholeheartedly with other Local Spiritual Assemblies throughout...[2] in all matters declared by the National Spiritual Assembly to be of general Bahá'í importance and concern. It shall rigorously abstain from any action or influence, direct or indirect, that savours of intervention on the part of the Bahá'í body in matters of public politics and civil jurisdiction. It shall encourage intercourse between the Bahá'í community of ... and other recognized Bahá'í communities, issuing letters of introduction to Bahá'ís travelling from ... and passing upon letters of introduction issued by other Bahá'í Assemblies. It shall regard its authority as a means of rendering service to Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís and not as a source of arbitrary power. While retaining the sacred right of final decision in all matters pertaining to the Bahá'í community, the Spiritual Assembly shall ever seek the advice and consultation of all members of the community, keep the community informed of all its affairs, and invite full and free discussion on the part of the community of all matters affecting the Faith.

ARTICLE V

The Bahá'ís of ... for whose benefit this Corporation has been established shall consist of all persons of the age of 15 years or over resident in ... who are accepted by the National Spiritual Assembly as possessing the qualifications of Bahá'í faith and practice required under the following standard set forth by the Guardian of the Faith:

Full recognition of the station of the Báb, the Forerunner; of Bahá'u'lláh, the Author; and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the True Exemplar of the Bahá'í religion; unreserved acceptance of, and submission to, whatsoever has been revealed by their Pen; loyal and steadfast adherence to every clause of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's sacred Will; and close association with the spirit as well as the form of Bahá'í Administration throughout the world.

Upon attaining the age of 21 years, a Bahá'í is eligible to vote and to hold elective office.

[2] Name of country or region.

ARTICLE VI

The Spiritual Assembly shall consist of nine Trustees chosen from among the Bahá'ís of..., who shall be elected by these Bahá'ís in a manner hereinafter provided and who shall continue in office for the period of one year, or until their successors shall be elected.

ARTICLE VII

The officers of the Spiritual Assembly shall consist of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, and such other officers as may be found necessary for the proper conduct of its affairs. The officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the entire membership of the Assembly taken by secret ballot.

ARTICLE VIII

The first meeting of a newly-elected Assembly shall be called by the member elected to membership by the highest number of votes or, in case two or more members have received the same said highest number of votes, then by the member selected by lot from among those members; and this member shall preside until the permanent Chairman shall be chosen. All subsequent meetings shall be called by the Secretary of the Assembly at the request of the Chairman or, in his absence or incapacity, of the Vice-Chairman, or of any three members of the Assembly; provided, however, that the Annual Meeting of the Assembly shall be held on April 21, in accordance with the administrative principles recognized by all Bahá'í Assemblies.

SECTION 1. Five members of the Assembly present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum, and a majority vote of those present and constituting a quorum shall be sufficient for the conduct of business, except as otherwise provided in these By-Laws, and with due regard to the principle of unity and cordial fellowship involved in the institution of a Spiritual Assembly. The transactions and decisions of the Assembly shall be recorded at each meeting by the Secretary, who shall have the minutes adopted and approved by the Assembly, and preserve them in the official records of the Assembly.

SECTION 2. Vacancies in the membership of the Spiritual Assembly shall be filled by election at a special meeting of the local Bahá'í community duly called for that purpose by the Assembly. In the event that the number of vacancies exceeds four, making a quorum of the Spiritual Assembly impossible, the election shall be under the supervision of the National Spiritual Assembly.

ARTICLE IX

The sphere of jurisdiction of the Spiritual Assembly, with respect to residential qualification of membership, and voting rights of a believer in the Bahá'í community, shall be the locality included within the civil limits of...

ARTICLE X

SECTION 1. In the event that any decision of the Assembly is unacceptable to any member or members of the community, the Assembly shall, after endeavouring to compose the difference of opinion, invite the said member or members to make appeal to the National Spiritual Assembly and notify that body of the condition of the matter and the readiness of the Assembly to become party to that appeal.

SECTION 2. In the same manner, if any difference arises between the Assembly and another Local Assembly, or Assemblies, in ...[3], the Assembly shall report the matter to the

[3] Name of country or region.

National Assembly and inform that body of its readiness to make joint appeal together with the other Assembly or Assemblies.

SECTION 3. If, however, the result of such appeal is unsatisfactory to the Spiritual Assembly, or the Assembly at any time has reason to believe that actions of the National Spiritual Assembly are affecting adversely the welfare and unity of the Bahá'í community of..., it shall, after seeking to compose its difference of opinion with the National Assembly in direct consultation, have the right to make appeal to the Universal House of Justice.

SECTION 4. The Assembly shall likewise have the right to make complaint to the National Spiritual Assembly in the event that matters of local Bahá'í concern and influence are referred to the national body by a member or members of the local community without previous opportunity for action by the Local Assembly.

ARTICLE XI

The Annual Meeting of the Corporation at which its Trustees shall be elected shall be held on April 21, at an hour and place to be fixed by the Assembly, which shall give not less than fifteen days' notice of the meeting to all members of the local Bahá'í community.

SECTION 1. The Assembly shall accept those votes transmitted to the Assembly before the election by members who by reason of sickness or other unavoidable reason are unable to be present at the election in person.

SECTION 2. The election of members to the Spiritual Assembly shall be by plurality vote.

SECTION 3. All voting members of the local Bahá'í community are eligible for election as members of the Spiritual Assembly.

SECTION 4. The Assembly shall prepare an agenda for the Annual Meeting in which shall be included reports of the activities of the Assembly since its election, a financial statement showing all income and expenditure of its fund, reports of its committees and presentation of any other matters pertaining to the affairs of the Bahá'í community. The Assembly, both preceding and following the annual election, shall invite discussion and welcome suggestions from the community, in order that its plans may reflect the community mind and heart.

SECTION 5. The result of the election shall be reported by the Spiritual Assembly to the National Assembly.

ARTICLE XII

In addition to the Annual Meeting, the Assembly shall arrange for regular meetings of the Bahá'í community throughout the year at intervals of nineteen days, in accordance with the calendar incorporated in the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith.

ARTICLE XIII

The seal of the Corporation shall be circular in form, bearing the following inscription:
The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of.....

ARTICLE XIV

Alternative 'A'

These By-Laws may be amended by majority vote of the Spiritual Assembly at any of its regular or special meetings, provided that at least fourteen days prior to the date fixed for the said meeting a copy of the proposed amendment or amendments is mailed to each member of the Assembly by the Secretary.

Alternative 'B'

These By-Laws may be amended only by majority action of the National Spiritual Assembly, which, in making amendments, does so for the By-Laws of all Local Spiritual Assemblies throughout....[4]

[4] Name of country or region.



Seven members of the Local Spiritual Assembly in Loja, Spain, elected in October 1986. The majority of Assembly members are Roma.



The Local Spiritual Assembly of Ashkhabad, Turkmen S.S.R., re-formed in 1989 after a lapse of fifty years.



The Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of District 10 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, elected at Riḍván 1990.



Members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Johannesburg, South Africa, consulting during a meeting in 1988.



Children gathered for Bahá'í classes in the Local Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds in Dzitya, Yucatan, Mexico, in 1987.



Members of local youth committees meeting with the National Youth Committee of Germany to consult on the Six Year Plan. Mainz, Germany March 1987.



A Nineteen Day Feast being held at the Khao-i-Dang Annex Refugee Camp in Thailand, in 1987.



Roslyn Bule (in the wheelchair) reading a prayer during the devotional part of the Naw-Rúz celebrations held in Port Vila, Vanuatu, on 21 March 1992.



Children of Ambano, Madagascar, singing during the Naw-Rúz celebrations held in their community on 21 March 1991.



Friends enjoying the Ayyám-i-Há celebrations sponsored by the Local Spiritual Assembly of San Jose, California, USA, in February 1988.



A social activity held as part of a Weekend Bahá'í School in Macau in January 1988.



Young friends providing entertainment during the Naw-Rúz celebration held in Paramaibo, Suriname, on 21 March 1988.

V
THE INSTITUTION OF THE MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR

1. FOREWORD

BY HORACE HOLLEY

Blessed is he who, at the hour of dawn, centring his thoughts on God, occupied with His remembrance, and supplicating His forgiveness, directeth his steps to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and, entering therein, seateth himself in silence to listen to the verses of God, the Sovereign, the Mighty, the All-Praised. Say: The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is each and every building which hath been erected in cities and villages for the celebration of My praise. Such is the name by which it hath been designated before the throne of glory, were ye of those who understand.

Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas

MANY discerning minds have testified to the profoundly significant change which has taken place during recent years in the character of popular religious thinking. Religion has developed an entirely new emphasis, more especially for the layman, quite independent of the older sectarian divisions.

Instead of considering that religion is a matter of turning toward an abstract creed, the average religionist today is concerned with the practical applications of religion to the problems of human life. Religion, in brief, after having apparently lost its influence in terms of theology, has been restored more powerfully than ever as a spirit of brotherhood, an impulse toward unity, and an ideal making for a more enlightened civilization throughout the world.

Against this background, the institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár stands revealed as the supreme expression of all those modern religious tendencies animated by social ideals which do not repudiate the reality of spiritual experience but seek to transform it into a dynamic striving for unity. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, when clearly understood, gives the world its most potent agency for applying mystical vision or idealistic aspiration to the service of humanity. It makes visible and concrete those deeper meanings and wider possibilities of religion which could not be realized until the dawn of this universal age.

The term "Mashriqu'l-Adhkár" means literally, "Dawning-place of the praise of God".

To appreciate the signficiance of this Bahá'í institution, we must lay aside all customary ideas of the churches and cathedrals of the past. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár fulfils the original intention of religion in each dispensation, before that intention had become altered and veiled by human invention and belief.

The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is a channel releasing spiritual powers for social regeneration because it fills a different function than that assumed by the sectarian church. Its essential purpose is to provide a community

meeting-place for all who are seeking to worship God, and achieves this purpose by interposing no man-made veils between the worshipper and the Supreme. Thus, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is freely open to people of all Faiths on equal terms, who now realize the universality of Bahá'u'lláh in revealing the oneness of all the Prophets. Moreover, since the Bahá'í Faith has no professional clergy, the worshipper entering the Temple hears no sermon and takes part in no ritual the emotional effect of which is to establish a separate group consciousness.

Integral with the Temple are its accessory buildings, without which the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár would not be a complete social institution. These buildings are to be devoted to such activities as a school for science, a hospice, a hospital, an asylum for orphans. Here the circle of spiritual experience at last joins, as prayer and worship are allied directly to creative service, eliminating the static subjective elements from religion and laying a foundation for a new and higher type of human association.

2. THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR

A LETTER FROM SHOGHI EFFENDI

IT should be borne in mind that the central edifice of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, round which in the fullness of time shall cluster such institutions of social service as shall afford relief to the suffering, sustenance to the poor, shelter to the wayfarer, solace to the bereaved, and education to the ignorant, should be regarded apart from these dependencies, as a house solely designed and entirely dedicated to the worship of God in accordance with the few yet definitely prescribed principles established by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. It should not be inferred, however, from this general statement that the interior of the central edifice itself will be converted into a conglomeration of religious services conducted along lines associated with the traditional procedure obtaining in churches, mosques, synagogues, and other temples of worship. Its various avenues of approach, all converging towards the central hall beneath its dome, will not serve as admittance to those sectarian adherents of rigid formulae and man-made creeds, each bent, according to his way, to observe his rites, recite his prayers, perform his ablutions, and display the particular symbols of his faith within separately defined sections of Bahá'u'lláh's Universal House of Worship. Far from the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár offering such a spectacle of incoherent and confused sectarian observances and rites, a condition wholly incompatible with the provisions of the Aqdas and irreconcilable with the spirit it inculcates, the central House of Bahá'í worship, enshrined within the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, will gather within its chastened walls, in a serenely spiritual atmosphere, only those who, discarding forever the trappings of elaborate and ostentatious ceremony, are willing worshippers of the one true God, as manifested in this age in the person of Bahá'u'lláh. To them will the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár symbolize the fundamental verity underlying the Bahá'í Faith, that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that Divine Revelation is not final but

progressive. Theirs will be the conviction that an all-loving and ever-watchful Father Who, in the past, and at various stages in the evolution of mankind, has sent forth His Prophets as the Bearers of His Message and the Manifestations of His Light to mankind, cannot at this critical period of their civilization withhold from His children the guidance which they sorely need amid the darkness which has beset them, and which neither the light of science nor that of human intellect and wisdom can succeed in dissipating. And thus having recognized in Bahá'u'lláh the source whence this celestial light proceeds, they will irresistably feel attracted to seek the shelter of His house, and congregate therein, unhampered by ceremonials and unfettered by creed, to render homage to the one true God, the Essence and Orb of eternal Truth, and to exalt and magnify the name of His Messengers and Prophets Who, from time immemorial even unto our day, have, under divers circumstances and in varying measure, mirrored forth to a dark and wayward world the light of heavenly guidance.

But however inspiring the conception of Bahá'í worship, as witnessed in the central edifice of this exalted Temple, it cannot be regarded as the sole, nor even the essential, factor in the part which the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, as designed by Bahá'u'lláh, is destined to play in the organic life of the Bahá'í community. Divorced from the social, humanitarian, educational and scientific pursuits centring around the dependencies of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, Bahá'í worship, however exalted in it conception, however passionate in fervor, can never hope to achieve beyond the meagre and often transitory results produced by the contemplations of the ascetic or the communion of the passive worshipper. It cannot afford lasting satisfaction and benefit to the worshipper himself, much less to humanity in general, unless and until translated and transfused into that dynamic and disinterested service to the cause of humanity which it is the supreme privilege of the dependences of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár to facilitate and promote. Nor will the exertions, no matter how disinterested and strenuous, of those who within the precincts of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár will be engaged in administering the affairs of the future Bahá'í commonwealth, fructify and prosper unless they are brought into close and daily communion with those spiritual agencies centring in and radiating from the central shrine of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. Nothing short of direct and constant interaction between the spiritual forces emanating from this House of Worship centring in the heart of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, and the energies consciously displayed by those who administer its affairs in their service to humanity can possibly provide the necessary agency capable of removing the ills that have so long and so grievously afflicted humanity. For it is assuredly upon the consciousness of the efficacy of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, reinforced on one hand by spiritual communion with His Spirit, and on the other by the intelligent application and the faithful execution of the principles and laws He revealed, that the salvation of a world in travail must ultimately depend. And of all the institutions that stand associated with His Holy Name, surely none save the institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár can most adequately provide the essentials of Bahá'í worship and service, both so vital to the regeneration of the world. Therein lies the secret of the loftiness, of the potency, of the unique position of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár as one of the outstanding institutions conceived by Bahá'u'lláh.

25 October 1929

3. THE DEDICATION OF THE FIRST MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR OF THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT AND THE INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CONFERENCE NEW DELHI, INDIA 23–27 DECEMBER 1986

A. REPORT OF THE DEDICATION AND CONFERENCE

NAYSÁN ṢAHBÁ

Preliminary Activities

Well I dreamed
That stone by stone I rear'd a sacred fane
A temple, neither Pagod, Mosque,
nor Church,
But loftier, simpler, always open door'd
To every breath from heaven, and Truth and
Peace and Love and Justice came and
dwelt therein
(and then despairingly)
I watched my son
And those that follow'd loosen
stone from stone
All my fair work, and from the ruins arose
The shriek and curse of trampled millions
even as in the time before;
but while I groan'd
From out the sunset pour'd an alien race
Who fitted stone to stone again,
and Truth, Peace, Love and Justice came
and dwelt therein.

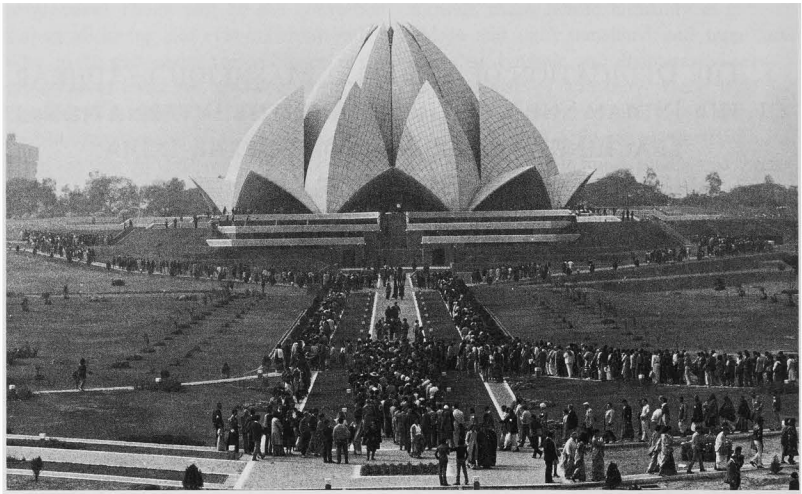
—Alfred Lord Tennyson

On the morning of 23 December 1986, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum entered the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Indian sub-continent for the first time since its completion. The friends present on that occasion included the Hands of the Cause of God Mr. William Sears and Mr. Collis Featherstone; the Continental Board of Counsellors for Asia; the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of India; the architect, Mr. Faríburz Ṣahbá, and his work team; and a few other invited guests.

A silver casket holding dust gathered from the blessed Shrines of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb was to be placed into the crown of the Prayer Hall arch facing the direction of 'Akká, symbolically consummating the preparations that would sustain the next day's dedication of the Temple. Amatu'l-Bahá ascended the specially erected nine-metre-high stage to place the casket, contained in a marble box, in a niche under the apical marble slab of the arch.

Rúḥíyyih Khánum spoke of the significance of the sacred dust, the gift of the Universal House of Justice. Then, after the chanting of prayers, the friends moved to the library in the ancillary building, where Amatu'l-Bahá presented the architect with an inscribed plaque on behalf of the Indian Spiritual Assembly, expressing their admiration and appreciation for his work. Finally, the group proceeded to the main gate of the Temple lands which was then officially designated as the Dr. Muhájir Gate in tribute to Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir's great love and services for India.

The events that morning anticipated the remarkable five-day convocation of over eight thousand believers gathered in New Delhi to celebrate the completion of the first Bahá'í House of Worship of the Indian sub-continent and to behold its dedication to public worship by Amatu'l-Bahá, the representative of the Universal House of Justice. Nine months before, the National Assembly of India had announced the momentous event in a letter to the Bahá'í world:



The Dedication of the Mother Temple of the Asian Continent, in New Delhi, India, on 24 December 1986.

Under the loving and inspiring guidance of the Universal House of Justice, the collective and sacrificial efforts of the Bahá'ís of India together with their brothers and sisters all over the world, have drawn nigh the blessed hour of the triumphant completion of this mighty edifice in the very first year of the new Six Year Plan. It is, therefore, with a feeling of profound ecstasy and a deep sense of gratitude, that we joyfully convey the Supreme Body's auspicious announcement to hold the dedication of the Mother Temple in December 1986.

But work on the event had begun even before the announcement. The Dedication Committee had been appointed in 1984, immediately procuring the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium—the largest of its kind in Asia—for the conference, reserving accommodation for attendees of what was to be the largest assemblage of Bahá'ís ever gathered on that sub-continent, preparing the programme with all of its subsidiaries, and seeing to every logistic detail in order to ensure the comfort and fruitful participation of all who would come. The committee relied on the invaluable and sacrificial assistance of hundreds of volunteers from around the world to manage all aspects of the preparations. With the commencement of registration on 19 December, hundreds of participants stepped forward to offer their services in various capacities for the events. Thus, the stage was set.

Welcoming Ceremony

FOREVER IN BLOOM
A new flower has blossomed in Asia
And everyone's coming to see
For its fragrance has perfumed the planet
Setting hearts and souls everywhere free a
symbol of hope for the future
A symbol of peace for mankind
In silence rejoicing and quietly voicing
Its praises of all things divine
Forever in bloom, this heavenly flower
A lotus of love, and life-giving power
Beseeching the dead to come forth from
their tomb
And witness the wonder, forever in bloom

So come, and behold now the beauty
Give ear to the unspoken call
For the sweet songs of life-everlasting
Are now being sung for us all
Let those who are deaf come and listen
Let all who are blind come and see
As man now commences to transcend
his senses
And learns what it means to be free

Forever in bloom, this heavenly flower
A lotus of love, and life-giving power
Beseeching the dead to come forth from
their tomb
And witness the wonder, forever in bloom

Let none then be hindered from coming
For who could be sad or forlorn
Where God and mankind come together
And faith in the future is born
Let all then rejoice in the vision
For darkness is destined to cease
And mankind shall notice the sweet-scented
lotus
Proclaiming the promise of peace

Forever in bloom, this heavenly flower
A lotus of love, and life-giving power
Beseeching the dead to come forth from
their tomb
Come witness the wonder,
Forever in bloom

—Tom Shoemaker

In a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of India, the Universal House of Justice had announced the theme of the conference that would augment the dedication as "The Bahá'í House of Worship dedicated to the Unity of God, the Unity of His Prophets, and the Unity of Mankind". This conference was inaugurated in the Indira Gandhi Stadium on 23 December.

The atmosphere in the stadium was charged with profound feelings of pride and joy as all gathered together for the first time and saw about them the massive strength that lies in the unity of the Bahá'í international community. For most, the numerical expansion of the Faith over the Seven Year Plan had been simply a statistical success recorded in reports. That success was imbued with the breath of life as it unfolded itself in the coliseum. The participants represented 114 nations, with the Indian attendees providing a microcosm of their subcontinent's diversity with delegates from every state and territory present. Old friends were re-united and new friendships were kindled as believers shared their unique stories of teaching, service, toil, and sacrifice, inspiring each other until the call of welcome drew their attention to the stage, beautifully designed for the occasion.

This opening session was co-chaired by Mrs. Shirin Boman and Counsellor Iraj Ayman. After their words of greetings and the devotions, the chairman of the National Assembly of India, Mr. Kishen Khemani, gave a stirring welcoming address on behalf of his hosting community. The special guests, the Hands of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, Mr. William Sears, and Mr. Collis Featherstone, were introduced and invited to the stage, much to the joy and honour of an audience that dearly remembered the services rendered by them and the debt the entire Bahá'í world owed to them for their leadership in both the promulgation and protection of the Cause. In the presence of these precious Hands, the "Roll Call of the Nations" was taken. As each country was announced, a representative of that nation came to the stage. The friends looked on with wonderment as believers of every background and race gathered around the seated Hands of the Cause. A thunderous applause filled the hall as the colourful assemblage on stage was finally completed.

The precious friends of Írán, unable to send a representative to the dedication due to the persecutions in their land, sent a stirring message and 204 red roses to the assemblage, in memory of the 188 friends martyred and the 16 souls still missing at that time. The flowers, bought through the

contributions of the prisoners and families of the martyrs, were reverently displayed in two exquisite silver-gilt urns inside the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. The beautiful letter read, in part: "With overjoyed hearts and tearful eyes, in utmost joy and anxiety, we offer sincere greetings to Amatu'l-Bahá and others present in that conference. By this token we feel ourselves spiritually present... Although we are far away over the mountains and oceans, we are close to you in heart and soul."

The conference was officially inaugurated by Amatu'l-Bahá, who read the message of the Universal House of Justice. (For the full text of the message please see p.740) Rúḥíyyih Khánum then addressed the conference herself, sharing spirited words of praise, wisdom, warning, and encouragement, inspiring further delight and enthusiasm into the hearts of the friends, for both the dedication at hand and their own long-term dedication to the service and teaching work of the Cause.

To familiarise the friends with the physical surroundings and the intricate structure of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, a slide programme with running commentary was presented, covering the history of the Temple's construction and explaining the dimensions and layout of the Prayer Hall and its ancillary buildings.

At this point, Mr. Faríburz Ṣahbá was introduced and welcomed to the stage. In a heartfelt speech of praise and thanksgiving, the architect reviewed the incredible story of the building of the House of Worship, remembering the many precious souls and institutions that assisted in the complicated process. He expressed his particular indebtedness to his wife, Mrs. Golnar Ṣahbá, whose loving support and spirit as both spouse and working partner was invaluable in allowing him to carry forward his services towards the raising of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. A wave of applause was raised as he asked her to share the stage with him. Mr. Ṣahbá went on to refer to the many professionals who assisted with the construction work, including the hundreds of devoted, unskilled labourers who toiled in the true spirit of worship.

The Dedication Ceremony

At times only a whisp, a breath, a comma,
separates us from the world we seek.
We have no need of disguises here,
may abandon the false limp that solicits pity
and walk with head erect, our minds
unstockinged,
allowing the unquestioning light
to escort us charitably into the stillness
where, though we die with our distinctions,
we are unjudged and undiminished.
It is truth's way to be disinterested
and death—ah, we will live to die again.

What matters is our willingness
to lose our ordinary use of eyes,
to have our hearts catch fire,
to run forward blind and eager
with our hearts' ashes drifting from our
hands.
Only the purest gesture will suffice.

Arriving will be wonderful—
like being in the cool plush centre of a
flower
and becoming its fragrance
broadcast in indiscriminate opulence
intoxicating the lovers
leading crazed Majnún ecstatically to his
Laylí.

—Roger White

The entire day of 24 December 1986, was devoted to the dedication of the Mother Temple of India. Three consecutive services were held in order to accommodate all of the beloved friends. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, who was to offer the dedicatory speech on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, graced all three gatherings with her presence, offering that Supreme Body's words of dedication to all.

The first service was particularly notable as about 400 special guests from around the world witnessed the dedication in the presence of Mr. Sears and Mr. Featherstone —such people as the Lieutenant-Governor of Delhi, India's Foreign Secretary, the Ambassadors of Canada, Denmark, and the United States of America, the First Secretary of the Embassy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the ranking representative of the Vatican Mission to India, high ranking officials from the Embassy of China, judges of the Indian High Court, representatives of the project's consultants and contractors, and many others.

The service opened with a beautiful selection of devotions. Amatu'l-Bahá then spoke words of dedication. Her brief speech and selection of Writings, partially based on the message prepared by the Guardian for the dedication of the House of Worship in Wilmette, included the only comment made to the friends in the Prayer Hall:

> On behalf of the Supreme Body of the Bahá'í Faith, the Universal House of Justice, I have the great honour of dedicating this Mother Temple of the Indian sub-continent to public worship. Conceived in the hearts of a handful of early Bahá'ís in Bombay, in 1920, who petitioned 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Head of their Faith, the son of its Founder, Bahá'u'lláh, that a Temple be raised in His name in India; blessed from its very inception, almost 70 years ago, by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who prayed that by the Will of God a majestic Mashriqu'l-Adhkár—literally "the Dawning Place of the mention of God"—should be erected in one of the central cities of India; confirmed in this mighty enterprise by the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith himself, who stipulated that this Temple must be erected in New Delhi, and made the purchase of its site one of the goals of his world-encompassing Crusade; initiated through a message of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the world in 1974, conveying the glad tidings that the construction of this historic House of Worship in this part of Asia would be commenced during the



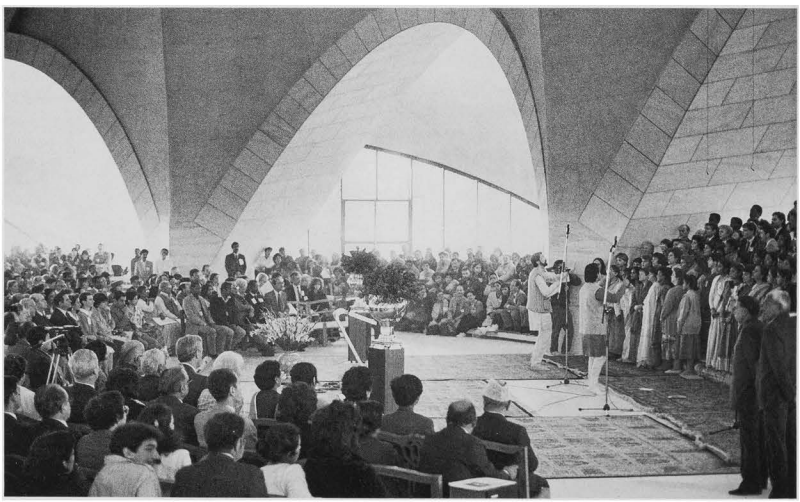
The three Hands of the Cause of God present at the Dedication of the Temple in India: William Sears, Amatu'l Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, and H. Collis Featherstone.

coming five years, and all the preliminaries and initial excavations be completed within that period; reared through the sacrificial and loving contributions not only of the Indian Bahá'ís but their fellow believers from every country, territory, and major island of the globe, now this glorious marble lotus, this exquisite symbol of the purity, beauty, perfection, and mercy that comes to all men from their Creator, enfolds us tenderly in her breast, bidding us unite in peace, welcoming within her doors peoples of all creeds, all races, all nations and all classes, and proclaiming to all men that this Temple is dedicated to the three fundamental verities animating and underlying the Bahá'í Faith—the unity of God, the unity of His Prophets, the unity of mankind.

She concluded by saying, "I greet and welcome you within these walls on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, and invite you to share with us the words recorded in the Sacred Scriptures which we believe to be repositories of the eternal and fundamental truths revealed by God in various ages for the guidance and salvation of all mankind." The assemblage then rose as Amatu'l-Bahá shared brief but stirring selections from the Prayers and Meditations of Bahá'u'lláh.

Next, selections from the Sacred Scriptures of the world were eloquently shared in English, Persian, Hindi, and Sanskrit. These were interspersed with music provided by choirs made up of more than one hundred people who had come together from various parts of the world to help make the dedication services unique and unforgettable. Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís, professionals and amateurs joined the English, Hindi or Persian choir, the three bodies singing separately, in unison, and in various combinations. The English and Persian choirs were conducted by Mr. Tom Price and Mr. Bijan Khadem-Missagh respectively. The Hindi choir holds a special place in the Temple's history because of its connection to one of the world's noted classical musicians and India's greatest sitarist, Pandit Ravi Shankar. His is one of the Temple's love stories.

Pandit Shankar had been approached several months before the dedication by the



Three choirs performing during the services of worship inaugurating the Mother Temple of the Indian Sub-Continent at New Delhi, 24 December 1986.

members of the committee, requesting him to consider playing the sitar at one of the conference sessions. He declined the invitation to play at the stadium, but upon hearing of the purpose of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, the principles of unity that went into its lotus design, and upon seeing photographs of the Temple, he told the friends that he felt the prayer hall was imbued with a special and beautiful spirit, the unifying attributes of which he felt he could capture through a combination of his music, the Sacred Scriptures, and the bringing together of singers from around the world. Had they asked him to play at the Temple, he said, he would have gladly accepted. The friends were then faced with the dilemma of having such a wonderful offer and yet having to inform Pt. Shankar that only a capella music can be used in the Prayer Hall of a Bahá'í House of Worship, when the musician suddenly expressed that, in his opinion, only the voice of man should be used to praise God in such a spiritual place!

Pt. Shankar visited the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár shortly thereafter—a visit that confirmed the importance of the task at hand for him. He became completely enamoured with the beauty and purpose of the Temple, wholeheartedly setting to work on the music and expecting to conduct the choir, too. Alas, Pt. Shankar suffered a severe heart attack shortly before the week of the dedication. To the ceaseless gratitude and admiration of the friends, however, he composed the final passages of the music in his hospital bed, because of the great importance he attached to the Temple and its dedication. Mr. Asit Desai, Pt. Shankar's personal assistant, conducted the Hindi choir with great success. The three choirs raised their voices in glorious notes, melting the hearts and setting ablaze the souls of all those present.

Tears of joy and thanksgiving flowed as the beloved friends were imbued with the total effect of the transcendent Writings, the celestial music, and the majestic tabernacle itself, with its serene surroundings of pools, fountains, and gardens. In a cable to the Bahá'í World Centre, Amatu'l-Bahá expressed her feelings of the "...Inestimable privilege attend all three packed services heart our lotus Temple". Indeed, she was so inspirited by the choirs' performance that she personally invited the singers to the conference hall in the ancillary building, sharing her feelings, saying, "Today in this House of Worship I can begin to appreciate the meaning of Bahá'í choir and the true value of having only the human voice in the Prayer Hall in the Bahá'í Temples. I am grateful to each one of you. It was truly a heavenly performance." She requested that her gratitude be forwarded to Pt. Shankar as well.

No soul attending the functions of that day could have asked for anything more. Attendants, volunteers, organisers, guests; all left the tranquil grounds revitalised and emboldened, prepared to celebrate this latest victory of the Faith with two days of orations, drama, and music. Those who attended the final session of dedication had the added privilege of witnessing the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in full illumination—breathtaking and award-winning lighting that created the ethereal effect of a blooming flower floating on water. It was a symbolically apt coincidence that the close of the day's dedicatory observances saluted the beginning of the commemoration of the Birth of Christ. It was undoubtedly a Christmas Eve that the friends would always cherish.

The International Teaching Conference

Oh lotus in the heart!
Growing up from the soil
Of mother India,
Drawing deep springs
Up from the depths of Asia,
Rising a mighty fountain
Of mystic power unseen
Felt, almost heard,
As it over flows
From petals clasped in prayer
To carry the voices

Of the singers praising God
To be scattered far and wide
By the scattering angels—
Armfuls of prayer they carry
Like panniers of invisible flowers
Scattering the Words of God
Scattering His Glorious Words
Up to the snow clad Himalayas
Down to the lapping edge of the seas
A rain of perfume
A rain of blessing
It seeps into every crevice
Showers every jungle
Spatters the deserts' sands
Passes above every meadow
Blows into every cave!
The scattering angels
Rank on rank, file on file,
Deploying the promise
Of their Lord the Almighty.

—Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum

The two-day conference was both lively and enlightening. The sessions were chaired by Mrs. Shirin Fozdar, Dr. Singara Velum, Mr. Douglas Martin, Judge James Nelson, and Mr. Bharat Koirala, all of whom skilfully wove together the diverse programme of serious discussion and light cultural presentations.

All three of the blessed Hands of the Cause were again present at the conference. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum spoke further on the theme of the dedication and the significance of Asia's House of Worship. Mr. Sears shared an endearing presentation on the infallible station of the Universal House of Justice and that sacred Body's influence upon the world. Mr. Featherstone elevated the minds of the delegates with a penetrating talk on spiritual values.

A touching highlight of the conference was the sharing of the message of the late Hand of the Cause of God, Mr. Dhikru'lláh Khádim, by his wife, Mrs. Jávídukht Khádim. Mr. Khádim, who was to have been a keynote speaker at the conference, passed away just five weeks before the dedication.

The progress of the Cause in the world, in Asia, and in India was carefully assessed by three members of the Continental Board of Counsellors; Dr. Peter Khan, Mr. Vicente Samaniego, and Mrs. Zena Sorabjee, respectively. Counsellor Burháni'd-Dín Afshín spoke stirringly on the essential role of sacrifice in Bahá'í service.

At the first session of the conference the secretary of the National Assembly of India, Mr. Ramnik Shah, introduced representatives of the tribal people of the sub-continent who spoke eloquently of what the Faith of God meant to them and to their peoples. The Continental Pioneer Committee for Asia presented its goals in an informative address by Mr. Kueh Lip Kuang.

All of these conference talks were accented by cultural performances presented by artists from around the world. Every state of India was represented through indigenous folk or classical dances, songs, and drama; devotional programmes were given by the children attending the conference; the youth of India and Malaysia were specially featured at one session. Prominent Bahá'í recording artists entertained the friends with their music.

Throughout the days of the conference, extra-sessional activities occupied the friends and provided them with opportunities to give and share the joy and exuberance they imbibed from the dedication.

A complete tent city had been erected near the Temple grounds, accommodating four thousand of the believers who had come to attend the sessions. This unique complex played host to an outdoor cultural evening of colourful performances by a variety of ethnic groups. It also gave rise to numerous teaching opportunities as people were attracted by the unity shown amongst the Bahá'ís of different backgrounds.

A children's conference ran parallel to the plenary sessions, from 23 to 26 December, providing a full-time forum for the youngest Bahá'ís attending the dedication. Their programme included a special dedicatory service at the House of Worship on 26 December.

Prior to the dedication, on 22 December, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum had addressed the media at a press conference held at New Delhi's finest hotel. All the leading newspapers of India had been represented, resulting in at least two features, stories, or photographs appearing in each paper. The electronic media present for the dedication events included All India Radio, the British Broadcasting Corporation's Radio and Television, and other news service agencies whose materials were disseminated worldwide. A group of Bahá'í media professionals from Australia and the United States volunteered and excelled in dealing with the media, giving invaluable support to the dedication committee.

On 27 December the friends who could remain in New Delhi experienced a number of unique events that once again accented the remarkable functions of the preceding days. The day began with dawn prayers at the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, drawing the friends to that cherished House for one final offering of prayer before the gates were opened to the public of India and the world. And yet by mid-day, it seemed that the curiosity and wonderment of the public could not be contained any longer. Thousands of people, many of whom lived in the vicinity of the Temple and had witnessed the beautiful events of the days gone by, gathered at the Dr. Muhájir Gate and around the perimeter of the Temple lands until such a multitude had amassed that could be contained no longer. The gathering was let in and large groups were informed of the purpose of the Temple. The surprised visitors passed through the Prayer Hall with the greatest of respect, astonishing the friends with their reverence and their innate awareness of the sanctity of that precious Fane.

During the evening of the 27th, a public meeting and cultural programme was held, chaired by Mrs. Meherangiz Munsiff and including an introduction to the Faith by Mr. P.N. Mishra. The entertainment included a ballet, an indigenous American dance, a multi-media presentation on *The Promise of World Peace*, classical Indian dances, performances by American composers, and the singing of the theme song of the conference.



Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum on 23 December 1986, addressing the opening session of the International Teaching Conference held in Indira Gandhi Stadium in New Delhi, India.

Once again, the friends joined hearts, enjoying their final moments together before returning to their respective homes and sharing the spirit of those precious days with the rest of the Bahá'í world.

The remaining days of 1986 passed silently for India's mother Temple. The friends of New Delhi prepared themselves for an entirely new phase of Bahá'í service, the glories of which would only be manifest in the months and years ahead. That—still unbelievable—service began when the Lotus of Bahapur blossomed out to public worship on New Year's Day, 1987. And thus it remains, forever in bloom.

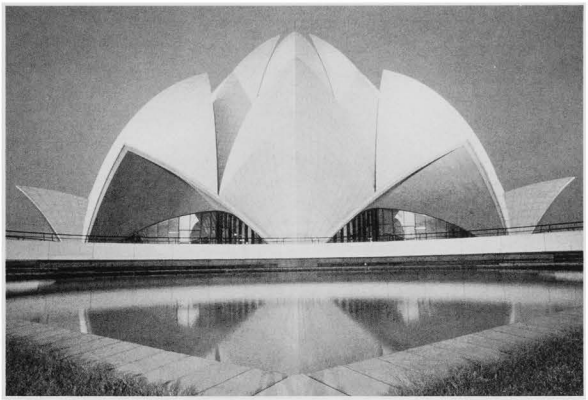
B. Message of the Universal House of Justice

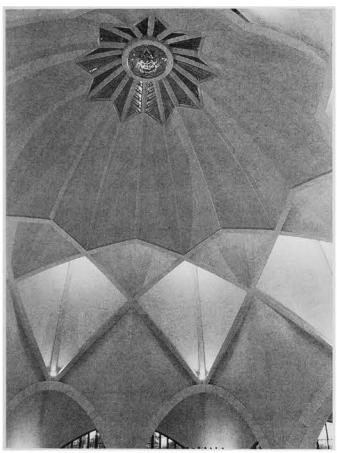
With feelings of intense joy and humble gratitude we hail congregation followers Bahá'u'lláh assembled in thousands from east and west on this memorable occasion inauguration Mother Temple Indian Subcontinent. This magnificent edifice raised Asiatic continent, cradle principal religions mankind, just dedicated for public worship, is befitting tribute to Bahá'u'lláh, Glory of God, testifying to His unfailing promises, manifold blessings and abiding protection vouchsafed generations His devoted followers who responded His call, toiled in His vineyard, offered their lives in path His love, sacrificed their comfort, wealth and position to promote His Cause, establish His institutions and unfurl His banner of unity and tranquility amongst mankind.

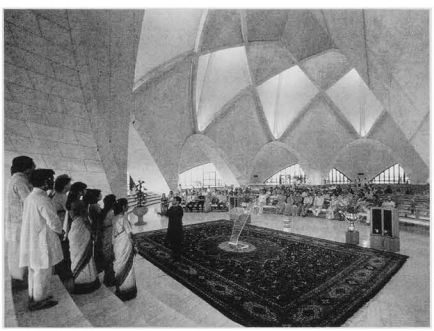
Outstanding achievements recent past when, thanks to courage, steadfastness and self-abnegation Bahá'í community land its birth, Faith Bahá'u'lláh has dramatically attracted worldwide attention, when communities Greatest Name have resolutely crossed threshold fourth epoch Formative Age Bahá'í Dispensation, when National Spiritual Assemblies, as evidence their maturation have, for first time, devised and embarked upon major national teaching plans as parts international enterprise, these achievements now crowned with signal victory completion Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Delhi from which praise of God will resound throughout world, confer particular blessing continent Asia, which has for so many years been deprived of this divine institution.

These successive victories bestowed upon small but vigorous Bahá'í community, animated by Holy Spirit, assured of unbounded confirmations from on high and motivated by love of Beloved of the world and Desire of the nations, will be step nearer glorious future presaging still greater triumphs Bahá'í community which will draw upon its hidden and great potential in promoting Faith and conferring immortal fame servants Blessed Beauty. We earnestly renew our fervent plea to those participating this festive occasion as well as to all Bahá'ís around world to arise in thanksgiving, consecrate themselves to arduous but eternally rewarding services to Cause God and concentrate their efforts and resources to execution and triumphant conclusion projected historical venture during critical brief years separating us from centenary Ascension Bahá'u'lláh.

The Lotus of Bahapur...







"...exquisite symbol of the purity, beauty, perfection, and mercy that comes to all men from their Creator..."



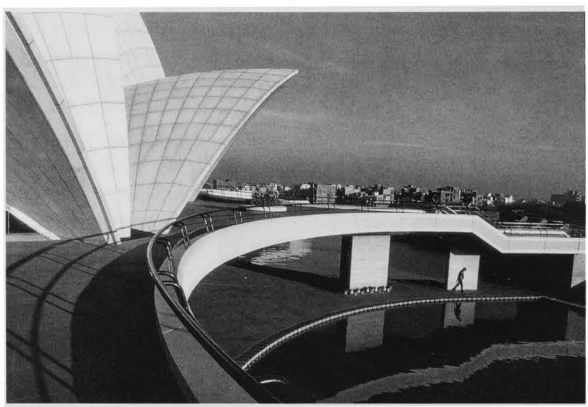
The Mother Temple of the Indian Sub-Continent.
The Dawning Place of the Mention of God.



In the heart of New Delhi, the Bahá'í Temple offers an oasis of silence and peace.

Like a lotus flower glimmering on a tranquil pond, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar was designed to represent that ancient symbol of purity.





Part of the Temple's beauty lies in its simplicity, with water and light being the only elements of ornamentation.

4. THE TEMPLE OF BAHAPUR AS SILENT TEACHER

ELIZA RASIWALA

IN the heart of New Delhi, the bustling capital of India, a lotus-shaped outline has etched itself on the consciousness of the city's inhabitants, capturing their imagination, fuelling their curiosity, and revolutionising the concept of worship. This is the Bahá'í Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, better known as the "Lotus Temple". With the break of every new day, an ever-rising tide of visitors surge to its doorsteps to savour its beauty and bask in its serenely spiritual atmosphere.

From its dedication to public worship in December 1986 to the end of the Six Year Plan in April 1992, this Mother Temple of the Indian sub-continent saw more than thirteen million people cross its threshold, making it the most visited edifice in India in a short span of five years—surpassing even the number of visitors to the Taj Mahal. From its high-perched pedestal, this "Lotus" cast its benevolent glance over vast green lawns and avenues covering an expanse of twenty-six acres of land. Its soothingly quiet Prayer Hall and tranquil surroundings touched the hearts of its numerous visitors, awakening in them a desire to trace its inspirational source and capture a bit of its peace for themselves.

The saga of this House of Worship on the Indian sub-continent began in 1953, when five adjacent plots of land were acquired at the behest of the beloved Guardian of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi, through the sacrificial contributions of one of the lovers of the Blessed Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh. Not until 1976, however, were plans made in earnest to raise a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the "Name of the Lord of Revelation". The edifice itself came into existence through the universal participation and sacrifices of Bahá'ís from every corner of the world. The period from April 1980 to December 1986 witnessed intense construction activity at Bahapur. The inscrutable wisdom of the Almighty had ordained the site of the "Dawning Place of the Remembrance of God" to be named Bahapur —"Abode of Light"—long before its acquisition by the National Spiritual Assembly of India.

Paradise of Abhá

In a land renowned for its temple architecture, Mr. Faríburz Ṣahbá, the architect of the Bahá'í Temple of Bahapur, was faced with a tremendous challenge—"to design a temple which would reflect the rich cultural heritage of India, and, at the same time be compatible with the cardinal principle of the Bahá'í Faith, that is, the unity of religions". The challenge also provided him with "a most unusual and remarkable chance of witnessing the power of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation". After prayers and an avid search throughout India for two years, he was guided towards a concept. As an evocative symbol of beauty and purity, representative of divinity, the lotus flower remains unsurpassed in the Indian iconography. Rising up pure and unsullied from stagnant water, the lotus represents the Manifestation of God. Undoubtedly inspired by the Spirit of the Greatest Name, the architect used this ancient Indian symbol to create a design of ethereal beauty and apparent simplicity, belying the complex geometry underlying its execution in concrete form.

Twentieth century architecture has been characterised by a high degree of technological prowess; however, it has been, by and large, unexceptional in aesthetic value. The Lotus Temple provides one of the rare exceptions with its remarkable fusion of ancient concept, modern engineering skill and architectural finesse, making it the focus

of attention amongst engineers and architects the world over.

The 27-petaled flower, which has an enormous expanse of exposed concrete surface—approximately 20,000 square metres—is clad in gleaming white marble on the outside with a brush-hammered inner surface executed manually, dispensing with the need for plaster or paint. A discerning eye would perceive that there is not a single straight line in the lotus structure. The thin concrete shells of the petals all have curved surfaces. The innermost bud of nine petals rises to an elevation of 34.3 metres above the inner podium. Each outer leaf is 15.4 metres wide and rises up to 22.5 metres, whilst the entrance leaf is 18.2 metres wide at the entrance and 7.8 metres high. Despite its massive dimensions, from afar it appears as fragile as a fresh bloom.

Awe-inspiring as these proportions are, the inside of the structure evokes no less awe. Spanning a diameter of 35 metres, the Central Hall, serving as the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Temple, with a seating capacity of 1,300, is adorned with nine arches placed at angular intervals of 40 degrees which bear almost the entire load of the superstructure. The interior dome is designed similarly to the innermost pattern of the flower, to facilitate natural light to filter in.

Circling the flower on the outside are nine pools of limpid water closely emulating the floating green leaves of the lotus, enhancing the Temple's beauty and providing natural ventilation for its interior. Glittering as a jewel at night in its specially designed external illumination, it gives one the feeling of a lotus afloat on water and not anchored to its foundations. With water and light the only elements of ornamentation, part of this edifice's beauty lies in its simplicity.

The thought of Pentelikon marble conjures up a vision of the Parthenon, the Temple of Athena, which was so greatly admired by the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi. It conjures up a vision of the magnificent Seat of the Universal House of Justice on Mount Carmel. The same Pentelikon marble, quarried in Greece, was used for the outer surface of the concrete petals. Ten thousand square metres of it was transported all the way to Italy to be cut by the renowned firm of Industria dei Marmi Vicentini into designed sections, to a precision which allowed perhaps only a millimetre of leeway for the curved surface of the petals. The complete confidence in the skill of the firm for such work was not misplaced; it was the same company which, back in 1955, had been entrusted by the Guardian with the dressing of the marble for the International Archives Building.

The architect, Mr. Ṣahbá, who doubled as Project Manager during the construction phase, was ably supported by a team of assistants, engineers, and workers, Bahá'í as well as non-Bahá'í, during the different phases of the project. The highly reputed firm of Flint and Neill, of London, collaborated as structural consultants. The main contractors were Messrs. Larsen and Toubro, and the ECC Construction Group of India (the two companies later merged), with their team of 40 engineers and supervisors. Together with other contractors and departmental labourers, about 800 workers toiled day and night to construct the House of Worship.

Without the use of sophisticated equipment, the extremely complex design called for the highest order of engineering ingenuity and traditional workmanship. No wonder then, that the Lotus Temple, as a symbol of faith and human endeavour expended in the path of God, became the recipient of accolades and world-wide acclaim. The first international distinction came its way soon after completion, when the International Federation for Religious Art and Architecture, based in the United States, conferred upon Mr. Ṣahbá the award for "excellence in religious art and architecture for 1987". In 1988, the edifice received its second international award, this time for its structural design from the Institute of Structural

Engineers of the United Kingdom. The citation award reads: "For producing a building so emulating the beauty of a flower and so striking in its visual impact". When Mr. James Armstrong, the President of the ISE, visited the Temple in 1990, he remarked that in retrospect their award seemed inadequate for so sublime a building. In 1988, the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America conferred its international award on the Temple for the excellence of its outdoor illumination. In 1990, the American Concrete Institute awarded the Temple for being one of the finest concrete structures built.

The value of beauty and symmetry in architecture by itself is not sufficient to immortalize a building. What is important is the response the structure evokes in the hearts of the people. Ravi Shankar, the sitar maestro, was "so deeply moved visiting this great beautiful place that I find no words to express my feelings". All that Dizzy Gillespie, the cherished Bahá'í and jazz musician could exclaim was, "I still can't believe it! It is God's work". An Indian diplomat was moved to describe the Temple as a "symbol of spiritual refinement of mankind". Indeed, the construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Bahapur was another significant chapter in the making of Bahá'í history on the Indian sub-continent.

Divine Sanctuary

Be obedient to the command of Bahá'u'lláh, enshrined in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, "O people of Creation, build ye houses as perfect as can be built on earth in the Name of Him who is the Lord of Revelation...", Bahá'ís have endeavoured to their utmost to build Houses of Worship as beautiful and distinctive as possible. They have been inspired by the divine outpourings from the Pen of the Ancient Beauty and the beloved Master and by the noble example set by the Guardian of the Faith who initiated the process of raising up the magnificent edifices of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh on God's Holy Mountain. The Houses of Worship in North and Central America, Europe, Africa, Australia, and Western Samoa each reflect the pristine beauty and freshness of the Faith and attract spiritual energies. This flowering of Bahá'í architecture was further perpetuated by the blossoming of the 'Lotus of Bahapur'.

The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in New Delhi, however, occupies a unique position. Not only does it embody the spiritual aspirations and basic beliefs of the world-wide Bahá'í community, but significantly, in a land of myriad religions, it has begun to be seen as providing a unifying link, bringing divergent thoughts into harmony by virtue of its principle of oneness—of God, religion, and mankind. This perhaps is the secret of its unabated popularity.

The formal dedication of the House of Worship by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum saw 8,000 Bahá'ís from all over the world gathered together in New Delhi. (See also p.731.) Their colour and diversity were reflective of the variety and beauty of flowers blossoming in the gardens of the Temple. Their example set a precedent for the forthcoming years when millions of visitors of all hues would throng to the Temple from every part of the globe.

Against the backdrop of a religious milieu which encourages the fragmentation of the Supreme Reality into innumerable gods and goddesses each personifying a specific attribute of the Almighty, the Bahá'í Temple, with its total absence of idols, elicits bewilderment as well as favourable response. When the Dr. Muhájir Gate (main entrance) was first opened to the general public on 1 January 1987, visitors flocked to the "Lotus Temple" out of sheer curiosity. The vast lawns, the massive white structure, the high-ceilinged Central Auditorium and a Temple without idols standing so near to the ancient "Kalkaji Temple" aroused the interest of all.

The Indian visitors, from the most urbane to the most simple rural folk, expressed perplexity at the absence of any deity. It became a challenge to explain to them the

all-pervasive nature of the Creator which defies deification. Many times guides helping to maintain decorum inside the Prayer Hall were startled into action by the astonished exclamations of visitors wondering aloud where the object of adoration was. Some of them, in their simplicity, paid obeisance to the lectern, surreptitiously placing a flower or two—an amusing as well as a touching sight! Awed by the beauty and grandeur of the edifice, they struggled to grasp the spiritual significance of this material structure.

As understanding dawned, a typical refrain became: "Few temples radiate the atmosphere of sublimity, peace and calm so necessary to elevate a devotee spiritually as the Bahá'í House of Worship". Other repeated comments included: "where there is silence, the spirit is eloquent..." and "...one feels one is at last entering into the estate of the soul, the state of stillness and peace". The visitors were aided in their efforts by the serenity of the Prayer Hall and the assistance of volunteer guides and staff who explained to them the raison-d'être of the Temple. The innate sense of reverence of the Indian for the Omnipresence often manifested itself in the act of reverently touching the steps leading into the Prayer Hall.

The visitors from the West often came to critically appraise a structure which had gained fame as a marvel of 20th century architecture. For them it was sometimes a grudging, sometimes a spontaneous realisation that the phenomenon called faith transcends logic and that the universal ethic of 'love' envelops all. They too were humbled at this altar of faith and love.

As the Temple's fame began to spread, it gained prominence in Indian official circles as well as amongst officials of several diplomatic missions based in Delhi, particularly the Embassies of the Soviet Union, Vietnam, and China, which gradually included the Temple on the itinerary of visiting dignitaries. Primarily, their interest was focused on the beautiful edifice with sceptical disregard for its spiritual significance. But slowly, their souls began to respond to the gentle nudgings of the ineffable atmosphere prevalent in the Temple, and the visitors from these countries began to respond to the Teachings of the Blessed Perfection.

Altogether, a remarkable number of dignitaries were received at the House of Worship between December 1986 and April 1992. If a list were to be compiled, it would read like a directory of prominent people of the world: Heads of State, Government Ministers, Ambassadors, Heads of foreign missions, Heads of the Armed Forces, diplomats, leaders of religion, scholars, academicians, and artists.

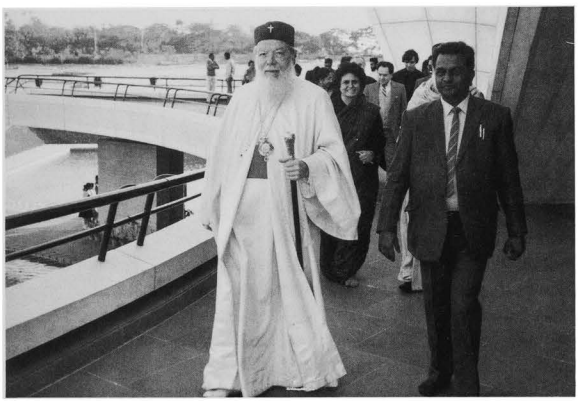
No matter what the identity of the visitors, from the Orient or the Occident, from North or South, of humble origins or exalted positions, all have been unanimous in their appreciation of the physical grandeur as well as the lofty purpose of the House of Worship. One of the visitors commented: "The most beautiful experience. Its magnificence, charm and glamour are awe-inspiring. It reflects the dream of all humanity to bring together a new civilisation for all people." One of the renowned visitors from India opined "Architecturally, artistically, ethically, the edifice is a paragon of perfection...."

The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is so impressive, both materially and spiritually, that it serves to enhance the authority, dignity, and meaning of the Cause of God. It effectively creates an atmosphere of openness, preparing the visitor to hear its message... "My visit has aroused great interest in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. That harmony is the primary purpose of religion is the teaching that has impressed most." "I am deeply impressed by the humanism and universalism of the Bahá'í religion."

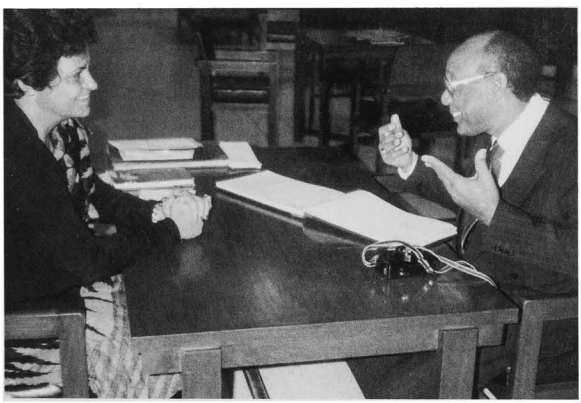
The aura of silence surrounding the Prayer Hall instills reverence. Some were moved by what they termed as 'eloquent silence'; others said that the 'divine atmosphere' inside touched the heart. All were affected in various degrees by the peace and beauty of the sanctum.



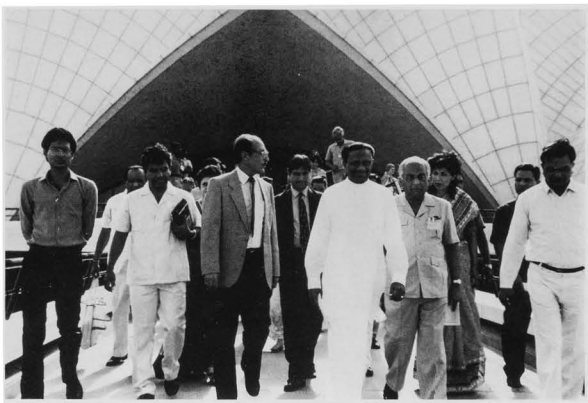
The British High Commissioner in Delhi, Sir David Goodall, being shown a booklet about the Faith during his visit to the Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi, India, in January 1989.



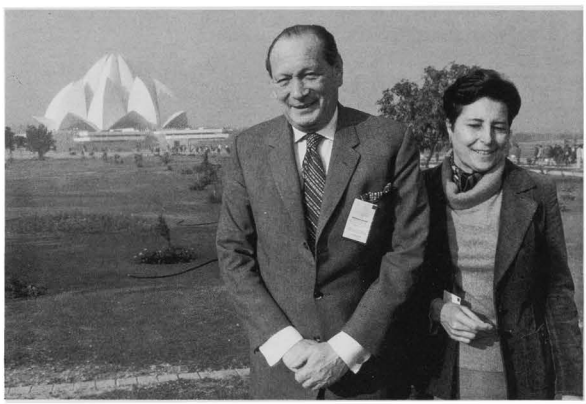
The Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, His Holiness Theoctist, being escorted to the Temple for an official visit in January 1989.



The Assistant Permanent Representative of Haiti to the United Nations, Mr. Roger Ravix, visiting the Temple on 17 February 1989.



The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Mr. R. Pramadasa, visiting the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in March 1988.



The Ambassador of the United States to India, Mr. John Dean, and his wife, Martine, visiting the Temple during its Dedication services in December 1986.



The Ambassador of Thailand to India, Mr. Nikorn Praisaeng-petch, with his family and a Bahá'í guide (seen right), during a visit to the House of Worship in April 1990.

The political events which began to unfold in the beginning of 1990 impelled many to seek answers for the intractable problems of the world generated by divisive ideologies. The principles of the Faith, with their stress on the unity of mankind, touched a responsive chord in many of the visitors. The sentiment that "with the conditions prevailing in the world today, it is very necessary that the teachings of the Bahá'í religion MUST spread" was echoed by many, while the realisation that "if we could spare a few moments of our precious time in this Temple, we will derive much solace in our life" became apparent to many others. For one student, a visit to this Temple "has given me peace of mind and mental security and satisfaction. I have decided to work for some good purpose, for the good of mankind".

Source of Great Interest to the Media

One reason for the immense popularity of the House of Worship of Bahapur is the fact that media attention, both Indian and foreign, focused on it even before its completion. *Construction News*, a technical journal from the United Kingdom, was the first to give the Lotus Temple the epithet of 'Taj Mahal of the 20th Century' in its April 1986 issue, a description that has been subsequently used by many other publications. The comparison brings to mind the words of the famous Indian poet and philosopher, Rabindranath Tagore, who described the Taj as "a teardrop on the cheek of eternity". Considering that the Bahá'í House of Worship is an affirmation and a celebration of man's love for his Creator and not a mausoleum, the Lotus Temple could be described as "a dewdrop on the brow of eternity".

The widely-read newspaper, *Indian Express*, in its issue of 20 November 1986, pointedly referred to the fact that "while the Taj is an expression of deep personal love, for the Bahá'ís the Temple symbolizes love between Man and God".

Saturday Times, a Times of India publication, announcing the approaching dedication of the House of Worship, printed the headline "Baha'i Temple: Nine day wonder" and then began the article with "The Bahá'í Faith has engineered an architectural masterpiece in Kalkaji, New Delhi...".

During the Six Year Plan, more than two hundred magazines and double that number of the most widely read newspapers featured articles and photographs highlighting the Temple's architecture and lauding its purpose. As a result, in the words of the Universal House of Justice, "its fame as an architectural wonder spread with speed as did its spiritual influence" and the principles of the Faith associated with it. Headlines ranged from "A Magnificent Lotus In Bloom For All" to "Jewel in the Indian Night", "A Unique Lotus Temple", "Relevance of Bahá'u'lláh to India", "A Message of Peace", and "The Bahá'í Way—Rich, Radiant Expositions".



The Vice-Minister of the Chinese Ministry of Broadcasting, Film and Television, H.E. Wang Feng, visiting the Temple on 20 October 1990.

That the Temple's renown rests squarely on its successfully capturing the universalist themes of the Bahá'í Faith can be gauged from the following excerpts from articles. In the September 1989 issue of *Day After*, an international news magazine published from New Delhi, an article says, "Apart from its outer architectural beauty, the intrinsic beauty and spiritual value conveyed by this great edifice is of immense significance... The universal religion established by Bahá'u'lláh can certainly provide the much-needed unity among the divisive forces in Indian society fighting against each other." *Gala*, a German magazine which carried an eight-page article with stunning colour photographs of the Temple, concluded its coverage with: "Five million people who call themselves Bahá'ís have taken for themselves a new purpose. It is founded on the conviction of the oneness of God, oneness of religion and oneness of mankind. Perhaps the Bahá'ís will succeed in making of this world that place long promised to the blessed. It could well look like the Temple in Delhi."

L'Arca, Italy's international magazine of architectural design and visual communications, said in its February 1988 issue: "Religion must be the cause of unity and harmony among men, states the fourth Bahá'í principle. And on the evidence of this temple...it seems to have fully succeeded."

Articles also threw light on the persecution of this religious minority in Írán. *Express Weekend*, a Saturday supplement of the *Indian Express*, carried the following: "Despite persecution in the country of its origin, the Bahá'í Faith preaches a message of universal brotherhood and love—a concept embodied in their exquisite new Lotus Temple in Delhi."

The Temple attracted significant media attention in Russia and China. A beautiful photograph of the Temple, illuminated at night, appeared on the cover of the popular magazine, *Soviet Women*, in January 1990. It had been taken by a press photographer of the U.S.S.R. Information Department in Delhi, who had especially been assigned this task. Subsequently, officials and journalists from Izvestia, Novosti Press, and the Tass Agency visited the House of Worship expressing their desire to write and publish articles on the Temple and the Bahá'í Faith. Thirty-three representatives from the Soviet Encyclopaedia Publishing House, International Department, spent considerable time at the Temple garnering information on the Faith which they said would be included in the section on Philosophy and Religion in the Russian Encyclopaedia. A Russian journalist, who had been very impressed during his first visit to the House of Worship, returned at the end of March 1991 to interview two Russian volunteers serving at the Temple. His interest was in their religious background and how and when they accepted the Faith.



A delegation of Soviet film artists in Delhi in January 1989 to attend an International Film Festival visiting the "Lotus of Bahapur".

It was in April 1990 that the first delegation of officials from the Chinese media—headed by the director of the Newspaper Department, the Press and Publication Administration of China—visited the Temple and spent two hours seeking detailed information on the Faith. Later, high officials from Xinhua News Agency sought answers to questions about the main aims of the Bahá'í Faith, how the Bahá'ís obtain funds, the Bahá'í administrative system, how the teachings are spread, and how unity will come about. Of course, questions about details of the Temple's architecture also figured prominently.

The Temple's first exposure on television occurred in January 1987 when footage from its dedication was broadcast on the Indian programme entitled Doordarshan. Later a number of television programmes featuring the Temple appeared in India, Russia, and China. "Essence of the Lotus", a film on the House of Worship, which also dealt with the social and economic development projects being operated in India and the effect of the Faith on the lives of its followers, was produced by Doordarshan and telecast on the national network on 5 November 1989.

In November 1988, a camera crew of the China Central Television, Beijing, went twice in one day to film the Temple for a documentary on India to be telecast for viewing by the Chinese people during the visit of the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, to China. One of the members of the television crew wrote in the Temple's Visitors' Book: "Hope, in China we see the same Bahá'í (Faith)". During the same month, a Chinese delegation led by a senior correspondent for Radio Beijing visited the House of Worship in New Delhi. Again in July 1990, another team from China Central Television came to film the House of Worship, followed by the visit of the Vice-Minister of the Chinese Ministry of Broadcasting, Film and Television. The team leader was so touched with the Bahá'í teachings that he said to his Indian counterpart, "I am sure one day the whole world will become Bahá'í".

"Right now the most popular religion in the Soviet Union is the Bahá'í Faith" was the extraordinary remark of an official of Soviet Television and Radio during his visit to the House of Worship. Similar sentiments were reiterated by other Russian tourists as a result of the officially televised presentation on the House of Worship all over the Soviet Union in the month of January 1991, a programme which had succeeded remarkably in capturing the beauty and purpose of the Temple. By the end of the year, another film crew, this time from the Central Studio of Documentary Films, spent three days capturing the Temple for its film "Gate to Heaven". The director of the film was certain that this Gate began from the Bahá'í Lotus Temple.

The Army of Light

The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár could not have served as the most effective "Silent Teacher" of the Indian sub-continent without the Bahá'í volunteers who came from far and near, willingly giving their time, sacrificing their means, fired with the love of the Blessed Beauty, to voice abroad His teachings to millions of thirsting souls. This "Army of Light" was the channel through which the radiance of Truth was reflected from this most divine Institution. What the spirit is to the physical body of man, so these volunteers, the servants of Bahá'u'lláh, were to the material structure of the Temple.

The House of Worship, in turn, reciprocated by becoming instrumental in effecting a transformation in all the Bahá'ís who came to serve selflessly at its threshold, providing a practical opportunity to implement the Teachings of the Blessed Perfection in their own lives. The New World Order, as envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, requires of man the transcendence of prejudices of all kinds, whether racial, geographical, intellectual, religious or of the sexes, which form a barrier to the realisation of the truth, *The*



The Ethiopian Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, H.E. Shimblis Adugna, and his wife, visiting the Bahá'í House of Worship on 4 January 1990.

earth is but one country and mankind its citizens. Service at the Temple provided for many the crucible in which these prejudices were melted away. The glorious bounty that the volunteers carried back home with them was this benediction of the Ancient Beauty: *My glory be with thee, O thou that callest upon My Name, whose eyes are directed towards My court and whose tongue uttereth the praise of thy Lord, the Beneficient.*

The Bahá'í youth serving as guides created enthusiasm in their contemporaries with the Message of the Faith through their freshness and spiritual vitality and impressed their seniors in age by their wisdom and maturity. The senior Bahá'ís brought their knowledge and experience to bear on their service, enkindling the light of faith in many hearts. But perhaps the most potent impact on the visitors was created by the presence of Bahá'ís from such diverse places as Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, the Commonwealth of Independent States (former U.S.S.R.), Germany, Holland, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Poland, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and the United States of America. They showed, in effect, that the proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, *Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch...* is not just a pious enunciation, but a practical reality.

The warm welcome accorded to every individual who entered the portals of the Temple, the lack of prejudice in the interaction of these volunteers with the visitors, the respectful acceptance of the religious beliefs of others, the attitude of equanimity displayed when conversing with those claiming to be atheists, agnostics, and materialists, earned for the Bahá'ís and the Bahá'í Faith the appreciation and respect of the people.

Teaching the Cause of God

In His Will and Testament, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote "Of all the gifts of God, the greatest is the gift of Teaching". The "Army of Light" at the Temple of Bahapur was bountifully endowed with this gift.

Besides the interaction with volunteer guides from different parts of the world speaking varied languages, the visitors were enlightened through a number of organized activities at the House of Worship. Regular prayer services, during which the Creative Word of God revealed through the different Holy Scriptures was read or chanted, heightened the spiritual experience at the Temple. The domed structure of the Prayer Hall lent itself perfectly to the melodious singing of the Temple choir which succeeded in elevating many a listener's soul to spiritual heights. In the basement of the Temple, an audio-visual presentation of the principles of the Faith titled "Century of Light" and illuminating exhibits evoked many very positive responses.

Great efforts went into the dissemination of *The Promise of World Peace* and "Bahá'í Message" in most of the major languages of the world. The stock of free literature was constantly being updated, reprinted, and replenished. Imagine the delight of travellers, thousands of miles away from their homes, who came to this Temple in India and unexpectedly received information brochures in their own languages, be they Norwegian, Croatian, Pushtu, Bahasa, Polish, Dutch, Italian, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean or Spanish! This generated a lot of warmth and goodwill in the visitors. Equally important was the dissemination of "The Principles of the Faith" in the regional languages of India.

Books about the Faith and Bahá'í prayers in various Indian and foreign languages were available for sale to allow visitors to acquaint themselves with the Bahá'í teachings in some detail in the privacy of their homes. Postcards and calendars of the Temple were also eagerly sought as souvenirs. These were the only exceptions made to the rule of no commercial activity in the Temple premises. In fact, all services at the Temple, including guided tours around the House of Worship, were free of cost—a fact highly appreciated by the visitors.

One of the most effective means of extending the healing message of Bahá'u'lláh to the people visiting the Temple was through talks given by Temple guides to groups of people in the ancillary building's Conference Hall. Tourist, student, professional, and family groups were all invited to hear about the House of Worship and the reason for its existence. Depending upon the interest of these visitors, the briefing sessions lasted from fifteen minutes to more than an hour. Often, opportunities arose to clarify misconceptions or misinformation, and the visitors left with a better appreciation of their visit to the Bahá'í House of Worship.

The Library, with its selection of literature ranging from Bahá'í history to the Holy Writings of the Faith and a selection of scriptures from other religions, provided the ideal place for a study of the Bahá'í Faith.

All these served as potent tools in sharing the Cause of God.

Homage

The physical sun, resplendent in its halo of light, has traversed the expanse of heaven from east to west in its fiery chariot. As it pauses awhile on the horizon before plunging out of sight, it casts its luminous shadow on a white 'Lotus', standing majestically on its red pedestal, giving it a warm glow. There is an intangible aura of fulfilment surrounding it. Ark-like, it had ridden the waves of people swirling around it during the day with composure. The last ripples are slowly moving away, casting their longing glances behind at the 'Lotus' as if beseeching it to take them back into its fold.

A lone figure stands, surveying the scene, feeling the Temple's silent reassurance that it will be there a thousand years hence to welcome them back at the break of every dawn. She wonders at the mysterious attraction of this monumental 'Lotus' which is the Dawning Place of the Remembrance of God. Impelled by an inner urge to ponder over the profound statement of Bahá'u'lláh, "This (Bahá'í) Revelation is endowed with such power that it will act as a lodestone for all the nations and kindreds of the earth", she realises that the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, as one of the Central Institutions of the Faith, is endowed with a power and potency that no other material structure can ever hope to possess. As she recalls the Prophetic Words, "no place is there nor can there be, for anyone to flee to", her soul is uplifted on the wings of certitude.

VI
THE NON-POLITICAL CHARACTER OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF SHOGHI EFFENDI

THE Bahá'í principles clearly define and explain the non-political character of the Faith, and serve as a guide for conduct in the relations of Bahá'ís with one another, with their fellow men, and in their relations with different departments of the civil government. A brief summary of excerpts from the Bahá'í Writings will show that non-participation in political affairs is one of the basic axioms of Bahá'í action.

The keynote to this theme may be found in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. He has stated:

That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race. The Great Being saith: Blessed and happy is he that ariseth to promote the best interests of the peoples and kindreds of the earth. In another passage He hath proclaimed: It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.[1]

Sow not the seeds of discord among men, and refrain from contending with your neighbour... Open, O people, the city of the human heart with the key of your utterance....

That which beseemeth you is the love of God, and the love of Him Who is the Manifestation of His Essence, and the observance of whatsoever He chooseth to prescribe unto you, did ye but know it.

Say: Let truthfulness and courtesy be your adorning. Suffer not yourselves to be deprived of the robe of forbearance and justice, that the sweet savours of holiness may be wafted from your hearts upon all created things. Say: Beware, O people of Bahá, lest ye walk in the ways of them whose words differ from their deeds. Strive that ye may be enabled to manifest to the peoples of the earth the signs of God, and to mirror forth His commandments. Let your acts be a guide unto all mankind, for the professions of most men, be they high or low, differ from their conduct. It is through your deeds that ye can distinguish yourselves from others. Through them the brightness of your light can be shed upon the whole earth...[2]

The aim of the faith is to produce the reality of virtue in souls and evolve institutions capable of dealing with social matters justly, in the light of the revealed truths. This is entirely distinct from the province filled by partisan civil institutions.

'Abdu'l-Bahá counselled the Bahá'ís from the early beginnings of the American Bahá'í community not to discuss political affairs.

[1] *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976) p. 250.

[2] ibid., pp. 303–305.

...All conferences (i.e., all consultation and discussion) *must be regarding the matters of benefit, both as a whole and individually, such as the guarding of all in all cases, their protection and preservation, the improvement of character, the training of children, etc.*

If any person wishes to speak of government affairs, or to interfere with the order of Governors, the others must not combine with him because the Cause of God is withdrawn entirely from political affairs; the political realm pertains only to the Rulers of those matters; it has nothing to do with the souls who are exerting their utmost energy to harmonizing affairs, helping character and inciting (the people) *to strive for perfections. Therefore no soul is allowed to interfere with* (political) *matters, but only in that which is commanded.*[3]

With the development of a world-wide administrative structure within the Bahá'í Faith, institutions have been set up in national and local areas which assure the unity and integrity of the Faith. In unfolding these administrative institutions Shoghi Effendi has reiterated the importance of the non-political character of the Bahá'í teachings in a letter written 21 March 1932 to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada:

'...I feel it, therefore, incumbent upon me to stress, now that the time is ripe, the importance of an instruction which, at the present stage of the evolution of our Faith, should be increasingly emphasized, irrespective of its application to the East or to the West. And this principle is no other than that which involves the non-participation by the adherents of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, whether in their individual capacities or collectively as local or national Assemblies, in any form of activity that might be interpreted, either directly or indirectly, as an interference in the political affairs of any particular government. Whether it be in the publications which they initiate and supervise; or in their official and public deliberations; or in the posts they occupy and the services they render; or in the communications they address to their fellow-disciples; or in their dealings with men of eminence and authority; or in their affiliations with kindred societies and organizations, it is, I am firmly convinced, their first and sacred obligation to abstain from any word or deed that might be construed as a violation of this vital principle. Theirs is the duty to demonstrate, on one hand, their unqualified loyalty and obedience to whatever is the considered judgment of their respective governments.

'Let them refrain from associating themselves, whether by word or by deed, with the political pursuits of their respective nations, with the policies of their governments and the schemes and programmes of parties and factions. In such controversies they should assign no blame, take no side, further no design, and identify themselves with no system prejudicial to the best interests of that worldwide Fellowship which it is their aim to guard and foster. Let them beware lest they allow themselves to become the tools of unscrupulous politicians, or to be entrapped by the treacherous devices of the plotters and the perfidious among their countrymen. Let them so shape their lives and regulate their conduct that no charge of secrecy, of fraud, of bribery or of intimidation may, however ill-founded, be brought against them. Let them rise above all particularism and partisanship, above the vain disputes, the petty calculations, the transient passions that agitate the face, and engage the attention, of a changing world. It is their duty to strive to distinguish, as clearly as they possibly can, and if needed with the aid of their elected representatives, such posts and functions as are either diplomatic or political from those that are purely administrative in character, and which under no circumstances are affected by the changes and chances that political activities and party government, in every

[3] *Bahá'í World Faith*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976) p. 407.

land, must necessarily involve. Let them affirm their unyielding determination to stand, firmly and unreservedly, for the way of Bahá'u'lláh, to avoid the entanglements and bickerings inseparable from the pursuits of the politician, and to become worthy agencies of that Divine Polity which incarnates God's immutable Purpose for all men.

'It should be made unmistakably clear that such an attitude implies neither the slightest indifference to the cause and interests of their own country, nor involves any insubordination on their part to the authority of recognized and established governments. Nor does it constitute a repudiation of their sacred obligation to promote, in the most effective manner, the best interests of their government and people. It indicates the desire cherished by every true and loyal follower of Bahá'u'lláh to serve, in an unselfish, unostentatious and patriotic fashion, the highest interests of the country to which he belongs, and in a way that would entail no departure from the high standards of integrity and truthfulness associated with the teachings of his Faith.

'As the number of the Bahá'í communities in various parts of the world multiplies and their power, as a social force, becomes increasingly apparent, they will no doubt find themselves increasingly subjected to the pressure which men of authority and influence, in the political domain, will exercise in the hope of obtaining the support they require for the advancement of their aims. These communities will, moreover, feel a growing need of the good-will and the assistance of their respective governments in their efforts to widen the scope, and to consolidate the foundations, of the institutions committed to their charge. Let them beware lest, in their eagerness to further the aims of their beloved Cause, they should be led unwittingly to bargain with their Faith, to compromise with their essential principles, or to sacrifice, in return for any material advantage which their institutions may derive, the integrity of their spiritual ideals. Let them proclaim that in whatever country they reside, and however advanced their institutions, or profound their desire to enforce the laws, and apply the principles, enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh, they will, unhesitatingly, subordinate the operation of such laws and the application of such principles to the requirements and legal enactments of their respective governments. Theirs is not the purpose, while endeavoring to conduct and perfect the administrative affairs of their Faith, to violate, under any circumstances, the provisions of their country's constitution, much less to allow the machinery of their administration to supersede the government of their respective countries.

'It should also be borne in mind that the very extension of the activities in which we are engaged, and the variety of the communities which labor under divers forms of government, so essentially different in their standards, policies, and methods, make it absolutely essential for all those who are the declared members of any one of these communities to avoid any action that might, by arousing the suspicion or exciting the antagonism of any one government, involve their brethren in fresh persecutions or complicate the nature of their task. How else, might I ask, could such a far-flung Faith, which transcends political and social boundaries, which includes within its pale so great a variety of races and nations, which will have to rely increasingly, as it forges ahead, on the good-will and support of the diversified and contending governments of the earth—how else could such a Faith succeed in preserving its unity, in safeguarding its interests, and in ensuring the steady and peaceful development of its institutions?

'Such an attitude, however, is not dictated by considerations of selfish expediency, but is actuated, first and foremost, by the broad principle that the followers of Bahá'u'lláh will, under no circumstances, suffer themselves to be involved, whether as individuals or in their collective capacities, in matters that would entail the slightest departure from

the fundamental verities and ideals of their Faith. Neither the charges which the uninformed and the malicious may be led to bring against them, nor the allurements of honours and rewards, will ever induce them to surrender their trust or to deviate from their path. Let their words proclaim, and their conduct testify, that they who follow Bahá'u'lláh, in whatever land they reside, are actuated by no selfish ambition, that they neither thirst for power, nor mind any wave of unpopularity, of distrust or criticism, which a strict adherence to their standards might provoke.'[4]

And again: 'The Bahá'í Faith as it forges ahead throughout the western world and particularly in lands where the political machinery is corrupt and political passions and prejudices are dominant among the masses, should increasingly assert and demonstrate the fact that it is non-political in character, that it stands above the party, that is it neither apathetic to national interests nor opposed to any party or faction, and that it seeks through administrative channels, rather than through diplomatic and political posts to establish, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the capacity, the sane patriotism, the integrity and high-mindedness of its avowed adherents. This is the general and vital principle; it is for the National Representatives to apply it with fidelity and vigour.'[5]

These instructions raised the question whether Bahá'ís should vote in any public election. A Tablet revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Mr. Thornton Chase was sent to the Guardian, and the following reply was received, dated 26 January 1933:

'The Guardian fully recognizes the authenticity and controlling influence of this instruction from 'Abdu'l-Bahá upon the question. He, however, feels under the responsibility of stating that the attitude taken by the Master (that is, that American citizens are in duty bound to vote in public elections) implies certain reservations. He, therefore, lays it upon the individual conscience to see that in following the Master's instruction no Bahá'í vote for an officer nor Bahá'í participation in the affairs of the Republic shall involve acceptance by that individual of a programme or policy that contravenes any vital principle, spiritual or social, of the Faith.' The Guardian added to this letter the following postscript: 'I feel it incumbent upon me to clarify the above statement, written in my behalf, by stating that no vote cast, or office undertaken, by a Bahá'í should necessarily constitute acceptance, by the voter or office holder, of the entire programme of any political party. No Bahá'í can be regarded as either a Republican or Democrat, as such. He is, above all else, the supporter of the principles enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh, with which, I am firmly convinced, the programme of no political party is completely harmonious.'[6]

In a letter dated 16 March 1933, the Guardian sent these further details:

'As regards the non-political character of the Bahá'í Faith, Shoghi Effendi feels that there is no contradiction whatsoever between the Tablet (to Thornton Chase, referred to above) and the reservations to which he has referred. The Master surely never desired the friends to use their influence towards the realization and promotion of policies contrary to any of the principles of the Faith. The friends may vote, if they can do it, without identifying themselves with one party or another. To enter the arena of party politics is surely detrimental to the best interests of the Faith and will harm the Cause. It remains for the individuals to so use their right to vote as to keep aloof from party politics, and always bear in mind that they are voting on the merits of the individual, rather than because he belongs to one party or another. The matter must be made perfectly clear to the individuals, who will be left free to exercise

[4] Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publihsing Trust, 1982) pp. 63–67.

[5] U.S. *Bahá'í News*, December 1932.

[6] U.S. *Bahá'í News*, April 1933.

their discretion and judgement. But if a certain person does enter into party politics and labours for the ascendancy of one party over another, and continues to do it against the expressed appeals and warnings of the Assembly, then the Assembly has the right to refuse him the right to vote in Bahá'í elections.'[7]

That this principle, as do all Bahá'í principles, has world-wide application is made clear by Shoghi Effendi in a letter dated 11 March 1936.

'The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh has assimilated, by virtue of its creative, its regulative and ennobling energies, the varied races, nationalities, creeds and classes that have sought its shadow, and have pledged unswerving fealty to its cause. It has changed the hearts of its adherents, burned away their prejudices, stilled their passions, exalted their conceptions, ennobled their motives, co-ordinated their efforts, and transformed their outlook. While preserving their patriotism and safeguarding their lesser loyalties, it has made them lovers of mankind, and the determined upholders of its best and truest interests. While maintaining intact their belief in the Divine origin of their respective religions, it has enabled them to visualize the underlying purpose of these religions, to discover their merits, to recognize their sequence, their interdependence, their wholeness and unity, and to acknowledge the bond that vitally links them to itself. This universal, this transcending love which the followers of the Bahá'í Faith feel for their fellow-men, of whatever race, creed, class or nation, is neither mysterious nor can it be said to have been artificially stimulated. It is both spontaneous and genuine. They whose hearts are warmed by the energizing influence of God's creative love cherish His creatures for His sake, and recognize in every human face a sign of His reflected glory.

'Of such men and women it may be truly said that to them "every foreign land is a fatherland, and every fatherland a foreign land." For their citizenship, it must be remembered, is in the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh. Though willing to share to the utmost the temporal benefits and the fleeting joys which this earthly life can confer, though eager to participate in whatever activity that conduces to the richness, the happiness and peace of that life, they can, at no time, forget that it constitutes no more than a transient, a very brief stage of their existence, that they who live it are but pilgrims and wayfarers whose goal is the Celestial City, and whose home the Country of never-failing joy and brightness.

'Though loyal to their respective governments, though profoundly interested in anything that affects their security and welfare, though anxious to share in whatever promotes their best interests, the Faith with which the followers of Bahá'u'lláh stand identified is one which they firmly believe God has raised high above the storms, the divisions, and controversies of the political arena. Their Faith they conceive to be essentially non-political, supra-national in character, rigidly non-partisan, and entirely dissociated from nationalistic ambitions, pursuits, and purposes. Such a Faith knows no division of class or of party. It subordinates, without hesitation or equivocation, every particularistic interest, be it personal, regional, or national, to the paramount interests of humanity, firmly convinced that in a world of inter-dependent peoples and nations the advantage of the part is best to be reached by the advantage of the whole, and that no abiding benefit can be conferred upon the component parts if the general interests of the entity itself are ignored or neglected.[8]

The unity of Bahá'í action throughout the world is further emphasized in a letter from Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'ís of Vienna, written in 1947 through his secretary, in which he said in part:

[7] ibid., January 1934.

[8] *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 197–198.

'...We Bahá'ís are *one* the world over; we are seeking to build up a new world order, divine in origin. How can we do this if every Bahá'í is a member of a different political party—some of them diametrically opposite to each other? Where is our unity then? We would be divided because of politics, against ourselves and this is the opposite of our purpose. Obviously if one Bahá'í in Austria is given freedom to choose a political party and join it, however good its aims may be, another Bahá'í in Japan or America, or India, has the right to do the same thing and he might belong to a party the very opposite in principle to that which the Austrian Bahá'í belongs to. Where would be the unity of the Faith then? These two spiritual brothers would be working against each other because of their political affiliations (as the Christians of Europe have been doing in so many fratricidal wars). The best way for a Bahá'í to serve his country and the world is to work for the establishment of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order, which will gradually unite all men and do away with divisive political systems and religious creeds...'[9]

In the *Will and Testament* of 'Abdu'l-Bahá the Bahá'ís are instructed to *obey and be the well-wishers of the governments of the land, regard disloyalty unto a just king as disloyalty to God Himself and wishing evil to the government a transgression of the Cause of God.*[10] In explanation of this statement, the Guardian wrote, in a letter dated 3 July 1948:

'Regarding your question about politics and the Master's Will: the attitude of the Bahá'ís must be twofold, complete obedience to the government of the country they reside in, and no interference *whatsoever* in political matters or questions. What the Master's statement really means is obedience to a duly constituted government, whatever that government may be in form. We are not the ones, as individual Bahá'ís, to judge our government as just or unjust—for each believer would be sure to hold a different viewpoint, and within our own Bahá'í fold a hotbed of dissension would spring up and destroy our unity. We must build up our Bahá'í system, and leave the faulty systems of the world to go their way. We cannot change them through becoming involved in them; on the contrary, they will destroy us.'[11]

Another application of this principle concerns the right, propriety or usefulness of exerting Bahá'í influence for the enactment of legislative measures reflecting more or less the purpose of some Bahá'í principle or teaching. For example, should a Bahá'í community, local or national, lend the name of the Bahá'í Faith to support legislation which seeks to abolish race and religious discrimination in matters of industrial employment, or intervene when measures concerning military training of youth are before a legislature?

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States has stated that, 'as a general policy subject to the Guardian's specific direction in special cases, Bahá'ís and their administrative institutions should not feel obligated to adopt a "Bahá'í" attitude or course of action on matters of civil legislation. Our teachings and basic principles speak for themselves. These we can always declare and set forth with all possible energy whenever occasions arise. But a truth which is sundered from its sustaining spiritual Source, lifted out of its organic relationship to the Bahá'í community, broken off from the other truths, and made subject to the storm and stress of secular controversy, is no longer a truth with which we can usefully have concern. It has become an enactment to be carried out by institutions and groups committed to other enactments, other aims and purposes and methods not in conformity with the "Divine Polity" entrusted to those alone who give full

[9] U.S. *Bahá'í News*, April 1949.

[10] Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1960), p. 4.

[11] U.S. *Bahá'í News*, January 1949.

loyalty to Bahá'u'lláh. Far better for us to strive to mirror forth radiantly the individual and community virtues of a new era than to hope that others than believers will achieve the holy mission of the Faith. We Bahá'ís have in reality accepted a world order and not merely a new decalogue of truths or commands. On the other hand, obedience to civil government is an obligation laid by Bahá'u'lláh upon every Bahá'í.'[12]

Shoghi Effendi points out, as a guiding principle of Bahá'í conduct, that 'in connection with their administrative activities, no matter how grievously interference with them might affect the course of the extension of the Movement, and the suspension of which does not constitute in itself a departure from the principle of loyalty to their Faith, the considered judgement and authoritative decrees issued by their responsible rulers must, if they be faithful to Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's express injunctions, be thoroughly respected and loyally obeyed. In matters, however, that vitally affect the integrity and honour of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh and are tantamount to a recantation of their faith and repudiation of their innermost belief, they [the Bahá'ís] are convinced, and are unhesitatingly prepared to vindicate by their life-blood the sincerity of their conviction, that no power on earth, neither the arts of the most insidious adversary nor the bloody weapons of the most tyrannical oppressor, can ever succeed in extorting from them a word or deed that might tend to stifle the voice of their conscience or tarnish the purity of their faith.[13]

'Small wonder if by the pen of Bahá'u'lláh these pregnant words, written in anticipation of the present state of mankind, should have been revealed: *It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens.* And again, *That one indeed is a man who today dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race. Through the power released by these exalted words*, He explains, *He hath lent a fresh impulse, and set a new direction, to the birds of men's hearts, and hath obliterated every trace of restriction and limitation from God's Holy Book.*'[14]

[12] *The Bahá'í World*, vol. X, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1949) pp. 278–279.

[13] *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 162.

[14] *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 198.

VII
RELATIONSHIP TO GOVERNMENT

1. LOYALTY TO GOVERNMENT

WHEN a great social crisis sweeps through a civilization, moral values become impaired and moral issues confused. In the crisis of our time, members of the Bahá'í Faith go on record as firmly upholding the principle of loyalty to government.

Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, laid upon His followers this sacred obligation: '*In every country where any of this people* (Bahá'ís) *reside, they must behave towards the government of that country with loyalty, honesty and truthfulness.*'[1] The Bahá'í Writings state further, '*The essence of the Bahá'í spirit is that in order to establish a better social order and economic condition, there must be allegiance to the laws and principles of government.*'[2] Should a Bahá'í act contrary to the laws of the government his conduct would be considered reprehensible before God, for members of this community '*should at all times manifest ... truthfulness and sincerity*' and '*be constant in ... faithfulness and trustworthiness.*'[3]

In elucidation of this cardinal spiritual and social principle 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the authorized Interpreter of the Faith, has written: '*According to the direct and sacred command of God we* (the Bahá'ís) *are forbidden to utter slander, are commanded to show forth peace and amity, are exhorted to rectitude of conduct, straight-forwardness and harmony with all the kindreds and peoples of the world. We must obey and be the well-wishers of the governments of the land...*'[4]

The followers of Bahá'u'lláh are exhorted to be 'good citizens'.[5] The Bahá'í teachings foster in the individual adherent an appreciation of authority and an intelligent and balanced patriotism. The Bahá'í is encouraged to 'serve in an unselfish, unostentatious and patriotic fashion, the highest interests of the country to which he belongs, and in a way that would entail no departure from the high standards of integrity and truthfulness associated with the teachings of his Faith.'[6]

Allegiance to government, far from being a concept to which the Bahá'í gives lip service, is a spiritual obligation reinforced by and inseparable from those teachings of Bahá'u'lláh's on which His followers pattern their individual spiritual development. '*Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts*,'[7] Bahá'u'lláh enjoins.

Without integrity of character in its citizens and without loyalty to government, a nation will find itself torn asunder and unable to function as an organic society. Not only do the Bahá'í teachings obligate members to be loyal to their government—they also specifically forbid them from taking part in subversive political and social movements.

1 Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978) p. 22–23.

2 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publihsing Trust, 1982) p. 238.

3 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978) p. 294.

4 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1968) p. 8.

5 *Selections*, p. 319.

6 Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982) p. 65.

7 *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976) p. 285.

2. THE BAHÁ'Í VIEW OF PACIFISM

IN a letter published in U.S. *Bahá'í News*, January 1938, Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith wrote through his Secretary:

'With reference to the absolute pacifists or conscientious objectors to war: their attitude, judged from the Bahá'í standpoint, is quite anti-social and due to its exaltation of the individual conscience leads inevitably to disorder and chaos in society. Extreme pacifists are thus very close to anarchists, in the sense that both of these groups lay an undue emphasis on the rights and merits of the individual. The Bahá'í conception of social life is essentially based on the subordination of the individual will to that of society. It neither suppresses the individual nor does it exalt him to the point of making him an anti-social creature, a menace to society. As in everything, it follows the "golden mean". The only way society can function is for the minority to follow the will of the majority.

'The other main objection to the conscientious objectors is that their method of establishing peace is too negative. Non-cooperation is too passive a philosophy to become an effective way for social reconstruction. Their refusal to bear arms can never establish peace. There should first be a spiritual revitalization which nothing, except the Cause of God, can effectively bring to every man's heart.'

3. SUMMARY OF THE GUARDIAN'S INSTRUCTIONS ON THE OBLIGATIONS OF BAHÁ'ÍS IN CONNECTION WITH MILITARY SERVICE.

IMMEDIATELY prior to World War II the Bahá'í position on military training and service, and the obligation of individual Bahá'ís to apply for and maintain a non-combatant status when this is possible under the laws of their country, were clearly stated by the Guardian of the Faith. On 27 November 1938 he instructed his secretary to write to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles: 'He has noted your Assembly's request for his advice as to what forms of national service the friends may volunteer for in times of emergency. While the believers, he feels, should exert every effort to obtain from the authorities a permit exempting them from active miliary service in a combatant capacity, it is their duty at the same time, as loyal and devoted citizens, to offer their services to their country in any field of national service which is not specifically aggressive or directly military. Such forms of national work as air raid precaution service, ambulance corps, and other humanitarian work or activity of a non-combatant nature, are the most suitable types of service the friends can render, and which they should gladly volunteer for, since in addition to the fact that they do not involve any violation of the spirit or principle of the Teachings they constitute a form of social and humanitarian service which the Cause holds sacred and emphatically enjoins.'

A further query from that National Spiritual Assembly dated 9 May 1939 evoked the following reply on 4 June 1939, in amplification of the above principles:

'His instructions on this matter, conveyed in a letter addressed to your Assembly during last November, were not intended for that particular occasion, but were meant for present conditions, and for any such emergencies as may arise in the immediate future.

'It is still his firm conviction that the believers, while expressing their readiness to unreservedly obey any directions that the authorities may issue concerning national service in time of war, should also, and while there is yet no outbreak of hostilities, appeal to the government for exemption from active military service in a combatant capacity, stressing the fact that in doing so they are not prompted by any selfish considerations, but by the sole and supreme motive of upholding the Teachings of their Faith, which make it a moral obligation for them to desist from any act that would involve them in direct warfare with their fellow-humans of any other race or nation.

'The Bahá'í Teachings, indeed, condemn, emphatically and unequivocally, any form of physical violence, and warfare in the battlefield is obviously a form, and perhaps the worst form which such violence can assume.

'There are many other avenues through which the believers can assist in times of war by enlisting in services of a non-combatant nature—services that do not involve the direct shedding of blood—such as ambulance work, anti-air raid precaution service, office and administrative works, and it is for such types of national service that they should volunteer.

'It is immaterial whether such activities would still expose them to dangers, either at home or in the front, since their desire is not to protect their lives, but to desist from any acts of wilful murder.

'The friends should consider it their conscientious duty, as loyal members of the Faith, to apply for such exemption, even though there may be slight prospect of their obtaining the consent and approval of the authorities to their petition.'

After the war, on 20 July 1946, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States enquired of the Guardian whether the existence of the United Nations in its present form changed the attitude of the Bahá'ís toward military duties which might require the taking of human life. The Guardian's reply, written by his secretary, was:

'As there is neither an International Police Force nor any immediate prospect of one coming into being, the Bahá'ís should continue to apply, under all circumstances, for exemption from any military duty that necessitates the taking of life. There is no justification for any change of attitude on our part at the present time.'

The Guardian therefore has made it clear that it is obligatory and not an optional matter for all Bahá'ís to apply for and maintain a non-combatant status if this is possible under the law. Where such a law exists, Bahá'ís cannot voluntarily enlist in any branch of the armed forces in which they would be subject to orders to engage in the taking of human life.

The Universal House of Justice amplified this later statement:

'There is no objection to a Bahá'í enlisting voluntarily in the armed forces of a country in order to obtain a training in some trade or profession, provided that he can do so without making himself liable to undertake combatant service.

'There is likewise no objection to a Bahá'í seeking or continuing a career in the armed forces, provided that he can do so without making himself liable to undertake combatant service.'

VIII
BAHÁ'Í CALENDAR, FESTIVALS AND DATES OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. FOREWORD

Excerpt from *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* by Dr. J.E. Esslemont

AMONG different peoples and at different times many different methods have been adopted for the measurement of time and fixing of dates, and several different calendars are still in daily use, e.g., the Gregorian in Western Europe, the Julian in many countries of Eastern Europe, the Hebrew among the Jews and the Muḥammadan in Muslim countries.

The Báb signalized the importance of the dispensation which He came to herald by inaugurating a new calendar. In this, as in the Gregorian calendar, the lunar month is abandoned and the solar year is adopted.

The Bahá'í year consists of 19 months of 19 days each (i.e., 361 days), with the addition of certain 'intercalary days' (four in ordinary and five in leap years) between the eighteenth and nineteenth months in order to adjust the calendar to the solar year. The Báb named months after the attributes of God. The Bahá'í New Year, like the ancient Persian New Year, is astronomically fixed, commencing at the March equinox (21 March), and the Bahá'í era commences with the year of the Báb's declaration (i.e., 1844 A.D., 1260 A.H.).

In the not far distant future it will be necessary that all peoples in the world agree on a common calendar.

It seems, therefore, fitting that the new age of unity should have a new calendar free from the objections and associations which make each of the older calendars unacceptable to large sections of the world's population, and it is difficult to see how any other arrangement could exceed in simplicity and convenience that proposed by the Báb.

2. BAHÁ'Í FEASTS, ANNIVERSARIES AND DAYS OF FASTING

- Feast of Riḍván (Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh), 21 April–2 May 1863.
- Feast of Naw-Rúz (New Year), 21 March.
- Declaration of the Báb, 23 May 1844.
- The Day of the Covenant, 26 November.
- Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, 12 November 1817.
- Birth of the Báb, 20 October 1819.
- Birth of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 23 May 1844.
- Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, 29 May 1892.
- Martyrdom of the Báb, 9 July 1850.
- Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 28 November 1921.
- Fasting season lasts 19 days beginning with the first day of the month of 'Alá', 2 March— the Feast of Naw-Rúz follows immediately after.

3. Bahá'í Holy Days on Which Work Should be Suspended

- The first day of Riḍván,
- The ninth day of Riḍván,
- The twelfth day of Riḍván,
- The anniversary of the declaration of the Báb,
- The anniversary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh,
- The anniversary of the birth of the Báb,
- The anniversary of the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh,
- The anniversary of the martyrdom of the Báb,
- The feast of Naw-Rúz.

NOTE:

'Abdu'l-Bahá, in one of His tablets addressed to a believer of Nayríz, Persia, has written the following: *Nine days in the year have been appointed on which work is forbidden. Some of these days have been specifically mentioned in the Book. The rest follow as corollaries to the Text...Work on the Day of the Covenant* (Fête Day of 'Abdu'l-Bahá), *however, is not prohibited. Celebration of that day is left to the discretion of the friends. Its observation is not obligatory. The days pertaining to the Abhá Beauty* (Bahá'u'lláh) *and the Primal Point* (the Báb), *that is to say these nine days, are the only ones on which work connected with trade, commerce, industry and agriculture is not allowed. In like manner, work connected with any form of employment, whether governmental or otherwise, should be suspended.*

As a corollary of this Tablet it follows that the anniversaries of the birth and ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá are not to be regarded as days on which work is prohibited. The celebration of these two days, however, is obligatory.

Bahá'ís in East and West, holding administrative positions, whether public or private, should exert the utmost effort to obtain special leave from their superiors to enable them to observe these nine holy days.

4. Additional Material Gleaned from Nabíl's Narrative Regarding the Bahá'í Calendar

THE Badi' Calendar (Bahá'í Calendar) has been taken by me from the *Kitáb-i-Asmá*, one of the works written by the Báb. As I have observed in these days that certain believers are inclined to regard the year in which Bahá'u'lláh departed from Baghdád to Constantinople as marking the beginning of the Badi' Calendar, I have requested Mírzá Áqá Ján, the amanuensis of Bahá'u'lláh, to ascertain His will and desire concerning this matter. Bahá'u'lláh answered and said: 'The year sixty A.H.[1] (1844 A.D.), the year of the Declaration of the Báb, must be regarded as the beginning of the Badi' Calendar.' The Declaration of the Báb took place on the evening preceding the fifth day of Jamádíyu'l-Avval, of the year 1260 A.H. It has been ordained that the solar calendar be followed and that the vernal equinox, the day of Naw-Rúz, be regarded as the New Year's Day of the Badi' Calendar. The year sixty, in which the fifth day of Jamádíyu'l-Avval coincided with the sixty-fifth day after Naw-Rúz, has accordingly been regarded as the first year of the Badi' Calendar. As in that year, the day of Naw-Rúz, the vernal equinox, preceded by sixty-six days the date of the Declaration of the Báb, I have therefore,

[1] (i.e., 1260 A.H.)

throughout my history, regarded the Naw-Rúz of the year sixty-one A.H. (the Naw-Rúz immediately following the Declaration of the Báb) as the first Naw-Rúz of the Badi' Calendar. I have accordingly considered the Naw-Rúz of this present year, the year 1306 A.H., which is the 47th solar year after the Declaration of the Báb, as the 46th Naw-Rúz of the Badi' Calendar.

Soon after Bahá'u'lláh had left the fortress of 'Akká and was dwelling in the house of Malik, in that city, He commanded me to transcribe the text of the Badi' Calendar and to instruct the believers in its details. On the very day in which I received His command, I composed, in verse and prose, an exposition of the main features of that calendar and presented it to Him. The versified copy, being now unavailable, I am herein transcribing the version in prose. The days of the week are named as follows:

Days	*Arabic Name*	*English Name*	*Translation*
1st	Jalál	Saturday	Glory
2nd	Jamál	Sunday	Beauty
3rd	Kamál	Monday	Perfection
4th	Fiḍál	Tuesday	Grace
5th	'Idál	Wednesday	Justice
6th	Istijlál	Thursday	Majesty
7th	Istiqlál	Friday	Independence

The names of the months, which are the same as the days of each month, are as follows:

Month	*Arabic Name*	*Translation*	*First Days*
1st	Bahá	Splendour	March 21
2nd	Jalál	Glory	April 9
3rd	Jamál	Beauty	April 28
4th	'Aẓamat	Grandeur	May 17
5th	Núr	Light	June 5
6th	Raḥmat	Mercy	June 24
7th	Kalimát	Words	July 13
8th	Kamál	Perfection	August 1
9th	Asmá'	Names	August 20
10th	'Izzat	Might	September 8
11th	Mashíyyat	Will	September 27
12th	'Ilm	Knowledge	October 16
13th	Qudrat	Power	November 4
14th	Qawl	Speech	November 23
15th	Masá'il	Questions	December 12
16th	Sharaf	Honour	December 31
17th	Sulṭán	Sovereignty	January 19
18th	Mulk	Dominion	February 7
19th	'Alá'	Loftiness	March 2

Ayyám-i-Há (Intercalary Days) 26 February to 1 March inclusive—four in ordinary and five in leap years.

The first day of each month is thus the day of Bahá, and the last day of each month the day of 'Alá'.

The Báb has regarded the solar year, of 365 days, 5 hours, and 50 odd minutes, as consisting of 19 months of 19 days each, with the addition of certain intercalary days. He has named the New Year's Day, which is the day of Naw-Rúz, the day of Bahá, of the month of Bahá. He has ordained the month of 'Alá' to be the month of fasting, and has decreed that the day of Naw-Rúz should mark the termination of that period. As the Báb did not specifically define the place for the four days and the fraction of a day in the Badi' Calendar, the people of the Bayán were at a loss as to how they should regard them. The revelation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in the city of 'Akká resolved this problem and settled the issue. Bahá'u'lláh designated those days as the Ayyám-i-Há and ordained that they should immediately precede the month of 'Alá', which is the month of fasting. He enjoined upon His followers to devote these days to feasting, rejoicing, and charity. Immediately upon the termination of these intercalary days, Bahá'u'lláh ordained the month of fasting to begin. I have heard it stated that some of the people of the Bayán, the followers of Mírzá Yaḥyá, have regarded these intercalary days as coming immediately after the month of 'Alá', thus terminating their fast five days before the day of Naw-Rúz. This, notwithstanding the explicit text of the Bayán which states that the day of Naw-Rúz must needs be the first day of the month of Bahá, and must follow immediately after the last day of the month of 'Alá'. Others, aware of this contradiction, have started their fasting on the fifth day of the month of 'Alá', and included the intercalary days within the period of fasting.

Every fourth year the number of the intercalary days is raised from four to five. The day of Naw-Rúz falls on the 21st of March only if the vernal equinox precedes the setting of the sun on that day. Should the vernal equinox take place after sunset, Naw-Rúz will have to be celebrated on the following day.

The Báb has, moreover, in His Writings revealed in the Arabic tongue, divided the years following the date of His Revelation into cycles of 19 years each. The names of the years in each cycle are as follows:

1. Alif	A.
2. Bá'	B.
3. Ab	Father.
4. Dál	D.
5. Báb	Gate.
6. Váv	V.
7. Abad	Eternity.
8. Jád	Generosity.
9. Bahá	Splendour.
10. Ḥubb	Love.
11. Bahháj	Delightful.
12. Javáb	Answer.
13. Aḥad	Single.
14. Vahháb	Bountiful.
15. Vidád	Affection.
16. Badí	Beginning.
17. Bahí	Luminous.
18. Abhá	Most Luminous.
19. Váḥid	Unity.

Each cycle of 19 years is called Váḥid. Nineteen cycles constitute a period called Kull-i-Shay'. The numerical value of the word Váḥid is 19, that of Kull-i-Shay' is 361. Váḥid signifies unity, and is symbolic of the unity of God.

The Báb has, moreover, stated that this system of His is dependent upon the acceptance and good-pleasure of '*Him Whom God shall make manifest*'. One word from Him would suffice either to establish it for all time, or to annul it forever.

For instance, the date of the 21st of April, 1930, which is the first day of Riḍván, and which according to the Kitab-i-Aqdas must coincide with the '*thirteenth day of the second Bahá'í month,*' and which fell this year (1930) on Monday, would, according to the system of the Badi' Calendar, be described as follows:

'The day of Kamál, the day of Qudrat, of the month of Jalál, of the year Bahháj, of the fifth Váḥid, of the first Kull-i-Shay'.'

5. HISTORICAL DATA GLEANED FROM NABÍL'S NARRATIVE REGARDING BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

	Works Revealed During This Period	*Houses Occupied During This Period*
A. BAGHDÁD Arrival latter part Jamádiyu'th-Thání, 1269 A.H. 12 March–10 April 1853 A.D. Departure for Sulaymáníyyih on Wednesday, 10 April 1854 A.D.—Rajab 12, 1270 A.H.	Kullu't-Ṭa'ám	House of Ḥájí 'Alí-Madad in old Baghdád) House of Sulaymán-i-Ghannám
B. SULAYMÁNÍYYIH Before reaching Sulaymáníyyih, He lived for a time on the Sar-Galú mountain. During His absence from Baghdád His family transferred their residence from House of Ḥájí 'Alí-Madad to that of Sulaymán-i-Ghannám. Nabíl arrived at Baghdád 6 months after Bahá'u'lláh's departure for Sulaymáníyyih.	Prayers Qaṣídiy-i-Varqá'íyyih Sáqí-Az-Ghayb-i-Baqá	
C. BAGHDÁD Arrived from Sulaymáníyyih on Wednesday, 19 March 1856 A.D.—Rajab 12, 1272 A.H. Departure from Baghdád for Constantinople, Wednesday afternoon (first day of Riḍvan), 22 April 1863 A.D.—Dhi'l-Qa'dih 3, 1279 A.H. Short stay in Mazra'iy-i-Vashsháh during above period to celebrate Naw-Rúz ended with departure on Thursday, 26 March 1863 A.D.—Shavvál 5, 1279 A.H.	Tafsír-i-Ḥurúfát-i-Muqaṭṭa'ih Ṣaḥífiy-i-Shaṭṭíyyih Haft-Vádí (Seven Valleys) Tafsír-i-Hú Lawḥ-i-Ḥúríyyih Javáhiru'l-Asrár Kitáb-i-Íqán Kalimát-i-Maknúnih (Hidden Words) Subḥána-Rabbíya'l-A'lá Shikkar-Shikan-Shavand Ḥúr-i-'Ujáb Halih-Halih-Yá Bishárat Ghulámu'l-Khuld Az-Bágh-i-Iláhí Báz-Áv-u-Bidih-Jámí Malláḥu'l-Quds (Holy Mariner)	

C. BAGHDÁD *(continued)*	*Works Revealed During This Period*	*Houses Occupied During This Period*
Arrival at Garden of Najíbíyyih (Garden of Riḍván), 22 April 1863 A.D.—Dhi'l-Qa'dih 3, 1279 A.H.	Súriy-i-Ṣabr revealed on first day of Riḍván	
Arrival of Bahá'u'lláh's Family at Garden of Riḍván on eighth day after first of Riḍván.		
Departure from Garden of Riḍván for Constantinople last day of Riḍván at noon on Sunday, 3 May 1863 A.D.—Dhi'l-Qa'dih 14, 1279 A.H.		
Length of overland journey from Garden of Riḍván to Sámsún on Black Sea: 110 days		

Firayját (arrived early afternoon—stayed seven days) arrived on Sunday, 3 May 1863 A.D.—Dhi'l-Qa'dih 14, 1279 A.H. (Firayját is about 3 miles distant from Baghdád)
Judaydih,
Dilí-'Abbás,
Qarih-Tapih,
Saláḥíyyih (stayed 2 nights),
Dúst-Khurmátú,
Táwuq,
Karkúk (stayed 2 days),
Irbíl,
Záb River,
Barṭallih,
Mosul (stayed 3 days),
Zákhú,
Jazírih,
Nuṣaybín
Ḥasan-Áqá,
Márdin
Díyár-Bakr,
Ma'dan-Mis,
Khárpút (stayed 2 or 3 days),
Ma'dan-Nuqrih,
Dilík-Tásh,
Sívas,
Ṭúqát
Amasia (stayed 2 days),
Iláhíyyih (while approaching Sámsún, 'Lawḥ-i-Hawdaj' was revealed), (last day of overland journey),
Sámsún (stayed 7 days), Black Sea port; sailed in a Turkish steamer about sunset for Constantinople,
Sinope (arrived next day about noon), Black Sea port: stayed for a few hours,
Anyábulí (arrived next day)

D. CONSTANTINOPLE	*Works Revealed During This Period*	*Houses Occupied During This Period*	*Duration*
Arrival at noon on Sunday, 16 August 1863 A.D.—Rabí'u'l-Avval 1, 1280 A.H.	Subḥánáka-Yá-Hú Lawḥ-i-'Abdu'l-'Azíz Va-Vukalá	House of Shamsí Big (near the mosque of Khirqiy-í-Sharífh)	1 month

D. CONSTANTINOPLE *(continued)*	*Works Revealed During This Period*	*Houses Occupied During This Period*	*Duration*
Length of sea voyage from Sámsún to Constantinople: 3 days. Length of journey from Constantinople to Adrianople: 12 days.		House of Vísí Páshá (3 storey, near Sulṭán Muḥammad Mosque)	3 months

1. Kúchik-Chakmachih (3 hours from Constantinople—spent one night)
2. Búyúk-Chakmachih (arrived about noon)
3. Salvarí
4. Birkás
5. Bábá-Iskí

E. ADRIANOPLE	*Works Revealed During This Period*	*Houses Occupied During This Period*	*Duration*
Arrival on Saturday, 12 December 1863 A.D. —Rajab 1, 1280 A.H.	Súriy-i-Aṣḥáb Lawḥ-i-Ḥaqq I	1. Khán-i-'Aráb (caravanserai, two-storey, near house of 'Izzat-Áqá)	3 nights
Length of stay: 4 years, 8 months, 22 days.	Lawḥ-i-Ḥaqq II		
	Kitáb-i-Badí' Súriy-i-Mulúk (Tablet of the Kings)	2. House in Murádíyyih quarter, near Takyiy-i-Mawlaví	1 week
Departure from Adrianople on Wednesday, 12 August 1868 A.D.— Rabí-'u'th-Thání 22, 1285 A.H.	Súriy-i-Amr Súriy-i-Damm Alváḥ-i-Laylatu'l-Quds Munájátháy-i-Ṣiyám (Prayers for Fasting)	3. House in Murádíyyih quarter, near house (2) 4. Khániy-i-Amru'lláh (several storeys, near Sulṭán-Salím Mosque)	1 week
	Lawḥ-i-Sayyáh	5. House of Riḍá Big	1 year
	Lawḥ-i-Nápulyún I (First Tablet to Napoleon III)	6. House of Amru'lláḥ (3-storey, north of Sulṭán-Salím Mosque)	3 months?
	Lawḥ-i-Sulṭán (Tablet to the Sháh of Persia) Lawḥ-i-Nuqṭih	7. House of 'Izzat-Aqá	11 months

1. Uzún-Kuprí
2. Káṣhánih (arrived about noon, Láwḥ-i-Ra'ís [Tablet of Ra'ís] was revealed in this place)
3. Gallipoli (length of journey from Adrianople to Gallipoli about 4 days)
   (after a few days' stay sailed before noon in Austrian steamer for Alexandria, Egypt)
4. Madellí (arrived about sunset—left at night)
5. Smyrna (stayed 2 days, left at night)
6. Alexandria (arrived in the morning, trans-shipped and left in the morning of the following day for Haifa)
7. Port Said (arrived morning, left the same day at night)
8. Jaffa (left at midnight)
9. Haifa (arrived in the morning, landed and after a few hours left on a sailing vessel for 'Akká)

F. 'AKKÁ	*Works Revealed During This Period*	*Houses Occupied During This Period*	*Duration*
Arrival on Monday, 31 August 1868 A.D.—Jamádíyu'l-Avval 12, 1285 A.H.	Kitáb-i-Aqdas Lawḥ-i-Nápulyún II (Second Tablet to Napoleon III)	1. Barracks	2 years, 2 months, 5 days
	Lawḥ-i-Malikih (Tablet to Queen Victoria)	2. House of Malik 3. House of Ráb''ih	3 months
Purest Branch died on Thursday, 23 June 1870 A.D.—Rabí'u'l-Avval 23, 1287 A.H.	Lawḥ-i-Malik-i-Rús (Tablet to the Czar) Súriy-i-Haykal Lawḥ-i-Burhán Lawḥ-i-Ru'yá Lawḥ-i-Ibn-i-Dhi'b (Epistle to the Son of the Wolf)	4. House of Manṣúr 5. House of 'Abbúd (where Kitáb-i-Aqdas was revealed) 6. Mazra'ih	2 or 3 months
Passed away 29 May 1892 A.D.	Lawḥ-i-Páp (Tablet to the Pope)	7. Qaṣr (Mansion, where He passed away)	

6. DATES OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE IN THE RISE OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

Birth of Bahá'u'lláh.....12 November 1817
Birth of the Báb .....20 October 1819
Declaration of the Mission of the Báb in Shíráz.....23 May 1844
Birth of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.....23 May 1844
Departure of the Báb on His pilgrimage to Mecca..... September 1844
Arrival of the Báb in Máh-Kú, Ádhirbáyján .....Summer 1847
Incarceration of the Báb in Chihríq, Ádhirbáyján.....April 1848
Conference of Badasht ..... June 1848
Interrogation of the Báb in Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján.....July 1848
Martyrdom of the Báb in Tabríz, Ádhirbáyján..... 9 July 1850
Attempt on the life of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh .....15 August 1852
Imprisonment of Bahá'u'lláh in the Síyáh-Chál of Ṭihrán .....August 1852
Banishment of Bahá'u'lláh to Baghdád ... .12 January 1853
Withdrawal of Bahá'u'lláh to Kurdistán.. .....10 April 1854
Return of Bahá'u'lláh from Kurdistán. .....19 March 1856
Declaration of the Mission of Bahá'u'lláh... .....22 April 1863
Arrival of Bahá'u'lláh in Constantinople. .....16 August 1863
Arrival of Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople... .....12 December 1863
Departure of Bahá'u'lláh from Adrianople.. .....12 August 1868
Arrival of Bahá'u'lláh in 'Akká ....31 August 1868
Death of the Purest Branch.....23 June 1870
Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh.....29 May 1892
First public reference to the Faith in America ..... 23 September 1893
Establishment of the first Bahá'í centre in the West .....February 1894
Arrival of the first group of Western pilgrims in 'Akká ..... 10 December 1898
Arrival of the Báb's remains in the Holy Land ..... 21 January 1899
Reincarceration of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 'Akká.. .....20 August 1901
Commencement of the construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of 'Ishqábád ....28 November 1902
Release of 'Abdu'l-Bahá from His incarceration..... September 1908
Interment of the Báb's remains on Mt. Carmel .....21 March 1909
Opening of the first American Bahá'í Convention.....21 March 1909
'Abdu'l-Bahá's departure from Egypt..... ..... September 1910
'Abdu'l-Bahá's arrival in London .... 4 September 1911
'Abdu'l-Bahá's arrival in America..... .....11 April 1912
Laying of the corner-stone of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Wilmette, Ill., by 'Abdu'l-Bahá .....1 May 1912
Second visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Europe and tour through the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Hungary and Austria ....December 1912 to June 1913
'Abdu'l-Bahá's return to the Holy Land..... .....5 December 1913
Unveiling of the Tablets of the Divine Plan.. .....April 1919
Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá 28 November 1921
Verdict of the Islamic Court in Egypt pronouncing the Faith to be an independent religion.....10 May 1925
Martha Root's first interview with Queen Marie of Romania ..... 30 January 1926
Resolution of the Council of the League of Nations upholding the claim of the Bahá'í community to the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdád .....4 March 1929

Passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf..... .....15 July 1932
Inception of the First American Seven-Year Plan ..... April 1937
Celebration of the Centenary of the Declaration of the Báb..... 23 May 1944
Inception of the Second American Seven-Year Plan ..... April 1946
Centenary of the Martyrdom of the Báb ....9 July 1950
Completion of the Arcade and Parapet of the Shrine of the Báb on Mt. Carmel..... .....9 July 1950
Inauguration of the Centenary Celebrations of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh's Prophetic Mission .....October 1952
First Bahá'í Intercontinental Teaching Conference, Kampala, Uganda, Africa .... 12–18 February 1953
Inauguration of the Ten-Year International Bahá'í Teaching and Consolidation Plan ..... April 1953
Bahá'í dedication of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Wilmette, Illinois..... 1 May 1953
Public dedication..... 2 May 1953
All-American Bahá'í Intercontinental Teaching Conference, Chicago... 3–6 May 1953
Third Bahá'í Intercontinental Teaching Conference, Stockholm, Sweden..... .....21–26 July 1953
Fourth Bahá'í Intercontinental Teaching Conference, New Delhi, India..... .....7–15 October 1953
Completion of the construction of the Shrine of the Báb.....October 1953
Expansion of the Faith to 100 additional countries and islands by settlement of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh 1953–1954
Completion of exterior of International Archives Building.....1957
Passing of Shoghi Effendi 4 November 1957
The holding of five Intercontinental Teaching Conferences successively in Kampala, Sydney, Wilmette, Frankfurt, Djakarta/Singapore 1958
First dependency of a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, the Bahá'í home for the Aged, opened in Wilmette, Illinois, U.S.A. ... January 1959
Dedication of the Mother Temple of Africa, Kampala, Uganda ..... 14 January 1961
Dedication of the Mother Temple of the Antipodes, Sydney, Australia16 September 1961
Completion of the Ten Year Crusade..... ..... April 1963
First election of the Universal House of Justice . ..... 21 April 1963
First Bahá'í World Congress in London, in celebration of the "Most Great Jubilee" ... . April 1963
Launching of the Nine Year Plan April 1964
Dedication of the Mother Temple of Europe, near Frankfurt, Germany.....4 July 1964
Celebration of the Centenary of the Revelation of the *Súriy-i-Mulúk*..... .....September/October 1967
Opening of period of proclamation of the Cause, inaugurated by the presentation by the Universal House of Justice to 140 Heads of State a special edition of *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*.....October 1967
The holding of six Intercontinental Conferences simultaneously in Panama City, Wilmette, Sydney, Kampala, Frankfurt, and New Delhi .....October 1967
His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II of Western Samoa, embraced the Faith .... 19 February 1968
Establishment of the Continental Board of Counsellors ..... 21 June 1968
First Oceanic Conference, Palermo, Sicily ... . 23–25 August 1968
Commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the arrival of Bahá'u'lláh in the Holy Land .....31 August 1968
The Bahá'í International Community accredited with consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council ....27 May 1970
Commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the death of Mírzá Mihdí, 'The Purest Branch' ..... 23 June 1970
The holding of eight Oceanic and Continental Conferences in La Paz, Rose Hill (Mauritius), Monrovia, Singapore, Kingston, Suva, Sapporo, and Reykjavik..... between August 1970 and September 1971

Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá 28 November 1971

Completion of the erection of the Obelisk on Mt. Carmel ..... 19 December 1971

Dedication of the Mother Temple of Latin America, Panama ..... 29 April 1972

Adoption by the Universal House of Justice of its Constitution.....26 November 1972

Publication by the Universal House of Justice of *A Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* ....April 1973

Establishment of the International Teaching Centre..... 5 June 1973

Launching of the Five Year International Teaching Plan..... April 1974

His Highness the Malietoa Tanumafili II of Western Samoa visited the resting place of Shoghi Effendi..... 12 September 1976

The holding of eight Intercontinental Conferences in Helsinki, Anchorage, Paris, Nairobi, Hong Kong, Auckland, Bahia (Brazil) and Mérida (Mexico)..... ..... between July 1976 and January 1977

Commemoration of the Centenary of the termination of Bahá'u'lláh's Confinement in the prison-city of 'Akká.....June 1977

Launching of the Seven Year International Teaching Plan..... April 1979

Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the passing of Bahíyyih Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf .....July 1982

The holding of five International Teaching Conferences in Dublin, Quito (Ecuador), Lagos, Canberra, and Montreal..... ..... between June and September 1982

Occupation by the Universal House of Justice of its Permanent Seat ..... January 1983

Opening of the House of 'Abdu'lláh Pásha to pilgrims ....April 1983

Dedication of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Pacific Islands ..... 1 September 1984

Inauguration on United Nations Day of period of dissemination to Heads of State and to the general public of *The Promise of World Peace*, a letter addressed by the Universal House of Justice to 'The Peoples of the World' .....24 October 1985

Launching of the Six Year International Teaching Plan..... April 1986

Dedication of the Mother Temple of the Indian subcontinent, New Delhi, India ....23–27 December 1986

Establishment of the Bahá'í Office of the Environment.....26 October 1989

Establishment of first Bahá'í Chair for World Peace at the University of Maryland in the United States ..... January 1990

Launching of the supplementary Two Year Teaching Plan for Eastern Europe, the USSR and Mongolia ..... April 1990

Commencement of re-construction and completion of the Terraces of the Shrine of the Báb ..... 23 May 1990

Commencement of construction of the Centre for the Study of the Texts.....17 June 1991

Establishment of the Office of Ḥuqúqu'lláh in the Holy Land .....November 1991

PART FIVE

In Memoriam

IN MEMORIAM

DR. UGO GIACHERY
1896–1989

Rich in history and embellished by the arts, fortunate in her traditions, inhabited by citizens open to human relations—such was the city of Palermo, capital of Sicily, that welcomed to the world, on 13 May 1896, Ugo Giachery, the fifth in a family of nine children.

"I believe I can recall events from the age of three," recounted Ugo Giachery, "when I registered in my memory episodes and facts that I did not then fully understand, but which with the passing of time seemed like blossoms which would open like magic; so it was for me a world of delights and wonders!"[1]

He continued:

> My father was born on the 6th of August 1863; the name given to him, Uberto, is a Teutonic name meaning 'Resplendent Soul' —and so he was![2] ...Some of the happiest recollections that come to my memory are of the hours we passed with him when we were young—he loved us immensely; he was always available for us. He seized every opportunity to increase our general knowledge; he talked to us of the universe, of the solar system, of geophysics, of trees, plants, flowers and herbs.[3] ...Among his friends were three famous sculptors, with one of whom he had been at school, and to whose studio we were often taken ... I recall that although I was very small, I was enchanted to see how from blocks of marble would come forth faces, human figures, animals I could recognize, or imaginary creatures.[4]
>
> Then came the War, the First World War. 'Not every evil is harmful', as the ancient proverb has it, for I was wounded and obtained a government scholarship which permitted me to graduate in chemistry.[5]... Not knowledge, nor his so-called culture, make a man; but rather his dreams, his imagination, his vision of an ordered future where reason triumphs over force and compromise.[6]

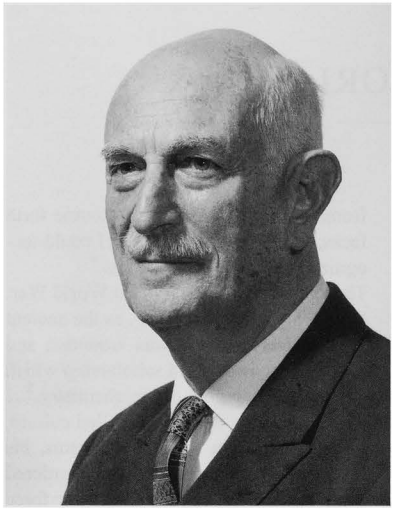
Dr. Giachery also wrote about how he met his wife, Angeline:

> ...I met Angeline in the home of mutual friends [in the United States]; she was gentle, gracious, cultured, elegant and happy. In her presence one seemed to sense the fragrance of pines and firs of the Värmland forest, the most romantic and beautiful region of Sweden. We met frequently and a mutual affection developed. On 24 February 1926 we were married in New York City.[7]

Angeline was already a Bahá'í when she met Dr. Giachery, and towards the end of the 1920s or the beginning of the 1930s Dr. Giachery first wrote to the Guardian. A door had opened, allowing a glimpse of a path; nobody could have imagined how far it would lead!

Dr. Giachery served as chairman of the Teaching Committee of the State of New

1 Ugo Giachery, *Come Ricordo Emerico Giachery*, Nov.–Dec. 1981, p.1.
2 ibid., p. 3.
3 ibid., pp. 9–10.
4 ibid., p. 18.
5 ibid., p. 23.
6 ibid., p. 26.
7 *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVIII (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1986), p. 718.



Dr. Ugo Giachery

York, and as treasurer of the Local Spiritual Assembly of New York City. And when the Guardian, through historic messages, sounded the signal for the inauguration of the second Seven Year Plan, to carry across the ocean to the shores of the Old World the healing influence of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, Dr. and Mrs. Giachery sold their home and went as pioneers to Italy.

They reached Naples on 20 February 1947, and after a 12-hour journey on an ancient and overcrowded bus, they arrived at Rome.

> ...by Riḍván 1948 the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Rome was elected. Shoghi Effendi was overjoyed. He requested a photograph of the Local Spiritual Assembly, had it framed and personally placed it at the head of his bed in the room he often occupied when staying overnight in the Mansion of Bahjí.[1]
>
> On April 29, 1948, at four o'clock in the afternoon, in a room of the Hotel Savoia in Rome, William Sutherland Maxwell, acting for Shoghi Effendi ... signed the first contract for the marble necessary to complete the Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel.[2]

Dr. Giachery wrote: "The hand of destiny made me his co-worker in securing the carved marble for the Holy Sepulchre in my native Italy, a privilege and honour that has blessed my mature years."[3] The assistance of his dear wife, Angeline, at the Italian end of the magnificent enterprise was inestimable, extending from 1948 to the end of 1957.

Recounting his first meeting with the Guardian, Dr. Giachery wrote:

> ...the reward came to me that first night I was in his presence ... Turning to the friends seated at his table for dinner, he said ... 'We are very glad to have such a Bahá'í friend, to whom the whole world is indebted.' Then, addressing me, he added: 'The service you have rendered is not sufficiently appreciated today, but it will be fully appreciated in the future ... This evening when I went to the Shrine, I remembered you, and I have come to the decision that we shall have a "Giachery" door for the Shrine—one of the doors.'[4]

During these years of residence in Rome, 1947–1964, Dr. and Mrs. Giachery devoted special care to the vital work of translating from English into Italian and publishing the Bahá'í texts, an inestimable gift to the believers for their comprehension of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. The first of the numerous texts which were brought to light in Italian was *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, "... that splendid, authoritative and comprehensive introduction to Bahá'í history and teachings..."[5] and splendid were the results of its being presented to numerous libraries and personalities throughout Italy.

1 *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVIII, p. 718.

2 *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XII, p. 240.

3 Ugo Giachery, *Shoghi Effendi: Recollections* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1973), p. 55.

4 ibid., pp. 78–79.

5 Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987), p. 382.

From Dr. Giachery's interesting and perspicuous treatise entitled *One God, One Truth, One People: Some thoughts on the Peace Encyclical of Pope John XXIII*, we learn that as an Observer to the United Nations for the Bahá'í International Community Dr. Giachery was present at the historic meeting for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in Paris on 10 December 1948. He also collaborated (with other representatives of many non-governmental organizations) in the drafting of that document, at the NGO Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, in May of that same year.

On 24 December 1951, the Guardian announced:

> HOUR NOW RIPE TAKE LONG INEVITABLY DEFERRED STEP... APPOINTMENT FIRST CONTINGENT HANDS CAUSE GOD...

Dr. Giachery was one of that first contingent of the Hands of the Cause of God.

In March 1952 he was appointed "member at large" of the International Bahá'í Council.

During his pilgrimage, Dr. Giachery had received instructions directly from the Guardian on the immediate steps to be taken aimed at the formation, ere the termination of the second Seven Year Plan, of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Italy and Switzerland. The Convention, according to the Guardian's desire, was held in the city of Florence, in the heart of the Italian Peninsula, and was considered by him to be the fairest fruit produced in the European continent by the Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Guardian was represented by Dr. Giachery, who was elected to that body and served as its chairman for nine consecutive years.

The Great Jubilee commemorating the Centenary of the termination of the Bábí Dispensation and the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, 1853–1953, had as its highlights four Intercontinental Conferences. The Conference for Europe took place in Stockholm, Sweden, and Dr. Giachery was the special representative of the Guardian. He was also present at the last of the four conferences, which took place in New Delhi, India, and at the meeting with the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru. Then, at the Guardian's request, he travelled from there to Persia where he remained about two months.

In November 1954, the invitation of the Guardian to go on pilgrimage reached Dr. and Mrs. Giachery. For Angeline, to be at the World Centre and meet Shoghi Effendi was the greatest event of her life. One evening, on 24 December, the Guardian turned to her and said:

"I would very much like to keep you and Ugo here indefinitely, but Ugo must return to Italy and start immediately to work on the International Archives."[1] Dr. Giachery decided to give absolute priority to the execution of this magnificent plan.

On 12 December 1956, Shoghi Effendi sent to Dr. Giachery a cablegram which reads as follows:

> CONGRATULATE YOU SPLENDID HISTORIC HIGHLY MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT ENSURING EXCELLENT EXECUTION DETAILS STRUCTURE ARCHIVES PARTICULARLY GREATEST NAME. PRESENT FUTURE GENERATIONS BELIEVERS INCLUDING MYSELF PROFOUNDLY GRATEFUL.

In November of 1957, the Bahá'í world was stricken by the passing of the Guardian. It is nearly impossible to convey the state of those who had been so close to him, who had served him with such passion and loved him so intensely. Dr. Giachery expressed his feelings best in the epilogue of his book entitled, *Shoghi Effendi: Recollections*.

Again, the hand of fate called upon him to supervise the preparation of the marble and other materials needed for the erection of the memorial to Shoghi Effendi.

The responsibilities and tasks of the Hands of the Cause suddenly grew immensely. Dr. Giachery was away from home more often and for longer periods. In a letter from a friend to his wife, we read:

"Dear Angeline, ...I am sorry for you to have to be so very long alone in Rome. You are a most brave soldier in His heavenly

[1] *Shoghi Effendi: Recollections*, p. 154.

army, heavenly it should be if we make it thus. We too miss Dr. Giachery..."

The beloved Shoghi Effendi, in his last message of October 1957, had announced the convocation of five Intercontinental Conferences, at the midway point of "the decade-long Spiritual Crusade", that Crusade "formulated for the execution of the Grand Design conceived by 'Abdu'l-Bahá..."[1] Dr. Giachery was chosen to act as a special representative of the Guardian at the Chicago conference. To him was assigned the duty of exhibiting the portraits of Bahá'u'lláh and of the Báb. And in the city where the Name of Bahá'u'lláh was publicly mentioned for the first time in the Western world in the last century, His portrait and the portrait of the Báb were now exhibited for the spiritual delight of over 1,600 believers from 31 countriest: such a fruit from such a seed!

On the eve of the end of the Ten Year Crusade, at Riḍván 1962, the happy and constructive union of the Italian and Swiss communities came to an end with the formation of the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of Italy and the Bahá'ís of Switzerland. To the believers of both countries this opened new vistas.

The years from 1964 to 1969 were particularly intense. On 19 January 1964 Dr. Giachery informed the National Spiritual Assemblies of Europe and the Auxiliary Board members of his departure for the Americas, accompanied by his most precious collaborator, Angeline, to serve as a Hand of the Cause of God in the Western Hemisphere. To many friends the change appeared as a painful separation.

Dr. Giachery wrote: "The geographic area assigned to me is Mexico, and Central America, and all the Antilles (Greater Antilles and Lesser Antilles). The country is large, the believers numerous...." He passed days of real joy in the company of the Indians, who showed affection, respect, and care. "Oh if only the friends would understand that the basis of every conquest is harmony and unity!!"

One of the Counsellors remembers that when, in 1968, the first Continental Board of Counsellors for Central America was formed, "...the counsel of Dr. Giachery to us was: 'Noblesse Oblige'—constant and sacrificial service to the Friends".

Dr. Giachery was one of the six Hands of the Cause who opened the Centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation in the "Land of Mystery" with a visit, in September 1967, to the House in Adrianople where the *Súriy-i-Mulúk* was revealed. Six Intercontinental Conferences followed. At the Conference in Sydney, Australia, he represented the Universal House of Justice.

In a letter addressed to a believer in November 1967 he says:

> It is impossible to tell you in detail our experiences, but briefly I can assure you that the Intercontinental Conference of Sydney was a true success and brought a breath of the spirit which emanates from the World Centre of the Faith to the friends in that continent, and those of nineteen other countries! The meeting with the Mayor of Sydney, with the Governor of American Samoa, and with the King of Western Samoa, to whom I presented the Book of Proclamation, remain episodes of the greatest importance in the history of the Faith.

On 11 February 1968, another meeting took place at the private residence of the Malietoa. Within the hour, Dr. Giachery cabled the Universal House of Justice:

> TODAYS INTERVIEW CONFIRMS HEARTFELT ACCEPTANCE...[2]

The Universal House of Justice described this as "...an event of which the true significance will be fully understood only in the course of centuries to come..."[3]

[1] Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950–1957* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), p. 124–125.

[2] *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XV, p. 181.

It was Dr. Giachery who, at the request of the Universal House of Justice, presented *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh* to the Vatican, on 9 April 1968. Then, on the occasion of the 1968 International Convention, he was requested to visit France, Portugal and Spain. In Portugal he met Umberto II of Italy, who received Dr. and Mrs. Giachery in his residence, Villa Italia, at Cascais, on the outskirts of Lisbon. They presented the book *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh* to the exiled king.

Meanwhile, the time approached for the commemoration of the Centenary of the voyage of Bahá'u'lláh across the Mediterranean Sea to reach the prison city of 'Akká. Palermo had been chosen to host this first Oceanic Conference, held from 23–25 August 1968. The Universal House of Justice was represented by Dr. Giachery. Many of the friends felt that the unfoldment of such an important event, and the presence of Dr. Giachery in his native land, fulfilled his deepest wishes, his hopes, and his efforts to bring the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to his fellow countrymen—a gift and augury for the future destiny of the land.

The news of the Giacherys' return to Europe at Naw-Rúz 115 (1969) was received by the friends with great eagerness, in fresh anticipation of the joy and bounty of having them near. Their residence was established at Monte Carlo in the Principality of Monaco. But the experiences, emotions, difficulties, joys and victories passed through in that period in the Americas remained with them for the rest of their lives.

Dr. Giachery's anguish at the premature passing of his beloved Shoghi Effendi seemed never to lighten. He yearned to write his recollections of the greatest adventure of his life, the adventure which had transformed his existence. By the end of 1973, the book was published. A review of it written by Dr. Howard Garey, Professor of French Philology at Yale University in the United States, appeared in the magazine *World Order* (Spring 1974): "To me, reading this loving recollection has been a moving and joyful experience. ...the book by Dr. Giachery ...is like a poem of love."

In 1975, he made an extensive visit to the Cradle of the Faith. The testimony of one of the Persian friends gives us an insight into one of the events of that visit:

"The Bahá'ís of Mashhad, in the Province of Khurásán, welcomed Dr. Giachery and his beloved wife with tremendous love and enthusiasm. With great reverence they paid a visit to the house of Mullá Ḥusayn, remaining for a long time in the room of Mullá Ḥusayn and Quddús reciting the special Tablet of Visitation displayed in that special spot."

That same year, he presented the Faith to Franz Joseph II, Prince of Liechtenstein: the visit"...was lively, interesting and friendly..."[1]

A particularly significant day in the life of Dr. Giachery was 12 September 1976, when His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II of Western Samoa made a moving visitation to the resting place of the beloved Guardian. Dr. Giachery was with him, as a representative of the Universal House of Justice. The object of their common devotion greatly increased their reciprocal affection. It was an intense and happy day.

During his tenure as a Hand of the Cause, Dr. Giachery attended the inaugural conventions of: the Iberian Peninsula, as representative of the Guardian (April 1957); Haiti and Venezuela, as representative of the Bahá'í World Centre on behalf of the body of the Hands (April–May 1961); and the Leeward, Windward and Virgin Islands (Riḍván 1967), British Honduras (28–30 April 1967), Near East (Lebanon—Riḍván 1970), Puerto Rico (Riḍván 1972), and Cyprus (20–21 May 1978), all as representative of the Universal House of Justice.

Dr. Giachery marked the moment of earthly separation from his beloved companion and

[1] *Bahá'í News*, December 1975, p. 17.

[3] Message from the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the world, 7 May 1973.

consort, Angeline, on 23 April 1980. He passed the following nine years without the comfort and affectionate support of his Angeline, yet what he succeeded in accomplishing is almost incredible.

In December 1980, he was in Western Samoa for the fourth time and was received by His Highness the Malietoa Tanumafili II. He also met hundreds of Bahá'ís at the "most historic and bountiful Summer School ever" at which he "poured out his heart day and night, his luminous spirit enriching the heart and soul of every believer".[1] He proceeded to the Hawaiian Islands, and then to southern California where he was happily able to be present at a special meeting in January 1981 held as "A Tribute to the Hands of the Cause". Here he spoke of the Guardian and of the Hands in a way which was considered to be beyond description.

In 1982, the Universal House of Justice announced five International Conferences to be dedicated to the Greatest Holy Leaf on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of her passing. At the Canberra, Australia, Conference Dr. Giachery represented the Universal House of Justice. He considered this the finest conference he had ever attended.

Time rolled swiftly by. For 20 years Dr. Giachery sent out words of encouragement, affection and advice in innumerable letters written from his home on the fourth floor of the Europa Residence building in Place des Moulins. It is not easy to capture the variety and essence of their contents. Some passages from two messages written at Riḍván 142 and 143, addressed to the Bahá'í friends in Europe, give us glimpses:

> Cherished Bahá'í Friends,
> There is yet no one, who has not reached my advanced age, that can justly evaluate the speed of time and the impelling necessity to hasten the propagation of the regenerating Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. Youth in general believe that there is a magnitude of time ahead of them ... the grown ups ... feel that the little efforts they can make are sufficient to appease the Creator and silence their conscience. Centuries are passing as fast as the twinkling of an eye, and very often human beings leave this contingent world suddenly, without having accomplished, in whole or in part, what was a divine mandate at the time of their birth...
>
> Dearest Friends,
> I have served the Faith of God for many decades, and I am going to hand down the secrets of my blessed wife and myself to all of you. Devote your life to the service of the Cause of God. The highest station man can aspire to is that of service. 'Abdu'l-Bahá selected that name for Himself ... it means the 'Servant of Bahá'. Avoid any form of ambition. 'Abdu'l-Bahá ... said that ambition that is not applied to the service of mankind is abomination ... be always polite, kind and generous. Teach your children to grow up like that; plant in them the desire to learn and love their teachers.

At the end of his fourth visit to Samoa, Dr. Giachery had assured the Sovereign that he would return. As time passed such a wish increased in intensity, until at last the long-awaited day arrived. On the morning of 10 April 1989, he left his home in the Europa Residence in a wheelchair, no one imagining that it would be the last time. The memorable journey was under way! The bounty of God had granted the fulfilment of his desire.

In Apia, the capital city of Western Samoa, he was received with a moving formal welcome by the Head of State, His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II. And the islands of Samoa saw many souls turn to the light of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh and enlist under the banner of His Cause. On 3 July, as he was signing a message, he said he thought he was signing his name for the last time. The message was about a plan for a Samoan Academy of Arts and Sciences, with a high level of study and research,

[1] *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVIII, p. 496.

based on the Bahá'í concept of education, for the well-being of the people of Samoa and of their region, and to help deepen understanding of their rich cultural heritage.

On the morning of 5 July, he had to be taken to the hospital; he asked that the return journey to Monte Carlo, scheduled for 12 July, be cancelled. That afternoon he talked of his beautiful journey, of the past, of the construction of the Shrine of the Báb, of how the tiles had been made, of so many other things. His thoughts, his spirit, rejoiced in the present, remembered the past, and lived the future.

He was resting when, at 6:45 p.m., his heart ceased to beat.

The Universal House of Justice announced his passing to all National Spiritual Assemblies on 6 July 1989 in the following message, the final diadem adorning the crown of his service:

> Deeply grieved loss valiant, indefatigable, dearly-loved, distinguished Hand Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery. His passing in course historic visit Samoa adds fresh laurels to crown already won during ministry beloved Guardian, and reinforces spiritual distinction vast Pacific region, already blessed by interment four other Hands.
> His magnificent accomplishments as Member at Large of International Bahá'í Council in connection raising superstructure Shrine of the Báb, which prompted Guardian to name one of the doors of that noble edifice after him, his painstaking efforts in promoting on the local, national and international levels, paramount interests of the Faith, his notable achievement in establishment Italo-Swiss National Spiritual Assembly on eve launching Ten Year Crusade, his outstanding qualities of zeal, fidelity, determination and perseverance, which characterized imperishable record his arduous labours—all combine to richly adorn annals Faith over period his superb, assiduous exertions, and undoubtedly assure him bountiful reward in Kingdom on High.
>
> Advise all National Spiritual Assemblies hold befitting memorial gatherings his name, particularly in Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs in recognition his unique position, splendid services.

The funeral took place on the morning of 12 July. "Dignified, serene, even glorious" were words people used to describe it. It was impressive the way the familiar Bahá'í ceremony was combined with Samoan culture. "'Fa'a Samoa' is what they say in Samoa to explain that something, a situation or action, embodies the spirit and soul of the Samoan way. And so, the funeral—wonderfully Bahá'í in content—felt at the same time 'fa'a Samoa'. ...

"Notable was the presence of Malietoa Tanumafili II, the Head of State; the Prime Minister; cabinet members; and individuals of the royal family, dressed in formal Samoan lavalava suits and puletasi. ... Significantly, the Malietoa chose this occasion to be the first public announcement of his membership in the Bahá'í Faith."[1]

Counsellor 'Alá'í read a moving eulogy about Dr. Giachery's life. After the reading of the Obligatory Prayer for the departed, the casket was carried to its final resting place, followed by His Highness, the Cabinet members and dignitaries, the Bahá'ís and others.

Numerous were the messages sent from various parts of the world. One of these reads:

"The Bahá'ís of the Hawaiian Islands join our brothers and sisters of Samoa in honouring the memory of our highly respected, deeply loved and treasured Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Ugo Giachery.

"We will miss his regal bearing, his dignity, his wit and the twinkle in his eyes. We will miss his graciousness and his gentleness. We will forever remember the tears welling up in his eyes when he shared with us his deepest feelings for the two great loves of his life: his beloved Guardian Shoghi Effendi

[1] Sperry, Mollie. "Beloved Hand Laid to Rest in Samoa". *Light of the Pacific*. Hawaii, Aug. 1989, p. 5.

and his dearly-loved wife Angeline. By opening himself to us through his personal stories, he gave us a glimmer of the power of divine assistance and the depth of spirituality which comes 'through the love of God and the illumination of divine teachings'."

DR. MARIO PIARULLI

ZIKRULLAH KHADEM
(Dhikru'lláh Khádim)
1904–1986

Dhikru'lláh Khádim was born in 1904 in Ṭihrán, Persia, the second of six children to devoted and hardworking parents, Mírzá Naṣru'lláh and Rá<u>dí</u>yyih Khánum. His father, Mírzá Naṣru'lláh, had spent two years in the Holy Land in the service of the Master, 'Abdu'l-Baha. One day, much to his dismay, 'Abdu'l-Baha had sent him back to Ṭihrán to get married. Longing to spend his entire life in the service of 'Abdu'l-Baha, Naṣru'lláh was reluctant to depart, but had obediently complied with the wishes of the Master. In Ṭihrán, he had married Rá<u>dí</u>yyih Khánum and devoted himself to the spiritual nurturing and education of his family.

As a child, Dhikru'lláh's home was graced with the presence of two exceptionally courageous and outstanding grandmothers. One of these, whom he called 'Bíbí Jan', repeatedly accompanied another dedicated and fearless lady, Ábjí Susan, as they placed their lives in jeopardy in order to claim the precious bodies of martyrs for befitting burial. Clad in chadors, they would hasten to the site where the bodies had been thrown in disrespect. Crying, "My brother, my brother," they would rescue the remains, wash them with tender love, and bury them with due respect, in accordance with Bahá'í law.

The Khádim home was totally dedicated to the Cause and open to all. It was located in a section of Ṭihrán characterized by small houses surrounded by high walls with abutting roof-tops. The buildings, interconnected by narrow alleys and passageways, created enclaves where Bahá'í families could gather, removed from the fanaticism of the general populace, for meetings and firesides.

Love and hospitality so permeated the atmosphere of the Khádim home that it was well-known among the Bahá'ís and was a haven for travelling teachers. Great Bahá'í scholars passed through and left behind traces of their zeal and devotion. This invigorating environment surrounded the young Dhikru'lláh and provided him with ample role-models, God-intoxicated heroes and heroines. Among the well-known teachers of the time were two brothers, the poets Nayyír and Síná, and the great teacher and Islamic scholar, Fáḍil Shírází.

Bahá'í teachers and pilgrims from the Holy Land also passed through these enclaves, bringing the latest news of the victories of the Faith and messages and Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Bahá'ís would excitedly assemble to peruse the divine Tablets by the light of a few candles or sit enthralled as they witnessed the transformation of a seeker upon accepting the proofs of the coming of the Promised One. This devoted group of lovers of Bahá'u'lláh was momentarily oblivious to the fanaticism and turmoil of the world beyond their sanctuary. Soon, however, they had to venture out into the labyrinthine passageways to return to their homes. En route, as they dodged the stones hurled at them, they would be subjected to the verbal hostility of street urchins shouting curses and invectives.

These were the forces which shaped Dhikru'lláh Khádim's character. On the one hand, he was enveloped in a spiritual atmosphere characterized by courage, heroism, and total dedication to Bahá'u'lláh. He was sheltered in a vital community whose living fountainhead was 'Abdu'l-Bahá and whose goals were the creation of a new world order, promotion of universal peace, and the establishment of the oneness of mankind. This vibrant and lustrous pearl of a community was surrounded by a sea of fanaticism, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness. The stark

contrast between the two worlds served to crystallize Dhikru'lláh's own identity. He witnessed first-hand the heroism and exemplary courage of the martyrs and teachers of the Faith in the face of brutal attacks and grave injustice, and became well-known himself for heroism and courage. He was a passionate lover of God and, at the same time, a fierce defender of His Faith.

From his early childhood, Dhikru'lláh Khádim demonstrated great spiritual potential. His father appreciated this and felt certain that one day his son would shoulder significant spiritual responsibilities, as alluded to by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in a Tablet.

While still a young boy, Dhikru'lláh was very alert to the needs of the Faith. Thus, when the Central Spiritual Assembly of Persia advised the friends to convey their loyalty to the beloved Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, Shoghi Effendi, he whole-heartedly followed this recommendation. With tears in his eyes he wrote a letter filled with great love and devotion, professing his loyalty. From that moment, a longing to attain the presence of the beloved Guardian became his consuming and over-riding passion.

His wish was granted in May of 1925, and the Guardian asked this ardent pilgrim, eager to perform any service, to convey to the Persian Bahá'í youth his love and encouragement, to ask them to deepen themselves in the Cause and to study English, especially English literature. This request caused Dhikru'lláh to embark on a zealous study of the English language, a study he pursued throughout his life. This was further reinforced on subsequent visits and communcations when the Guardian asked him to translate Bahá'í articles from English to Persian. The Guardian sent treasured copies of *The Advent of Divine Justice*, *The Promised Day is Come*, and two volumes of *The Bahá'í World* with instructions for Dhikru'lláh to translate portions for distribution to the Bahá'ís of Persia.

The crowning event of that first pilgrimage was the gift of a picture of 'Abdu'l-Bahá with a rose in His hand. The beloved Guardian told him, "I give you a picture of the beloved Master as a souvenir." One cannot describe how deeply he cherished all the gifts the Guardian gave him. His reverence for these objects was evidence of his love and devotion.

After that pilgrimage Dhikru'lláh Khádim was galvanized with a new purpose, propelled in a new direction, infused with a new passion. His only thought, his only desire was to please his beloved.

Upon completion of the schooling available in Ṭihrán, he taught briefly at the Tarbíyat School. He then went to the south of Persia to serve as interpreter and language tutor for the huge Anglo-Persian Oil Company. He developed an accelerated method of teaching Persian to the English-speaking population and then opened a language school that used this method. While in his early 20s, he reached a turning point: should he continue with the oil company or should he, as he desired, return to Ṭihrán and set out on his own? He was confirmed through a dream in which Abdu'l-Bahá provided him support. He confidently left his position, returned to Ṭihrán, and found work helping the government of 'Iráq to establish its Embassy in Persia.

His skill in scholarly Arabic and Persian (from knowing the Writings), diplomatic French (which he studied as a second language during his schooling at Dáru'l-Funún), and English (which he diligently pursued in obedience to the Guardian) quickly distinguished him. It was in this key Embassy post that he was able to perform many historic services for the Faith, such as transmitting to the Holy Land the sword of Mullá Ḥusayn and other historical treasures of the Faith.

While he was employed at the Embassy, Dhikru'lláh Khádim married Jávídukht Jávíd, also from a Bahá'í family. Mrs. Keith Ransom-Kehler, who was to become a martyr in Persia and posthumous Hand of the Cause of God, expressed approval of

their marriage in a tender note to Dhikru'lláh who served as her devoted secretary, friend, and companion during her stay in Persia. The marriage took place on 3 October 1933, and produced five children, all devoted servants of the Cause.

Dhikru'lláh made trips to the Holy Land in 1939 and 1940 and received other assignments from the beloved Guardian. Among these, he was instructed to visit, on the Guardian's behalf, all of Persia. Shoghi Effendi expressed keen interest in the reports of his travels and repeatedly encouraged him through cablegrams and letters. After Dhikru'lláh travelled around the country the Guardian asked him to repeat it over again. He gave him specific tasks such as photographing Bahá'í sites in Persia and the graves of the martyrs of Nayríz. This latter assignment resulted in his arrest and brief imprisonment in that fanatic locale.

In February 1940, the beloved Guardian gave Mr. Khádim the great mission of arranging for Persian Bahá'ís to obtain overt permission from the government to go on pilgrimage to the Bahá'í Holy Places. Because the Guardian promised that the door of pilgrimage would soon open, Mr. Khádim prepared the believers for this bounty and then, incredibly, effectively assisted in facilitating a dramatic change in government policy that, in fact, opened the doors.

In the same year, Shoghi Effendi asked Mr. Dhikru'lláh Khádim to encourage the Bahá'ís of Persia to pioneer to Arabia and the islands of the Persian Gulf. Mr. Khádim communicated the Guardian's call for pioneers with such zeal and such magnetic attraction that those who heard him could not help but feel moved themselves. In this manner, the love and wishes of the Guardian were infused into the entire Bahá'í community in Persia.

The spirit of that period in Persia was indescribable. On the one hand, there was the spirit that returning pilgrims brought back. On the other were the prospective pioneers transmitting the spirit of their love and self-sacrifice to others. The deep longing to please their beloved Guardian resulted in a contagious and raging pioneering fever. Those who were affected, infected others, until virtually the entire community was in the throes of this spiritual epidemic.

From 1940 to 1957, Mr. Khádim was entrusted with the mission of receiving mail and cablegrams from Shoghi Effendi for institutions and individual Bahá'ís in the East. This priceless bounty was the source of great pride to him and blessed the family with eager anticipation and excitement for 17 years.

One event in particular stands out—an event which took place in 1944, the Centenary of the Declaration of the Báb. Mr. Khádim was honored with the assignment of being the carrier of the beloved Guardian's message to the Persian National Convention. Due to wartime restrictions, the message had to be sent through the National Spiritual Assembly of 'Iráq. When it arrived in Baghdád, Mr. Khádim painstakingly arranged for it to be flown to Ṭihrán.

The moment-by-moment whereabouts of this document created such anxiety for him that when the message finally arrived in Ṭihrán, he was overcome with joy and gratitude. After numerous difficulties and many obstacles, he drove the message to Shíráz, arriving just in time for the celebration at two hours and eleven minutes after sunset. For years later, he would refer to that blessed occasion and cherish the bounty of having been a participant and eye-witness of this milestone in the history of the Cause.

Until 1952, Mr. Khádim served the Faith in the Eastern part of the world from Egypt to India under the direction of the Guardian. However, during a pilgrimage in 1939, Shoghi Effendi had told him: "I will send you to the West, to America, to witness with your own eyes, the secret, the mystery, the light of the Cause in those lands". (As recorded in Mr. Khádim's diary).

On 28 February 1952, he received a cable from the Guardian:

MOVED CONVEY GLAD TIDINGS YOUR ELEVATION RANK HAND CAUSE STOP APPOINTMENT OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED PUBLIC MESSAGE ADDRESSED ALL NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES STOP MAY SACRED FUNCTION ENABLE YOU ENRICH RECORD SERVICES ALREADY RENDERED FAITH BAHA'U'LLAH

From that date his services extended to the Western world.

The year 1952 was blessed for him. He made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, enjoying the presence of the Guardian, and received his assignments as a Hand of the Cause. For five years, until November 1957, he travelled at a dizzying pace, visiting Bahá'í centers throughout Europe, all over Africa, the islands of the Caribbean, the Far East, as well as South, Central, and North America. From the moment he began these travels on assignment from the Guardian, he kept an extremely detailed journal which documented his times of arrival and departure, names and addresses of everyone he met, hotels he stayed at, planes he boarded, etc. He believed that every act under the direction of the Guardian of the Cause of God had historical significance.

The euphoria that pervades this five-year journal is especially poignant when it abruptly ends on 4 November 1957, the day his beloved Guardian passed from this realm. Nothing had the same significance for him after that. Of course, he continued to serve with undiminished devotion, but the carefree joyous spontaneity was permanently gone.

What sustained him after the passing of the Guardian was his unshakeable certitude in the assistance of Shoghi Effendi from the realm beyond. He often remarked that if he did not feel, even for a moment, the nearness of the Guardian in his heart, he would instantly perish. This is what permitted him to continue his services in those very trying years between 1957 and 1963, until the Universal House of Justice was established. As each of the Hands undertook a sphere of activity, he volunteered to move to the United States and oversee the work of the institution of the Hands in the Americas, further fulfilling the Guardian's 1939 prediction.

He was exhilarated when, in 1963, the reins of the Cause of God were safely passed to the Universal House of Justice. Infallible guidance was again assured. He was especially devoted to the Universal House of Justice and was always prepared to carry out its wishes. He represented that august Institution at many conferences and conventions. Under the direction of the House of Justice, he undertook an intensive five-year project of researching and documenting all the Bahá'í Holy Places. The project resulted in 141 volumes under the title, *Registry of Bahá'í Holy Places*. He also authored many articles in English and in Persian. His travels and his participation at Bahá'í schools and institutes continued to the end of his life.

In July 1986, Mr. Khádim was diagnosed as having disseminated liver cancer. Thereafter, he was confined to bed most of the time. However, during much of this period he remained active. He attended to his correspondence and communicated, with great tenderness, his love and support to the institutions of the Cause. By the middle of October, however, his strength gradually waned until he passed on to the Abhá Kingdom in the early morning of 13 November 1986, and once again attained the presence of his beloved Guardian.

The Universal House of Justice cabled the Bahá'ís of the world:

WITH SORROWFUL HEARTS ANNOUNCE PASSING INDEFATIGABLE FEARLESS DEFENDER FAITH DEEPLY LOVED HAND CAUSE ZIKRULLAH KHADEM. HIS STERLING SERVICES TO THE CAUSE, HIS TOTAL CONSECRATION TO TASKS ASSIGNED TO HIM BY BELOVED GUARDIAN, HIS OUTSTANDING EFFORTS AS MEMBER NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY CRADLE FAITH, HIS VALUABLE SOUL-UPLIFTING STIMULATION IMPARTED BODY BELIEVERS NORTH AMERICA, PARTICULARLY UNITED STATES BAHA'I COMMUNITY, HIS



Zikrullah Khadem

UNTIRING ENDEAVOURS THROUGH HIS TALKS AND WRITINGS IN SAFEGUARDING COVENANT AND IN INSTILLING APPRECIATION LOVE FOR SHOGHI EFFENDI SHED UNDYING LUSTRE OVER PERIOD HIS ADMIRABLE STEWARDSHIP CAUSE GOD.

OFFERING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. URGE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS HIS NAME AT ALL HOUSES OF WORSHIP AS WELL AS IN ALL LOCAL BAHA'I COMMUNITIES.

Memorial gatherings were held throughout the world, including a very touching one in the Holy Land. A memento of this moving event, in the form of rose-petals from the Shrines, was lovingly sent to his family by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum.

Hundreds of Bahá'ís from all over the United States, some even from distant countries, came for Mr. Khádim's funeral, held two days after his passing. Flowers, condolences, cables, letters, and messages of love in so many forms were sent. The funeral hall was filled to overflowing, but the flowers outnumbered the people. Roses, hyacinths, orchids, carnations, chrysanthemums, and other flowers of every variety transformed the very air with their love-scents, paying homage to this signal lover whose own fragrance lingers in so many hearts.

JÁVIDDUKHT KHÁDÍM

JALAL KHAZEH
(Jalálu'lláh Khádi')
1897–1990

DEEPLY GRIEVED ANNOUNCE PASSING STAUNCH TIRELESS PROMOTER FAITH HAND CAUSE GOD JALAL KHAZEH. HIS STRENUOUS ENDEAVOURS CRADLE FAITH HOLY LAND LATIN AMERICA AND WORLDWIDE TRAVELS AFTER PASSING BELOVED GUARDIAN SET SHINING EXAMPLE OF UNSHAKEABLE DEDICATION AND COURAGE, OF UNDEVIATING LOYALTY AND PERSEVERANCE. IMPERISHABLE RECORD HIS STERLING SERVICES AS GIFTED TEACHER DEFENDER CAUSE NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN. HIS NOBLE SPIRIT NOW ABHA KINDGOM WILL UNDOUBTEDLY INTERCEDE BEHALF PERSIAN BAHA'I COMMUNITY WHOSE VITAL INTERESTS HE SERVED WITH SUCH HIGH DISTINCTION OVER SEVERAL DECADES. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES FOR PROGRESS HIS ILLUMINED SOUL IN REALMS ON HIGH. ADVISE FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS HIS HONOUR PARTICULARLY ALL HOUSES OF WORSHIP.

Universal House of Justice
25 February 1990

When the Hand of the Cause of God Jalál Khádi' ascended to the Abhá Kingdom on 21 February 1990, the Bahá'í world mourned a man whose service in the Formative Age of the Faith left a brilliant mark. Those who had the privilege of knowing Mr. Khádi' will never forget his radiant happiness, devotion, and eagerness to serve.

Jalál was born in Ṭihrán, Persia, in 1897. His father, Ghulám-Riḍá, had had to leave his town Sidíh in the province of Iṣfahán,

with some other well-known Bahá'ís because of the unrest and persecutions there. Ghulám-Riḍá's wife, who was not a Bahá'í, left him and, despite the fact that she was not divorced, married a Muslim. Thus it came about that Ghulám-Riḍá married Jamálíyyih Khánum in Ṭihrán. She was the daughter of Jináb-i-Karbilá'í Mihdí Ṭihrání, who had spent three years in the Síyáh-Chál in Ṭihrán as a prisoner because he was a Bahá'í. The couple had two children: Jalálu'lláh and Farkhundih.

As a result of the persecutions he had suffered, Ghulám-Riḍá was always in poor health, and he died at the age of thirty-five, when his son, Jalál, was only seven years old and his daughter, Farkhundih, was only five. With loving devotion, courage, and selflessness, their mother took care of their education. Jalál attended Bahá'í children's and youth classes as well as the Tarbíyat Bahá'í School.

At the age of seventeen, Jalál began to study veterinary medicine at the military academy which was headed by professors from Sweden. In this profession, he served in the army in Qazvín, Hamadán, Kirmánsháh, Sanandaj, Khurramábád, Burújird, and Ahváz. He received the rank of a lieutenant when he was only nineteen years old. That same year, he married Jamálíyyih, the daughter of Ustád Ḥasan-'Alí Mi'márbáshi-i-Káshání. Their marriage was blessed with three daughters and two sons. Having served the required number of years, he retired from the army in 1943, having attained the rank of colonel.

In his autobiography Jalál wrote: "Through my mother's guidance I participated in my early years in two different classes conducted by well-known Bahá'í scholars. (Mírzá 'Alí-Akbar Rafsanjáni and Aqá Muḥammad Ḥusein-Ulfat.) And so I owe my faith in the Blessed Beauty's Holy Cause to my mother's guidance and the participation in these teaching evenings."

Jalál Kháḍi' was only fifteen years old when he entered the field of service to the Faith, and from his twentieth year onwards he was a member of committees and Spiritual Assemblies of the cities in which he lived and worked. In 1944, after he had retired, he was elected as a delegate to the National Convention for the electoral district of Ṭihrán. Thus he took part in that National Convention which was held in Shíráz to commemorate the one-hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb. He was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Írán and served for five years in this capacity. Afterwards he was elected to the Spiritual Assembly of Ṭihrán and served there for three years as secretary.

Parallel to his administrative functions, he continually travelled to teach throughout Persia and sent reports about his experiences to the beloved Guardian. On 17 August 1950, Dr. Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím penned the following remark onto his report about Kirmán and Rafsanján on behalf of the Guardian: 'Write Jalál Kháḍi' and urge him to continue his travels and assure him how deeply the Guardian values his wonderful services.'

Mr. Kháḍi' was of strong, fine build, and very courageous by nature. He used this quality whenever he received news of a Bahá'í being oppressed or mistreated somewhere. He did not hesitate to reprimand even government officials if they neglected to fulfil their duty in favour of giving in to pressure from fanatical elements in the society.

At the end of 1951, he resigned from the Spiritual Assembly of Ṭihrán to teach throughout Persia. At first he wanted to go to Hamadán, but then he received a telegram from Shoghi Effendi giving him permission for a pilgrimage. He immediately took steps to acquire a passport and all the necessary documents. At the end of March in 1952, his greatest wish was fulfilled. He was able to visit the Holy Places in Haifa and 'Akká and attain the presence of the beloved Guardian.

After this pilgrimage he felt as though he had been newly born to serve at the Holy Threshold. Shoghi Effendi gave him the task of teaching the Cause of God in the whole of

Persia, travelling to the villages and cities and bringing the friends news from the Bahá'í world, familiarizing them with the goals of the Ten Year Crusade and encouraging them everywhere to arise with all their strength to achieve these goals. For two and a half years he travelled through the provinces of Khuzistán, Fárs, Iṣfahán, Kirmán, Khurásán, and Mázandarán to carry out the tasks Shoghi Effendi had assigned to him.

On 23 October 1952, Mr. Khádi' received the following cable:

ADVISE ATTEND KAMPALA CONFERENCE AFTERWARDS VISIT AFRICAN CENTRES THEN CONTINUE MERITORIOUS VISITS CENTRES IRAN PRAYERS ACCOMPANYING YOU. SHOGHI.

Following this request, Mr. Khádi' took part in the African Intercontinental Conference in Kampala, Uganda, from 12–18 February. Then he visited the Bahá'ís in East Africa, travelling to Abyssinia, Eritrea, and Kenya. Afterwards he visited pioneers in Aden, Bahrain, Dubai, Kuwait, Masqat, and Ra's at Tannurah. After carrying out Shoghi Effendi's instructions, he returned to Persia and continued his travels there.

He sent reports from Nairobi, Aden, and Ṭihrán to Haifa, informing the Guardian about his journey and enclosing photographs of Kampala and other places. When he was just about to leave for the province of Gílán, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Írán asked him to come to their meeting, and they gave him a telegram from the Guardian along with a letter from Dr. L. Ḥakím dated 20 May 1953. The cable, which expressed the infinite mercy of the Guardian, moved Mr. Khádi' to tears:

PROUD YOUR SERVICES ENCOURAGE FRIENDS CENTRES ARISE PARTICIPATE CRUSADE. SHOGHI.

Other telegrams and letters also reflect Shoghi Effendi's loving acknowledgement and encouragement for Mr. Khádi' and assured him of his prayers. For example, the Guardian wrote, '...YOUR SERVICES ARE THE CAUSE OF GLORY AND HONOUR...', and in a letter written on behalf of the Guardian: "your services and travels set an example for the friends in Írán..." Mr. Khádi' wrote in his autobiography: "This [principle] became clear: if we take one step sincerely in His exalted path, He comes towards us one thousand steps through His goodness and grace, to encourage us and even to praise us..."

An excerpt from one of Mr. Khádi''s reports of that time reveals his service extremely clearly [translation from *Payám-i-Bahá'í* 126 (May 1990)]:

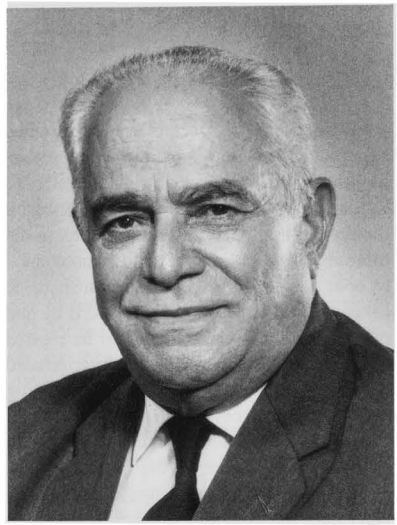
> One of Shoghi Effendi's instructions is the reason why I feel the urge to visit the friends in many places despite being an old and weak man. When I was on pilgrimage with some of the other Hands of the Cause of God, Shoghi Effendi told us that we must serve the Cause of God until our last breath. Well, we all know what this last breath means... During my pilgrimage, the beloved Guardian instructed me to go to Persia and to visit the friends everywhere, even in places where there was only one Bahá'í. He said that if we do not visit the friends who are isolated in a place as pioneers or for some other reason, their tree of being will wither.
>
> Thus, I left one day to visit the village Dilmán in Gílán. I travelled through forests and over mountains, and only mules which were especially trained were able to cover this distance of about 50 kilometres. The strain of the journey can hardly be described! I wanted to visit Mr. Riḍá Ṣamímí, a former clergyman from Táliqán whom the enemies of the Cause had wanted to kill. He had gone to Dilmán and was the only Bahá'í there. While I was with him, I realized how well our beloved Guardian knows which souls suffer from loneliness in which locations.
>
> After a journey of two days, I arrived in Dilmán. I was so exhausted that I was unable to utter a single word. My legs were so grazed that I could not walk. I was carried up the stairs leading into the room and collapsed on the floor. Mr. Ṣamímí thought initially that I was a revenue

officer who had come to collect taxes. He asked: 'Excuse me, but who are you and why have you come?' I asked: 'Are you Riḍá Ṣamímí?' He answered in the affirmative. I continued, 'My name is Jalál Khádi' I met the beloved Guardian. He asked me to visit the friends everywhere, especially those who live in a locality all by themselves. I have been travelling for two days in order to come and see you.'

Before concluding this sentence, I realized that he did not know what to do. He began to cry and exclaimed: 'My Beloved, the Guardian, remembered and thought of me and sent you here, because otherwise nobody would have come to this corner of the country in order to find out how I was.' His tears streamed into his beard (reminding one of the fact that he had been a clergyman.) Then he said: 'Well, as you are a messenger of my Beloved, please, stay exactly where you are and do what I tell you.' I replied, 'As you like it.' Mr. Ṣamímí then explained: 'I would like to circumambulate you nine times, chanting prayers and Tablets.'

To make a long story short, I felt that this man exerted a strength and power which made me sit down. He began to walk around me in circles, intoning Holy Tablets and prayers, shedding tears. For lunch he brought soup (ábgusht), but he did not eat anything. He said that he could not possibly eat at the same time as I, because he desired to eat from the plate from which I had eaten...

Mr. Khádi' also reported on his journeys to Rasht, Lahiján, Shahsavár, Siahkol, Chálús, and other places. In the answer of 16 August 1953, Dr. Ḥakím quotes Shoghi Effendi as follows: 'Write to Mr. Khádi' that I read his detailed report carefully and that I was deeply touched by it. I profoundly appreciate his continuous service, and his trips to the different communities and localities have had a long-lasting impression on the friends.'



Jalal Khazeh

On 22 November 1953, Mr. Khádi' received a letter from Dr. Ḥakím in answer to his travel report about the region of Khurásán —Mashhad, Qúchán, Darjaz, Bujnúrd, Shírván, Turbat-i-Jám, and about Sístán, deep in the heart of Balúchistán. This letter had been sitting in Mashhad for two months, because nobody knew his address. In that letter, Mr. Ḥakím wrote on behalf of the Guardian:

> Shoghi Effendi asked me to write to you and to tell you that he read your letter despite the heavy workload and that he is very happy about your visits to the friends in the different places. Now the beloved Guardian would like you to go on an extended journey to the Mázandarán region. He does not expect you to settle there, but he asks you to stay in each place for a considerable period of time, in order to have extensive meetings with the friends and to encourage and support them with respect to their relationship to the Faith as much as you can. The friends in Mázandarán are in great need of such assistance, especially in the

region of Núr and Tákur. Shoghi Effendi is very glad about your services and appreciates them greatly. He is always thinking of and praying for you...

At the end of December 1953, when Mr. Khádi' had returned from a two month teaching trip in Sístán and Balúchistán to Turbat-i-Ḥaydaríyyih, he was awakened on the second night at about four o'clock in the morning by three Bahá'í friends who wanted to congratulate him. Greatly astonished, he asked them the reason. They asked if he had not received his telegram. When he replied in the negative, one of the friends embraced him and said, "Then I am the first to bring you the happy news that you have been appointed a Hand of the Cause of God. The telegram arrived twenty days ago and was sent on to Záhidán, Bírjand, and Zábul. Apparently they were not able to reach you there."

"Amazement and astonishment", writes Mr. Khádi', "took hold of this servant's whole being. How strange, what ability does this insignificant, shameful, modest atom possess to be honoured by such a high rank and such grace and to be chosen for this." With tears in his eyes he asked the friends to leave him alone and for some time he sat in prayer and meditation. Early in the morning, the friends gathered again to meet him. He decided to go to Mashhad in order to personally receive the following telegram dated 7 December 1953:

ANNOUNCE YOUR ELEVATION RANK HAND CAUSE CONFIDENT DIVINE BLESSINGS FUTURE SERVICES. SHOGHI.

Remembering this time, Mr. Khádi' wrote: 'God knows the state I entered when I read this cable. On the one hand, I saw my weakness, and on the other hand, I saw the arduousness of my future task, and the fire of hopelessness began to consume me.' Mr. Khádi' then sent a telegram to the Guardian which read, when translated from the Persian:

The crown of honour which the Beloved of all Worlds has bestowed upon the head of this servant through His mercy will be the cause of everlasting honour and glory for this servant and his descendants in both worlds. Now, the future lies in the hands of this servant. I will either find a spot in the paradise of nearness to Him by attracting the bounty of the incomparable Protector, or I will be neglectful and careless and fall into the fire of remoteness from Him. Thus, I ask you for your support and help, so that the feeble back of this nonentity will be enabled to carry this heavy load and will come to a good end in this passing world.

In answer to this telegram, Mr. Khádi' received the following cable:

REST ASSURED CONFIDENT GREAT SUCCESS. SHOGHI.

Mr. Khádi' travelled on to Mázandarán, and at Riḍván 1954 went to Ṭihrán to take part in the National Convention and the meeting of the Hands of the Cause in Asia. Shoghi Effendi sent a telegram instructing the Hands of the Cause Ṭarázu'lláh Samandarí and Jalál Khádi' to continue their teaching trips, although Mr. Khádi' had been elected once more to the National Assembly of Persia. Dr. Ḥakím wrote on behalf of the Guardian: 'Although you were elected a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, you should continue your travels through Mázandarán for some time, in order to visit and encourage the friends. That is more important for you than staying in the capital.' So Mr. Khádi' went again to Mázandarán.

Between 22 June and 10 July 1954, he and the Hand of the Cause 'Alí-Akbar Furútan visited Núr and Tákur and the House of Bahá'u'lláh there. About this visit Mr. Khádi' wrote: 'During this sojourn of nineteen days I met relatives of Bahá'u'lláh every day and spoke to them about the greatness of the Cause and about the honour bestowed upon them by belonging to this illustrious family.' After that, Mr. Khádi' visited friends of Sangsar for twelve days and travelled through Bábul for six months

in order to carry out the Guardian's request to strengthen and encourage the friends. He continued sending reports to the Guardian about his travels to Búshihr, Kazerún, Shíráz, and Ábádih. On 20 August 1954, he received the first cable from Shoghi Effendi directly addressed to him:

> DELIGHTED REPORT PRAYING CONTINUED SUCCESS. SHOGHI.

After spending one month in Ṭihrán, Mr. Khádi' and his wife returned to northern Írán and Bábul where they stayed for six months. During the day, there were gatherings for youth; in the evenings, he met with the Spiritual Assembly. He also visited other communities in Sháhí, Sárí, Amul, and associated villages. According to the Guardian's guidance, Mr. Khádi' then travelled to the province of Fárs and remained in Shíráz in order to protect the friends from the intrigues spun by covenant breakers.

During that time, Jalál Khádi' regularly went to Búshihr from where he mailed his reports to Haifa. It was he who gave directions to the Local Assembly there concerning the transfer of the remains of the wife of the Báb. In a letter dated 15 March 1956, Dr. Ḥakím had written to Mr. Khádi' on behalf of the Guardian, expressing the wish that this transfer be conducted with wisdom, quietude, steadfastness, and meticulousness.

On 18 June 1956, Mr. Khádi' gave the Guardian an account of teaching and pioneer activities in Shíráz. The Spiritual Assembly had formed a committee to collect contributions to assist friends willing to pioneer. In July 1956, Dr. Ḥakím wrote on behalf of the Guardian:

> The services rendered by the beloved friends in Shíráz and Fárs are deeply appreciated. The Guardian instructed Jináb-i-Varqá to provide 10,000 tuman for the assistance of these deeply valued services in Fárs in his name. He wants you to continue your valuable work and assures you of his happiness about your activities and of his prayers for your success.'

After being appointed a Hand of the Cause of God, Mr. Khádi' undertook numerous journeys abroad. In April 1957, he was the Guardian's representative at the National Convention for North East Asia in Tokyo, Japan, and he then visited the friends in that country as well as in Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau. Shoghi Effendi asked him to let him know his impressions about the success of the friends in those countries and then go back to Shíráz. From there, he was to travel to Neyriz and its environs to monitor the activities of the covenant breakers, and then spend the remainder of the year 1957 in the region of Fárs.

In November 1957, the Bahá'í community was thunderstruck by the unexpected news of the passing of the beloved Guardian. Paralysing sadness overcame the hearts of the friends. The Hands of the Cause were notified and asked to gather in London for the funeral and then proceed to the Holy Land. Unfortunately, Mr. Khádi' and Mr. Furútan were unable to receive travel documents in time to travel to London, but they arrived in the Holy Land on the same day as the other Hands of the Cause of God.

During their historic gathering, the twenty-six Hands of the Cause decided that nine of them should reside in Haifa and that the other Hands were to travel all over the planet to guide the friends and the Bahá'í institutions. Mr. Khádi' was one of the nine Hands of the Cause who stayed in the Holy Land. From 24 November 1957 to September 1963, he and his wife lived in Haifa in order to serve the Cause of God there.

However, during those years he also went abroad. He travelled for two months to see the friends in most of the localities in Írán to explain the declaration and decisions of the Hands of the Cause following the passing of the Guardian. In 1958, he participated in the International Conference in Frankfurt, Germany, and then returned to the Holy Land. In the winter of 1960, he spent five months on the Indian subcontinent. He was a master of the Persian and Arabic languages,

spoke English well, and knew some Spanish. He was a competent and skillful speaker and exerted a strong impression on his listeners with his broad knowledge of the Faith.

Whenever he was in Haifa, Mr. Khádi' took care of the Eastern pilgrims. In addition to the official programme, which was conducted in turns by the different Hands of the Cause of God, he was indefatigable in taking the pilgrims to every spot in Haifa of historic importance in order to tell them interesting details and to ask them to take pictures which are of historic value today.

During Riḍván 1963, he was present during the first election of the Universal House of Justice. Right after that, he attended the first Bahá'í World Congress in London. On behalf of the Hands of the Cause of God, he visited the national conventions in Switzerland and Luxembourg. Before going back to the Holy Land in September, he travelled through Austria, Belgium, England, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Turkey.

The newly established institution of the Universal House of Justice decided that five of the nine Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land should stay in Haifa, while the others should move to different parts of the world. Jalál Khádi' chose South America, where the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Hermann Grossmann had served before. In September 1963—after a short journey to Persia during which he visited several Bahá'í communities—he and his wife boarded a ship which took them from the Holy Land to Rio de Janeiro. One week later they travelled onwards to Campinos, a small town about 100 kilometres north of São Paulo, where they settled.

For the following six years, Mr. Khádi' travelled all over ten South American countries, bearing the stress caused by going through a multitude of climatic zones and altitudes typical of this continent. Once in a while, he also visited Europe and North and Central America and fostered the creation of a Spanish newsletter which was published in Latin America and distributed everywhere.

When the Universal House of Justice appointed the members of the first Continental Board of Counsellors, Mr. Khádi' attended the opening session of the Board of Counsellors for South America. Following the directions of the Universal House of Justice, he and his wife returned to Persia in 1969.

From Írán, he travelled through Europe for six months and visited Switzerland, Luxembourg, Germany, Belgium, England, France, Spain, Italy, and Austria. Next, he made a journey to the eastern states of the United States of America. During a short sojourn in Chicago, Illinois, he visited the House of Worship in Wilmette. On his way back to Írán, he went to Europe and spent a week with the friends in France, Monaco, and Switzerland before proceeding to the Holy Land. In Haifa, he presented a report about his travels to the Universal House of Justice, and received new instructions. Then he returned to Persia where he settled in Ṭihrán.

At Riḍván 1970, he represented the Universal House of Justice at the National Conventions in Dahomey, Togo, and Niger, as well as in Ghana, and in August 1970 he participated in the Oceanic Conference in Mauritius. Afterwards he returned to Ṭihrán and concentrated on his tasks in the fields of teaching and protection of the Cause. That was a period in Írán full of tests, but it also brought great teaching successes in the provinces due, in large part, to his enthusiasm and encouragement.

In the summer of 1973, Mr. Khádi' visited the friends in India, Japan, Alaska, Canada, the United States and Switzerland during a journey around the world. In 1974, he made an extended tour of South America and the Caribbean. In Brazil, he attended the National Convention. In the Caribbean area, he spent two months visiting the friends and Spiritual Assemblies in Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Antigua, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Jamaica.

Next he went to Texas, U.S.A., for a conference. Six days later, he took a flight via France to the Holy Land. Again, he informed the Universal House of Justice about his travels and then proceeded to Írán.

While he was living in Írán again, a valuable manual for Spiritual Assemblies was compiled under Mr. Khádi''s guidance. It took one and a half years to complete and many relevant topics are classified in it, verified by extracts from the Holy Writings, letters from the Universal House of Justice and circulars from the National Assembly of Írán. The manual was published around 1975.

In 1976, he and his wife, Jamáliyyih, decided to move from Ṭihrán to Bábulsar, in the province of Mázandarán. From there, he travelled to virtually all of the cities, towns and villages in the provinces of Mázandarán and Gílán to visit the Bahá'ís residing in those areas.

In 1978, he was able to attend the International Convention in Haifa, although he was very weak.

His beloved wife passed away in Bábulsar. Soon after, the Revolutionary Guards of the Islamic Republic attacked his house. Mr. Khádi' was interrogated, and all of his writings, documents and books were taken away to aid their investigation. After this incident, Mr. Khádi' was moved to Ṭihrán and kept in safe places. The authorities began to look for him in order to arrest him.

In 1984, at the age of 87, upon the advice of the National Spiritual Assembly and with the help of relatives, he moved from Írán to Canada. During the last ten years of his life, he was mostly confined to the house because of very poor health and eyesight. He was so frail that he had to content himself with assisting the friends through giving advice. He passed away on 21 February 1990 in Canada.

In both the Arabic and Persian languages, "khádi'" means "humble", and that was one of his outstanding qualities. People in his presence always felt his humility, devotion, and love. Thus, his personal commitment to the Cause of God and his spiritual greatness will always be an example. His historic merits can only become completely evident to future generations.

DR. MASSOUD BERDJIS
(Mas'úd Birjís)

WILLIAM SEARS
1911–1992

William Bernard Patrick Michael Terrance Sears was born 28 March 1911 in Duluth, Minnesota, U.S.A. He had an eventful childhood, full of fun, as his personality combined a creative imagination and a penchant for action. He was extremely talented, had a wonderful sense of humor, and a warm, generous and loving nature. He also believed that whatever you did, you should try to do it better than it had ever been done before, and with more originality.

He attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison during the Great Depression. However, finances became a serious problem so he left school and went to try his talents in the new medium of radio. He began at a small station in Wisconsin called WOMT.

It was at this point in his life that he met Marguerite Reimer, a second generation Bahá'í. Despite some obvious obstacles, including his Irish Catholic upbringing, and his being a widower with two small sons, they were married in 1940. Not long after the marriage he became a Bahá'í, and for the next fifty years Bill and Marguerite served the Faith together with total dedication.

For example, he used his experience in radio broadcasting to help write and produce the Bahá'í radio series "Meet Mr. Justice", which prompted *Variety* magazine to comment that "here at last is a Religion with a sense of humor." This series was later translated into Spanish and used in Latin America.

During the 1940s and 1950s, he became a well-known public personality while

working for WPEN and for CBS affiliate WCAU in Philadelphia, first in radio and then in television. His sports program, "The Bill Sears Show", won an Emmy Award as the best sports series of 1951. He was also the announcer for the University of Pennsylvania, Villanova, and Philadelphia Eagles football games.

In addition to his success in sports broadcasting, he made two appearances on the "Ed Sullivan Show" with episodes of the very successful "In the Park", a television series in which he acted, and which he helped write and produce in Philadelphia for the fledgling Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS).

William Sears had reached a point in his professional life at which he had achieved everything that most men desire: financial success, awards, fame, both locally and nationally, and new contract offers and opportunities which, combined with the state of the television industry at that time, would have assured him of becoming one of its superstars. It was then that he made the decision to set this all aside in order to serve the Faith in Africa.

In 1953, William and Marguerite Sears and their son Michael left the United States to live in South Africa. Mr. Sears suffered a heart attack soon after his arrival, but recovered. To support his family he returned to the radio business. His program, "That Man Sears", was very successful on Springbok Radio, the national network in South Africa. His "Tot siens, goodnight, it's been a pleasure" was familiar to thousands all over the southern part of the continent.

In April 1954, William Sears made his first pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Actually, he wrote at that time,

> Each pilgrim makes two pilgrimages in one. The first is the pilgrimage of the mind: notes taken of special information, new developments of the Faith, instructions from the Guardian to be applied to one's community or one's self. The second is the pilgrimage of the emotions: the sea that surges inside the pilgrim from the moment he catches his first glimpse of that glistening, golden dome. This is the warm flooding tide that soon will fill every empty inlet along the coastline of his spirit...
>
> One thing was apparent to me at once. My life was changing. My concept of the Faith, of teaching, of service, none of these would ever be the same again... The Guardian calls you to higher service. He lifts you up to heights of limitless joy, then sets you gently down. Having revealed the treasure, he requests the payment, which is service to the Faith of God... Not big projects planned, but small projects completed....

The Bahá'í work in South Africa was unique and difficult, but supremely rewarding. The Sears served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Johannesburg, which was responsible for the planning, coordination and implementation of teaching plans for the greater part of southern Africa and surrounding islands.

The teaching success was due largely to the direct efforts of the newly enrolled and inspired native African believers, but the source of much of their inspiration was the love showered upon them by the pioneers, and in particular by William Sears. They could feel the warmth of his love, and the appreciation he felt for their services to the Faith.

The Hand of the Cause of God in Africa, Músá Banání, asked William Sears to serve as a member of his Auxiliary Board. Then in October 1957, in a message to the Bahá'í world, Shoghi Effendi announced the designation of another contingent of the Hands of the Cause of God. Among the eight whose elevation to this exalted rank was announced in that message was William Sears.

While he was still attempting to understand and come to terms with the implications of being appointed a Hand of the Cause, he received the stunning and

unbelievable news of the sudden passing of his beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi.

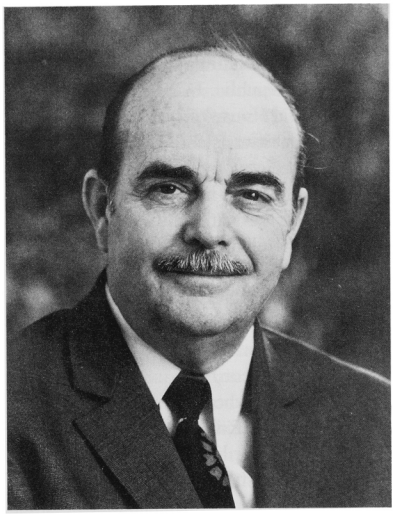
Those two events in October and November of 1957 caused an abrupt change in William Sears. His warm and loving nature, his sense of humor, and the sparkle in his eyes were intact, but there was a new intensity, a singleness of purpose, and no matter what else it might appear that he was doing, he was really concentrating on what he could do, himself and through his friends, to advance the Faith, and fulfill the responsibilities entrusted to him by Shoghi Effendi.

In November 1957, he was one of the 26 Hands of the Cause who attended the first meeting of the Hands following the passing of Shoghi Effendi. Only Corinne True, too ill to travel, was not present. He was one of the 26 signers of the original proclamation of the Hands to the Bahá'í world from that meeting.

In 1958 he attended the Intercontinental Conference in Kampala, Uganda, and the National Convention in France. He visited centers in Basutoland, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Northern Rhodesia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zanzibar. During the period 1959–1961 he visited all National Spiritual Assemblies in North, Central, and South America. He visited centers in fifteen countries in Central and South America, as well as Alaska, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Jamaica. He attended the National Convention of Costa Rica in 1960, and the National Conventions of El Salvador and Guatemala in April and May of 1961.

From June through November 1958 and again from 1961 to 1963, he served as one of the Hands of the Cause of God in the Holy Land.

In 1963, he participated in the International Convention that brought into being the Universal House of Justice, and the World Congress that followed in London. He was one of the speakers for the public meeting held in conjunction with the Congress, and his talk began, "This age in which we are living has been called an age of Nuclear Giants but ethical midgets. We have been described as material monsters and moral dwarfs."



William Sears

While thrilling and emotional moments followed one after another on this historic occasion, a highlight for him was seeing one of the very first South African Bahá'ís, a man whose enrollment and early education and training in the Faith he had been so much a part of, William Masehla, later a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of South and West Africa and then a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Africa, serving as chairman for Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum.

Once the Universal House of Justice had been elected and the element of infallibility restored to the World Order of Baha'u'llah, William and Marguerite returned to the United States to live. There, one of his first major projects was the 1965–1966 California Victory campaign, one of the first successful mass teaching projects in the United States, which served as an example for projects in other parts of the world.

In 1967 he travelled throughout Europe, and represented the Universal House of Justice at the National Convention of the Cameroon Republic. In 1970, he represented the Universal House of Justice at the Conference on Mauritius Island. He and Marguerite also visited Germany and travelled throughout Persia. In 1972, he represented the House of Justice at the National Convention of the Republic of Ireland.

While residing in the United States, he produced, with Dr. Amín Banání, a series of four cassettes called *Stories from the Children's Dawn-Breakers*. He made an Ayyám-i-Há record for all of his grandchildren everywhere... young and old. Working with Robert Quigley and the Hawaiian friends, he helped write, produce, and performed in probably the first series of quality Bahá'í television shows.

It was his campaign, following the Guardian's example, initiated with a generous contribution, and followed up by a steady stream of inspirational letters and tapes in 1984, that assured the funds which made it possible for the Bahá'í radio station, WLGI, at the Louis Gregory Institute, to go on the air as scheduled on 23 May 1984.

His slogans, "ARISE" (Arise Reach Individual Souls Everywhere) and "Get A Round Tuit" are frequently used at conferences and summer schools all over the world, and his "Month of Firesides" campaign held in the United States in November 1984 produced more firesides in Kansas in a single month than ever before.

The country-wide program of Souvenir Picnics to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the original Souvenir Picnic held at the Wilhelm property in Teaneck, New Jersey, on 26 June 1987, produced spectacular proclamation events across the country. Mr. Sears attended three of these picnics, in different parts of the country, on the same day.

An effort to raise funds for the Arc using the Sears' original copy of *The Dawn-Breakers* signed by Shoghi Effendi aroused the love and admiration of friends across the country.

He was one of the reasons for the spectacular successes of The Desert Rose Bahá'í School, held annually in Tucson, Arizona, and for the famous "Gatherings" held on the Hadden property on Batterwood, near Toronto, in Canada.

One of the major contributions made by the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears was the eleven books he authored.

Release the Sun. A book written to present the soul-stirring story of the ministry of the Báb in a way that would capture and hold the interest of the English-speaking African believers. He purposely wrote it in a simple language so it could be easily translated into the African tongues.

Thief In The Night, was written to fill a need, to answer the question asked repeatedly by people of primarily Christian backgrounds in southern Africa. The book has been translated into numerous languages, and is widely used throughout the world.

God Loves Laughter. This book is a favourite of many people. It tells the story of the early life of William Sears, including how he became Bahá'í, in a light and humorous way, and yet presents the Message of Baha'u'llah in clear and uncompromising terms.

Cry From The Heart. This book was written under extremely difficult conditions, in record time, in protest against the atrocities systematically committed against the Bahá'ís in Írán by fanatical Muslim fundamentalists with the support of the government, and by that government itself. What agony and heartache he must have suffered while working on this book. The victims, individuals, institutions of the Faith, and Bahá'í Holy Places, were all personally familiar to him. He and Marguerite had travelled widely in Írán. "The Baha'is in Írán are my personal friends," he wrote. "I have met many of them face to face, stayed in their homes, played with their children, attended their meetings, marveled at their heroic history, and felt the warmth of their

love and kindness." The book was translated and widely used in many places to bring pressure to bear on the government of Írán to end its persecution of the Bahá'ís.

There are five more published books: *Prisoner and the Kings*, *Prince of Peace*, *The Wine of Astonishment*, *The Flame* (written with Bob Quigley), *All Flags Flying*, *Tokoloshe* (both book and tapes), and *Run to Glory*. All royalties from the sale of his books, which would normally go to the author, he arranged to have contributed directly to various funds of the Faith.

One of the last things he did, during the final year of his life, was to record the book *God Loves Laughter* on tape for use by WLGI. What a bounty that he was able to do this himself. And how difficult it was. He had to work from large print sheets of just a sentence or two at a time, and with his glasses and his magnifying glass. But he did it!

The Hand of the Cause William Sears was as well known for his abilities as a public speaker as he was for his books. His name on a program was sufficient to assure standing-room-only crowds, anxious to hear him speak, and to meet him in person. In his travels, it seemed he must have embraced, and shaken hands, with half of the Bahá'í world, and he always had time for the children.

He never disappointed the friends. He did not stand up to speak expecting to be inspired. He would spend weeks preparing for a meeting, putting together notebooks, preparing charts, selecting photographs, readying special effects. While his themes were varied, they usually dealt, in some way, with the greatness of the Universal House of Justice, the station of the individual believer and what he could contribute, summed up in his title "The Majesty and Greatness of You." He was always hoping to find that special soul who could set a continent ablaze.

When you left one of his meetings you knew what the important goals of the Faith were at this particular time in history, and what part you should be playing in accomplishing them.

We are all familiar with the admonition to let deeds, not words be our adorning. In the case of the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears, his words, written and spoken, also became an adorning, as they inspired deeds in others.

On his desk, where he sat to work, he had a long rack of books, containing the major works of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi. They were literally worn out through use. The only thing holding them together was spiritual magnetism and paper clips. He was a scholar of the Faith before the coming of the concordances. He developed his own systems of indexing and cross referencing, and used them for years. When the concordances came, he had them as well.

One of the more remarkable things about this man is that he accomplished what he accomplished while dealing with the same everyday problems that beset us all—physical, financial, and every other kind—and which so often seem able to prevent us from doing what we really believe to be important, and would like to do.

The way he overcame the indignities and handicaps of the aging process could serve as an example to us all. When he could not see, he got stronger glasses. When there were no stronger glasses, he used glasses and a magnifying glass. When that didn't work, he used glasses and a magnifying glass and large print. He had laser surgery on his eyes in an effort to save what was left of his vision, but it wasn't successful. He would, afterwards, when having trouble reading some of his notes, refer apologetically to his 'laser' eyes. Those privileged to attend the meetings at which he spoke during his last year will well remember the large sheet of styrofoam which he used for his notes.

When he had trouble walking, he used a cane, then a wheel-chair; when he could not stand up to speak, he spoke sitting down. But he never stopped!

On the weekend of 19 and 20 October 1991 he began a five-city tour on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly to the five most promising teaching areas, to encourage the friends toward the accomplishment of the goal of 9,000 new believers by Riḍván as a gift of loving gratitude to Bahá'u'lláh to usher in the Holy Year commemorating the 100th anniversary of His Ascension.

His first stop was Boca Raton, Florida, followed by Worcester, Massachusetts, on 26–27 October, Tolleson, Arizona, on 2–3 November, San Francisco, California, on 9–10 November, and Portland, Oregon, on 16–17 November. He was back in Arizona in time to participate in The Desert Rose Bahá'í School.

Probably a little surprised at finding that he had been able to complete the five cities tour, and knowing that there was still work to be done, and little time left, he decided to visit New York City the weekend of 1–2 February 1992; Cleveland, Ohio, 8–9 February; and Washington, D.C., 15–16 February. After a weekend off, he was in Chicago, Illinois, 29 February–1 March. The weekend of 7–8 March he was in Atlanta, Georgia, and 14–15 March in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Just a look at the itinerary is enough to tire one out. And it tells nothing of the hours of waiting in airports in the middle of the night, or of missed connections, or the terrible weather conditions, or the problems of getting around by wheel-chair.

He spent the weekend of 21–22 March at home in Tucson, doing what he called "resting", preparing for the seventh of his nine meetings, scheduled for Denver, the next weekend. March 28 would have been his eighty-first birthday.

He was unable to be with the friends in Denver. On the morning of 25 March 1992, this aging warrior of Baha'u'llah left this earthly kingdom, his 'fierce spirit' freed to work its wonders on a higher plane.

Even his passing, which was given wide publicity, both locally and nationally, became a proclamation and teaching event.

The message from the Universal House of Justice, dispatched 26 March 1992, read:

> OUR HEARTS DEEPLY SADDENED, BAHÁ'Í WORLD GREATLY DEPRIVED, BY PASSING HAND CAUSE GOD WILLIAM SEARS, VIBRANT, CONSECRATED, STOUT-HEARTED STANDARD-BEARER FAITH BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. HIS MORE THAN HALF CENTURY UNBROKEN SERVICE MARKED BY UNFLINCHING DEVOTION TO BELOVED GUARDIAN, INFECTIOUS ENTHUSIASM FOR TEACHING, GALVANIZING SENSE DRAMA, DISARMING HUMOUR, SPECIAL LOVE FOR CHILDREN, UNFLAGGING DETERMINATION IN FACE DIFFICULTIES. HE WILL EVER BE REMEMBERED FOR DEDICATING FULL RANGE HIS CREATIVE AND ENERGETIC CAPACITIES AS WRITER, EDITOR, LECTURER, RADIO AND TELEVISION PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, TO HIS VARIED SERVICES AS TRAVELLING TEACHER TO NUMEROUS COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY IN THE AMERICAS, AND AS PIONEER TO AFRICA WHERE HE WAS MEMBER OF AUXILIARY BOARD AND OF NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY SOUTH AND WEST AFRICA WHEN IN 1957 HE WAS ELEVATED RANK HAND CAUSE. HE LATER SERVED AS MEMBER BODY HANDS HOLY LAND. HIS LOSS ACUTELY FELT IN NORTH AMERICA WHERE HE EXPENDED LAST MEASURE HIS EBBING STRENGTH PROMOTION TEACHING ACTIVITIES. DYNAMIC EFFECTS HIS WORK WILL ENDURE THROUGH HIS MANY BOOKS AND RECORDINGS. GENERATIONS TO COME WILL REJOICE IN RICH LEGACY LEFT THEM THROUGH HIS HISTORIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS ILLUSTRIOUS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.
>
> ADVISE FRIENDS THROUGHOUT WORLD COMMEMORATE HIS PASSING. REQUEST BEFITTING MEMORIAL SERVICES TO HIS HONOUR ALL HOUSES OF WORSHIP.
>
> WILLIAM SEARS JR.

JOHN ALDHAM ROBARTS
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1901–1991

John Aldham Robarts was born on 2 November 1901 in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, to Aldham Wilson Robarts and Rachel Mary Montgomery Campbell Robarts.

An extraordinary thread of dedication to the service of God seems to have been woven into the very fabric of John Robarts' life. Looking back to his great-grandmother, we find a woman giving birth to a son during a hurricane in Barbados, in the only safe place available to her in that raging tempest, an old bake-oven, half underground. At the height of the storm, she made a vow that if she and her baby were spared, she would dedicate its life to the service of God.

As if in fulfilment of that promise, that son grew up to become the Reverend Thomas Tempest Robarts, a Canon in the Anglican Church, in Thorold, Ontario. Thomas Tempest had three sons and two daughters. The third son, Aldham Wilson Robarts, John's father, remained an Anglican. The two daughters, Ella and Grace Robarts, became Bahá'ís in 1906, when John was five years old.

Like his mother before him, Thomas Tempest dedicated the life of his last-born, Grace Robarts, to the service of God. Little did he know that Grace would fulfil his vow by becoming the servant of the Servant, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, nor that she would be uniquely honoured by Him. Part of her story is in *The Bahá'í World*, Vol.VIII, p.658:

> ...During the months of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's stay in America in 1912 Mrs. Ober (Grace Robarts) had the honor of being indeed the "servant" in His home in whatever city (on the East Coast) He was staying. He chose her to go ahead and secure an apartment for Him and have it in readiness upon His arrival. Then she would care for His home as a housekeeper and hostess while He and His Secretaries and those Persians who had the privilege of serving Him in various capacities, remained there. She kept the home immaculate, and always ready for the constant stream of guests from morning to night, Bahá'ís and inquirers and souls in difficulty to whom 'Abdu'l-Bahá was always a loving Father. It was during one of the New York City visits of 'Abdu'l-Bahá that He suggested her marriage to Harlan Ober. Gaining the consent of these two devoted believers, who in His consummate wisdom He had drawn together, He, on the following day, July 17, 1912, married them in the morning according to the Bahá'í marriage.
>
> This infinite bounty of being chosen for each other and joined in marriage by the Center of the Covenant Himself was a unique favor bestowed upon these two souls alone, out of all America.
>
> After they had been joined in a divine and eternal relationship by 'Abdu'l-Bahá He requested Howard Colby Ives, a Unitarian minister, deeply attracted to 'Abdu'l-Bahá but not, as yet, a confirmed Bahá'í, to perform the legal ceremony....

It was this Grace Robarts Ober, his beloved aunt, who first told John about the Bahá'í Faith; it was she who first inflamed his heart with her contagious love for this Cause. Little did she know that John would dedicate his life joyfully to its service, that he and his wife would take its Message to remote Africa and be named Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, nor that Shoghi Effendi would honour him by appointing him a Hand of the Cause of God.

John's father was manager of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in Port Arthur (now Thunder Bay), on the north shore of Lake Superior in Ontario, and it was here that John and his two older sisters completed their elementary schooling. He attended Ridley College in St. Catharines, Ontario, leaving at age 17 to accept a position as secretary to a Canadian National Railways superintendent. With a concentration and dedication that became characteristic of all his work, he quickly acquired proficiency in

secretarial skills that proved invaluable to him in the years to come.

In 1926 John became a partner in the firm Graham Robarts and Company (domestic heating business) in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and in 1927 he and his partner, James D. Graham, established The Overhead Door Company of Canada, with John as president and general manager, 1927–1934, in Toronto.

John Aldham Robarts married Audrey FitzGerald (born 20 December 1904 in Montreal), daughter of Edward FitzGerald and Kate Bulmer, on 3 March 1928 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. They had four children: Aldham Edward, 1929; John FitzGerald, 1930; Patrick Tempest, 1934; Nina Grace, 1940.

In 1934, when John sold the Overhead Door Company, the economy was depressed and jobs were at a premium, but he found employment for each of his approximately 20 workers before accepting the invitation urged upon him to join the Manufacturers' Life Insurance Company. He completed the Alexander Hamilton Business Courses, and qualified as a Chartered Life Underwriter (C.L.U.). In 1938 he joined the London Life Insurance Company as district manager of their Toronto King Street Agency which, under his direction, became their most productive agency in Canada.

John, and later Audrey, had always been attracted to Aunt Grace and Uncle Harlan. In the 1930s they became attracted to Bahá'u'lláh. Taught mainly by Grace and Harlan, and by Mabel and Howard Colby Ives, later also by George Spendlove, they together accepted the Faith in Toronto in 1937 and declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh in 1938. It was the second year of Shoghi Effendi's Seven Year Plan for the United States and Canada, and both John and Audrey plunged into the teaching work.

The Robarts' home in Forest Hill Village, a Toronto suburb, attracted a stream of diverse people, from distinguished visiting Bahá'í teachers to an army of friends of their four children. Often on summer evenings the neighbourhood youngsters converged outside the Robarts' home, especially when Mr. Robarts was among them playing ball or skipping rope or teaching them feats of bicycle riding. Even six-year-old Suzie from down the street felt the pull of that home when she rang the doorbell and implored, 'Can Mr. Robarts come out now and play?'

The warmth of Audrey and John's informal hospitality was itself an eloquent teacher. Every Wednesday evening for years they held a lively fireside in their home. When there was not an invited speaker John gave the talk himself, frequently tailoring his words and aiming them, with uncanny perception and utmost love, at one unidentified, sometimes identifiable, individual present. One never knew who might be the next focus of his attention. Far from humiliating anyone, the effect was to electrify the people there by drawing every individual into a kind of loving complicity that at any moment could erupt into waves of laughter or nods of enlightenment.

Acutely conscious of the value of time, John created additional fruitful teaching opportunities during his work week by hiring a private dining room near his office once a week and inviting friends to hear about the Faith over a businessmen's lunch.

In 1940, John was appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada to the first Ontario Regional Teaching Committee and served as secretary, its only officer, until he became chairman in 1944 and 1945. He also chaired the Ontario Summer School Committee for some years, and was instrumental in organizing the first Ontario Bahá'í Summer School at Rice Lake in 1941.

When the National Teaching Committee of Canada was formed in 1946 John was elected as its chairman. In accordance with Shoghi Effendi's plan, this Committee was instrumental in laying the foundation for the establishment of Canada's own independent National Spiritual Assembly, the ninth in the world. The first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada was elected in

1948 and John was elected its chairman. He served in this capacity six times, from its inception in 1948 until 1953.

John played a key role in developing the first Bahá'í communities of Hamilton and Ottawa, Ontario, travelling to Hamilton every week for a year, and to Ottawa for a number of whole weekends, teaching intensively in each city. The first Local Spiritual Assemblies of Hamilton and Ottawa were formed in 1940 and 1948 respectively. John and Audrey both served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Toronto and in 1950 they raised up an Assembly in their own Forest Hill Village.

Among John's most endearing qualities were his quick sense of humor and infectious laugh. He was a brilliant story teller. He often recounted real-life stories interspersed with pertinent quotations from Bahá'í scriptures. These stories conveyed a powerful spiritual message, and could move his listeners from tears or helpless laughter to renewed dedication to the Cause of God, and promptly to action, the goal for which they were intended. His calls for pioneers, his appeals on behalf of the Funds, his exhortations to heartfelt prayer, to 'planning our work and working our plan', raised innumerable individuals, families and communities to new spiritual levels of daily living, service and happiness.

He continually invited, urged and guided the Bahá'ís to connect with that Source of all light that guided him, that was ever-present to him, that he so clearly saw lovingly surrounding us all, ready to rush to our assistance if we would but take the first step. He never doubted the capacity of the believers to win every goal. John seemed to walk the mystical path with practical feet and a penetrating eye. It was as though his vision extended beyond this material world and into the spiritual realm, enabling him to see straight to the heart of matters, to answer the unspoken question, to respond quickly and appropriately to the unuttered need.

John awakened strengths in people. Once, urgently requiring a chairman for a meeting, he threaded his way through the crowd looking for a willing soul. Several experienced Bahá'ís declined, pleading unworthiness. A brand new young Bahá'í hesitantly agreed, but warned that she had no idea how to proceed. 'Don't worry,' he reassured, 'I'll tell you.' At the appointed moment he whispered, 'Ask them to sit down, then read a prayer.' She followed instructions. 'Now, introduce me,' he breathed behind his hand. Graciously she introduced him. John began his address by introducing his radiant chairman, to a burst of delighted applause. After his talk he whispered his last discreet cue, 'Now thank me!' Another long Bahá'í career of service was launched!

John was not easily deflected from his purpose. Apparent reverses he counted not as failures but as divine promptings to higher victories. One evening when not one soul came to his advertised meeting, he simply delivered his talk anyway. A passerby strolling past the open door of the rented conference room was nonplussed to see a man vigorously addressing an empty room! That person later became a Bahá'í, pioneered overseas and raised a dedicated Bahá'í family.

John, in his professional work, inspired his insurance agents to go out and pursue the goals he set for them. Perhaps for this reason he could identify with Shoghi Effendi's vastly greater spiritual undertakings devising plans and sending pioneers out all over the world to accomplish them. In any case, he arose with heart and soul to fulfill Shoghi Effendi's wishes with obedience and speed.

In 1949 he attended the Second European Teaching Conference, in Brussels, Belgium, then visited seven of North America's ten goal countries in Europe—the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark—as well as France and England. Shoghi Effendi had given Canada the seemingly impossible goal of opening Greenland, a closed country which no one could enter without complicated permission

from the Danish government. Mr. Robarts met with officials for Greenland and won goodwill and the promise of cooperation. He met with the Copenhagen Local Spiritual Assembly, addressed a meeting of Danish Bahá'ís, and returned to Canada with new leads and two pioneer offers. Mr. Palle Bischoff, a Danish Bahá'í, was able to finally open Greenland to the Faith in 1951.

In 1950, John offered to visit England, Ireland and Scotland where a sense of despair had descended upon the Bahá'ís who, in the last weeks of their Six Year Plan, were lagging behind their goals. Shoghi Effendi approved of Mr. Robarts' trip, and the National Teaching Committee arranged a concentrated tour and rallied the British Bahá'ís. John arrived on 26 March and visited 10 cities in 13 days, carrying the Message on his lips, love in his heart, and declaration cards in his pocket. Some seekers, already deepened, came into the Faith with little more than John's warm invitation.

On 17 April the British National Spiritual Assembly cabled Shoghi Effendi: TOTAL VICTORY ASSURED...! and the Guardian replied on 19 April: OVERJOYED DEEPLY GRATEFUL IMMENSELY PROUD SIGNAL VICTORY ACHIEVED BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY BRITISH ISLES.... SHOGHI.

In 1953, the Hand of the Cause of God Siegfried Schopflocher was to represent Canada at the New Delhi Conference, one of the four intercontinental conferences at which Shoghi Effendi's global Ten Year Crusade was launched. Unfortunately Mr. Schopflocher died and it seemed no one else in Canada was able to go in his stead. John's communications with Shoghi Effendi at the time reveal this spirited exchange:

16 September 1953:
IF IMPERATIVE HAVE CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE NEW DELHI I WILL ATTEND AT PROBABLE SACRIFICE CORDIAL EMPLOYER RELATIONS. DEEPEST DEVOTION, JOHN ROBARTS.

19 September 1953:
PRESENCE CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE IMPERATIVE. LOVE, SHOGHI.

22 September 1953:
ATTENDING CONFERENCE. EMPLOYERS HAPPY. LOVE, JOHN ROBARTS.

26 September 1953:
LOVING APPRECIATION. SHOGHI.

As soon as John and Audrey heard about the Ten Year Crusade during the New Delhi Conference they sent a cable to Shoghi Effendi dated 19 October 1953 offering to pioneer. On 22 October they received his reply:

BECHUANALAND HIGHLY MERITORIOUS. LOVE, SHOGHI.

Within two months—having discovered in the encyclopedia that Bechuanaland was situated in southern Africa, a landlocked country the size of France, without tarred roads, mostly Kalahari Desert—they had, with absolute faith in Shoghi Effendi, parted with two beloved sons (Aldham, who shortly thereafter pioneered to Nigeria, and later to Ghana, and Gerald who pioneered on the homefront first to Kingston and later to Windsor, Ontario), and left behind John's successful career and their comfortable Toronto home to sail, with Patrick (aged 19) and Nina (aged 13), on the very first ship to South Africa, a small Norwegian cargo liner carrying just one other passenger on a 21-day voyage, some of those days in very rough waters.

Within three or four days of arrival in Mafeking, the capital of Bechuanaland, they purchased a house. This total transplant, from inspiration to realization, was executed within 16 weeks. For opening Bechuanaland to the Faith, John, Audrey and Patrick earned the title 'Knight of Bahá'u'lláh'.

'To John A. Robarts... Whose Faith Comes First...' Perhaps these words, engraved on the gold watch presented to him with affection and awe by the agents of his life insurance branch upon his sudden departure for Africa, epitomize John Robarts' life. Like a beacon of light shining within him and guiding his steps, John's love for and steadfast faith in Bahá'u'lláh, in the promised

assistance of God, in the power of daily prayer were, to many, almost palpable. That love and that faith centred in the divine kingdom were the source of his warmth of heart in this earthly one, his passionate drive, his clear vision and above all his spirit of certitude so well remembered by those who knew him.

His success as a businessman, and the respect of his business associates, were so widely known that representatives of two South African life insurance companies met the Robarts family upon their arrival in Cape Town in 1954 with job offers for Mr. Robarts, before he even stepped off the boat! He accepted a position as district manager with the Prudential Assurance Company in South Africa, 1954–1957, and in Southern Rhodesia, 1957 until 1959, when he gave up his business in order to devote his full time to the African Bahá'í work.

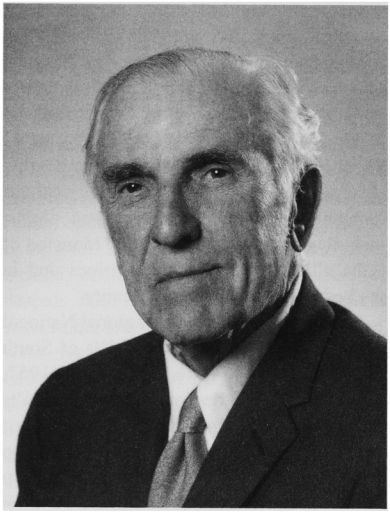
The Hand of the Cause of God for Africa, Mr. Musa Banani, appointed John Robarts as one of nine members of the first Auxiliary Board for the continent of Africa in 1954. As if guided by some inner compass, John was able to find 'true north,' to identify the basic principle involved in situations and to act upon it without compromise. His integrity tolerated no deviation from spiritual principles. He was able to create a sense of unity among the friends through his love for them, to renew their confidence by recognizing and utilizing their strengths, and, through astute use of his executive acumen, to carve a path through unnecessary detail straight to the point.

In 1955, John, Audrey, Patrick and Nina had the privilege of going on pilgrimage to Haifa and Bahjí. It was a highlight in John's life. In the film *Retrospective*, John is asked about his impression of the Guardian when finally they met. His reply is movingly captured as the camera zooms in on John's face suffused with joy at the memory. He pauses for a moment, and replies: 'He made an impression upon me that seized my heart. I loved him so much....' After two of the seven dinners at which Shoghi Effendi placed John directly across the table from him, and Audrey between them at the head of the table, John was twice privileged to be alone briefly with the Guardian when Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum asked him to accompany Shoghi Effendi back to their home nearby. He cherished always his memories of those moments and those nine days and nights, including two nights spent at the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh, praying in the Shrines and in the bedroom of the Blessed Beauty.

John was elected to the Regional National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of South and West Africa in 1956. By February 1957, there were enough deepened African Bahá'ís to form the first Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Mafeking, Bechuanaland, so the Robarts moved to Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) to serve their Bechuanaland goal from the north.

In Bulawayo, John and Audrey, together with Noura Faridian, a valiant young nurse and the only other pioneer, supported by Patrick and Nina when they were home from their studies, raised up the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Bulawayo, in 1958, and opened other localities. As John's international travels increased, Audrey, often fearlessly driving hundreds of miles on corrugated unpaved roads alone or with the beloved African friends, sometimes with Patrick or Nina, carried on the teaching work in both Southern Rhodesia and in Bechuanaland.

On 2 October 1957, Shoghi Effendi appointed John Robarts a Hand of the Cause of God. On 4 November 1957, Shoghi Effendi died, depriving the Bahá'í world of his infallible guidance. The Hands of the Cause, upon whom responsibility for leadership now fell until such time as infallibility could be restored, realized that the goals of the Ten Year World Crusade were of paramount importance: they had to be achieved by 1963 as planned. Sufficient local and national Bahá'í communities had to be established in order to elect that first



John Robarts

Universal House of Justice, called for by Shoghi Effendi, which, as promised by Bahá'u'lláh, would be infallible.

Those dear and precious Hands, those intrepid 'Chief Stewards of the Embryonic World Commonwealth of Bahá'u'lláh', assembled in Haifa and Bahjí (except Corinne True, 96 years old) immediately following Shoghi Effendi's funeral. At that time there were 27 Hands living, widely scattered on five continents, 22 men and 5 women, ranging in age from 31 to 96, never before having come together as a body. It was the first of six annual Conclaves of the Hands, and began their historic five-and-a-half-year custodianship of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, piloting it through that most perilous period in its history, until the glorious moment when they could deliver it intact to the first Universal House of Justice.

The role, unique in history, of the Hands of the Cause, engaged day and night in the protection and propagation of the Cause of God, in constant worldwide travels assisting and inspiring the believers to attain every goal lest opportunity be irretrievably lost, and the responsibilities of the Custodians, those Hands residing in the Holy Land, at the nerve-centre of the Bahá'í world, coordinating this stupendous global enterprise, fixing the eyes of the Bahá'í world community on its one overarching goal, the election of the first Universal House of Justice, are perhaps but dimly understood today. In its first message to the Bahá'ís of the world, 30 April 1963, the Universal House of Justice paid tribute to the Hands of the Cause of God:

> We do not wish to dwell on the appalling dangers which faced the infant Cause when it was suddenly deprived of our beloved Shoghi Effendi, but rather to acknowledge with all the love and gratitude of our hearts the reality of the sacrifice, the labour, the self-discipline, the superb stewardship of the Hands of the Cause of God. We can think of no more fitting words to express our tribute to these dearly loved and valiant souls than to recall the words of Bahá'u'lláh Himself: '*Light and glory, greeting and praise be upon the Hands of His Cause, through whom the light of long-suffering hath shone forth, and the declaration of authority is proven of God, the Powerful, the Mighty, the Independent; and through whom the sea of bestowal hath moved, and the breeze of the favour of God, the Lord of mankind, hath wafted.*' ... The entire history of religion shows no comparable record of such strict self-discipline, such absolute loyalty, and such complete self-abnegation by the leaders of a religion finding themselves suddenly deprived of their divinely inspired guide. The debt of gratitude which mankind for generations, nay, ages to come, owes to this handful of grief-stricken, steadfast, heroic souls is beyond estimation.[1]

John Robarts attended all six Conclaves of the Hands of the Cause of God held at

[1] *The Ministry of the Custodians 1957–1963* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre 1992), p. 2.

Bahjí from 1957 to 1963, visiting Bahá'í communities via the west coast of Africa on his way to Haifa, and returning home to Bulawayo through communities of the east.

On 7 October 1957, Shoghi Effendi—in the last month of his life—had asked that John Robarts go to Canada after attending the January 1958 Intercontinental Conference in Kampala, Uganda. Though stunned, like the rest of the Bahá'í world at the loss of the beloved Guardian, Mr. Robarts, ever prompt to fulfil Shoghi Effendi's wishes, travelled in several countries for five months. He attended the Intercontinental Conferences held in Wilmette and Frankfurt in 1958, and traversed Canada, his homeland, from February to April 1958, and again, January to July 1960 at the request of the Hands in the Holy Land, spurring the Canadians on to splendid advances in their Ten Year Crusade goals. From 1961 to 1966, he also served as Trustee of the Continental Fund for Africa.

The ultimate victory of the Ten Year Plan was the election of the first Universal House of Justice in Haifa, Israel, on 21 April 1963. This took place in the House of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, with John Robarts and the other Hands of the Cause of God present. Mr. Robarts also attended the first Bahá'í World Congress, held in London, England, immediately after the election. On his way back to Southern Rhodesia, he went to Morocco to visit the Bahá'ís imprisoned for their Faith in Kenitra Prison, three condemned to death, five to life imprisonment.

Through all of these triumphs and trials of the Faith, John Robarts never lost his sense of humor. A newly appointed Auxiliary Board Member found herself seated at a banquet between another Hand of the Cause on her left, and John Robarts on her right. 'Oh, Mr. Robarts, I am so nervous sitting between two Hands of the Cause! I am afraid I will spill my dinner!' she whispered into his ear. 'Spill to the left!' came his instant reply!

In 1964, John Robarts represented the Universal House of Justice at the Inaugural Conventions of the Regional Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of West Africa, with its seat in Monrovia, Liberia, and West Central Africa, with its seat in Victoria, Cameroon. In 1966, the Robarts moved back to Canada to strengthen that community. In 1968, he attended the second International Convention in Haifa, convened the inaugural meeting of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Northeast Asia, and visited Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Hawaii.

In 1971, he travelled from Canada to the Oceanic Conference in Jamaica, and represented the Universal House of Justice at the Oceanic Conference in Iceland. A teaching trip to Australasia undertaken during 1971–72 took him to Australia, New Zealand, Tahiti, Fiji, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, New Hebrides, Western Samoa and Hawaii. In 1973, he attended the third International Convention in Haifa, and in 1976 he took part in the International Teaching Conferences held in Anchorage, Paris, and Nairobi. In 1978 he attended the fourth International Convention in Haifa.

The joy of both John and Audrey Robarts was unbounded when, in 1981, they returned to Mmabatho for the inaugural convention of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Bophuthatswana, John representing the Universal House of Justice. He also represented the Supreme Body at the International Teaching Conference held in 1982 in Lagos, Nigeria, and attended the International Conferences in Dublin and Montreal. In 1983 he attended the fifth International Convention in Haifa.

In 1983, Mr. Robarts also travelled to visit Native American friends, and attended the dedication of the land for Bahá'í House at the Yukon Bahá'í Teaching Institute. Then, in 1984, he attended the dedication of the Yukon Bahá'í House. On that occasion he was adopted as an elder into the Johns clan of the Tlingit people of the Yukon and honoured with the powerful name 'Gooch Ooxú' meaning 'Wolf Teeth'.

In 1984, at the age of 82 years, Mr. Robarts graciously accepted one last administrative post. He served as a valuable and much loved member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Rawdon, Quebec, the village in which he lived, in order to save that incorporated Assembly until a newly declared Bahá'í was able to replace him the following year.

That same year, he represented the Bahá'í Faith in a series of ecumenical activities organized by the Anglican Church of Rawdon and delighted priest and congregation by giving the sermon one Sunday morning on the subject of life after death. The vitality of his message, its hopeful new vision of the world to come, is fondly remembered years later, as well as his humour: 'I don't mind if you look at your watches during my sermon. lt's when you take off your watch and shake it (removing his own watch and shaking it near his ear) I know my time's up!'

John Robarts made his last international teaching trip, to eleven cities in Ireland, in 1986.

Mr. Robarts rarely thought in terms of writing anything for publication. He was totally involved in actively seeking the heart of each situation, intuitively and wisely dealing with it at once. These qualities are reflected in his reports to and correspondence with the institutions of the Faith, and in his letters to the many individuals who wrote to him and benefitted from his inspiring and encouraging guidance. He did, however, write the Introduction to *Messages to Canada*, the collected communications of Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'ís of Canada, 1923 to 1957. His only other published work was his 1960 letter to the Bahá'ís of Canada, published as a 13-page booklet of inspiring and amusing reports from Canadians about their (sometimes first) experiences with fervent prayer in response to John's urgings, amazed that it really worked for them, at least as well as he (and the Writings) had promised!

John Robarts' reminiscences about Shoghi Effendi are movingly recorded in the 55-minute film *Retrospective*, produced by Elizabeth Martin in 1978 for the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada. Led by Douglas Martin's perceptive questions and comments, Mr. Robarts looks back over his 40 years in the Faith, brings to life some early Bahá'í history and sheds light on the unprecedented role of the Hands of the Cause of God.

Reminiscences of both Audrey and John Robarts about Shoghi Effendi during their nine-day family pilgrimage in 1955 appear in the chapters contributed by each of them in *The Vision of Shoghi Effendi*, published by the Association for Bahá'í Studies in 1993.

The vigour of John Robarts' half century of sustained services to the Bahá'í Faith stands as awesome testimony to the power, when we do but tap it, of the promised assistance of God. Few people realized that asthma and chronic bronchitis, later emphysema, were, for much of John's life, his constant companions which he was able to subdue to an extraordinary degree, thanks not only to his and to Audrey's reliance on prayer, but to Audrey's resourcefulness and lifetime of utter devotion to his care. Increasingly Audrey accompanied him on his travels, thereby extending by years his strenuous and precious teaching activities.

Few others ever saw him rise determinedly from a sleepless night in extreme climatic conditions, struggling for breath, to maintain his unwavering focus on the love of Bahá'u'lláh, never doubting that His assistance would flow through him at just the right moment, to stride forward to the podium and address his conference audience with ease and joy. The humour and dignity with which John wore the physical frailty that finally overtook his body touched all those around him in an unforgettable example of radiant submission to the will of God, to his very last breath. And then his luminous soul took its flight.

Hundreds of tributes flooded in from around the world after John's peaceful passing

on 18 June 1991 in Rawdon, Quebec. Among the most precious were the words of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum:

...HIS UNI-DIRECTIONAL, CONSECRATED, UNREMITTING SERVICES FAITH HE HAD EMBRACED WITH SO MUCH CONVICTION AND ENTHUSIASM, ... HIS WARMTH OF HEART, FRIENDLINESS, THE CONSTANT ENCOURAGEMENT HE INVARIABLY SHOWERED ON ALL THE BELIEVERS ... HIS WISDOM AND CONSECRATION, WHICH WERE AN INVALUABLE SUPPORT AND INSPIRATION IN THE DELIBERATIONS OF HIS FELLOW HANDS DURING THE CRITICAL PERIOD AFTER THE ASCENSION OF THE BELOVED GUARDIAN...

And also from the International Teaching Centre:

...HIS RADIANT SPIRIT, THE WARMTH OF HIS LOVE, HIS STEADFAST ADHERENCE TO BAHÁ'Í PRINCIPLES...

The Universal House of Justice announced John's passing to the Bahá'í World with the following:

WITH SADDENED HEARTS ANNOUNCE PASSING MUCH-LOVED STAUNCH PROMOTER FAITH, KNIGHT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, HAND CAUSE GOD JOHN ROBARTS. HIS DISTINGUISHED ADMINISTRATIVE TEACHING PIONEERING ACTIVITIES IN HIS NATIVE CANADA, IN AFRICA AND EUROPE, DURING MINISTRY BELOVED GUARDIAN AND SUBSEQUENTLY ON WORLD SCALE THROUGH HIS INTERNATIONAL TRAVELS WERE SOURCE ABUNDANT INSPIRATION COUNTLESS FRIENDS MANY LANDS. HIS RELIANCE AND EMPHASIS ON PRAYER IN ALL EFFORTS PROMOTION CAUSE AND HIS SUSTAINED SERVICES PATH LOVE FOR BLESSED BEAUTY WERE CHARACTERIZED BY SPIRIT CERTITUDE, SELF-EFFACEMENT AND VIGOUR WHICH SET A STANDARD OF STEWARDSHIP THAT HAS ENRICHED ANNALS FAITH. HE HAS ASSUREDLY EARNED BOUNTIFUL REWARD ABHÁ KINGDOM. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL. ADVISE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS IN HIS HONOUR THROUGHOUT WORLD INCLUDING ALL HOUSES WORSHIP. CONVEY DEAR AUDREY, BELOVED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES MOST LOVING SYMPATHY.
UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE.

NINA GRACE ROBARTS TINNION

H. COLLIS FEATHERSTONE
1913–1990

Collis Featherstone and his wife, Madge, accepted the Bahá'í Faith in December 1944. This came about in an unusual way.

Somewhat earlier, two intrepid and stalwart Bahá'ís, Bertha Dobbins and Katherine Harcus, had set out from Adelaide, the capital city of South Australia, to teach the Faith in the Port Adelaide area, about 14 kilometres away. Walking back in the direction from whence they had come and, footsore and very weary, they leaned against a post at a railway and road intersection at Albert Park in the Woodville area, and called on the Greatest Name for a home to be opened up to the Faith.

Sometime later, a Mrs. Almond, who lived near to the Featherstones, invited Madge to a gathering at her home to meet her past school teacher who had something very important to share with her and any of her friends.

The teacher was Bertha Dobbins, and the important message she had to share with everybody was the Bahá'í Faith. She began her introduction to the Faith by reading the Tablet of Aḥmad. Madge attended several afternoon meetings with her small children, sharing all the proceedings, pamphlets and newsletters with Collis, who was instantly attracted. Bertha saying that the Faith "was for everyone on earth" prompted Collis, through Madge, to ask for a "decent book" to read.

Madge brought home for him the large American illustrated copy of *The Dawn-Breakers*. He was so hungry to learn more that he began reading it the same night, and when he got to page 92 and started reading

the Báb's address to the Letters of the Living, he realized that this Message was from God. He had found what he was looking for.

Both Madge and Collis continued to study and even responded affirmatively to Bertha's call for a home to be opened up for evening meetings. On one occasion a very interesting talk on the Bahá'í Administrative Order was given, and afterwards Collis stood and said: "This is all very interesting, but aren't there some books on the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh?" The very next day, he received several. These "firesides" continued for several months before the couple announced in December 1944 that they wished to become Bahá'ís. When the two teachers had stopped at the railway crossing and called on the Greatest Name, Collis and Madge's home had been the nearest one facing them!

Harold Collis Featherstone was born in the historic town of Quorn, South Australia, on 5 May 1913. As his father worked for the South Australian Railways, the family moved to several different country areas over the years. The most significant period of his early life was spent in Smithfield, some twenty-eight kilometres north of Adelaide, when his father was promoted to Station Master.

During his high school years, from 1925 to 1928, he travelled daily to the Adelaide High School on West Terrace. His report described him as "diligent, well-behaved and polite, thoroughly reliable and straightforward" and said "He is neat and careful in his script work." Indeed his handwriting throughout his whole life remained neat and controlled and always attracted comment. He became a very avid reader with all the train travelling. He was a keen cyclist, played cricket and always kept a keen interest in the Test Cricket Matches. He played tennis and actively participated in the local tennis club until he injured his shoulder when he was fifty-seven years old.

During his days in Smithfield, Collis started thinking about deeper matters. There were three main things which set this process in motion.

At fifteen, Collis was confirmed in the Church of England. The fact that he had not been baptised in the Church earlier was not realized until after his Confirmation; that should never have been allowed to happen! Church authorities at the time were determined he would not forget the error, and he was continually reminded of it. This rather unforgiving attitude was upsetting to him.

Furthermore, he could not reconcile himself to the Church's teachings on the resurrection of the body. Following the death and burial of his dog near a fencing post which was later damaged in a storm and had to be replaced, the decomposing remains of his pet were exposed, only to confirm his misgivings about the logic of such a belief.

Another striking incident occurred when he was travelling home by train and was so deeply involved in his reading he didn't notice the train had stopped at his station. As it was pulling out, he ran to jump off onto the sand which he knew lay beyond the platform between another set of rail lines. He was ready to jump when something told him to get off the other side. It was a split second decision and as he landed he heard an express train roar through, travelling in the opposite direction and on the side he had decided not to jump from only a few seconds before. Had he made the slightest misjudgement in jumping from that side, it was quite apparent what his fate would have been! Ever afterwards, he wondered what it was that made him change his mind. There had been no time for rational thinking; it all happened too quickly.

These three incidents fueled his search into spiritual matters.

During the 1930s, Collis moved to live and work in Adelaide. Almost every Sunday he would attend up to three church services —all different denominations. The Reverend G.E. Hale of the Unitarian Church, however, was a man Collis never forgot. What impressed him most was the fact that he took

parallel quotes from the scriptures of other great religions, which Collis found so interesting and appealing that he went off to the public library to read more.

Although initially Collis worked in an office and studied accounting at night school, he had the opportunity in 1934 to learn dye making, ultimately leading him into a precision engineering business partnership in 1938, which he eventually bought out, and carried on for more than thirty-five years. He was widely recognised in the industry for his excellent workmanship and the fairness with which he conducted business.

He met Madge Green, and after a long courtship they were married in March 1938. They had five children: four daughters and a son.

During the war years, money was short, the children small and their needs time consuming, and the business was hard work, all of which slowed down the spiritual search until Bertha and Joe Dobbins and the Bahá'í Faith came into the Featherstones life.

Although there were few young Bahá'ís at that time, the Featherstones were keen and enthusiastic, participating fully in the affairs of the greater Adelaide community of thirty to forty Bahá'ís. Their firesides continued, usually commencing with a speaker giving a short address on some aspect of the Faith. With the enthusiasm that was generated by their zeal, the Bahá'í community grew.

Whenever Collis reflected on those early days as a Bahá'í, he recalled the joy and excitement that prevailed. News travelled much more slowly in those days, and whenever a letter or news was received from the Guardian, the friends were very jubilant. Collis was very eager to meet Clara Dunn, affectionately known as Mother, who together with her late husband John Henry Hyde Dunn, had brought the Bahá'í Faith to Australia in 1920. That meeting was realized after Bertha Dobbins had arranged for Mother to come to Adelaide in 1945, when she also stayed in their home for a couple of nights. Much to Collis' regret he never met John Henry Hyde Dunn, who had passed away in 1941.

At the time Collis became a Bahá'í, the beloved Guardian was guiding the whole Bahá'í world singlehandedly, the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand had been in existence for only about ten years, and there were only three Local Assemblies. The Bahá'í community might have been small, but it was so vibrant that Madge and Collis had the impression that there were many more Bahá'ís throughout Australia than there actually were!

The friends were encouraged in those days to keep in touch with the Guardian, and as early as 1945 Collis wrote a long letter to him, the first of many, with a string of questions he had been unable to get answers for elsewhere. In his own hand the Guardian wrote: "May the Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh bless and reinforce your efforts, and may He aid you to obtain a clearer understanding of the essentials of His Faith, and to advance its best interests, and contribute to the consolidation of its God-given institutions".

Many of the early Bahá'ís were strong and forceful personalities, independent and strong willed, often with very divergent views which clashed from time to time. However, in spite of the personality problems that existed, the believers were fierce defenders of the Cause and were loyal and steadfast. Collis would often say that the Faith in those early days needed strong-willed and independent people. Nevertheless, there was a tendency for the believers to "take sides", and from the very beginning Collis and Madge made it clear that they were not going to be a part of that, choosing instead to follow the guidelines given to Collis from Mother Dunn and then the Guardian through his secretary:

> THE GUARDIAN HOPES YOU, YOUR WIFE, AND THE OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE SO ACTIVE IN THE CAUSE IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD WILL RENDER IT MANY SERVICES, PROMOTE UNITY AND LOVE IN THE COMMUNITY,

STRENGTHEN THE ADMINISTRATIVE FOUNDATIONS OF THE FAITH, AND ATTRACT MANY NEW SOULS TO IT.

(from a letter dated 26 October 1945)

Bertha and Joe Dobbins were visionaries too, and they encouraged Collis and Madge to set their sights high—to establish an Assembly in their area, to teach, to travel, to attend the Bahá'í summer schools... The Featherstones rose to all those challenges.

In 1946, Collis and Harold Fitzner started their monthly teaching trips to Kingston, south of Adelaide, a bus journey of several hours' duration (very few Bahá'ís had cars in those early post-war days). Teaching activities continued there for more than six years until the culmination of the Six Year Plan in 1953. In the latter years Collis purchased a car and was able to take many Bahá'ís, including Mother Dunn, and overseas visitors such as Shirin Fozdar, on teaching trips to Kingston. Merle Mueller, whose family became Bahá'ís in Kingston, wrote at the time of Collis' passing: "Many times in my life I have given silent praise and thanks that you were both instrumental in giving the precious gift of the knowledge of Bahá'u'lláh to our family."

Collis and Madge attended their first summer school at Yerrinbool in January 1947, and Collis went again on his own in January 1949. On several subsequent occasions Collis and Madge travelled by car and caravan to attend and participate with the whole family. It was a long and tiring journey of about 1,500 kilometres each way, but it was the only way they could all afford to attend. During all those years Madge made almost all her own clothes as well as those of the children so they could afford to be involved in Bahá'í activities. But in all cases where there is sacrifice there is also gain, and in this particular situation it was the great fun and joy of being at the summer school, as well as all the sight-seeing and visits to places of interest on the way that made up for it.

The Woodville Local Spiritual Assembly, the first outside the city of Adelaide, was established in 1948 with Collis and Madge as founding members. The community invited all the National Assembly members and Mother Dunn to attend a public meeting in May announcing the Assembly's formation. Eight of the nine National Assembly members, as well as dear Mother, were able to come. The function was also attended by about 100 other people and attracted publicity in the press. Woodville was the sixth Local Spiritual Assembly in Australia and New Zealand at the time.

Collis attended the National Convention as an observer in 1946 and 1948. In 1949, he went as a delegate and was elected to the National Assembly. Each year he was re-elected and served, often as chairman, until 1962.

In addition to serving the Faith as a member of various institutions and a participant in Bahá'í activities, the choices Collis made in his private life demonstrated his constant striving to live up to Bahá'í principles. As a result of wanting to observe the Nineteen Day Fast, Collis gave up smoking cigarettes. So that he could better present the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, he undertook a course in public speaking.

His service also extended beyond the Bahá'í community. In his pre-marriage days, Collis had actively served with the St. John Ambulance, and whilst it was not practical for him to continue when the family was very young, he was able to serve on the committee of the District and Bush Nursing Society (DBNS) until they moved to Port Adelaide in April 1953. During this period both Collis and Madge assisted the settlement of European immigrants to Australia and helped them to reunite with their loved ones. After World War II they were also able to assist Bahá'ís in the Philippines by sending parcels of books and clothing.

The Six Year Plan for the Australian and New Zealand Bahá'ís began in 1947, providing the impetus for sustained teaching activities which led to the expansion of the

Faith. As well as continuing with the trips to Kingston and other towns on the way, Collis and Madge concentrated their efforts on consolidating the Woodville community and on raising the Port Adelaide Group to Assembly status, relocating in April 1953 to raise the numbers and thus to fulfil the original goal of Bertha and Joe Dobbins.

A look at their diaries of that time gives some indication of the constant Bahá'í activity: deepenings, firesides of their own, supporting the firesides in other areas, public meetings, committee meetings... All of the goals of the Plan nation-wide were not only achieved, but exceeded, and the believers were understandably excited.

Without a doubt, the Holy Year from October 1952 to October 1953 was a milestone in the lives of both Collis and Madge. Indeed, it was a year of immense significance for the entire Bahá'í world. As one Plan concluded, the Ten Year Crusade commenced in April 1953. The Australian Bahá'ís responded magnificently, and six of the National Assembly members went out as pioneers. There were four intercontinental conferences held, and the Australian Bahá'í community was invited to the one in New Delhi, India, held in October 1953, to consult about ways to open the Asiatic and South Pacific areas to the Faith.

By selling their house and homefront pioneering to Port Adelaide, Collis and Madge were able to reorganise their finances so that they could go to the conference in New Delhi, on the Indian continent. In addition, they had cabled the Guardian for permission to go on pilgrimage.

It was all an unforgettable experience. The conference gave them their first real experience of unity in diversity, with so many Bahá'ís of different racial, religious and cultural backgrounds attending. And to follow this with pilgrimage! They were overwhelmed. As Madge has written: "If we needed any further confirmation of the power of Bahá'u'lláh's Words to transform and bring about peace on earth, we saw it demonstrated by the Guardian, who inspired the Bahá'ís the world over and guided the establishment of Bahá'í institutions around the world. We were unbelievably happy and uplifted."

Whilst they were with the Guardian, he received news of the arrival of Bertha Dobbins in the New Hebrides, and a few days later, of Gladys Parke and Gretta Lamprill in Tahiti, both Ten Year Crusade goals for Australia. The Guardian was elated with the news.

Because of their family and business commitments, Collis and Madge were unable to pioneer overseas, offering instead to provide financial support to a pioneer for many years.

Collis had a very deep affection and respect for Mother Dunn, and when she was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God early in 1952, he shared with all believers the great excitement at having a Hand on the continent of Australia. He set out to understand more about the role and work of the Hands, and talked openly about their exalted station. When Collis and Madge were in Haifa in October 1953, the Guardian elaborated on the Institution of the Hands of the Cause and its work for the protection and teaching of the Faith. Little did Collis know then that he was to find out more in a very personal way in the not too-distant future.

It is evident from reading the pilgrim notes prepared by Collis and Madge that the subjects elucidated by the Guardian formed the bedrock of Collis' action and talks for the rest of his life. Topics included: The role of the Hands and their Auxiliary Boards; God's Plan and the Divine Plan; the relationship between individual Bahá'ís and government; the need for Assemblies to be frank, wise, and uncompromising in their relationship with the authorities, and to demonstrate to governments that we are patriotic but have nothing to do with politics; the role and responsibilities of the pioneers; and Australia and Japan—the two magnetic poles of the Pacific.

In 1954, at the National Convention when Collis was chairman, Mother Dunn announced the appointment of her first two Auxiliary Board members, Collis Featherstone and Thelma Perks. Collis reacted by saying he would have been quite relieved if the floor had opened up and swallowed him.

In addition to this appointment, and serving on the National Assembly, he became secretary of the Asian Teaching Committee which had been set up to assist the settlement of the pioneers, mostly in the Pacific area. It was not long before the committee realized the pioneers were not only very lonely at times, but were starved for news, so *Koala News*, a regular newsletter, was born. For the pioneers it became their lifeline of support and news. Collis spared nothing to keep the pioneers up to date, often working late into the night.

Collis knew from his own experience early in his Bahá'í life how uplifting it was to have news, and for the rest of his life he made a point of joyfully and enthusiastically sharing news.

A temporary vacuum was created when so many active Bahá'ís went pioneering at the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade, and it took time for the community to recover and rebuild. With the Guardian's vision for the future so clear in his mind, Collis was constantly pushing for further development. At the end of 1954, he visited New Zealand and Fiji, the first of his overseas visits as an Auxiliary Board member. This was followed by a more extensive trip a year later which included Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands; and in August 1956, a visit to Indonesia.

During this early part of the Crusade, there were many legal matters that Collis, as a National Assembly member, was involved with concerning Assembly by-laws, incorporation, and Bahá'í marriage. Collis was the first Bahá'í to be a marriage celebrant in the State of South Australia. The Guardian's secretary wrote to him on 7 April 1955, advising that the Guardian "attached the utmost importance to the Incorporation of the Local Assemblies...". In consequence, Collis was unrelenting in pushing for the incorporation of Assemblies.

Meanwhile, Mother Dunn was becoming very frail, being well over 80 years old, and Collis and Thelma Perks would write all the reports to the Guardian as though Mother were writing them, then seek her approval and signature. Gradually, they began to feel a bit guilty that the reports were really theirs and not Mother's, so they decided to "confess" to the Guardian. His reply through his secretary put their minds at rest: "He approves of and appreciates what you are doing and the way you are doing it, in view of Mother Dunn's condition. You should continue to carry forward this work as you have been doing." (August 30, 1957)

At the same time, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, in a brief reply to a letter from Madge, added a postscript which read: "Our Guardian has new plans brewing—thrilling ones!" Collis was very excited, as he always was, with news from the Guardian, and he spoke openly of the thrilling plans to come.

When the National Assembly secretary telephoned him at work on Monday morning, 7 October 1957, to tell him of the cable received from Shoghi Effendi, he referred to the thrilling news, carrying on until Collis asked him what it was all about. It read as follows:

> ANNOUNCE YOUR ELEVATION RANK HAND CAUSE CONFIDENT NEW HONOUR WILL ENABLE YOU RISE GREATER HEIGHTS SERVICE BELOVED FAITH SHOGHI

Collis was shocked. He immediately left his office and went out to sit in his car to recover. After about half an hour his composure had returned sufficiently for him to phone Madge and then tell his business partner he'd had some disturbing news and was taking the rest of the day off.

Following the two great traumatic events of his life—his appointment as a Hand, and a month later the passing of the beloved

Guardian—Collis' life entered a new phase. As one of the "Chief Stewards", who had the responsibility for the Bahá'í world on his shoulders, the scene had suddenly changed dramatically.

It became necessary for him to change the management of his business to enable him to travel extensively. How he continued to run his engineering business, carry on an ever-growing correspondence with his Auxiliary Board members, individuals, and institutions, look after his family, and travel throughout the Australasian region and beyond, not only to visit Bahá'í communities, but also to present the Faith to dignitaries and government officials wherever he went, is difficult to imagine.

During this period of five and a half years from October 1957 to April 1963, which made up the latter half of the Guardian's world encircling Ten Year Crusade and culminated in the first Bahá'í World Congress in London, Collis made 29 visits to 14 countries in Australasia and Asia; visited nine countries in Europe and five in Central America; and travelled six times to the Holy Land, the first five of which were to the Conclaves of the Hands to consult on the Plan and direct the Bahá'í world until the formation of the Universal House of Justice in 1963.

Whenever there was an unexpected need, Collis would rise to the occasion without hesitation. For example, after fellow Hand Enoch Olinga had visited New Zealand, the National Spiritual Assembly there specifically requested the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land to send someone else of the same rank to visit the Maoris. Collis used his annual Christmas vacation period in 1958–59 to go. Again in 1961, when ill health prevented Hand of the Cause John Robarts from travelling, Collis went in his stead to Central America. Unfortunately, he too became very ill, but apart from a few days of forced rest, he carried on with his gruelling itinerary. He was so run down at the end of the journey that it took him six months to recover.



Collis Featherstone

From the very early days Collis kept historical records of Bahá'ís and events. He collected and subsequently had bound copies of the early Bahá'í magazines, such as *Star of the West*, the *Australian Bahá'í Quarterly* (now the *Australian Bahá'í Bulletin*), the *American Bahá'í News*, and *Herald of the South*. He also collected photographs, and became a keen photographer. When he travelled to India and the Holy Land he made two 16mm silent colour movies, the first of which he titled "East Meets West" and the second, as suggested by the Guardian, "Bahá'í Holy Places in Israel". He used both extensively for teaching upon his return. This was all in pre-television times in Australia, so the impact was significant.

In November 1954, Collis made an audiotape recording of Mother Dunn relating her experience of meeting 'Abdu'l-Bahá in San Francisco in 1912. One 16mm colour film he made at the Conclave of the Hands at Bahjí in November 1958 is the only such record of this period of the Hands, and shows the 25 Hands who were present, Corinne True and Clara Dunn being too frail to attend.

Collis would tell the friends everywhere he went: "You are making history now". He was very conscious of this, and kept detailed records, including correspondence, programmes, itineraries, and reports of all his travels which he put together in volumes and bound himself.

Many of the friends have expressed their joy in being with him, of feeling the love and radiance he gave out constantly, and being instilled with a new confidence and vision. He was the essence of detachment, as if floating above the material world, and always in tune with the spiritual side of life. The first full blood aborigine to embrace the Faith said he decided to become a Bahá'í after meeting Collis.

In October 1961, on his way to the fifth Conclave of the Hands in the Holy Land, Collis had the very great bounty, as he expressed it, of passing by the Most Great House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdád, and visiting the most Hallowed Spot where Bahá'u'lláh declared His Mission in the Garden of Riḍván. The Guardian had announced that the convocation of the Bahá'í World Congress would be held in the vicinity of this Garden, at Riḍván 1963, to celebrate "The Most Great Jubilee, commemorating the centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh to the Throne of His Sovereignty". This was not to be, due to the situation in Iraq, and the Congress was transferred to London.

London for Collis, as for all the Hands, was an event of great joy and relief. They had strictly followed their beloved Guardian's guidelines to bring his Ten Year Plan to a victorious conclusion, to arrange for the election of the Universal House of Justice by 56 National Spiritual Assemblies, and to organise, with the British Bahá'í community, the Congress to be held at the Royal Albert Hall in London. Collis especially recalled the meetings of the House of Justice with the Hands at Rutland Gate and the final handover to the members of the Universal House of Justice.

The five years from 1963–1968 saw Collis' travels expand considerably, with him making a total of 66 visits to 42 countries on all continents of the globe. During this period, his correspondence, already huge, expanded even further with the enlargement of his Auxiliary Board from four to nine in late 1964. The area of Australasia is massive on its own, but the House of Justice frequently requested him to travel to Asia, as well. The amazing thing was that he really knew all the friends in this vast area, their strengths, problems and needs; he was completely in touch and had his finger on the pulse of this vast region of the world.

All of his travelling and the time he spent on paperwork were at the cost of time with his family, and many times over the years Collis would lament over his inability to spend as much time as he wished with his children: Kaye, Margaret, Joan, Mariette, and Geoffrey. This of course did not diminish his deep love for each one of them. When they had grown up, left home, married and in many instances gone overseas in pursuit of Bahá'í service, he would endeavor to arrange the routes of his long journeys so he could visit them.

In June 1968, following prolonged consultation with the Hands of the Cause, the Universal House of Justice established the Continental Boards of Counsellors to carry out the functions of the Hands into the future. The Counsellors took over the supervision of the Auxiliary Boards, leaving the Hands free to travel to "diffuse the Divine Fragrances" and inspire the friends. This was a major change, and brought a certain sadness for Collis as he no longer had the direct and close contact with the Board members, but this was overridden by the joy of seeing the development of the Faith into the future.

As the years passed, and the children grew up, his dear wife and devoted partner in all their services to the Cause travelled with Collis more and more frequently. During the eight years from 1968 to 1976, culminating with the International Teaching Conferences

in Anchorage, Alaska, in July, and Paris, France, in August of 1976, Collis made 126 visits to 49 countries. Of the eight Oceanic and Continental Conferences held in 1971, Collis attended three—in Singapore, Suva and Sapporo—the trips taking a total of six months and covering 28 countries.

As the number of Hands diminished, it was the wish of the Universal House of Justice that Collis be totally free to travel, so in 1976, he sold his engineering firm in Adelaide. In 1977, he and Madge moved from Adelaide to Rockhampton, Central Queensland. During the last 14 years of his life he made a total of 243 visits to 95 countries on all continents.

In 1982, Collis and Madge attended the International Conference in Dublin, Ireland in June, one of five conferences dedicated to the memory of the Greatest Holy Leaf, and then continued to travel for nearly five months, covering 19 countries.

The pace of his activities was slowed down by two heart attacks in 1986. But a less severe heart attack in June 1988 did not stop him travelling from September onwards to Laos and China! Nothing would stop Collis visiting the friends, even if they were in remote villages or islands where access was possible only by foot, maybe bicycle, or dugout canoe. The extent of his travels in some areas of the Pacific is unparalleled.

As one of the Counsellors to travel in the island areas of Australasia, Howard Harwood, wrote: "One thing I soon discovered was that wherever I went, no matter how remote, Collis had been there ahead of me. He was well known and respected everywhere."

Collis had a sense of fun and liked to relax his audience by telling jokes. He had quite a collection which he used to illustrate his points on spiritual matters in his talks. He was also quite adept at teasing. However, he was also very sensitive: sensitive to good music, and sensitive above all to the spirit of the Faith and the power of the Words of Bahá'u'lláh which often visibly moved him—and consequently, others.

Graham Hassall summed up Collis' qualities when he wrote on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Australia: "Who can adequately portray the qualities of such a man? He exemplified spirit in action. He was holy, active and practical, pure and radiant. He possessed authority, he inspired confidence, he showed love. He had the power of attraction."

One of his exhortations to the friends was to delve constantly into the Holy Writings, as well as the writings and letters of the Guardian and the messages of the House of Justice. He most certainly practised this himself; the Writings were his mine and he shared the gems he found with all the friends. His "book" of quotations that was with him always is well known to those who met him, along with his well worn and highlighted copies of the Will and Testaments of both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, from which he invariably quoted.

In September 1990, Collis and Madge set out on a visit to Asia, with a high point scheduled in Lahore, Pakistan, for the International Youth Conference. This was not to be, for he left this world on Saturday, 29 September following a heart attack while on top of the world in Kathmandu, Nepal. Collis had been involved in a number of firsts over the years, and his passing achieved yet another: the first ever publicity for the Faith in Nepal in both the Nepalese and English newspapers. Truly, he "died with his boots on", doing what he loved best—serving the Cause.

Four of their five children and two of their sons-in-law were able to go to Kathmandu to be with Madge. Collis was laid to rest in the Bahá'í cemetery overlooking the beautiful valley of Kathmandu, with the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas in view.

On 30 September 1990, the Universal House of Justice sent the following message to all National Assemblies:

> DEEPLY GRIEVED ANNOUNCE PASSING VALIANT HAND CAUSE GOD COLLIS FEATHERSTONE WHILE VISITING KATHMANDU, NEPAL, COURSE

EXTENSIVE JOURNEY ASIA. HIS NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS STAUNCH, FEARLESS DEFENDER COVENANT, HIS UNCEASING COMMITMENT PROPAGATION CAUSE ALL PARTS WORLD, ESPECIALLY PACIFIC REGION, HIS UNREMITTING PERSEVERANCE FOSTERING ESTABLISHMENT LOCAL, NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER, HIS EXEMPLARY DEVOTION TO WRITINGS FAITH, HIS OUTSTANDING PERSONAL QUALITIES UNSWERVING LOYALTY, ENTHUSIASM, ZEAL AND DEDICATION, DISTINGUISH HIS MANIFOLD SERVICES THROUGHOUT MANY DECADES. OFFERING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES BOUNTIFUL REWARD HIS RADIANT SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. ADVISE FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS, PARTICULARLY IN MASHRIQU'L-ADHKARS, RECOGNITION HIS MAGNIFICENT ACHIEVEMENTS.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Australia organised a memorial service at the House of Worship, Sydney, at noon on Sunday, 4 November 1990, which was attended by all the immediate members of Collis' family, except three of his grandchildren who were unable to travel from overseas. The service was very moving and beautiful and was followed by a public tribute in a venue especially organised for the occasion and completed with the gentle lamentations in the form of rain from the celestial heavens.

GRAHAM AND KAYE WATERMAN,
WITH MADGE FEATHERSTONE

CHARLES WOLCOTT
1906–1987

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING DISTINGUISHED SERVANT CAUSE GOD, DEDICATED WORKER HIS VINEYARD CHARLES WOLCOTT. SELFLESSNESS, HUMILITY, COURAGE, NOBILITY, FAIR-MINDEDNESS, PERSEVERANCE CHARACTERIZED HIS UNINTERRUPTED SERVICES COURSE HALF A CENTURY, IN HIS CAPACITY AS MEMBER AND LATER SECRETARY NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY CRADLE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER, AS SECRETARY-GENERAL INTERNATIONAL BAHA'I COUNCIL FOLLOWED BY HIS OUTSTANDING LABOURS AS MEMBER UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE SINCE ITS INCEPTION. PRAYING SHRINES PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL, CONFIDENT RICH WELL-DESERVED REWARD ABHÁ KINGDOM HIS UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION PROGRESS CONSOLIDATION FAITH NORTH AMERICA AND AT WORLD CENTRE. EXTEND LOVING SYMPATHY HIS BELOVED WIDOW WHO SHARED SUPPORTED HIS SERVICES THROUGHOUT PERIOD HIS DISTINGUISHED PROFESSIONAL CAREER, HIS BRILLIANT LABOURS CAUSE GOD, AND TO HIS BEREAVED DAUGHTERS AND FAMILY. ADVISE FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS, INCLUDING COMMEMORATIVE SERVICES IN HIS HONOUR ALL MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁRS.

Universal House of Justice
27 January 1987

Charles Wolcott was his parents' first child, born in Flint, Michigan, U.S.A., on 29 September 1906. His father, Frederick Charles Wolcott, an accountant whose business interests were overshadowed by his love for music, formed a small-town orchestra in which his son participated, on the piano and accordion, from an early age. By the time Charles reached high school he had his own four-piece orchestra (piano, banjo, saxophone, drums) for playing at school dances. When he attended the University of Michigan, his larger band, "Charley Wolcott and his Wolverines", played for faculty (ballroom) dances and his smaller bands for fraternity and sorority (tea) dances. In the 1920s he went to the larger city of Detroit to play piano in hotels and ballrooms with the Jean Goldkette Organization and also performed on radio shows.

Charles married Harriett Marshall, from his hometown of Flint, on 30 August 1928, and soon after they moved to Toronto, Canada, then New York where, in spite of the

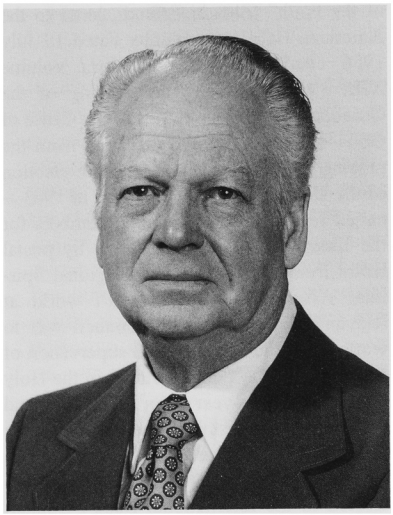
Depression, he was always able to find work as a pianist, composer, arranger, or conductor with the Paul Whiteman Band, Benny Goodman, the Dorsey brothers, Columbia Records, and network radio programs such as Burns and Allen (George and Gracie), Kate Smith, and Bob Hope.

While the Wolcotts were living in New York City, their two daughters, Sheila and Marsha, were born. The apartment building in which the family lived was managed by a Bahá'í couple, and about 1935 they were introduced to the Faith. Their interest in the Teachings was nurtured in New York, but they did not become Bahá'ís until later in California.

Fascinated by the colour and sound developments in motion pictures, Charles moved the family to Hollywood, California, in 1937 and soon began working at the Walt Disney Studios writing music for cartoon shorts, then feature films, such as *Pinocchio* and *Bambi*. By 1944 he had become General Musical Director at Disney Studios. In 1950 he transferred to the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) Studios as Associate General Musical Director and in 1958 became General Musical Director. In 1955, after he placed Bill Haley's song "Rock Around The Clock" in the MGM movie *Blackboard Jungle*, the "rock and roll" music craze spread worldwide.

Charles and Harriett enrolled in the Bahá'í Faith in Los Angeles in August 1938 and were members of the Los Angeles community for the next 22 years. During this period he composed music as a setting for some of the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh including "From the Sweet Scented Streams", "O Thou By Whose Name", and "Blessed is the Spot."

Charles was appointed to be a member of the Inter-America Bahá'í Teaching Committee (1942–1944); served as chairman of the National Audio-Visual Education Committee (1946–1948); was elected to the Los Angeles Local Spiritual Assembly (1948–1960) and served as chairman or vice-chairman; served as chairman of the American Southwest Teaching Committee (1950–1952); and served as chairman of the American National Teaching Committee (1953–1956). In 1953, he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States on which he served as vice-chairman until 1960.



Charles Wolcott

It was during this period that the Bahá'í world lost its beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi. When the Hand of the Cause of God Horace Holley, who had served on the National Assembly since 1923 and spent 34 years as its secretary, was called to the Bahá'í World Centre as one of the nine Hands to serve in the Holy Land, Charles was elected secretary of the National Assembly in 1960. In January 1960 he resigned his position as head of the Music Department at MGM Studios and he and Harriett moved to Wilmette, Illinois, so he could take up his duties in the National Bahá'í Center.

In January 1951, Shoghi Effendi had formed a Bahá'í International Council to assist him in the work of "expansion and consolidation of the international institutions

of the Faith" [Shoghi Effendi, letter to the American Bahá'í community dated 19 July 1956, cited in *The Bahá'í World*, volume XIII, 395]. Following the passing of the Guardian in 1957, the Hands of the Cause of God—who administered the Faith from the passing of Shoghi Effendi until the election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963—called for the election of nine members for the International Bahá'í Council by postal ballot from all National and Regional Spiritual Assemblies in the Bahá'í world at Riḍván 1961. The elected Council was to work under the direction and supervision of the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land for a two-year term of office, and would cease to exist upon the election of the first Universal House of Justice. At Riḍván 1961, Charles Wolcott was one of the nine elected to the International Bahá'í Council and was elected by that body to be its secretary-general.

Charles and Harriett moved from the United States to the Bahá'í World Centre in 1961 to take up his two-year post on the International Bahá'í Council, not knowing that his service to the Faith would keep him in that Holy Spot for another 26 years until his death.

On 21 April 1963, the first day of Riḍván in the year 120 B.E, the Centenary anniversary of the Declaration by Bahá'u'lláh of His sacred Mission, the election of the Universal House of Justice was held in the House of the Master in Haifa. The delegates invited to this first International Convention were the 504 members of the 56 National and Regional Spiritual Assemblies who were charged with the sacred privilege and duty of voting for the nine people of the Bahá'í world community who would comprise the membership of this first Universal House of Justice. The results of the election were announced at the close of the morning session of the Convention on 22 April. Charles Wolcott, who had received the highest number of votes, found himself now a member of the Universal House of Justice to which he would be re-elected to subsequent terms in 1968, 1973, 1978 and 1983. He died suddenly, toward the end of his last term, on 26 January 1987.

Throughout their 26 years at the Bahá'í World Centre, Harriett devoted herself to assisting in various offices at the Centre as well as being Charles' lifelong companion during 58 years of marriage. Their love of music was sustained by regular attendance at the performances of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. And, as a gift to the Bahá'í friends at the World Centre, they frequently opened their home for musical evenings. The demanding work as a member of the Universal House of Justice left little time or energy for creating musical compositions, but music listening was a constant source of strength and spiritual enrichment. Amongst his papers was found the compilation "Extracts from the Bahá'í Writings on Music" in which he had underlined certain passages such as: "We have made music a ladder by which souls may ascend to the realm on high" [Kitáb-i-Aqdas]; "A wonderful song giveth wings to the spirit and filleth the heart with exaltation" [*Bahá'í World Faith*, 334]; and "Music is one of the important arts.... although music is a material affair, yet its tremendous effect is spiritual, and its greatest attachment is to the realm of the spirit.... In this Cause the art of music is of paramount importance" [Abdu'l-Bahá, "Table Talk," 'Akká, July 1909, quoted in *Herald of the South*, 13 January 1933, 2–3].

For the occasion of his 80th birthday in September 1986, he and Harriett travelled to Santa Monica, California, to join most of their family in a celebration. This was the last time they were all to be together. If there was any regret in his happy and productive life it was only this, as he wrote to his granddaughter who was pioneering in Yugoslavia:

> It's sad not to be present during these precious days when one's grandchildren and great grandchildren are spreading their wings. But there are compensations, however, when we realize the wonderful

services being rendered by the various family members.... Nana and I send you loads of love, sorry it can't be lemon pie too. Maybe next year, Nana will make one for you when you come [to Haifa]. Hasta la vista! [signed] Baba.

The letter is dated August 1986 and the wish could not be fulfilled. Five months later he passed away and was buried in the Bahá'í Cemetery at the foot of Mount Carmel after a long and distinguished life dedicated for almost half a century to the Blessed Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh.

Memorial services were held throughout the world including one arranged by his wife and daughters in the Los Angeles Bahá'í Center on 12 April 1987. One of Charles' music colleagues from his days at MGM Studios, Johnny Green, closed his "Appreciation" remarks saying: "Throughout the years since the end of our MGM togetherness, Charles and I have remained close through regular correspondence and intermittent in-person visits. His letters shared with me the difficulties and horrors that the Bahá'ís were experiencing [in Írán] and his efforts to deal with these soul-searing situations. And, through it all, the beauty of his faith, the purity of his spirit, his divinely inspired patience, calm and kindness imbued life with a strong feeling of hope. All of you here know, even far better than I, what a dynamic force for good Charles Wolcott was, not only in the wide circles where he was personally known, but throughout this sorely troubled world. It was my privilege to spend a couple of hours with Charles in person here shortly before his final return to Haifa [in September 1986]. How eagerly he was looking forward to his working retirement! And now he has been called home.... In my heart of hearts I know that Charles Wolcott's noble and courageous spirit has been given as an inspirational beacon to all of us to make this world the far better place that it just has to be because he passed this way."

SHEILA WOLCOTT BANANI

HOWARD BORRAH KAVELIN
1906–1988

HEARTS LADEN WITH SORROW OVER LOSS TO BAHÁ'Í WORLD OUR DEARLY-LOVED FORMER COLLEAGUE H. BORRAH KAVELIN OUTSTANDING SERVANT CAUSE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. INDOMITABLE FAITH, RIGOROUS CONSCIENTIOUSNESS, IRREPRESSIBLE OPTIMISM, UNFAILING RELIABILITY, UNBLEMISHED TRUSTWORTHINESS AMONG BRILLIANT QUALITIES WHICH SHONE THROUGH HIS NEARLY HALF CENTURY MONUMENTAL SERVICES TO CAUSE HE CONSTANTLY PROMOTED AND DEFENDED TO LAST DAYS HIS DISTINGUISHED LIFE. HIS EXTENSIVE INVOLVEMENT BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS BEGAN IN 1941 WITH HIS NINE YEARS ON LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY NEW YORK AND INCLUDED 13 YEARS ON NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY UNITED STATES, TWO YEARS ON INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL FOLLOWED BY QUARTER CENTURY MEMBERSHIP ON UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE. HIS MANIFOLD SERVICES ESPECIALLY MARKED BY HIS DILIGENT ENDEAVORS TO ASSIST DEVELOPMENT EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AGENCIES BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, HIS DEFTNESS FOR DIGNIFIED PROMOTION FINANCIAL INTERESTS FAITH, HIS LUSTROUS RECORD IN CONNECTION ACQUISITION IMPORTANT PROPERTIES INCLUDING MANSION MAZRA'IH AND HOUSE 'ABDU'LLÁH PÁSHÁ.

OFFERING ARDENT SUPPLICATIONS HOLY THRESHOLD THAT HIS NOBLE SOUL MAY BE RICHLY REWARDED ABHA KINGDOM AND THAT BLESSED BEAUTY MAY SURROUND HIS BELOVED WIFE FLORE AND DEAR CHILDREN WITH DIVINE MERCY AND ASSISTANCE.

ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS IN HIS HONOUR ALL HOUSES WORSHIP AND THROUGHOUT BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY.

Universal House of Justice

H. Borrah Kavelin was born in Russia to a distinguished Jewish family on 16 March 1906, the sixth of seven children. They immigrated to the United States when he was three years old and remained in Denver,

Colorado. His father was a greatly beloved Rabbi in Denver, a pillar of the Jewish community and well known as a healer. He lost his life caring for others during an influenza epidemic. His mother was founder of the Beth Israel Hospital and Old Folks' Home in Denver.

As a young lad, Borrah had obtained a job as an usher at an opera house. His love for music drew him to New York City, and his debut as an operatic tenor occurred on the stage of Carnegie Hall. Through music, he met Martha Hamilton, a pianist studying at the Juilliard School of Music in New York. They were married in 1936.

Those were difficult financial times for everyone during the Great Depression, and a singer's life could not support a family. So Borrah turned from his musical career to become a secretary to the director of a real estate firm. His diligence and ability were soon recognized, and he became a partner in that original firm, and then served as the executive vice-president for a number of commercial realty companies in New York.

In 1943, he joined the distinguished firm of Durand Taylor and Company where he was partner and executive vice-president for 20 years. His company, which bought, sold and managed skyscrapers, was known in financial circles as "the Tiffany's of the real estate world." He received two awards during his career, both for the most outstanding transactions of the year.

He had a pristine reputation for trustworthiness and honesty, considered by some to be rather unusual qualities in the realty world. One client who was visiting their home said to Mrs. Kavelin, "Your husband has only one flaw. He is too honest." She replied, "Would you do business with anyone else?" He laughed and admitted that he would not.

Borrah Kavelin's first exposure to the Teachings of the Faith was through the firesides of Vaffa and Saffa Kinney, a couple dearly loved by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. While attending gatherings in their large brownstone apartment in New York, Borrah found that over the period of several years when he and his wife were studying the Faith, not one question he raised failed to elicit a meaningful, satisfying answer. By 1940, he decided that he must serve a Faith which stood for all the principles in which he deeply believed.

The Kavelins had three children: Linda, Thomas, and John. Over the years the education of the children in the Teachings of the Faith received much emphasis as part of family life. Every summer was spent at Green Acre Bahá'í School in Eliot, Maine. Borrah and Martha Kavelin were instrumental in establishing a very successful children's sunday school on Long Island. They also had regular firesides in their home, and youth firesides with standing room only.

From 1941 to 1950, Borrah served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of New York City, for seven years serving as chairman of that body. In 1950, he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States. His services on the National Assembly continued for 13 years, during which he served for a number of years as treasurer and from 1958 to 1963 as chairman.

In 1955, during a surge of persecutions of the friends in Persia, he was very actively involved and instrumental in gaining recognition of the plight of the believers. Through his efforts and those of others working on this issue, the force of the world-wide Bahá'í community was brought to the attention of the highest dignitaries of the Iranian government. Because he conducted himself with perfect decorum and dignity as well as deep assurance of the support of the Blessed Beauty, he was often called upon to represent the National Assembly in meetings with top level officials.

Borrah served as a trustee for a number of Bahá'í properties, including Green Acre Bahá'í School, and he represented the National Spiritual Assembly on several missions. In 1957, he chaired the first national convention for the formation of the National

Spiritual Assembly of the Benelux Countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg), and the National Spiritual Assembly asked him to represent it at an international conference to be held the following year in Kampala, Uganda.

Shoghi Effendi, to whom Borrah Kavelin was deeply and personally devoted, invited him to come on pilgrimage directly after the Kampala Conference. He had never had the bounty of meeting Shoghi Effendi personally, and he was deeply touched by the opportunity to pay homage to him. However, this meeting was never to occur. The greatest blow of Borrah's life came when he learned of the beloved Guardian's untimely death in London, shortly before they were to meet. He grieved openly, as did so many others. After this, he dedicated himself more and more to the service of the Cause for which Shoghi Effendi had given his life.



Borrah Kavelin

Following Shoghi Effendi's passing, the Bahá'í world was in turmoil. The international Bahá'í community looked to the Hands of the Cause of God for guidance. In 1961 the Hands decided that an International Bahá'í Council should be formed for two years. Borrah Kavelin was among those elected, and he served the Council as member-at-large rather than in residence in Haifa and was given permission to continue serving on the National Spiritual Assembly.

Much of the work with which he was involved was of a very serious nature. In 1961 during the Moroccan crisis, a time of severe persecutions of the believers in that country, he was one of those asked to serve the international community in organizing a campaign to protest against the imprisonments and impending executions of Bahá'ís. Cables poured in from every corner of the world, from Paris, France to Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The Moroccan government was forced to hear the voices of people all over the globe, from places it had never even heard of! It had a powerful effect and the persecutions abated.

In 1963, the whole Bahá'í world looked forward with great excitement and eager anticipation to the election of the first Universal House of Justice, described by 'Abdu'l-Bahá as that body which is "to be universally elected and established" and would be "under the care and protection of the Abhá Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of His Holiness, the Exalted One." (*Bahá'í World Faith,* p. 442)

The election took place in the House of the Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in Haifa, Israel, and the first members of the Universal House of Justice were introduced during the World Congress, held in the Royal Albert Hall in London. As their names were read, the nine men of the House of Justice took their places on the stage. Borrah Kavelin told his family later that he had had tears streaming down his face and felt a profound humility such as he had never experienced before.

Before he moved to the World Centre in Haifa, a luncheon was given in a distinguished private club in New York so that many of his business associates could pay their respects and say goodbye. They were one and all moved by the choice he was

making and profoundly respectful of the path he had chosen. Unfortunately, his marriage did not survive the transition, and Martha did not accompany him to the Holy Land.

He served the Universal House of Justice for a full quarter of a century, from 1963 to 1988. He was beloved at the World Centre for his diligence and the powerful energy and professionalism he brought to his tasks, particularly in the acquisition of properties for the Faith. Two of the crowning achievements which highlighted his service to the Universal House of Justice were the purchases of the Mansion of Mazra'ih and the House of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá in 'Akká.

Mr. Kavelin represented the Universal House of Justice on four significant missions to Írán to consult with the friends there about the financial needs of the Faith. His first trip was in 1965, the second in 1970 to consult about Ḥuqúqu'lláh, the third in 1975 to consult about the raising of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice on Mount Carmel, and the fourth in 1978.

In 1970 he met and married a beautiful, devoted, and distinguished believer from Ṭihrán, Manijeh Flore Taheri [Manízhih Flore Ṭáhirí]. She was his helpmate for the next 20 years and often served as his translator on those missions to Írán.

After the revolution in Írán in 1979, he again represented the Universal House of Justice at a time when the Bahá'í world was grieving for its losses in the birthplace of the Cause. During a ten-week mission, he traveled throughout Europe, Canada, and the United States meeting with thousands of Bahá'ís who thronged to hear him. His mission was to explain the state of the Persian friends, and the impact on the Bahá'í world community of the persecutions.

In 1987, after nearly 25 years of service, at 81 years of age, Borrah Kavelin asked to be excused from serving any longer as a member of the Universal House of Justice. Within two weeks from the time his retirement was announced he was hospitalized for cancer surgery, after which he recovered well and felt ready to begin a life of retirement in the United States.

The National Spiritual Assembly asked Mr. Kavelin to serve as a keynote speaker at six regional "Vision to Victory" conferences throughout the United States, and he was delighted. This became the driving force of his day-to-day life. When the cancer recurred, and his health began to fail rapidly, he was even more driven to fulfill his commitment to these conferences.

He was able to address the first conference in Boston, Massachusetts: his frail voice did not diminish the ardor with which he spoke to the friends of the imperative necessity to raise the Arc on Mount Carmel. However, by the time his plane arrived at the second conference site, in Chattanooga, Tennessee, he was so ill that he had to be rushed to the hospital in acute distress. His undeviating concern about making a presentation as he had promised was creatively solved by a doctor who asked if the Bahá'ís could videotape his talk there, in the hospital room. Mr. Kavelin agreed and arrangements were swiftly made to tape his talk.

Shortly after the talk, Mr. Kavelin lapsed into a coma. However, he recovered to the extent that two minor "miracles" were to occur. One was to give a Thanksgiving dinner to thank the doctor and all the many Bahá'í friends in Chattanooga who had been so kind to him. The other was to return home to Albuquerque. He lived another three weeks in his home in Albuquerque, then on 18 December 1988, he passed away.

"You wander all your life in search of meaning and then you find at the end, at the core, there is only the Covenant." These were among the last words of Borrah Kavelin, a man who lived to his last breath the commitment he had made to Bahá'u'lláh. One of his favorite passages read at his funeral, attended by hundreds of friends, was "As ye have faith, so shall your powers and blessings be." He was laid to rest in the Fairview Memorial Park in Albuquerque, New Mexico. His epitaph reads simply:

"Howard Borrah Kavelin, 1906–1988, Charter Member of the Universal House of Justice."

LINDA KAVELIN POPOV

QUDRATU'LLÁH VAḤÍD-I-ṬIHRÁNÍ
1900–1986

Qudratu'lláh Vaḥíd-i-Ṭihráni was born on 6 May 1900 in Ṭihrán, Persia. His father, 'Alí-'Askar, was one of the early believers of Káshán who, in spite of being illiterate, found the truth by persistent investigation and embraced the Faith after he heard The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh chanted at a Bahá'í fireside. He exclaimed: "These are the Words of God! He Who revealed them is assuredly the Messenger of God!"

Soon afterward, 'Alí-'Askar changed his residence to Ṭihrán, and wandered in the villages around the city as a peddler of cloth. He had memorized The Hidden Words and used to chant them aloud while on his travels. Through the stirring effect of these Words revealed by the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh, this illiterate person was instrumental in bringing into the Bahá'í Faith over 400 of his fellow countrymen.

'Alí-'Askar journeyed on foot to 'Akká in 1876. He spent four months there, frequently in the presence of the Blessed Beauty, and at times while the Holy Words were being revealed. On one such occasion a prayer was revealed for him, and later he was honoured with four Tablets.

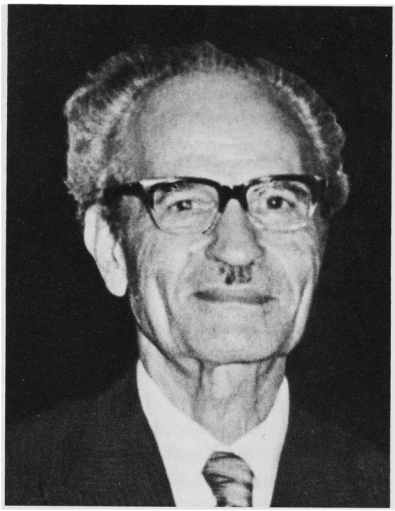
Qudratu'lláh, which means Power of God, was born when his father, in his 70s, had lost 14 children from a previous wife and had married Parí Khánum, a Bahá'í widow in a village near Ṭihrán called Varámín. His father soon passed away, and Qudratu'lláh, six years old, was brought up by his mother with the help of relatives, under severe financial hardship. He went through primary education in the Tarbíyat School in Ṭihrán and attended Bahá'í study classes under the tutorship of his cousin, Siyyid Ḥasan Háshimí-Zádih.

In 1916, he went with his cousins to Hamadán and started to work in one of the Bahá'í friend's shops. He returned to Ṭihrán in 1922 and was engaged as a teacher in primary classes at the Tarbíyat School. In Ṭihrán one of his cousins, 'Abdu'lláh Vaḥíd, helped him and his mother a great deal during the Depression. People in Persia had just started using family names and Qudratu'lláh, following the example of his cousins, chose Vaḥíd-i-Ṭihrání as his family name.

Qudratu'lláh learned how to use a typewriter, which was new in Ṭihrán, and in 1927 was employed by the Ministry of Finance in a secretarial position. He became well-known for his diligent service, reliability and trustworthiness, and he was sent to India on a special assignment in 1944. In 1946, he was appointed the accountant and director of the Office of the Iranian Agency in India. He returned to Írán in September 1948 and was given the post of assistant director of the archives in the Ministry of Finance.

He was an active and faithful member of the Bahá'í community wherever his work sent him. While in Ṭihrán, before his journey to India, he worked part-time in the office of the National Assembly as secretary in charge of the correspondence files. He also served on the Persian Holy Places Committee. Once in 1943, in response to a call by the National Spiritual Assembly for homefront pioneers, he and his family moved to Maḥallát, a village to the south of Ṭihrán; but within a few months he was recalled to the capital by the Ministry of Finance, in which he worked, and was sent to India. During the four years he spent in India, he served the Faith in Bombay and was elected a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly.

When the petroleum industry in Írán was nationalized in 1950, Mr. Alláhyár Ṣáliḥ, one of the directors of the Ministry of Finance, arrived in Ábádán as part of the government representative body, with Mr. Ṭihráni accompanying him as a private secretary. In



Qudratu'lláh Ṭihrání

September 1954, he was officially appointed the office manager for the board of directors in charge of the transfer from the British Petroleum Company to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. In May 1955, when Mr. Bázargán, a devout Muslim, became general refineries manager, Mr. Ṭihrání, who was known to him to be a trustworthy employee and a devoted Bahá'í, was appointed director of the general office in the Ábádán refinery. He was provided with first class residence in Ábádán, and lived there with his family.

Mr. Ṭihrání's family consisted of his wife, Naṣríyyih Ṣaḥíḥí, a son named Farhád, and a daughter named Parívash. The children were sent to England to pursue higher studies. Naṣríyyih Khánum accompanied her husband in all his places of work. In Ábádán, however, in 1954 her health steadily deteriorated and she passed away in 1956.

Mr. and Mrs. Ṭihrání had applied to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land together, but tragically permission granted reached them shortly after Mrs. Ṭihrání had passed away, and he had to go alone. The beloved Guardian suggested a number of teaching trips to the southern part of Írán for six months immediately after pilgrimage. This proved to be the best means of alleviating his grief and despondency.

When Mr. Ṭihrání reported on his assignment to the Guardian, He advised him to pioneer out of Írán, and recommended Japan, a pioneer goal in the Ten Year Crusade. Thereupon Mr. Ṭihrání retired from government service and left Írán, arriving in Tokyo 4 October 1957. On the advice of the National Spiritual Assembly of North East Asia, he pioneered to the northern island of Hokaido, and settled in Sapporo as the first pioneer. When he arrived there was only one Bahá'í in Sapporo, but 17 months later the first Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sapporo was formed with Mr. Ṭihrání being among those elected.

With the help of two new Bahá'ís in Sapporo, he held meetings to teach the Faith in the neighbouring cities. This diligent service continued 16 years during which he made occasional journeys outside Japan to renew his visa. He suceeded in bringing into the Faith a number of natives from the Ainu tribe, and encouraged them to build Bahá'í centres in three towns. The National Spiritual Assembly of Japan wrote:

> If there is one quality that we all remember about Mr. Ṭihrání it was his great love. He was elderly when he came to Japan and he never learned to speak Japanese. His health was often quite poor, and his income was limited. But there was no limit on his great love, which encompassed everyone he came into contact with. All felt it, and will always remember him.
>
> The cold weather of Hokaido Island, with frost and snow half of the year, finally caused Mr. Ṭihrání to suffer from severe backaches, and the doctors recommended he should leave the place.

In 1970 he was sent by the Hand of the Cause of God Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir to Hong Kong, where he stayed in the Bahá'í

Centre and held Bahá'í meetings and study classes to encourage and deepen the friends. After four months he was asked by the Hand of the Cause to go on a teaching trip to the Philippines. In 1971, he was invited by a pioneer family to the island of Guam, and while in that community he was elected a member of a Local Spiritual Assembly.

Finally, at the invitation of Counsellor Suhayl 'Alá'í, he went to Samoa on 17 March 1974. Here, with guidance and assistance from Mr. 'Alá'í he performed lengthy and valuable teaching trips to most of the islands in the Pacific. He was privileged to meet with the King of Western Samoa, His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II, and enjoyed a warm and enduring friendship with the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Sir Thomas Davis, and with Lady Davis, who was a Bahá'í.

In total, Mr. Ṭihráni travelled to more than 50 countries and islands after his retirement, including Australia, New Zealand, the Hawaiian islands, across the United States, and several countries in Europe and Africa. His greatest joy was visiting isolated communities and bringing to them the reassurance of the love of Bahá'u'lláh.

Correspondence with friends was another noteworthy feature of Mr. Ṭihráni's activities. For more than 25 years this devoted servant of Bahá'u'lláh kept up a continuous stream of correspondence with Bahá'í friends around the globe, encouraging them through his letters containing prayers, quotations from the Holy Writings, stories of the lives of early believers, and pictures of places and people prominent in Bahá'í events.

The Hand of the Cause of God Abu'l-Qásim Faydí asked Mr. Ṭihráni to visit Írán on his behalf to encourage the believers there to be steadfast, a task which he willingly performed for nine months during 1977 and 1978. In 1983, bodily ailment and financial difficulty—his pension had been cut off by the new management of the oil company—forced him to abandon the field of pioneer service, and after visiting his son in England he went to Zimbabwe to live with his daughter Parívash Harvey. Old age and weakness, however, did not prevent him from going on teaching trips in Zimbabwe and to the neighbouring countries of Zambia and Malawi under the guidance of Counsellor Shídán Fatḥ-i-A'ẓam.

Mr. Ṭihráni's whole life was dedicated to serving his Lord. He passed away in May 1986, after an operation for a fractured hip. The following telex was sent to Zimbabwe by the Universal House of Justice on 22 May:

> DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING FAITHFUL CONSECRATED PROMOTER FAITH QUDRATU'LLAH VAHID-TEHRANI. HIS LONG RECORD DISTINGUISHED SERVICES FAITH IN MANY LANDS LOVINGLY REMEMBERED. CONVEY RELATIVES DEEP SYMPATHY ASSURANCE FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES HIS NOBLE SOUL.
>
> FU'ÁD ASHRAF

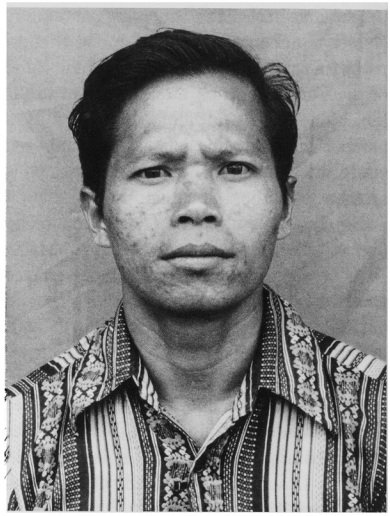
WINNANIK AND MUBARAK
c.1959–1984/1948–1986

Mubarak was born in 1948 in Canga'an village, Genteng sub-district, Banyuwangi district, East Java province, Indonesia. He was the fifth of seven children of Muḥammad Ṣáliḥ, a farmer and a staunch Muslim, who raised his family in an atmosphere of piety. In 1966, the family moved to Lampung, South Sumatra. Mubarak completed six years of elementary and three years of secondary school.

In 1975, as a result of a three-months visit by a close friend of Muḥammad Ṣáliḥ, the family came to know about the Bahá'í Faith and embraced it the following year. Mubarak, who was also a farmer, had achieved an unsavory reputation, but he now abandoned his old ways and became an eager and enthusiastic believer, fearless in spreading the Faith among his friends and neighbours, and in proclaiming it to government officials throughout the district.



Winnanik



Mubarak

In 1970, he married Winnanik, known to her friends as 'Nani', who had been born into a Muslim family in Ngawi in about 1959. She also accepted the Faith, and the couple farmed on a small scale. Three children were born to them. They taught their children Bahá'í principles, frequently held Nineteen Day Feasts in their home, and attracted others to the Faith. Much of the progress of the Cause in Lampung province was the result of their efforts.

When, in 1981, Mubarak, his wife and his younger brother, Wahab, as well as 'Abdu'l-Hadi Wibowo and Kurdi, two other local believers, acknowledged themselves as Bahá'ís on their identity cards, the Islámic clergy and others in the village community began to oppose the Bahá'í Faith and to spread abroad false accusations that the Bahá'ís were enemies of Islám. As a result, on 23 November 1982, Mubarak, 'Abdu'l-Hadi, and Kurdi were required to present themselves to the Military Commander in Tanjungkarang where they conducted themselves with equanimity before a trial panel and jury during an intensive interrogation. They explained the principles of the Bahá'í Cause and acknowledged the divine origin of all the great religions of the past, including Islám. They were given a sympathetic hearing and released. However, the 'ulamá continued to make false accusations against the Bahá'ís and stirred up feelings against them among the people by broadcasting false reports over the radio.

On 17 January 1984, Mubarak and three other Bahá'ís had their Bahá'í books seized by the police. Refusing an invitation to recant their belief, they were imprisoned and sentenced to terms ranging from two to five years.

In the difficult circumstance of being forcibly separated from her husband, Nani struggled to keep her family intact. She made a living for herself and the three children by buying chickens in the villages around her home, then selling them in the Panjang City market, 80 kilometres away—an undertaking that required her to use dirty, overcrowded public transport. She would leave her home each day at six o'clock in the morning, depart for Panjang City about ten, and return

home at ten o'clock in the evening, day after day, without cessation, and without complaint. During this time she also visited her husband and the other Bahá'í prisoners regularly, negotiated with a lawyer in Tanjungkarang regarding their case, attended court sessions, initiated solicitations at the office of the court, and made every attempt possible to obtain redress of injustice in the face of implacable official indifference. It is through Nani that the detailed knowledge of the court proceedings in these cases were made known to other Bahá'ís.

At last the great stress of dealing with the authorities, together with the physical strain of working to keep her family together, took their inevitable toll. In her eighth month of pregnancy, Nani suddenly fell ill. She died shortly thereafter on 13 July 1984. She was unstinting in her attempt, on behalf of the four imprisoned Bahá'ís, to wrest justice from a prejudiced and insensitive judiciary. She faced this daunting challenge with remarkable resolution and never failed, on her regular visits, to bring cheer to the hearts of the prisoners who will always be grateful for her valiant efforts.

When informed of his wife's death, Mubarak was inconsolable but he resigned himself to the will of God and entrusted his three children to the care of Bahá'u'lláh. Since his children were also the children of the Bahá'í community, he told his friends, he relied upon the believers to provide them with a Bahá'í education. His steadfastness in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh remained unshaken despite the added suffering caused by the death of his young wife and his concern about the welfare of his children.

After a two-year confinement, Mubarak was released from prison on 17 January 1986. He and his younger brother, who was released on the same date, went to work for another brother in whose home Mubarak died on 25 May 1986.

The Universal House of Justice requested that his family be assured that it had offered prayers at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of his soul; it praised his steadfastness and spoke of him as the very essence of faith and sincerity.

Adapted from reports provided by
DR. M. SAMANDARI
and from a memoir by
K.H. PAYMAN

DIPCHAND L. KHIANRA
1913–1986

Dipchand L. Khianra was born on 13 October 1913 at Thathanagar, some miles off Karachi, in Sind Province—then part of India. His mother hailed from a very staunch Hindu family. His father was from Arya Samaj and he had his business in Bahrain. Dipchand had one sister.

From his childhood, Dipchand showed an aversion to rituals and ceremonies. In accordance with a Hindu custom, at the age of 12 the sacred thread ceremony—something like Baptism in Christianity—was performed on him. In those days these ceremonies would last for 10 to 12 days. However, the very next day after the ceremony, Dipchand removed the thread from his neck and cast it away in the river, saying: "This thread is not going to protect me from evil, but it will always keep me away from Muslim and Christian friends".

Dipchand had his primary school education in his native village. He had not as yet acquired even the matriculation standard when his father passed away. After his father's death, Dipchand had to look after his mother and his sister, with the help of one uncle. His love was exemplary: to his mother he was a promising son; to his sister, a loving brother.

For his secondary school education, Dipchand went to Karachi and stayed with his maternal uncle. After passing his Secondary School Examination, he accepted a job as teacher in one of the schools. His mother and his sister came to live with him. For higher education, Dipchand attended

D.J. Sindh College in Karachi. It is here that he developed his love for Persian and Islamic culture.

At the age of 22, he married a simple, noble woman named Devki; though not educated, she proved to be a good wife and mother.

In 1937, he received his master's degree in linguistics, with Persian as his principal subject and English as his secondary subject. In 1957, he obtained a Vidhwana Degree in Hindi. Finally, he could read and write as many as 14 languages, and could speak a total of 19, including Sanskrit. He had command over Persian, Arabic, English, Hindi, Urdu, Sindhi, Gujarai, and other Indian languages —Persian and Arabic being his favourites.

Dipchand mastered Persian poems and could recite hundreds of couplets by Ḥáfiẓ, Sa'dí, Rumi, Firdawsí, Ghalíb, and many other famous Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í poets. He could quote a couplet or a poem most appropriate to the occasion. Because of his rich repertoire, he came in contact with a number of Persians who loved to listen to him for hours. What surprised them most was that a man from a Hindu background had mastered this language so well. They were even more amazed that he could quote verses from the Holy Qur'an from memory with ease and felicity.

Among the Persians Dipchand associated with was Isfandíyár Bakhtíyárí, whom the beloved Guardian had addressed as the "Strong Pillar of the Faith in Pakistan". Mr. Bakhtíyárí's simplicity, and his love for Bahá'u'lláh and the Bahá'í Faith inspired Dipchand's quest to investigate the Faith, and he eventually embraced it in 1942. He thus became the first Bahá'í of a Hindu background in the Sind community. He always introduced Mr. Bakhtíyárí as his spiritual father. Dipchand became a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Karachi and represented Karachi at the 1942 National Convention.

With the partition of India in 1947, Dipchand's family was given shelter in the Bahá'í House in Karachi. Later, his wife took six of their children to Nasik, in Maharashtra, India, to stay with her mother and sister. The Professor stayed in Pakistan with one son, his mother and sister, but he always visted Nasik when he went to India to attend a meeting of the National Assembly.

Professor Khianra finally left Pakistan for India in 1952, making Bombay his home. He joined Jai Hind College as the head of the Persian Department, and also taught Islamic Culture to post-graduate students at Bombay University.

With his arrival in India, Dipchand's responsibilities for bringing up his children and looking after their education increased manifold. Nonetheless, he took great interest in Bahá'í teaching and consolidation work and did it with love and zeal. He had made study his regular habit; he studied the Holy Writings thoroughly and counselled friends to do likewise if they wanted to serve the Faith.

Professor Khianra's service to the Faith included membership on National and Local Spiritual Assemblies, and on the New Era School Committee. He taught in Gujarat, and in the tribal area of Dang. He was an official translator in most summer and winter schools as well as translator to prominent Persian Bahá'ís visiting India. He taught at summer and winter schools, his favourite subjects being Bahá'í history and the lives of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He often wrote articles which appeared in Bahá'í newsletters and magazines in various languages. He also wrote a book entitled *Immortals* which gives an account of some early believers in India.

In April 1973, the Universal House of Justice honoured Professor Khianra by appointing him a Counsellor for South Central Asia and, later, with the formation of one Asian zone, as Counsellor for Asia. During his ten-year tenure as a Counsellor he travelled far and wide. While on his second visit to Afghanistan, his wife passed away in Bombay.

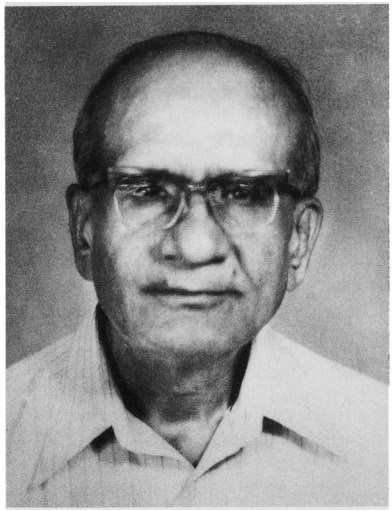
His travels to Bangladesh, Nepal, Sikkim, Sri Lanka and various cities of India are memorable and historic. He occupied himself wholly in spreading the Faith and deepening the believers. His delight in meeting the friends was much the same as a father feels on meeting his children. Friends felt happy to meet him; they were inspired by his sincerity and the catholicity of his spirit.

To whichever place his travels took him, Professor Khianra tried to meet all of the friends. He recited prayers and tablets for everyone and explained their meanings; he remembered so many prayers and tablets that people were amazed. His presence enlivened meetings and whenever there was an opportunity, he regaled friends with verses in Persian or Urdu. People felt joyous in his company.

He corresponded with Bahá'ís in many lands, and he had a treasure-house of Bahá'í books from which he recounted very important and inspiring things to Bahá'ís, exhorting them to serve the Faith. Being a true and self-respecting man, he did not have much of an attachment to the world. He led a simple, honest life and encouraged his children to do likewise.

In 1978, the Universal House of Justice invited the Counsellors to the Holy Land, and Professor Khianra participated in the International Convention in Haifa. He was ever thankful to God for fulfilling his long-felt yearning. From Haifa, he went to Írán, visiting Shíráz, Iṣfáhán, and Ṭihrán. Later, he was able to visit the Holy Land a second time.

His health began to deteriorate in 1984. He kept up his studies, as well as some correspondence, but at last, on 1 June 1986, this gallant soldier of Bahá'u'lláh abandoned his physical garment and ascended to the spiritual world. He was 72 years of age. He was survived by four sons and three daughters, of whom two sons and two daughters were Bahá'ís. The Bahá'í Gulistan in Bombay is his resting place.



Dipchand Khianra

The passing of Professor Dipchand Khianra deprived the Bahá'í community of a true friend, a noted Bahá'í historian, an abiding Counsellor, and an illustrious champion-builder of the Faith.

On 2 June, the Universal House of Justice sent the following message to the National Spiritual Assembly of India:

> HEARTS SADDENED PASSING DEVOTED STEADFAST PROMOTER CAUSE GOD DIPCHAND KHIANRA. HIS DISTINGUISHED SERVICES FAITH DURING PAST DECADES AS LEARNED TEACHER CHOSEN MEMBER BAHA'I INSTITUTIONS UNFORGETTABLE. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERING VARIOUS STATES INDIA BEARING TESTIMONY HIS UNTIRING EFFORTS PROMOTION CAUSE. ASSURE RELATIVES FRIENDS LOVING PRAYERS PROGRESS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.
>
> NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF INDIA

'Azíz Khabirpour
('Azízu'lláh Khabírpúr)
1915–1986

GRIEVED PASSING DISTINGUISHED SERVANT BLESSED BEAUTY AZIZ KHABIRPOUR. HIS OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS PIONEERING TEACHING FIELDS CROWNED BY HIS HISTORIC PARTICIPATION ERECTION SEAT UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ON MOUNT CARMEL ENSURE HIS MEMORY ANNALS CAUSE. ASSURE DEAR WIFE, CHILDREN, RELATIVES, FRIENDS ARDENT PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL, NOW GATHERED ABHA KINGDOM. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERING.

Universal House of Justice
10 June 1986

Pure-heartedness, loving kindness, sincerity, trustworthiness, modesty, patience, nobility of character, and generosity ranked among his distinctive qualities. His heart was like a jewel, shining out with all its lustre, illuminating and radiating warmth. Brimming with love for all human beings, he could not bear the mercilessness and injustice of this mortal world, for his heart was sensitive and tender. In the end it ceased beating, replete with devotion and contentment.

Enamoured of service at the Threshold of the Blessed Beauty, from the very outset of his youth, 'Azíz Khabírpúr served on various committees in Persia such as the National Youth Committee, the National Fund Committee, and the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár Committee, without seeking recognition or distinction. But of those services, the most memorable remains the night he announced, with eyes moist with tears, that he had been instructed to go to Tákur on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly to implement measures to prevent flooding at the House of Bahá'u'lláh. At that time no road had been built to Tákur, and he and his companions had to travel the mountainous part of the journey by horse and mule. He returned overjoyed. He had brought us a pear from the Holy House. Never again did I see him as joyful and happy except when he received the glad tidings of his appointment as resident engineer for the construction of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice.

'Azíz never considered himself worthy of the many blessings and favours showered upon him. One of his highest aspirations was to take part in the construction of a House of Worship. During the years he was carrying out his task at the World Centre he mentioned over and over again his gratitude for the tremendous bounty of being assigned to supervise the construction of the Seat of the Supreme Institution.

'Azíz was born 21 July 1915 in Ṭihrán. His mother came from a Bahá'í family, whereas his father had embraced the Faith of his own volition. He was very proud of his father and always remembered his good qualities and attributes and his astounding courage, regarding them as guidelines for his own life. He used to describe how his father, a strong man tall in stature, dispersed a crowd of adversaries of the Faith who were threatening to attack a pharmacy owned by a Bahá'í, simply by planting himself in front of the door and saying, 'If you want to enter and do any harm to the owners you must do so over my dead body'.

'Azíz was the only son, and his parents cherished him dearly. He was still in secondary school when his father departed from this earthly life and left on his son's shoulders the full responsibility of providing for his mother and three sisters. With perseverance, one of his most salient characteristics, he continued to work as well as to study, and succeeded in graduating from Ṭihrán's first technical university, known as *Dáru'l-Funún*.

Being inclined towards sports, 'Azíz was an active and successful member of various football and basketball teams during his student days and, until the end of his life, he not only participated in sporting activities but encouraged his friends and associates to do so. He also had a deep love for music, especially classical Persian music. He listened to

it with concentrated devotion. "Music," he said, "talks to my heart and strikes the chords of my innermost being."

In October 1950, after he was relieved of the responsibility for his mother and sisters, he married a Bahá'í, Nazenine Monadjem (Názanín Munajjim), and in 1960, following consultations with the National Pioneering Committee, the couple pioneered with their three sons to Luxembourg where their fourth child, a girl, was born.

What an incomparable father he was! Although due to his professional situation he often had to be away on business for long periods, during the time 'Azíz could spend with his children he lavished love and affection on them with his whole heart and soul and maintained a true friendship and companionship with them, so compensating for his frequent absences. His ardent hope for his children was that they would receive an excellent and thorough training, laying the foundations for their future services in the path of the Blessed Perfection. He never permitted them to work during their holidays, for he wanted them to use their free time solely in the service of the Faith.

For 14 years he served in Luxembourg as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, the Local Spiritual Assembly, and on different committees. At one time he was granted the privilege of attending the International Convention in Haifa and of participating in the election of the Universal House of Justice.

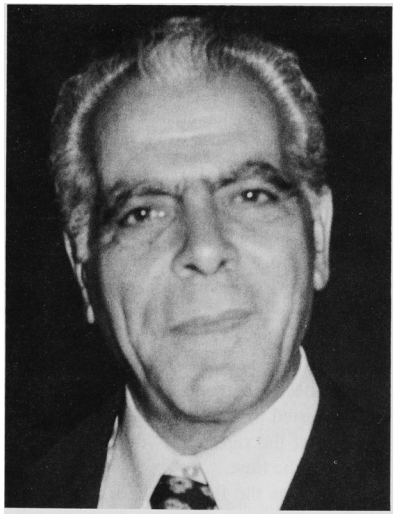
To the same degree that he was imbued with the spirit of pioneering and servitude, 'Azíz communicated a love for life. He belonged to those who cultivated ties of friendship and the art of hospitality, always holding the door of his house wide open to everyone, whether young or old, rich or poor. Hence he was successful at his pioneering post, endearing himself to all people. He was admired and deeply loved by his friends.

In 1974, 'Azíz was called to the Bahá'í World Centre and served there for 11 years, fulfilling his duties as resident engineer for the construction of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice. The architect of that magnificent building, Mr. Ḥusayn Amánat, has paid the following tribute:

> What a great bounty it is when one is doing what he feels a special love for from the depth of his heart and what gives meaning to one's entire life, past and present, his education, professional experience, an opportunity to employ all his potential abilities and talents, and virtues, his love and devotion and what brings him a chance to uplift his human attributes. When one deeply feels he will be assisted in what he will do and is certain that the right path will be shown to him all the time.
>
> This was the feeling of Mr. Khabírpúr all through his services as the architect's representative for the execution of the project of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice....
>
> He had built roads and bridges (some of them in very difficult, mountainous areas of Írán), government buildings, airports, and housing during his entire contracting career in Írán, a career which ceased when he pioneered to Luxembourg. It seemed that for his great love for serving the Faith and pioneering, he had to sacrifice his great love for building and ignore his abilities in the professional field. However, his potential abilities had been stored and were gathering momentum for his future role in a project that he regarded as the main purpose of his professional life....

Every piece of marble in the building, the doors and windows, the parapets, the plasterwork, the roof tiles, and every other item in the building is a reminder of Mr. Khabírpúr's constant efforts, his devotion, and love.

Those years spent at the World Centre can be reckoned among the best of his life. He was forever thankful, his heart overflowing with gratitude to the Sacred Threshold



'Azíz Khabirpour

for having been entrusted with so unique a service.

Early during his sojourn in Haifa he dreamt that, accompanied by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, he attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. The Blessed Beauty was standing on the balcony of a house situated on a hill, beckoning him to approach while addressing him with the words, 'Come in! Come in!' The next morning, as he recounted his dream, he was not able to restrain his tears from running down his cheeks. His friends interpreted this dream as an indication that he would eventually succeed in accomplishing his high task.

And so it was. During his period of service in the Holy Land, 'Azíz suffered a heart attack which forced him to rest for several months. Following a short period of recovery, he continued serving and became a witness to the sailing of God's Ark on Mount Carmel.

Shortly after his return to Luxembourg, he attained his heart's desire and ardent longing, to be forever attached to his pioneering post.

NAZENINE KHABIRPOUR
(Názanín Khabírpúr)

YAN KEE LEONG
1899–1986

On 19 December 1953, a Malayan Chinese artist named Yan Kee Leong signed a card of acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh. Possibly the only person aware of the historical significance of that moment was Shirin Fozdar, the pioneer who had handed him the card which made him the first believer in Malaya Peninsula. That simple act heralded the birth of a new era not only in his life, but in the life of his country.

Yan Kee Leong was born in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Malaya, on 19 November 1899, the fourth child of a poor migrant couple who had come from a village in China to seek a living from the tin mines of Malaya. Extreme poverty caused him to be given up for temporary adoption, and his foster parent gave him the name Kee Leong. His family name was Yan, and according to Chinese tradition, the family name precedes a personal name resulting in the name Yan Kee Leong, which was shortened to "Yankee" by which he was later known to everyone.

His father died when he was very young and his mother struggled amidst great hardship to bring up the family. Yankee was sent from one school to another in the care of relatives and friends, until he was finally enrolled in a Catholic institution of good standing.

His sensitive nature responded to the scripture study, and he was moved to accept the Catholic faith. For his baptism he chose to be named after Saint Paul, and his greatest wish as he grew older was to be a priest. Later he concentrated on his favourite hobby, art, eventually becoming a talented cartoonist for the local newspapers, where he proved himself a crusader and a reformer. He involved himself in several humanitarian movements and was consumed with the pursuit of truth and the meaning of life.

Slowly he began to see that the Catholic church was not the perfect answer to his quest, and he pondered on the divisions and

subdivisions in Christianity. He studied Hindu and Buddhist teachings, investigated the Rosicrucian Movement, and joined a philanthropic body called the Pure Life Society. He also became an active Theosophist in his never-ending search. None of these organizations, however, provided him with a satisfactory answer to his search for spiritual unity.

One evening, in a moment of inspiration, he outlined a scheme to draw men of all creeds, nations and colours into a lasting bond of Universal Brotherhood. In spite of enthusiastic support from some quarters, the Universal Brotherhood Movement failed to get official recognition as a registered society. Yankee was bitterly disappointed. He was unaware that God had bigger plans for him.

By this time Yankee had married Chi Lye Eng, a Malaysian Chinese woman from Malacca, and raised a family of one son and four daughters, who grew up as dedicated Catholics. They viewed their father's non-Christian activities with vehement disapproval.

Yankee's Bahá'í life began in the town of Shantiniketan in India in 1949 during a World Pacifist Conference to which he was invited as the Malaysian Chinese delegate. Chance would have Yankee seated next to a petite Persian lady who introduced herself as Shirin Fozdar, representing the Bahá'í Religion. Yankee pricked up his ears. Bahá'í? It was new to him. When the lady addressed the delegates, he was beside himself with excitement, because the principles of her Faith were similar to the ones he had tried to formulate in his Universal Brotherhood Movement. He immediately suggested that she visit Malaya and lecture on her Faith, but she was then unable to do so.

In 1952 Yankee was once again a delegate from Malaya to an international gathering, the World Federalist Government Conference in Japan. His colleague was Tunku Abdul Rahman, later to become the first Prime Minister of Malaysia. At this conference, fate placed Yankee next to another distinguished Bahá'í pioneer, Agnes Alexander, afterward named a Hand of the Cause of God, with whom he kept up a correspondence.



Yan Kee Leong

It was only in late 1953 that Shirin Fozdar was finally able to accept Yankee's invitation to visit Malaya. She and her husband, Dr. K.M. Fozdar, had left India in 1950 in answer to a call for pioneers for South East Asia, and they had settled in Singapore as the first Bahá'ís of that area. Yankee arranged for a series of talks by Mrs. Fozdar in Malacca, Seremban, and Kuala Lumpur. By the end of that tour, in December 1953, he had signed himself into history as the first Bahá'í of Malaya.

This was only the beginning of an impressive list of "firsts" in Yankee's life. He dedicated himself increasingly to the promotion of the Faith, and within a few months, at Riḍván 1954, there were sufficient Bahá'ís for the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Malaya to be elected. It was the Assembly in Seremban, Yankee's hometown. This was followed the next year by the election of the neighbouring Assemblies

of Malacca, and the capital city of Kuala Lumpur, where Yankee and other Bahá'ís had immediately begun teaching activities.

In 1957, the Regional Spiritual Assembly of South East Asia was appointed, with jurisdiction over Malaysia and six other countries in the region. It was based in Indonesia, and Yankee was privileged to serve on that body.

He was the first Bahá'í from Malaya to teach in the neighbouring countries of Brunei and Sarawak, travelling at the invitation of John and Minoo Fozdar, sons of Dr. and Mrs. K.M. Fozdar. He began mass-teaching among the indigenous people of the area. He was also the first to take the Faith to the Aslis, the aboriginals of Malaya.

His fondest memory was of a time when the first Asli village accepted Bahá'u'lláh in 1959. This achievement is all the more remarkable when one realises that Yankee was then 60, and the Malaysian jungle is thick with undergrowth, criss-crossed with rivers, and filled with leeches. Youths, a good 40 years younger than Yankee, who accompanied him on subsequent trips, report lagging behind the indefatigable Yankee. He ate with the Aslis of their tapioca and often rancid preserved meat; he slept on hardwood floors in their longhouses at the mercy of mosquitoes; he travelled the deep fast rivers, keeping immobile lest the small boat should capsize, for Yankee had never learned to swim. He walked briskly up and down hills in remote tribal areas in Thailand and Burma and Laos, endearing himself to the simple villagers everywhere with his humble loving manner.

In 1964, the first National Spiritual Assembly of Malaysia came into being, and Yankee was elected its secretary. The next year he was appointed Auxiliary Board member for the Bahá'ís of Malaysia, and together with fellow Board member Leong Tat Chee, he visited Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, becoming the first Malaysian Bahá'ís to travel and teach the Chinese there.

In 1966, at the request of the Hand of the Cause of God Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir, Yankee went to the Philippines and had the boundless joy of bringing into the Faith the first Chinese there. He was also privileged to guide the first Chinese Bahá'ís of Burma into the Faith. In 1968, he was appointed a member of the first Continental Board of Counsellors for the South East Asian Zone.

When help was needed in Singapore, prior to the establishment of its first National Spiritual Assembly in 1972, Yankee and Leong Tat Chee spent some months there laying the groundwork for the election. Yankee then had the great bounty of witnessing the raising of this new administrative institution to which his daughter, Rose, was elected chairman and his grandson Henry Ong served as a member.

Two years later it was Hong Kong's turn to elect its first National Spiritual Assembly, and once again Yankee was there to assist in the preparations.

At a time when men are starting to waste away, Yankee, though frail of body, was able to summon his high spirits, and travel to near or distant lands, wherever there was a call for Chinese teaching. Even as his health was slowing him down, he went to far-away Mauritius, and in the last years of his life, he travelled to teach for a month in the crowded and difficult city of Calcutta, where most of the Chinese in India reside.

During his 33 years as a Bahá'í, Yankee received numerous communications, but the one he cherished most was a letter from the beloved Guardian assuring him of prayers for a long life of dedication and service.

Yankee's life was indeed a fulfillment of the Guardian's prayer. His every thought was one of encouragement and praise for the believers through letters or in person. His overflowing love was also expressed through long hours of intense private prayer and supplication, on behalf of friends and their personal problems.

Only a few weeks before his passing, and with his lungs partly collapsed, Yankee

made a supreme effort to be present at the annual Bahá'í Convention of Malaysia in 1986. Here he bid farewell to the spiritual children he had lovingly nurtured over the years. Significantly, the Convention was for the first time held at the newly constructed Balakong Bahá'í Institute located close to the village in which Yankee was born at the turn of the century. This building has since been named the Yan Kee Leong Institute.

Yankee died in Ipoh on 17 June 1986 at the age of 86. Just before he breathed his last, he suddenly lifted his frail emaciated arms in a gesture of praise, and called out "Alláh'u'Abhá", then took his flight to the Abhá Kingdom. Bahá'u'lláh had blessed him richly, for he lived to see his country become a bastion of the Faith, and his children and grandchildren active in service, with two daughters Auxiliary Board members and one daughter a Counsellor.

His funeral was attended by about 600 believers from all parts of the country. The people in Ipoh watched in amazement as the long procession of Chinese, Indian, and Caucasian friends walked behind the hearse in solemn dignity, without the banner-carriers and professional weepers who usually follow a Chinese funeral.

None but the Bahá'ís were aware of the unique station of the man for whom they were mourning. Their sorrowing hearts were uplifted by the following beautiful cable from the Universal House of Justice on 19 June 1986:

> EXPRESS HEARTFELT SYMPATHY WITH BELOVED FRIENDS MALAYSIA PASSING YAN KEE LEONG WHO WILL EVER BE REMEMBERED AS FIRST ENLIGHTENED SOUL TO ACCEPT FAITH WITHIN COUNTRY. AS DEDICATED SERVANT BLESSED BEAUTY HE PROMOTED LIFE GIVING MESSAGE BAHA'U'LLAH, ESTABLISHED HIS SHELTERING INSTITUTIONS, INSPIRED HIS LOVING FOLLOWERS AND SET EXAMPLE FOR THE FRIENDS BELONGING TO THE GREAT CHINESE RACE BY RAISING FOUNDATION DIVINE CIVILIZATION ON EARTH. HIS UNTIRING MANIFOLD SERVICES IN SOUTH EAST ASIA UNFORGETTABLE. ADVISE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS IN MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE. ASSURE DISTINGUISHED RELATIVES, FRIENDS LOVING PRAYERS PROGRESS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

SHANTHA SUNDRAM

JOSÉ MINGORANCE FERNANDEZ
1920–1986

José Mingorance Fernandez was born in Granada, Spain, on 12 March 1920. At the age of 20, he married Carmen Tost Xifre, and in 1950, he and his family moved to the Principality of Andorra.

On 7 October 1953, Mr. William Danjon arrived in Andorra from Copenhagen, Denmark, in fulfilment of one of the goals of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States during the Ten Year World Crusade. In March 1954, the first series of visits by Miss Virginia Orbison to Andorra took place. On 26 July 1954, the Mingorance couple declared their faith in Bahá'u'lláh, becoming the first believers of Andorra. Miss Orbison was present for this event.

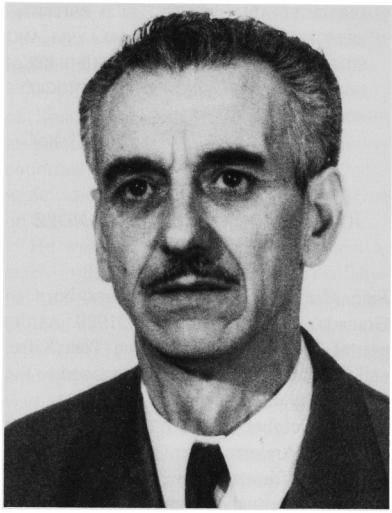
In the spring of 1957, Mr. Mingorance and his family moved to Santiago, Chile, where they remained until 1969, a period during which both he and his family carried out many activities as Bahá'ís.

In 1969, they returned to Andorra, where they resumed their Bahá'í activities. The first Local Spiritual Assembly of Andorra was formed on 18 August 1974, after the declaration of faith by their three children and their daughter-in-law.

Mr. Mingorance remained a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Andorra until his last days.

In his professional life, he filled a position of great responsibility in a bank in the Principality, where he had the complete trust of his superiors.

A kind, happy, and jovial character, Mr. Mingorance was a very spiritual person, concerned about deepening in the Bahá'í



José Mingorance Fernandez

teachings, and very capable and precise in replying to the questions and doubts of the seekers. He was a firm pillar of the Faith in Andorra.

On 11 July 1986, he passed away in Tarragona where he had gone for a short holiday. He leaves his wife and three children, all Bahá'ís, and the Faith firmly rooted in Andorra.

CARMEN TOST, WILLIAM DANJON, AND BADI'OLLAH DAEMI
(Translated from the Spanish by Annie Hunt)

AURA MARÍA BERNAL DE SÁNCHEZ
1899–1986

Aura María Bernal was born in Bogotá, Colombia, on 18 June 1899. For 12 years she was in the school of a Catholic Convent and received very strict religious education. She studied nursing, along with her sister Juanita Bernal, and worked as a nurse and midwife.

When she was 31, she married Luis Sánchez Cuervo, a free-thinker who was affiliated with several schools of thought, such as Theosophy and the Rosicrucian school. In 1942, at a theosophical meeting, a German Bahá'í with Canadian citizenship had the opportunity to speak about the Faith. At the end of the talk, Mr. Sánchez invited the man to his home. From that point, they had weekly meetings to talk about different aspects of the Faith. During one of these, Mr. Sánchez received as a gift the book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, the only Bahá'í book published in Spanish at that time. Aura began to read the book systematically and to ask questions at the talks every week.

In 1942, Aura became the first Colombian to accept the Faith. When she made her decision, in order to celebrate it, she prepared and offered a *sabajón*, a Colombian drink with some liquor. Her teacher, smiling, accepted the cup, and then said: "Mrs. Aurita, this was our last drink. There is a law for the Bahá'ís which forbids alcoholic drinks." She replied that normally she did not drink this type of drink but with it she had wanted to demonstrate that she was celebrating a special event. She said she naturally accepted and would follow this law. Mr. Sánchez came into the Faith some months after her.

Previously, Aura had joined her husband in activities with various associations but she had never made a personal commitment to any of them. When she officially became a Bahá'í, many people were surprised and made fun of the Faith in front of her. But being the only Colombian Bahá'í did not worry her; she shared the Teachings with everyone around her. Thus, the number of Bahá'ís soon increased, and Aurita was elected to the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Bogotá, which was also the first in the country. Several of her friends also became fundamental pillars in the development of the Faith.

From the first moment of her life as a Bahá'í, her orientation and guidance were the Sacred Teachings, her behaviour exemplified simplicity, humility, and determined collaboration, both within and outside the



Aura María Bernal de Sánchez

community. Parallel to teaching the Faith, she devoted her best efforts to the education of her two children, giving them the responsibility of demonstrating "a model of Bahá'í life."

During the 1950s, she travelled with her daughter to different places in the country, such as to the departments of Santander and La Guajira, to expand her beloved Cause. By 1960, she had moved to Manizales with the purpose of establishing a Local Assembly there, to help achieve the desired goal to elect the first National Spiritual Assembly of Colombia at Riḍván 1961. Her efforts were positively rewarded.

She always had deep conviction in the truth of Bahá'u'lláh and His Teachings, and was surrounded with the feeling of service. The last 15 years of her life were devoted to the care of the Bahá'í Center, and whoever entered into that house received affection and attention from her, in one way or another. Everyone who met her called her "*Mamita*."

Until the last moment of her life, she counselled her family to be firm and constant, emphasising that the only real and enduring things are noble and pure acts in service to the Kingdom and to humanity.

On 15 August 1986 she took flight to the infinite, in true peace and tranquillity, at the home of her son in Bogotá.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF COLOMBIA

FAZAL MOHAMAD KHAN
1908–1986

Fazal Mohamad Khan, known to his friends in Australia as Frank, was born in the village of Khassi Kalan near Ludhiana in the Punjab region of India on 6 April 1908, and attended the village school to higher level, studying English. His father, Karim Box, had gone to Australia in 1898 for a period, then went back and forth to India for a few years at a time until he brought his son, Fazal, out in 1926 in search of a better life. Frank later returned to India and married Hukoomat Bibi, and brought her and his half-brother Ramzan, to Australia aboard R.M.S. *Strathnaver* in 1932. The Khans were among the first Indians to settle on the eastern coast of Australia.

Frank was a self-taught and self-reliant man who rose from humble economic circumstances through paying careful attention to saving, and through his genuine concern for others. He was initially a clothing salesman, travelling by horse and cart from house to house, to the isolated farming areas of what is now Wingecarribee Shire. In 1952–53, the Khans moved from Mittagong to Dapto, in the Wollongong area, partly because Frank had come to know every family resident in the rural area and had "exhausted" his market, having sold to each of them the major new electrical appliances as they became available—such as radios, washing machines, and refrigerators. In Dapto, the Khans bought a dairy farm which they operated for several years until it was subdivided as the township expanded.

Frank was known throughout the Australian Muslim community for religious devotion and learning. He travelled regularly to Sydney to teach religious classes, and had memorised over two-thirds of the Qur'án. He was introduced to the Bahá'í Faith when Stanley and Mariette Bolton learned that a Muslim family lived in a nearby town, and invited him to address the Bahá'í School at Yerrinbool after they read in a letter from the beloved Guardian that the Australian Bahá'ís should deepen their understanding of Islám.

Before accepting the invitation, Frank consulted the members of his family and they agreed that he should speak to the Bahá'ís. He participated in a series of talks called "Nine great religions of the world" at the Yerrinbool Winter School in September 1947. He and his wife were attracted to the Faith by the respect that the Bahá'ís showed toward Muḥammad and their reverence for the Qur'án. However, they felt initially that the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh were reformers whose purpose was simply to return Islám to its pristine form, rather than independent Manifestations.

The Australian Bahá'ís procured from India a Bahá'í book entitled *Qiyamat* (*Resurrection*) by the distinguished Bahá'í author, Maulvi Mafusu'l-Huq, which was written in Urdu, and which related the claims of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh to Qur'ánic prophecies. This book was of great assistance to the Khans in their investigation.

Frank's concerns were dissolved by the explanations of these doctrines from the Bahá'í perspective given him by a Persian Bahá'í, who was travelling through Australia. He was confirmed in his faith by a dream, in which he felt himself being led in the Muslim obligatory prayer by Muḥammad; in the midst of the prayer Muḥammad stopped and said over his shoulder, "Now we will say the prayer this way" and began to recite the Bahá'í Long Obligatory Prayer. He remained firm in his faith when, a few weeks later, the Persian Bahá'í used a subterfuge to siphon off the bulk of his meagre life savings, and then absconded; some months later, this misguided and deluded person was expelled from the Cause by the Guardian after he had made contact with Covenant-breakers.

Frank and Bibi, together with their children, Joy and Peter, were the first Muslims to become Bahá'ís in Australia. They declared their faith at the Yerrinbool Summer School in December 1948, and became members of the Yerrinbool Bahá'í community. The summer school committee cabled to Shoghi Effendi:

> LOVING GREETINGS THIRTEENTH SUMMER SCHOOL COMMENCED WITH MOSLEM FAMILY ACCEPTING FAITH SUPPLICATING PRAYERS FRUITFUL ACHIEVEMENTS.

To this cable Shoghi Effendi replied:

> DELIGHTED ASSURE ATTENDANTS NEWLY ENROLLED FAMILY LOVING FERVENT PRAYERS MAY SCHOOL SESSIONS PROVE LANDMARK PROGRESS FAITH LEND TREMENDOUS IMPETUS UNFOLDMENT PLAN DEEPEST LOVE.

Upon becoming a Bahá'í, Frank was ridiculed and scorned by his Muslim friends and relatives in Australia, whom he nevertheless continued to visit and to teach the Faith. Eventually one half-brother became a Bahá'í. On two later occasions Frank visited the villages in Pakistan where his Muslim relatives had settled after a forced emigration from India as refugees in the upheaval following the partition of the sub-continent, and he endeavoured to share with them his new understanding of religious truth. On the first visit no one was prepared to listen, but during the second visit a cousin in the city of Sialkot accepted the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

In the following years, Frank Khan became one of Australia's most devoted and active teachers and administrators of the Bahá'í Faith. His subsequent long association with the Yerrinbool Bahá'í School, as both a speaker and member of the school

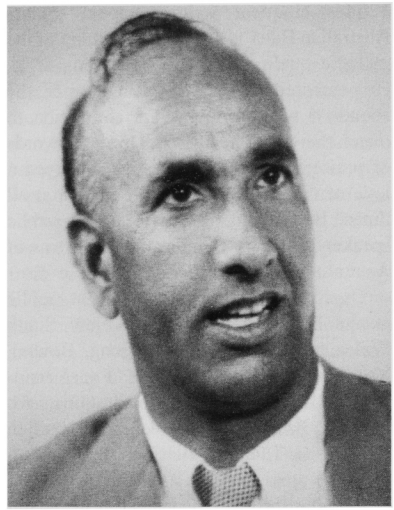
committee, is unparalleled. He was chairman of the committee from about 1950 into the mid 1960s. The existence of considerable tensions within the Bahá'í community as to how the school should be developed made this a testing time for Frank and for other members of the committee. Despite innumerable difficulties, however, Frank was proud of the fact that while he was treasurer on the committee, the Yerrinbool School made a profit on its operations.

Over a period of four decades, he was a source of knowledge concerning Islám and the Qur'án for the Australian Bahá'ís, who utilised his learning at both local and national levels. Although his mother tongue was Urdu and his second language English, Frank learned to read and speak Persian and Arabic after becoming a Bahá'í in order to read Bahá'u'lláh's words in the original. He learned the meaning of words by comparing a text in several languages simultaneously. In the teaching field Frank was most fearless, and continued to call his Muslim brothers to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. He ordered many books in the Urdu language to teach fellow Indians in Australia.

In 1950, soon after becoming a Bahá'í, Frank was elected as one of two delegates from the Yerrinbool Local Assembly to National Convention. He was elected to the National Assembly and became treasurer. Dulcie Dive, the former treasurer, was appointed his assistant. Frank was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly for three consecutive years 1950–53, and again for two years 1964–66. Frank was subsequently elected delegate to National Convention many times.

As national treasurer, in 1950 he wrote to the Australian Bahá'ís on the "lowness of the funds":

> Bold decisions and large scale plannings that are required to carry forth the blasts of the Twice Blown Trumpet of This Mighty and World Wide Resurrection cannot be taken because the Funds in the Treasury will not permit it...



Fazal Mohamad Khan

> The Seed is not being scattered in the soil of the mentalities of Australian and New Zealand brothers and sisters in a way that we should if we were to discharge our obligations to our slumbering brethren on this holy soil. The day is coming, my brothers and sisters, when the Cause shall be accepted. The Supreme God, Who sent down this Mother Book, this perfect Law, is most certainly potent of having it accepted and followed. This stage that we are passing through now is but a Passing Phase. 'Surely with difficulty is Ease and surely with Ease is difficulty...'
>
> Will each and every brother and sister give this matter their most serious consideration and act now, to gladden the hearts of your brethren, the NSA, to put new and vigorous life into the Cause which assuredly will prevail, which you have fortunately chosen to back, which each nation is now summoned to obey, which is the Salvation of Mankind, which is the command and Cause of the Potent, the Powerful Mighty God, the Lord of the Worlds.
>
> Humbly in His service, F.M. Khan

This eloquent written appeal to the Australian Bahá'ís conveys something of the melodic quality of Frank's speaking style. He possessed a deep and resonant voice, the sound of which conveyed a conviction to match the words he uttered. He spoke words of praise for the prophets, and conveyed a love of God and of spiritual qualities at all times. He offered his services as a public speaker in the far-flung cities and towns of Australia and the Pacific Islands.

On many occasions he spoke at public events held by the southern New South Wales communities of Mittagong, Bowral, Yerrinbool and Wollongong. For Yerrinbool's 1953 Naw-Rúz celebrations, for instance, Frank read an eloquent exposition of the Bahá'í Faith which was published in the local press. He was a champion at lawn bowls, and through friends made in pursuit of this sport, gave innumerable talks to Apex and Rotary Clubs. On many occasions he made teaching trips to the cities and towns of South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, and New South Wales.

In July 1952, Frank made the first of his visits to Fiji, where his efforts in teaching both Hindu and Muslim Indian-Fijian communities were quite successful. He gave two talks to the Literary Club of Suva, two radio broadcasts, one in Urdu and another in English, addressed Suva's Rotary Club, and spoke to a gathering of some 40 Hindus.

In 1958, the National Spiritual Assembly acquainted Frank with the difficulties associated with its attempts to retain Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Bertha Dobbins in Port Vila, in the New Hebrides. To resolve these difficulties, Frank volunteered to provide the funds for a school building where Mrs. Dobbins could live and teach, and also to have the building prefabricated in Australia and to personally construct it in Port Vila. He accomplished all this through great effort, being aided in the construction by Australian pioneer Mr. Bill Washington, and by Mr. Peter Kaltoli, a Bahá'í of the New Hebrides.

In the final three years of the Ten Year Crusade, 1960–63, Frank travelled to most of the Australian states to give firesides and public meetings. In 1961, Frank and Bibi left Australia to visit the resting place of Shoghi Effendi in London, to make their pilgrimage to Haifa, and to visit Bahá'í communities in Europe and Asia.

When the glorious years of the World Crusade came to a close, the task of consolidating the existing Bahá'í communities in Australia intensified, and the task of proclaiming the Message of Bahá'u'lláh remained. Throughout the Nine Year Plan, Frank continued to travel in both Australia and the islands of the Pacific. During his trip to Fiji in 1965, two of his talks were broadcast on the radio, he spoke with Muslims at their centre in Samabula, spoke with Sikhs in their village at Tamavua and later in their Temple, and was invited to address the Arya Samaj sect of the Hindus.

Throughout the 1960s, Frank continued to educate the Australian Bahá'í community through his talks at Yerrinbool School. His ability to convey both the teachings and spirit of Islám greatly aided the friends to increase their awareness of the great station of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.

In 1972, Frank, together with Bibi and grandson David, made his second pilgrimage and then travelled through Írán, Canada, and the United States, addressing Bahá'í meetings and visiting the House of Worship in Wilmette.

In addition to his ongoing travels with Bibi, Frank was active in his own community, serving as chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly for many years and conducting children's classes in Wollongong. Through his many years of success in business, he was also able to become benefactor to the House of Worship in Australia, the Yerrinbool School, and the publishing trusts. He also extended assistance to individuals in need.

Frank passed to the Abhá Kingdom on Wednesday, 10 September 1986, and was

laid to rest at Shellharbour Cemetery near Wollongong, New South Wales. The following message was sent by the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia on 11 September:

> DEEPLY GRIEVED LEARN PASSING DEVOTED SERVANT FAITH FRANK KHAN. HIS OUTSTANDING SERVICES CONTRIBUTIONS FAITH AUSTRALIA AND PACIFIC UNFORGETTABLE. KINDLY CONVEY MEMBERS HIS FAMILY OUR HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES AND ASSURANCE LOVING PRAYERS HIS IMMORTAL SOUL ALL WORLDS GOD.
>
> GRAHAM HASSALL

HAMUEL HOAHANIA
???–1986

Hamuel Hoahania was born in the AreAre district of Malaita in the Solomon Islands. He was a traditional chief and owner of all land near Hau Hui on Malaita. When the Solomon Islands were under the British, he had a reputation as being one of the most cooperative cocoa producers in the Protectorate.

As a young man he worked for the South Sea Evangelical Mission, the major Christian mission in his area, but he became very disillusioned with the church. Despite the Christian teaching of brotherly love, European missionaries did not socialise with Islanders. When Hamual heard of a European family living in Honiara who allowed Islanders into their home, and even ate with them, he did not at first believe the story, and decided to investigate for himself.

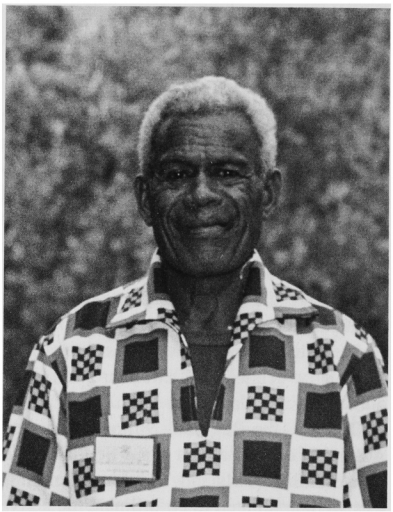
Hamuel's work as a government medical dresser allowed him to travel to different parts of the Solomon Islands, and when next in the capital, in about July 1956, he approached the home of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh Alvin and Gertrude Blum, and their daughter, Keithie. Alvin invited Hamuel in and offered him some refreshments. Hamuel asked the Blums for books about the Bahá'í Faith, and invited them to Hau Hui to 'start a mission'.

Hamuel's conversion precipitated the first mass entry of Solomon Islanders into the Faith. Gertrude Blum visited Hamuel's clan, and a large number of them decided to become Bahá'ís. A Local Assembly was soon established at Hau Hui with Hamuel as a member. The rapid emergence of Bahá'í communities on Malaita provoked opposition from a number of missions, and the new Bahá'ís faced a variety of forms of harrassment and ridicule. They persevered, however, and established more Local Assemblies, and a primary school at Tawaimare, on land donated by the clan to the Faith.

In 1959, the Regional National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the South Pacific was established. Island Teaching Committees were appointed to co-ordinate the activities of the Bahá'í community in each island group and liaise with the Regional Spiritual Assembly, and in 1961 Hamuel was asked to serve on the Solomon Islands Teaching Committee.

Hamuel was elected as a delegate to the convention of the South Pacific Regional Assembly in 1962 and several subsequent years. During this time he also assisted in implementing a large-scale teaching project on Malaita which included Bahá'ís visiting most of the villages in the AreAre and Koio regions. By Riḍván 1963 there was an Assembly at Hau Hui, nine other localities on the island, and some 800 Malaitan Bahá'ís. By 1986 there were 59 Local Assemblies on Malaita.

In 1964, the Solomon Islands became part of the South West Pacific Ocean Regional National Spiritual Assembly, and Hamuel served on that Assembly for a number of years. He also attended the Intercontinental Conference held in Sydney, Australia, in October 1967—one of six gatherings held to celebrate the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation to the kings and rulers of the world. During the Conference Hamuel 'enacted the story of his people and his



Hamuel Hoahania

acceptance of the Faith with a sparkling vivacity and humor'.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Solomon Islands was established in 1971, Hamuel was elected to that institution in 1978. He attended the 1978 International Convention in Haifa, Israel—the first Solomon Islander to do so. On his way home from the Convention, he travelled to Írán and visited the House of the Báb. Later that year he was appointed an Auxiliary Board member.

When Hamuel passed away on 15 October 1986, he left behind his wife and their 16 children, many of whom were actively serving the Faith.

GRAHAM HASSALL

MASHEED IQANI KOIRALA
(Mashíd Íqání Koirala)
1949–1986

The following telegram was sent by the beloved Universal House of Justice on 27 October 1986:

GRIEVED NEWS UNTIMELY PASSING DEAR HANDMAIDEN BAHA'U'LLAH MASHID KOIRALA. HER EXEMPLARY PIONEERING SPIRIT, STEADFASTNESS DEVOTION AND LOVING NATURE ALL INSTRUMENTAL WINNING MANY HEARTS ACHIEVING VICTORIES NEPAL UNFORGETTABLE. EXTEND HEARTFELT SYMPATHY HER NOBLE FAMILY FRIENDS NEPAL. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS. WE ARDENTLY PRAY SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Mahshíd Íqání was born in Ṭihrán on 17 April 1949. Her urge to travel and teach the Faith was noticed from an early age. While she was still in school in Írán she used to persistently ask her parents to send her pioneering. The beloved Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Akbar Furútan often recalled how she used to cry and ask him to tell her parents to allow her to pioneer.

Soon after she completed high school she left Írán to study in the Philippines. She was the first Persian Bahá'í student in the Philippines and when the others joined her she used to be called "the number one". She studied mass communication from 1967 until the summer of 1971, when violence in the campuses led to the closure of the university. She went home, planning to go back to the Philippines to complete her study, but while in Írán she heard about a course in mass communication in New Delhi, India.

She was particularly enthusiastic about going to India because of the possibility of visiting villages and teaching the Faith. She often spoke of her many visits to Filipino villages where she taught under the guidance of the beloved Hand of the Cause of God Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir. During later visits to Nepal, Dr. Muhájir himself told Nepalese friends how Mahshíd had travelled to remote Filipino villages and taught the Faith.

In September 1971, she joined the postgraduate diploma course in journalism in New Delhi where she met Bharat Koirala. They became engaged at a ceremony at the Bahá'í House in Delhi in the presence of the

beloved Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qásim Faydí. In April 1972 they were married, again at the Bahá'í House, in the presence of the beloved Hand of the Cause Mr. Furútan. Three days later they flew to Nepal in the company of Mr. Furútan, who was travelling to Nepal to the first National Convention.

For the next 14 years Mahshíd was destined to play an important role in the growth of the Faith in Nepal. She loved to travel to the villages where Bahá'ís resided. With her ever-present smile and unflinching faith in the power of Bahá'u'lláh, she was welcome everywhere. When in Kathmandu she often suffered from bronchial asthma, but when she visited Bahá'ís in villages, all traces of her physical suffering disappeared. She missed mass teaching as it was experienced in the Philippines or India, but she adjusted to new realities in Nepal and never stopped teaching, whether in small groups or large gatherings.

From the beginning, Mahshíd served as the Auxiliary Board member for Nepal and preferred to do so whenever she was elected to the Assemblies. She said it gave her the opportunity to "plan independently and quickly". It was only at the 1986 National Convention that she opted to serve on the Assembly, and she was subsequently elected secretary.

The end came on 24 October 1986, after a hectic day at the school where, in addition to her job as principal, she substituted for two absent teachers. She came home with some relatives she had met on the way, served tea for them, drove them home herself and then asked her mother and two children to get ready to go to the Bahá'í Centre for the Friday fireside. At the National Centre the day's speaker had not come and so they asked her to speak. She said, "Today, I will talk about Bahá'u'lláh and my son Samir will translate into Nepali for me".

She finished her talk, described by friends and seekers as most eloquent and inspiring, and while Samir was still translating, she left the room. A few minutes later her daughter Shabnam found her on the balcony outside panting desperately for breath. She was rushed to the hospital, but it was already too late.



Masheed Iqani Koirala

Hundreds of friends, relatives and prominent Nepalese came to pay their respects as her body lay at the Bahá'í Centre. Many non-Bahá'í friends attended the burial at the Bahá'í cemetery.

BHARAT KOIRALA

RUDOLFO DUNA
1913–1986

In London's Albert Hall in 1963, at the World Congress following the election of the first Universal House of Justice, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum was overcome by deep emotion and faltered during her inspiring presentation about the beloved Guardian. Then, the golden voice of Rudolfo Duna soared out across the auditorium singing "Alláh'u'Abhá". He was quickly joined by some 6,000 voices in praise of their Lord, giving Rúḥíyyih Khánum time to regain her composure, and welding all hearts in a deep spirit of love and unity. This instant response to emergencies as well as teaching opportunities characterized Rudolfo Duna's services to the Faith which he loved so dearly.

Rudolfo was born on 23 July 1913 in Lourenço Marques, Mozambique [now Maputo] into a staunch Christian family belonging to the Swiss Mission Church. Just before he heard about the Bahá'í Faith from pioneers Mr. John and Mrs. Charlotte de Pinto in 1955, he was preparing to become an evangelist for the Swiss Mission Church. He had no difficulty in recognizing the truth of the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, and became an ardent and indefatigable believer.

Rudolfo was the third person in Mozambique to accept the Bahá'í Faith during the World Crusade of the beloved Guardian, and he became a member of the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Lourenço Marques. The day after the formation of the Local Assembly, Mr. and Mrs. de Pinto were forced to leave the country, and a few days later the first three believers in Mozambique were arrested and put into prison, their homes searched and their Bahá'í books confiscated. Rudolfo spent about a week in jail and was freed after being told that he should not follow the religion brought by the de Pintos. However, in the words of Rudolfo himself, "As we have already tasted the sweet savour of the love of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, it is hard to reject the truth of the love of God."

Shortly after the formation of the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Mozambique in 1955, the call came from Shoghi Effendi for pioneers to go to Angola, the sister colony of Mozambique under the rule of Portugal.

Rudolfo and his wife, Angelica, knew little about the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh at that time, but their hearts were filled with love for the beloved Guardian. Then, Mrs. Duna had a wonderful dream, according to Rudolfo. "She saw a light never seen before by men's eyes and it came to her as an awakening and a warning. Then she said, 'This gives me courage and I feel I must obey the command of God to go to Angola!'...so we began to pray that God's Will would be done."

This decision won them the honor of being the first African pioneers in southern Africa to arise in obedience to the call of the Guardian.

Once they had decided, they never wavered in their determination to take their beloved new Faith to another land, in spite of all the discouragement and fears of family and friends. They went with their young daughter, Dora.

"We had to travel third class", Rodulfo related. [It was] "a long journey on hard seats and hard to sleep on too, but we were happy because we were following the command of our beloved Shoghi Effendi who was praying for us. I had never seen him before, but one thing for sure, he was praying for us."

In Luanda, they met Mr. Joao, who became the first believer and together they began to teach until the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Luanda was formed that April. The arrival of new pioneers from Portugal made it possible for the Dunas to return home after one year's stay in Angola and pick up the thread of their services in their home country.

When they returned to Lourenço Marques, they found the Local Assembly was no longer functioning and the believers were fearful and disheartened. They called the Bahá'ís together and did what they could

to strengthen and inspire them to hold Feasts and to teach, but it was very difficult as the authorities were watchful and suspicious.

In 1962, Mr. Duna was elected to the Regional Spiritual Assembly of South and West Africa, and it became his privilege and honour to travel to Haifa where he participated in the election of the first Universal House of Justice in 1963 at the close of the Ten Year Crusade.

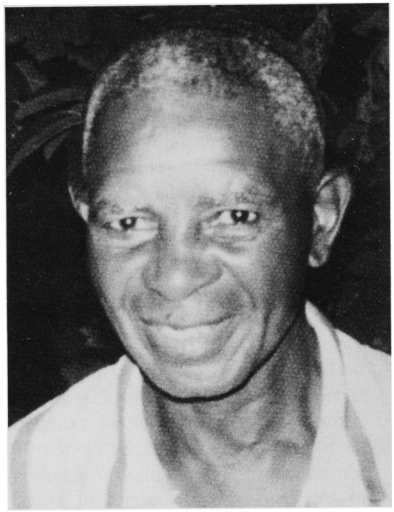
After the Bahá'í World Congress, Mr. and Mrs. Duna were asked to stop in Northern Rhodesia [now Zambia] to teach in an area which showed promise for mass conversion. They spent one month in the Mwinilunga area in the northwestern part of the country, and the promise became a reality as many souls embraced the Faith. They really had the magic touch of bringing many people into the fold of Bahá'u'lláh.

Upon his return home, Rudolfo was appointed to the Auxiliary Board for Propagation, a post which he held until his passing.

The 1970s were days of political unrest in Mozambique. Many outstanding Mozambican leaders were put in jail, including Rudolfo, who was imprisoned because of his Bahá'í activities. For three and a half years he suffered greatly, from solitary confinement, which lasted almost two years, to frequent beating and torture. Finally, because of his good conduct, he was permitted to take up basket weaving, ivory carving, and even to carry on his trade of plumbing outside the prison walls.

While in prison, Rudolfo was active in teaching the Faith and several of his fellow inmates became Bahá'ís. They were encouraged by him to translate Bahá'í prayers into Shimakonde, and *What is the Bahá'í Faith?* into Shimakua, and he himself translated *Bahá'u'lláh, Word Made Flesh* by H.M. Balyuzi, into Shironga.

After his release from prison, Rudolfo continued his work as Board member, helping the believers and encouraging them to teach and be active. The affairs of Mozambique were looking up. In 1976, the



Rudolfo Duna

Dunas made another trip to Angola at the request of the Counsellors, to assist the friends. They also visited Portugal, always spreading the love and knowledge of Bahá'u'lláh wherever they went.

In 1985, the Dunas were on hand to assist in the formation of the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Mozambique. This was something Rudolfo had dreamed of, had worked for, and had looked forward to for a long, long time. When the members of the National Assembly were announced and were asked to come forward, he looked at them and, especially because he saw his own daughter as a member, turned to Counsellor Fatḥi-A'ẓam, held his hand and said: "Shidan, this is the happiest moment of my life. My work is now ended. I am now ready to meet my Maker."

Among the many attributes which made Rudolfo an outstanding Bahá'í was his talent to compose music and write beautiful songs which were sung in Bahá'í meetings in many countries of the world. Among his many accomplishments was his work translating Bahá'í teachings into Shironga, one of the

major languages of Mozambique. *Bahá'í Administration*, *Bahá'í History*, *Ṭáhirih*, *Mullá Ḥusayn*, *Quddús*, *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh*, *What Is the Bahá'í Faith?*, and prayers are among his translation work.

Those who knew him well will long remember his steadfastness in the Faith, his devotion and love for Bahá'u'lláh, his perseverance in teaching the Cause and his loyalty and abiding love for the Bahá'í friends.

The following message was sent on 3 November 1986 by the Universal House of Justice when informed of his passing:

> DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING DEVOTED PROMOTER FAITH RUDOLFO DUNA. HIS LONG RECORD DEDICATED LABOURS IN BOTH TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE FIELDS SERVICE UNFORGETTABLE. ASSURE RELATIVES LOVING PRAYERS PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL. ADVISE ALL LOCAL ASSEMBLIES MOZAMBIQUE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS IN HIS NAME.
>
> SHÍDÁN FATḤI-A'ZAM
> (Shidan Fat'he-azam)

BERTHA DOBBINS
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1895–1986

On 7 November 1986, on a perfect spring day, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Bertha Dobbins was laid to rest at Centennial Park Cemetery in Adelaide, South Australia. It seemed that myriad daisies joined forces with the first flush of spring roses to bid that gallant soul a cheerful farewell, as she would have wanted it, as the funeral cortege moved from the chapel to the cemetery. Those gathered at the chapel included three generations of Bertha's family and dear friends.

Born in George Street, Port Chalmers (Dunedin) in New Zealand, two months premature, on 11 April 1895, the sixth of eleven children, Bertha never lost the will to survive against all odds. A teacher all her life, she inspired countless children with her enthusiasm for living and her absolutely unshakeable, positive faith that never knew the meaning of defeat.

For seven and a half years, Bertha taught in country schools in New Zealand. In August 1923, she resigned from the New Zealand Education Department with plans to go as a Church of England missionary to India to teach the Christian Faith to the peoples of that continent. Bertha wrote:

> I was brought up in the Anglican Church which I loved very much and will always be grateful for early training there. It was my privilege to serve wherever help was needed. Indeed, having been trained in New Zealand as a school teacher, I offered to go as a missionary to India and took a correspondence course with that object in view. My papers were signed and sent to London. I was to go there and learn a language prior to going to India; but, always an insatiable reader, I came across a poem, 'The Light of Asia'—the story of the Buddha! It was so beautiful! The thought dawned on me, 'If His followers lived up to His Teachings and if all the Christians lived the Teachings of Christ, there would be no need of missionaries!' Finally, I decided to travel and work my way round the world and write a book. So I left New Zealand in 1923.

Bertha went first to Australia, where she joined South Australia's Education Department. While she was teaching at Nailsworth Secondary School, the District Inspector, Adelaide Miethke, described Bertha, in a report dated 1 August 1927, as a "quiet, gentle little woman who has an influence which is distinctly good and spiritual in nature. She understands children and is full of devices for their interest. She has a free, easy discipline, yet the children respond to her quickly. Miss Mochan [her maiden name] is possessed of infinite patience. I have never heard her scold, nor her voice raised... I consider that both students and fellow-teachers receive an unconscious

uplift by association with this quiet, modest, cheerful little woman."

Within a few years of her arrival in Australia, Bertha had become involved in caring for the needy in the West End of Adelaide; had established free English classes for some early Italian immigrants; and had been appointed Divisional Commissioner of Girl Guides for Nailsworth at a ceremony on 27 April 1927 conducted at Government House, Adelaide, by Lady Bridges, State Chief Commissioner of Guides and wife of the then-Governor of the State.

While set on a course of comparative study of as many practicing Faiths as possible, Bertha met Joe Dobbins, who was on a similar quest. On 3 March 1929, Joe wrote to Bertha, inviting her to go with him and Hilda Gilbert and Robert Brown to meet... "Mr. and Mrs. Dunn ... at Blackwood" because, he said, "I believe they have the *real message*; there is no question which they do not answer to one's satisfaction". Hilda Gilbert actually was the first to give Joe the Message and he, in turn, gave it to Bertha.

An unusual courtship, spent every Saturday evening at the flat of John Henry and Clara Hyde-Dunn (later to become known affectionately to the Bahá'ís as "Mother" and "Father" Dunn), culminated in Joe and Bertha's eventual declaration of faith, prior to becoming husband and wife. Since there was no Bahá'í administration at this early stage of the Faith in Australia, exact records were not kept of enrolments, but letters passing between Bertha and Joe indicated that they had declared shortly after hearing of the Faith. Bertha was editor of *Herald of the South* in 1929, indicating that she was a Bahá'í in that year. Of this time, Bertha wrote, "The Bahá'í Faith was brought to my notice in 1929 and, after careful study of its scriptures, I found the answers to the many things which had puzzled me in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible."

Her marriage to Joe was recorded by the late Mayzi Almond in *Herald of the South* dated 13 April 1933, thus:



Bertha Dobbins

> On the evening of January 17, 1933, an interesting ceremony took place in the Bahá'í room, Epworth Building, Pirie Street, Adelaide, when our dear Bahá'í sister and brother, Bertha Mochan and Joseph Dobbins, were made one. The ceremony was conducted by the Rev. W.H. Hawke (President of the Council of Churches), who had heard the Bahá'í Message and was sympathetically and kindly disposed toward it.... After the orthodox service, the Rev. Mr. Hawke read the beautiful Bahá'í Marriage Tablet.... Among the many loving gifts was a beautiful crystal vase sent by the Bahá'ís of New Zealand in appreciation of the bride's work as editor of *Herald of the South*.

This particular magazine was actually founded by the late Bertram Dewing, a New Zealand journalist, with the approval of the beloved Guardian, who suggested the title. In some of her notes Bertha wrote:

> When Bertram was leaving for a trip abroad, he wrote to me in Australia and asked me to take over the magazine,

> which I was pleased to do.... I edited the magazine for 22 years: first from 1929–1932, at which time Miss Dugdale with the help of Miss L. Clark took over for two years; then it came back to me from 1934–1953. Then I went to the New Hebrides and Mr. Eric Bowes kindly took over.

During the following years, Bertha worked tirelessly as a devoted, generous and selfless wife, and mother of two children; served on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Australia and New Zealand from 1948–49, as well as for many, many years on her own Local Assembly; travelled to teach the Faith in country towns as well as interstate, particularly in Western Australia and Tasmania and also internationally in New Zealand and Tonga. Her greatest joy was to share enthusiastically and fearlessly her excitement about her discovery of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

Bertha had resigned from the Education Department in South Australia on 11 November 1932, just prior to her marriage. However, when her son was 13 and her daughter 11, she resumed teaching, taking up an appointment at the "Wilderness" girls' school, Medindie, South Australia, in 1947.

After nearly eight years at the beautiful college, it was time for a new adventure for the intrepid Bertha. Hence, in September 1953, at the age of 58, after consultation with her husband and her children, and in response to a call to the Bahá'í world from the Guardian, she left for the South Pacific, for the group of islands known then as the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), with the purpose of offering the Bahá'í Message to the peoples of those islands. Travelling first by train from Adelaide, she sailed from Sydney on 21 September 1953 on the S.S. *Caledonien*. Bertha's notes record those first moments on New Hebridean soil:

> I arrived in Port Vila on the 17th October, 1953, and said the Greatest Name as my feet touched New Hebridean soil. Miss Gladys Parke and Miss Gretta Lamprill, who were also on the *Caledonien*, en route for their destination, Tahiti, followed, and accompanied me to the Hotel Rossi, Port Vila, where I stayed until the 28th March 1954... On the 29th March 1954, I moved into the hut owned by Chung Yueng brothers, Chinese... and although living facilities were practically nil, I was glad to have a home. Later, this hut acquired an atmosphere of its own. A never-ending line of visitors, mostly native, came to hear 'the Story,' so I called the place Núr Cottage, and it was here, on the 9th August, 1954, that the Bahá'í school began.

In 1958, the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia was able to arrange for the construction in Port Vila of a substantial structure which had been prefabricated in Australia, and which enabled Bertha to continue her devoted activities at Núr School.

Following 16 years of separation and personal sacrifice for a Cause they both placed before their own love, the two sweethearts, Joe and Bertha, were parted finally when Joe passed away suddenly in Adelaide on 14 July 1969.

Sad but undaunted, Bertha returned to her school where she remained for another eight years. In December 1971, Núr School was closed at the direction of the Universal House of Justice, due to the cost of its upkeep. However, Bertha remained living at the school, which had become half her residence, half the local Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds. She left the New Hebrides islands only when the task that she had set herself—the formation of the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the New Hebrides—had been accomplished in October 1977. She was 82 years old.

In a letter from the Universal House of Justice, dated 4 August 1971, the following tribute was paid to Bertha and her school:

> There is no doubt that the Núr School has been of great service both in providing educational facilities and in contributing to the advancement of the Cause. The

story of your work with the islanders will forever be enshrined in the annals of the Faith. Praise be to God that you have been enabled to do so much.

Shortly before her return home to Adelaide, Bertha was granted the great bounty and privilege, in April 1973, of being able to accompany the Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone and his wife, Madge, on a visit to Írán and the Holy Land.

Petite in stature, very feminine, an artist of no mean talent (she studied under the famous Australian artist, William Ashton) and a lover of beauty, particularly in nature, Bertha was, at the same time, an indefatigable worker, with a courage and determination born of her positive faith and confidence in her own ability. She was afraid of no one, and, while respecting authority, those bearing that authority were under no misapprehension that the diminutive Bertha was in any way in awe of them! Quite to the contrary, her direct, fearless approach to everyone, from Mayor to Resident Commissioner to College Principal to Head of State, earned for her their respect and deep admiration.

A period of ill-health and increasing frailty on her return home from the New Hebrides culminated in a heart attack on 31 October 1986 and her eventual passing the following Friday, 6 November, at the age of 91.

Dignified and confident to the end, Bertha Dobbins was truly a great lady and a fearless servant of Bahá'u'lláh.

HELEN REISSENWEBER

TUMANUVAO WILLIAM WHITE
1918–1986

William White was born into a respected family in Savai'i, Western Samoa, in 1918. He heard the Message of Bahá'u'lláh for the first time in 1973, when Mr. Bob Biti and Mrs. April Lake visited Savai'i to teach the Faith of God in that fertile region during the happy occasion when the whole village was celebrating the Fiafia, or traditional feast, with Samoan dances and songs. William was inspired by these two strangers dancing with local people and he was told that they were preaching a new Faith.

William was shocked, and could not believe that any religion other than Christianity would ever exist. He took his wife, Manesesa, home and returned after some time to talk further with Bob and April. Their meeting went on through the night. When the sun rose, its golden rays beautified the surroundings and made everyone happy except William, who was very much upset and disturbed. His new friends tried to comfort him. He answered:

> I am happy to know about Bahá'u'lláh and His divine principles, but I am sorry it is impossible for me to become a Bahá'í because everyone will oppose me, even my wife and all my family and relatives, and if I die tomorrow, no one will even attend my funeral. But I am puzzled and wonder that if I don't accept Bahá'u'lláh, I have to reject even all other Prophets. If they are right, then He is also right; and if He is false, then all others are also false, because all of them are in the same condition and situation.

Then they read to him part of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh from *Gleanings*, and suddenly these words penetrated his heart and attracted his soul towards Bahá'u'lláh and he said that now he was ready to face all the difficulties and troubles. He became a dedicated servant of the Cause.

The next day his wife and other relatives opposed him, but he stood like a rock until his wife accepted the Faith and she began assisting him in all his efforts. William said a few days after his acceptance of the Cause of God, a Canadian pioneer named Philip Beattie came to him in Savai'i and invited him on a teaching trip. William said he didn't know anything about the Faith, so how could he teach others? Philip said that is the only reason he was invited. William



Tumanuvao William White

was deepened during this teaching trip and he could never do without teaching again. His travelling caused many prepared souls to draw to Bahá'u'lláh's Threshold. He was always grateful to Philip, and often talked about him.

William was often ill and in great pain, but even when he had a fever he never refused to go on a teaching trip. He always willingly left his house with a broad smile. One of the incidents he loved to narrate was from those days when he and Philip were walking around Savai'i with a bag of books on their backs. Here are his own words:

> It was evening time when Philip and I felt tired. We took rest under a tree in one of the school compounds. After some time, we witnessed nearly twenty youths approaching this compound along with their leader. They came and started practicing boxing. Philip and I were sitting and watching their practice. The youths gradually started warming up and came to Philip and said, 'How about boxing with us a few rounds?' Philip told them no way, he had never boxed in his life and could not do it. Then they came to me and said, 'Hey, old man, what about you?' I said, 'I am an old man. I do not want to box with you all.' But they insisted, and forced me to box with them. Then a youth came mockingly towards me and started with all his strength to knock me down and I pretended that I was unable to stand his blows. All of them laughed and Philip, who did not know that I knew boxing, was very much worried. Then they sent a second youth, this time he started very fast and acted very proudly. Then I knocked him down unconscious. They sent in their leader and he was defeated and I threw him out of the ring. Then all of them said, 'Ok, old man, you know boxing,' and they sent for their senior boxer. He came, and as soon as he looked at me, he recognized me and embraced me. Then he introduced me to these boxers and said all of them should apologise to me as I was a great champion. Then he invited us to his home and to the village. We were talking to them the whole night about this great Message. On the same night, eight people declared in this village and embraced the Faith.

Another exciting experience while teaching occurred when he was travelling all alone, riding on a motorcycle. The following are his own statements:

> It was evening, and I was riding on my motorcycle which was serving me as a queen of the roads. As soon as I reached near Falealupo, my queen stopped. The more I tried to start her, the worse she became. I kicked her and kicked her badly, but she did not care and did not start. I prayed and begged her to at least reach me to some village before dark, but she refused. Anyhow, darkness enveloped the area and I was helpless and I was so thirsty that I left my queen at the side of the bush and walked and walked in search of water. At last, I reached a *fale* (house)

and I asked them to give me some water. They welcomed me to their home and they insisted that I should spend a night with them. I told them I have to go to take care of my motorcycle, but they said do not worry, we are all here to assist you. The head of the family, Mr. Fiono, asked his son to accompany me to the spot and help me to bring the motorcycle down to their house.

As soon as we reached there again, they served me with a beautiful dinner and told me that they were waiting for me since evening. I was shocked and speechless and puzzled. Then I asked them how they knew me, and how were they expecting me. Mr. Fiono said, 'This evening, my wife saw a beautiful white owl fly over our *fale* (house) a few times and then fly away. Then I told my wife according to Samoan tradition, this means that we shall receive a respected guest and he shall bring us some good news. I told her to prepare a nice dinner.' Then I told them how sincere and true they were. The whole night I was speaking to them about the Faith and it was nearly dawn when Mr. and Mrs. Fiono and their son accepted the Faith. Later on, Mr. Fiono was elected as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Samoa.

Unfortunately, after a few years of service, this great man, Mr. Fiono, had a stroke and was completely paralyzed and motionless. He could not even talk. While he was laying on his mattress, the elders and pastors of many sects of Christianity would visit him and add to his pain by telling him that he was not saved because he was a Bahá'í, and that he should return to the Church and they would pray for him. But this man was so steadfast that he refused to listen to them, such was the result and the outcome of William's outstanding teaching work.

In addition to his teaching work, William served the Faith as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Samoa and as a member of the Auxiliary Board for Propagation. He also wrote a book called *Search for Truth* to explain the Bahá'í teachings.

Mr. William White passed away on 7 November 1986, a shining example of how to teach the Cause of God. The following telex from the Universal House of Justice, sent on 10 November, will surely bless his soul and also adorn these pages:

> SADDENED NEWS PASSING DEVOTED SERVANT BAHA'U'LLAH TUMANUVAO WILLIAM WHITE PRAYING SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL KINDLY CONVEY CONDOLENCES HIS FAMILY

A second telex, from the International Teaching Centre sent on 11 November, honoured his blessed activities and his soul:

> DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING HIGHLY DISTINGUISHED TUMANUVAO WILLIAM WHITE HE WILL BE LONG REMEMBERED FOR HIS CEASELESS ACTIVITY SPIRIT DEDICATION DEVOTED SERVICES TEACHING CONSOLIDATION UPOLU SAVAII HIS COURAGE EXEMPLARY MAINTAINING ACTIVITY DESPITE MANY YEARS ILL HEALTH PRAYING SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS HIS SOUL PLEASE CONVEY CONDOLENCE MEMBERS HIS FAMILY

William was laid to rest in Savai'i, in Papa Village near Puleia, with a most dignified funeral. Hundreds of people attended with tears rolling from their eyes. He was, up to his last breath, steadfast and firm and holding fast to the Teachings of God. He was survived by his widow, Manesesa, and sons and daughters and grandchildren.

A.K. FORUDI

APELIS MAZAKMAT
c.1920–1986

Apelis Mazakmat, the first Papua New Guinean to embrace the Bahá'í Faith, was born into the Moxomaaf or Red Parrot clan in the Nalik-speaking area of New Ireland some time in the 1920s. This clan has a

reputation in New Ireland both for being important custodians of traditional lore and for being open to new ideas; the first New Ireland convert to Christianity, for example, was a maternal relative of Apelis. Apelis lived up to this reputation, being a defender of New Ireland ways during a period of unprecedented change, while himself introducing a number of innovations from the outside world which helped make his people among the most advanced groups in the country.

Apelis was orphaned at an early age. He was adopted by his grandparents in Munawai Village, but spent much time with his father's relatives in Madina Village. He became aware of religious differences while still quite young. Although Munawai and Madina were both Methodist villages, his mother had been from Lugagon, a Catholic village between them. He began school at Lugagon, but rebelled against the Catholic missionary's strong stance against traditional ways, and returned to his grandparents at Munawai.

In 1930, he went to the first government school in New Ireland, which had just been established at Utu. Although the academic standard was still poor, it was better than the mission-run schools of the time, and he was able to progress to a teacher training institution in Rabaul on nearby New Britain. After this training, he was employed on the New Guinea mainland as one of the first indigenous government teachers. The second World War found him in the Sepik, where he was conscripted as a patrol officer by the Australian army.

After the war he was again hired by the Education Department to assist in rebuilding the government administration, and it was not until 1947 that he was able to return to New Ireland. In 1949, he started the first government school in the Nalik area in Madina. But the war had made Apelis question much that he saw was wrong in colonial society. One of the institutions which he felt was particularly oppressive was the mission. His negative feelings about the church were no doubt strengthened by the refusal of the local Catholic missionary to sanctify his marriage as a Methodist to a Catholic woman (whom he eventually did marry). He organised a meeting of community leaders from all parts of the Nalik area to convince them of the need to expel the missionaries from their region. He was able to persuade many that this should be done, but as church officials heard about this, they convinced the colonial authorities to arrest certain clan leaders who were following Apelis. It is undoubtedly no coincidence that these were later among the first to embrace the Cause.

The threat of further and more prolonged imprisonment induced the other leaders to oppose Apelis' moves, and in embarrassment he left the Nalik area with a friend by bicycle heading toward the southern part of the island.

Apelis is remembered as having been a very brash young man before he heard of the Faith. He and a friend travelled through New Ireland with no money, relying on their ingenuity to survive. When they reached the southern tip of New Ireland they went by canoe to Duke of York and then to New Britain, which is very difficult. There they worked at an agricultural research station, where Apelis learned how to grow cocoa and a number of cash crops.

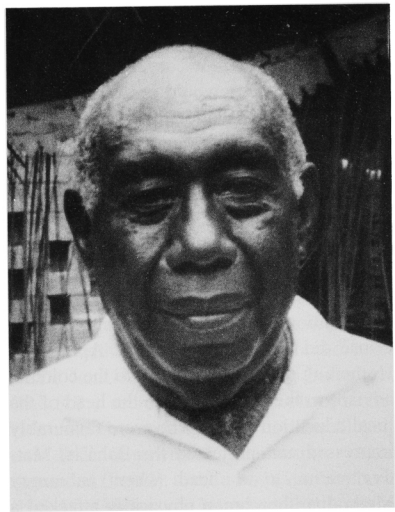
In 1951, he returned to New Ireland to put this knowledge to work. At that time expatriate planters on New Ireland would not allow New Irelanders to grow cocoa. Using seedlings which his friend sent him from the agricultural research station on New Britain, Apelis formed a cooperative in the Nalik area to introduce cocoa production to natives. This was the beginning of the now flourishing small holder cocoa plantation industry which is a major source of income for rural New Irelanders. Apelis also tried to start a native owned cocoa fermenter, but the opposition of expatriate planters and jealous clan leaders, who saw him as a threat to their power, prevented this for many years.

By this time the government was having problems dealing with a movement on Manus started by the famous cargo cult leader Paliau. Because of Apelis' lack of patience with religion and his understanding of how wealth was actually earned in a modern society, the government recruited him again for the teaching service, this time at the government school in Paliau's home village.

On Manus, he soon met Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Violet Hoehnke, who had arrived in 1954 from Australia to open the Admiralty Islands to the Faith. "Sister Vi" was a nursing sister at the hospital and had become good friends with Elliot and Dorothy Elijah, who lived near the hospital. Although they never became Bahá'ís, they did arrange a discussion about the Faith at their home for Apelis. In an interview for a national newspaper near the end of his life, Apelis said that he had been struck with the progressive nature of the Bahá'í principles and the fact that they were so harmonious with traditional New Ireland beliefs and practices.

In the colonial society of that time the free mixing of the races, which is so taken for granted in today's independent Papua New Guinea, was prohibited by custom and law. Sister Vi became notorious for inviting natives to her home and for socialising with native nurses at the beach, and so at the end of 1955 she was transferred from Manus to another island. She kept in contact with Apelis, however, and also introduced him to Rodney Hancock, a pioneer from New Zealand who had arrived in New Guinea soon after she had. When she was in Australia on leave in 1956, she received a telegram from Rodney informing him that Apelis had declared, becoming the first Papua New Guinean believer.

Apelis wrote to his childhood friend from Madina, Michael Homerang, then a teacher in the Sepik, telling him about the Faith. Homerang had to return to Madina because of illness, and at Christmas 1956 Apelis and



Apelis Mazakmat

Rodney Hancock went to Madina to teach Homerang the Faith. He soon declared. Miss Thelma Perks, then an Auxiliary Board member in Australia, went to visit Papua New Guinea. Apelis and Homerang organised a large meeting at the beach in Madina at which Thelma spoke and Rodney interpreted into Pidgin. A small group of people declared, and virtually the whole village began to discuss the merits of the Faith.

In the stratified society of the time, the fact that pioneers would stay in native homes and eat their food was a shock for both native villagers and settlers that was, as one man who later became a Bahá'í said, "as great a shock for us as when Ṭáhirih removed her veil in Írán". In fact, Apelis was even jailed for providing hospitality to Miss Perks: he had broken a colonial law prohibiting the accommodation of single white women in native villages.

Apelis used this dramatic removal of the colour bar to teach the Faith with greater intensity in Madina, so that by 1957 the first Local Spiritual Assembly could be formed. Many people declared until at one time three

quarters of Madina Village was Bahá'í. This alarmed church authorities and white teachers at the local school, who told the new believers that they would go to hell if they remained Bahá'ís and followed a "false prophet" and a "foreign religion". This caused many to return to the church, and feelings against the Bahá'ís became quite strong.

By 1957, Apelis had helped establish, and had been made chairman, of the first local government council in the area, and he used this position to ensure that opposition to the Cause did not get out of hand. Apelis and Homerang gave Bahá'í books to the colonial advisor to the council and to the head of the local education office, who were favourably impressed and protected the Bahá'ís. Matters came to a head when an angry Methodist churchman physically attacked a new Bahá'í who would not recant. The Bahá'í took the man to the government authorities, who jailed the attacker. When churchmen realised that the colonial government would protect Bahá'ís, opposition became muted. The Faith began to spread to other villages, but it never took hold in Munawai, Apelis' home village.

Although Apelis introduced many new ideas into Nalik society, once these ideas took root and were accepted by others, he left the day-to-day running of new projects to others. This pattern was reinforced in Apelis' relationship to the Faith by the fact that because no other person in his home village became Bahá'í, his opportunities for active involvement in Bahá'í administration were limited. Nevertheless, he was well known for being a firm Bahá'í, and he never hesitated to teach the Faith when the opportunity arose. He always spoke about the Faith with great joy and enthusiasm and was happy to be interviewed by the national media about his role in the early history of the Faith.

Much of his teaching was by way of example. Even today the non-Bahá'ís in his home village attribute his fine character to the influence of the Faith, citing his earlier escapades as proof of the power of the Faith to change behaviour. He is especially remembered for the fact that he was never cross. If he were verbally or even physically attacked, he would inevitably reply with such kindness that his opponent would be publicly shamed. This quality was reflected in his family; in a society where physical abuse of women is common, he was noteworthy for the respect which he showed his wife.

Apelis is also remembered for his way with words. Unlike many other modern Nalik leaders, he was very careful not to corrupt his public speeches in Nalik with English or Pidgin phrases. Although he was not a clan orator, he was perhaps the most accomplished Nalik poet and composer of his time, and many of the songs he composed are still sung at public gatherings. A common theme in these songs is the need for unity and cooperative work. He was a skilled storyteller; if people heard he was coming to a village, they would gather to hear his renderings of traditional stories or discussions of future plans for development.

These plans took up much of his time in the 1970s and early 1980s, long before "social and economic development" became a common phrase in the Bahá'í community at large. In the 1970s, Apelis left the local government council and started a timber company for local landowners from the Nalik area. As chairman of its board, he formed a partnership with a Japanese company, making his area one of the first in the country to reap the economic benefits of Japanese investment. He also introduced the first tractor to his village for use by an agricultural cooperative, and a World Health Organization primary health project, the first in the province. When he died on 25 November 1986, he had been trying to generate support for a hydroelectric scheme that would supply electricity and running water to the northern Nalik-speaking villages.

Apelis' wife had died shortly before he did. They had not had any children, and he

was survived only by a nephew whom he and his wife had raised. Although this nephew did not become a Bahá'í, both he and Munawai villagers in general are aware of and proud of the role Apelis played in the Bahá'í community.

Apelis' life spanned a time of tremendous change in Papua New Guinean society. Born at the beginning of the Australian colonial period, with its many restrictions, he lived through a devastating world war and the rapid changes which culminated in national independence in 1975 and the challenges of adjustment in the postcolonial period. Apelis' independent spirit, his desire to initiate change rather than react to it, his thirst for new knowledge, and his steadfast and often lonely loyalty to the Faith will remain an example for many generations to come.

CRAIG VOLKER

JULIÁNA TROJÁNKOVÁ-BENDOVÁ
1898–1986

Juliána Bendová, née Trojánková, was born on 19 November 1898 in Czechoslovakia. She first came in contact with the Bahá'í Faith in 1925 in the Carolinum, Prague, when she was called upon to translate a talk on the Faith which was being given by Martha Root. There had been some difficulties with making a translation from English so Martha spoke in Esperanto, which Juliána understood. Juliána wrote "It was my first public appearance and I felt very insecure. I asked myself whether I would be able to translate correctly, but then as Martha Root, in her fine and balanced way and with her mild friendly and loving smile began to speak with me, I realized that I understood her Esperanto very well... Martha Root spoke about the Bahá'í Faith with much love, devotion, and clarity, winning our hearts and becoming my teacher."

The Bahá'í Faith was not unknown in Prague at that time. As early as 1852, a newspaper article about the Báb had appeared. In 1912, Milos Svatopluk Wurm organized a Bahá'í book exhibition in Prague, gave public talks and wrote a book entitled *Mírové hnutí na vychodę* (*Peace Movement in the East*) which was published before the first World War.

In 1926, the year after Juliána encountered the Faith, she became very ill and was thus prevented from taking part in the activities of the community for a long time. It was a difficult period of her life, during which she realized the importance of spirituality.

In the following years, Juliána came into contact with many friends from abroad, such as: Dr. Jan Ude (Austria); Valentin Bulgakow (U.S.S.R., secretary to Leo Tolstoy), Dr. Hermann Grossmann, Dr. A. Mühlschlegel, and Erik Blumenthal (Germany); 'Azíz Samandarí (Persia); and Ludmila van Sombeek (U.S.A.). Above all, however, there was a very warm relationship between Juliána and the Austrian Bahá'í community. She visited the friends in Vienna in 1968 and took part in the Austrian Bahá'í summer school that year. She loved very much to hear the friends chant prayers in the original language, even though she herself did not understand either Persian or Arabic.

A foreign language correspondent by profession, Juliána translated many of the Writings herself and was a motivating force in ensuring the publication of several Bahá'í books. Her translations into Czech included *Words of Wisdom* (Slova moudrosti); *What is the Bahá'í Faith?* (Co jest náboženství Bahá'í?); *The Divine Art of Living* (Boské umení žíti); *The Book of Certitude* (Kniha jistoty); and various articles, including "The Return of Christ" (Kristus a Jeho opętny príchod). She also translated many of the Bahá'í Writings into Esperanto, some of which appeared in issues of the *Bahá'í News* published between 1940 and 1950. Juliána worked daily on translating the Writings right up into her last years.

She was deeply interested in the history of the Slavs and sought to clarify a common misperception of them as having been



Juliána Trojánková-Bendová

warlike while, she would point out, ethnology showed them to have been farming peoples. She liked also to speak of those great personalities of Czech history who had worked for peace, such as King George Podiebrad (Jiŗí z Podébrad) who, in the fifteenth century, suggested to the leaders of his time the convening of a peace conference, or Jan Ámos Komensky (J.A. Comenius) who wrote *Via Lucis* (published in 1668 in Amsterdam) in which he showed four ways to eliminate the danger of war and ignorance: the publication of universal books from which recognition of God would come forth; access to schools for all; the establishment of an assembly of philosophers; and the creation of a universal language to facilitate communication—all of which are in the spirit of Bahá'í teachings.

Juliána did not lead an easy life; she endured very severe tests but was never heard to complain of them, nor did she like friends to remind her of them. Since her youth, peace was her heart's desire. Knowing that the Peace Message of the Universal House of Justice was sent to the leaders of the world and, through the United Nations, to her own Government, gave her immense comfort and happiness.

In her memoirs, Juliána wrote "I write these sentences with heartfelt gratitude, a sense of solidarity, and a lasting remembrance of our very precious Martha Root, whose love for us beginners as we came to know the Bahá'í Faith was unfailing." Among her last words before she died were "Íqán", "'Abdu'l-Bahá", and "Bahá'u'lláh". Juliána Trojánková-Bendová died on 29 November 1986 in Prague.

Informed of the passing of her beloved soul into the Abha Kingdom, the Universal House of Justice cabled the following:

> GRIEVED PASSING STALWART DEVOTED MAID-SERVANT BAHA'U'LLAH JULIANA BENDOVA. FUTURE GENERATIONS CZECH BAHA'IS WILL REJOICE HER MEMORY BE INSPIRED BY HER HEROIC TENACITY UPHOLDING LIGHT CAUSE GOD. URGE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL SERVICE VIENNA. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER RADIANT SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Based on an article by JULIÁNA BENDOVÁ, (translated title: "How I became acquainted with the Bahá'í Teachings")

ISABELLE STEBBINS DODGE
1910–1987

Isabelle Stebbins was born 21 June 1910 in Urbana, Illinois, United States of America, to Joel and May P. Stebbins. Her father was a professor of astronomy at the University of Illinois, and her mother was a librarian. As a child Isabelle enjoyed reading and travelling, and she was an excellent student. In 1919 Isabelle's mother heard about the Bahá'í Faith from Albert Vail, a Bahá'í and a minister in the Unitarian Church in Urbana. Shortly thereafter, Isabelle learned about the Faith from her mother.

When Isabelle was 15 years old, she had the bounty of making a pilgrimage with her mother. En route to Haifa in the winter of

1925–1926, Isabelle and her mother stayed in Paris, where she met many distinguished Bahá'ís. On 9 March 1926 Isabelle and her mother arrived in Haifa where they spent a month. There she and her mother commonly had the noonday meal with Shoghi Effendi. They came to know Bahíyyih Khánum, Munírih Khánum, and other members of the Holy Family. Isabelle was quiet and attentive, and her thoughtful demeanor was remarked upon by several who were in Haifa at the time. Before Isabelle departed from Haifa, Munírih Khánum gave her the book *Memorials of the Faithful* in which she wrote the following in Persian:

> Oh God! Nourish this fresh plant newly grown in the garden of Thy love with the water of eternal life and protect it from the autumnal winds. Thou art the Powerful and Thou art the Wise.
>
> —Munírih

Isabelle attended Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, and then taught school in New York and St. Louis in 1931 and 1932. She received a master's degree in history in 1933 from the University of Wisconsin.

On 15 June 1935, Isabelle was married to Theodore Dodge in Madison, Wisconsin, by Albert Vail—the same man who had introduced Isabelle's mother to the Faith. They were both 24 years old and had known each other since high school. Ted had just completed his requirements for a Ph.D. in geology from Harvard University and was about to embark on his first assignment in Peru.

On 1 August 1935 Isabelle and Ted settled in their first home at 14,300 feet in the Andes mountains of Peru. Ted was a geologist for a mining company in Morococha, Junín. Isabelle found herself to be the only Bahá'í in Peru. Yet she was determined to be a Bahá'í teacher in that remote land. She received Bahá'í books and teaching materials via the Amazon River from Leonora Holsapple who lived in Brazil, and she met the well-known Nellie French on a cruise stop in Lima, Peru. Isabelle organized Bahá'í meetings and distributed literature to those who were interested. When possible she arranged for teaching meetings in Lima.

Isabelle and Ted lived in Morococha for three years, then returned to the United States in 1938 living in Pasadena, California, for two years, and Las Cruces, New Mexico, for one year. They lived in Cananea, Sonora, Mexico, from 1942 to 1945, and once again Isabelle found herself the only Bahá'í in the area. It was because of her presence in Cananea that Shoghi Effendi placed a lone star on his map of northern Mexico to indicate a Bahá'í center. Soon Ted's mining work took them to the deserts of Arizona.

The Message of Bahá'u'lláh had first been taken to Tucson by Loulie Mathews, who had held a Bahá'í public meeting during her stay in Tucson in the early 1940s. In August 1945, when Isabelle, Ted, and their family moved to Tucson, there were already two Bahá'ís residing there, Frances Lewis and Elizabeth Ashden. On 21 April 1948, the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Tucson was formed.

Ted and Isabelle lived in Tucson from 1945 to 1971, and during that time Isabelle served on the Local Spiritual Assembly for 25 consecutive years. In 1957 her husband, Ted, became a Bahá'í. In 1971, Ted began to work at Christmas, Arizona, and Isabelle resigned from the Tucson Assembly. At the next Feast, the Tucson Bahá'í community presented Isabelle with 25 red roses in a short ceremony to express its appreciation for her long and continued years of dedicated service.

Ted and Isabelle continued to travel widely. Isabelle attended the World Congress in London in 1963, and they both attended the La Paz Conference in Bolivia in 1970. They attended Bahá'í summer school in Lima, Peru, and travelled to Europe. In 1977 Isabelle had the bounty of making a second pilgrimage to Haifa, this time with her husband. This second time she was in the



Isabelle Stebbins Dodge

precincts of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, and she could reflect on the Bahá'í history that she had witnessed.

Ted and Isabelle retired to Tucson in 1975, and Isabelle continued to serve the community on different committees. Her warmth and wisdom were highly appreciated by the community; few in southern Arizona have been held in such high regard. A story is told about a tourist visiting an Indian Reservation in Arizona. The tourist was intrigued with the great respect paid to an elder Indian by the community and asked, "How does one get such respect and consideration?" The old man replied "You earn it." So it was with Isabelle. She had earned the love and admiration of the community.

Isabelle appeared to be in good health during her retirement years but in 1986 it became known that she was suffering from cancer. Soon she became intensely ill, and she died 1 January 1987 in Tucson. Her four children—Janet, Tom, Eleanor and Richard—continue her legacy of service to the Faith.

STEPHEN POWERS

GOL AIDUN
1930–1987

DEEPLY GRIEVED UNTIMELY PASSING DEAR WIFE GOL WHILE TRAVELING IN INDIA. HER KINDLY SPIRIT, GREAT ZEAL IN TEACHING INCLUDING MANY JOURNEYS BEHALF BELOVED FAITH, HER HISTORICAL RESEARCH ON PERSONS AND TOPICS OF CAUSE MAKE HER LOSS IRREPARABLE. EXTEND HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES ALL MEMBERS FAMILY. ASSURE FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER ILLUMINED SOUL WORLDS GOD.

Universal House of Justice
28 January 1987

Gol Yagánigí (Yaganegi) was born 12 March 1930 in Poona, India, the third of seven children of Isfandíyár and Keshwar Yagánigí. Her parents, after years of hardship and investigation, became Bahá'ís after Gol was born. When she was about three years old and again at eight years of age Gol met the Hand of the Cause of God Martha Root, who recognized her potential and encouraged her to teach the Faith and serve humanity. Miss Root presented Gol with a photograph on the back of which was written the inscription:

> Alláh'u'Abhá. If one speck of a jewel be hid in a stone and that stone be beyond the Seven Seas, until I have sought and found that jewel, my hand from its search will not stay. –Bahá'u'lláh. To beloved Gol Yaganegi, With tenderest Bahá'í love and fervent prayer that you will become a great Bahá'í teacher. In His Covenant, Martha L. Root at the Bahá'í School, Poona, India, February 7, 1938.

Gol treasured this gift all her life.

In the early 1940s, Mr. and Mrs. Isfandíyár Yagánigí and their children became the first pioneers to Panchgani, which today is the site of the New Era School and the Bahá'í Academy. Gol attended the Catholic Convent School in Panchgani as a day scholar and later as a boarder. The nuns impressed

her very much and taught her firmness, determination, perseverence, and self-sacrifice, qualities which became an integral part of her dynamic personality.

Gol's firmness in the Covenant was unshakeable. She deeply believed in the unity of mankind, her role model being Miss Martha Root. When Gol was 14 years old, she accompanied Dr. Khodadad and Mrs. Shirin Fozdar on her first teaching trip, a journey by train to the southern part of India. As a youth she served on a number of national and local committees and later on the Local Assembly of Pune. After receiving her bachelor's degree from Pune University, she married Jamshid Aidun in 1953 and moved to Karachi, Pakistan, where Jamshid was studying medicine.

In 1955, Gol arose to a call for pioneers to help form a new Local Spiritual Assembly in Navab Shah, Pakistan. Reassuring her husband, Jamshid, who was studying medicine in Karachi, that she would return as soon as there were other Bahá'ís in Navab Shah to take her place, Gol left Karachi in March 1955 with her one-year-old daughter, Laila. After almost two years Gol was able to fulfill her promise and the family was reunited.

In 1957 their second daughter, Seema, was born, and Gol, with her two daughters, joined Jamshid in the United States where a few months earlier he had begun his postgraduate studies in surgery. Gol and Jamshid served on the first Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Syracuse, New York.

After meeting some Canadian Bahá'ís in Niagara Falls on the occasion of the Anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit there, Gol and her family were asked by the Canadian Teaching Committee if they would consider pioneering to the province of Manitoba, which they did in July of 1963. At the time the newest member of the family, a son, Vaḥíd, was only a few months old. As a member of the Winnipeg Local Spiritual Assembly, which had the goal of opening up to the Faith Brandon, the province's second largest city, Gol once again volunteered to pioneer with her family. In 1965 the family moved to Brandon, and in 1970 the first Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís was formed there.

Gol was very outgoing and friendly, and had a keen interest in everyone and everything. Her home was always filled with friends from all walks of life. Of all her passions, Gol's first love was travelling to teach, and in the early 1970's, when the youngest of her three children was still in school, Gol started travelling to different parts of the world for three to five months each year in response to the needs of the Plans. These trips took her to all the provinces of Canada and to over 100 countries and islands. She was at home with dignitaries as well as with village people, never regarding herself as better than anyone. Instead, she felt that she was learning something from each individual that she met.

When the call came from the House of Justice for women to take on a more active role in the activities of the Faith, Gol immediately arose and concentrated on reaching out to the women in the villages that she visited. She also loved children and youth, and they returned this love. Age was never a barrier with Gol who was eternally young at heart.

Gol loved jokes, and had a keen sense of humour which was very contagious. Her best jokes were about herself and her difficulty remembering people's names. It is difficult to think of Gol without recalling some incident that brings a smile or a laugh.

At home Gol was a loyal, devoted, and loving companion to her husband, Jamshid, and they complemented each other in character, creating a bond of love and unity. As a mother Gol was firm, but supportive and encouraging, all her actions being tempered with an abundance of unconditional love. She instilled her beliefs in her children and raised them to be servants of mankind, for by serving others they would be serving God.

While at home, she also worked hard for various peace groups and organizations. She



Gol Aidun

was active with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), helping to form the first UNICEF committee for Brandon; she served as local president of the United Nations Organization; and she was a member of Project Ploughshares, International Women Together, and the West-Man Multicultural Centre, to name a few. She often wore a dove broach as it was a symbol of peace.

Her teaching activities in Canada focused on Native Americans, among whom she developed many close friendships. She would often visit these friends on their reserves, showing slides of her travels, encouraging them to honour their native arts and culture, and always eager to learn more about their beliefs. Noting an interest on one reserve for the art of ceramics, Gol enlisted the help of two Bahá'í ceramic teachers, and with government grants, saw that classes were started on the reserve for the native women. At Brandon University Gol was involved with the native programmes, taking native studies courses and often inviting the native students she had befriended to her home. She attended many Pow Wows, often expressing her respect for the great dignity and majesty of the native people at these colourful, spiritual gatherings.

Gol had an interest in everything. She was a researcher, an artist, and a concerned citizen in the areas of environment, health, gardening, birds and animals. Her formal education did not end when she married and had children. Her university degree from India was not recognized in Canada, so she gradually picked up courses while her children were in school and proudly graduated from Brandon University in 1975, along with her eldest child, with a bachelor of arts degree in religion. Having developed close ties with the professors in the religion department, Gol was able to encourage them to offer the Bahá'í Faith as a credit course (Zoroastrianism, Islam and Bahá'í) at the University.

With the inception in 1974 of the Association for Bahá'í Studies, in which Gol and Jamshid immediately became life members, her scholarly focus shifted somewhat from university courses, which she still took, to the writing of historical papers on the Faith. She presented four studies at the annual Association meetings, including papers on Manekji Limji Hataria, Pritam Singh, Mishkín-Qalam, and Marion Jack. Asked to represent the Bahá'ís at the World Congress of Religions held in Sydney, Australia in August 1985, Gol presented a paper and slides on Mishkín-Qalam and his calligraphy. These presentations were always lively and filled with love, stories and laughter, belying the hours of grueling research she would put into each paper. Gol also studied the Bahá'í Writings with a passion, often leaving mounds of books all over which were filled with slips of papers and notes marking references on numerous topics.

Gol possessed the heart and soul of a true artist. Whether splashing vivid colours on a canvas, painstakingly highlighting Mishkín-Qalam-styled calligraphy on ceramic vases, or photographing prairie crocuses with the dawn dew glistening on them, her talent was natural and inspired by the Writings.

The importance of agriculture grew in Gol's conscience as she lived in the midst of Canada's vast farmlands, and she would return from her travels each spring in time to plant and toil in "the good earth" of her vast garden. Meeting Sir Richard St. Barbe Baker instilled an even greater enthusiasm for nature in Gol, and she initiated a city-wide tree planting campaign in Brandon amongst all the schools during a youth year celebration.

In all her endeavours Gol was guided by constant prayer and meditation, and a total reliance on God. Asked if she was concerned for her safety she would always reply that she was not afraid of death and that she knew that God would somehow guide and protect her. Her gift of intuition was exceptional and she often had dreams which seemed to guide her.

It seems that Gol's last teaching trip was to India, where she had begun her first. This journey was an especially joyous one for Gol as she attended the dedication of the Mother Temple of the Indian Subcontinent, in New Delhi, her homeland, along with Jamshid, her three children, son-in-law, and two of her grandchildren. Following the dedication Gol had a family reunion in Pune with her mother and six brothers and sisters, who had come together now for the first time after 32 years.

After her husband and family returned to Canada, Gol stayed on to teach. In the last days before her passing, she was completely preoccupied with teaching in the villages and towns around Pune and Panchgani, keeping a schedule which those around her found exhausting. Then, tragically, while travelling from Pune to New Delhi, where she was to serve as a guide at the newly dedicated Temple, Gol fell from the train and met her untimely death during the early hours of 23 January 1987.

In the months that followed, teaching plans dedicated to Gol's memory sprang up around the world, many donations were made to various organizations, and numerous articles appeared about her passing in various newsletters. The West-Man Multicultural Centre in Brandon established the Gol Aidun Scholarship Fund, "to be given to outstanding achievements in the area of native art, promotion of multiculturalism and increasing awareness of peace", a most fitting remembrance to one who was described in Brandon as a "cultural champion". Later, in May 1987, at the Premier's Volunteer Service Awards for the province of Manitoba, Canada, Jamshid accepted a special posthumous award to Gol for "the outstanding volunteer in the area of Cultural-Native development".

Gol was laid to rest in the Bahá'í cemetery in Pune, India, the city of her birth. The night before her passing Gol dreamt that her son, Vaḥíd, and her grandson Jamál were very distressed because their favourite bird had flown away. Disturbed as to the significance of this dream she phoned Jamshid in Canada to inquire about everyone's health. Reassured that all were well, she boarded her train.

Our favourite bird has been set free and taken flight to the glorious realms of the Abhá Kingdom.

LAILA AIDUN EIRIKSSON

JUANITA MARIE STORCH
1895–1987

Juanita Marie Storch was born in the San Francisco/Oakland Bay area of California on 23 May 1895 to a German mother, Johanna M. Storch (née Thee), and an Austrian father who was born in Mexico, Hugo W. Storch. She was especially blessed at an early age to hear about and embrace the Bahá'í Message, and to be accorded the bounty of meeting 'Abdu'l-Bahá during his memorable visit to the West Coast of North America.

Fragile in appearance and gentle in manner, she lived, during her teenage years, in Fruitvale, California. The Faith had been established in San Francisco, across the bay, by such pioneers as Helen Goodall and her

daughter, Ella G. Cooper. Travel between San Francisco and Oakland by the friends was frequent. Her parents began going to Bahá'í gatherings in 1911 at the home of Mrs. Goodall, where Lua Getsinger and Thornton Chase would speak from time to time.

In 1912, the Bahá'ís began to anticipate the coming of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to California. Juanita wrote of this in her diary, and in letters to friends who often came to see her, in particular to ask for her remembrances of that historic occasion. In one such recollection she wrote:

> When 'Abdu'l-Bahá came to the Bay region in October 1912, the first time I saw Him was Thursday afternoon, Oct 3, 1912, at Mrs. Helen Goodall's home on Jackson St., Oakland.
>
> The Friends had been looking forward to this visit for several months. The ones who had been to the Convention in Chicago told us about Him. Visiting Friends also gave reports. Mrs. Goodall arranged a showing of the moving pictures taken in Connecticut, in her large attic room.
>
> Then we heard that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was very tired and would not journey to California. At that time with my parents I was a member of the "Fruitvale Assembly of 'Abdu'l-Bahá". We wrote Him a letter and He replied with a Tablet to the Fruitvale Assembly and ever since the phrase 'Firmness in the Covenant' has remained in my memory.
>
> Being seventeen at the time and living in a two-storey redwood house at the top of Lynde Street hill, we were two blocks from the Matteson's home, where most of our Bahá'í meetings and Feasts were held excepting when we went to Mrs. Goodall's house. Not many people had automobiles in those days. It was so easy to walk the two blocks to Matteson's on Sunset Street. To go to Mrs. Goodall's we walked down Lynde Street hill to where the end of the line of a street car at East 27th Street and Fruitvale Ave. came and stopped awhile. For five cents we rode on it to Jackson Street. At Mrs. Goodall's, my mother and father heard Thornton Chase speak at their first Bahá'í meeting. Some time later, dear Thornton Chase came to the Fruitvale Assembly as did Lua Getsinger and other early teachers and travelers so we were very blessed.
>
> Naturally the Friends wished they could go to the train to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but Mrs. Goodall and Mrs. Cooper advised against it so we had to wait until we heard that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had arrived the evening before and would be at Mrs. Goodall's in the afternoon to meet us all.
>
> The rooms were filled and I had to sit on the floor with a few other young folks. From there I could see out of the drawing room across the hall, to the stairway where 'Abdu'l-Bahá came down. First we heard His voice, then He came down with four Persians and Mrs. Getsinger, light from the colored glass window on His head and shoulders.
>
> When He appeared in the doorway we all arose and He said 'Allah'u'Abhá' several times. We answered and He walked to His seat and with a motion of His hand He bade us be seated. Somehow it all seemed so natural and as if we had always seen Him.
>
> My father had enrolled me at the California School of Arts and Crafts in Berkeley and I was hoping to study...to help him in the future as he was a talented designer who had studied architecture, but it was not to be. My studies did make me observe people, and I could not help but notice all the details of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's build and the beautiful way He used His hands. He never pointed at us. He used His hands more like a cup, offering us His bounty. At the end of His talk He arose and quickly walked through the pressing group of friends, taking some hands as He went. He took my hand as He was passing and looked into my eyes. It

was only a second but it seemed ten minutes. He still had my hand as He passed, and soon He was through the crowd, His voice vibrating through the room as He spoke... He kissed the babies and went out.

Many of the friends were exhilarated and all were talking to each other, so to escape the confusion I went into the hall where it was quiet and peeked into the dining room as a few voices were coming from there. What a picture I saw! There was 'Abdu'l-Bahá sitting in a big easy chair by the window. Little children were sitting on His lap and at His feet. He spoke to the children in English.

Mrs. Cooper told me once that her mother begged her father not to have the vines trimmed that hung over the outside of the window. So now it made a beautiful diffused light as a backdrop for this scene.

There was only one time I was able to attend a public meeting and that was at the First Congregational Church in Oakland. Other times were at Mrs. Goodall's on the long day of Oct 12th and twice at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's house in San Francisco. To get there we had to walk down Lynde Street hill and get the street car going down Fruitvale Ave. to the train station at Fruitvale Station then ride the train to the ferry to cross the bay and then at the Ferry Building take another street car to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's house. This was supposed to be too much for a seventeen year old school girl at night. The first time I was at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's house was with my parents. My father wanted to ask Him questions about the promised temple and the future of temples, etc. People always wanted to ask 'Abdu'l-Bahá questions. The halls were always full of people waiting for interviews.

As we walked down the hall to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's room upstairs, He came to the door and took my hand and said these words: 'In Persia it is not the custom to kiss the young ladies. You are My daughter, I am very fond of thee. Rest assured in Me.'



Juanita Marie Storch

In later years in time of trials those words came unbidden to me '–Rest assured in Me.'

Once my father went alone to see 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He embraced my father and said in the future to pattern his life on the stars.

As most of my memories are so personal and not of historical data, I shall tell of two other episodes that left an imprint on the seventeen year old. One was being up in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's room at Mrs. Goodall's. Everyone wanted that opportunity—to have an interview with 'Abdu'l-Bahá and I had no such wish. In fact I did not know what I would ask. Mirza Mahmood who was always around and talking to us all, insisted I go. He arranged it and beckoned me to come up the stairs. Mrs. Getsinger was standing at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's doorway. Dr. Fareed was inside and had taken Katheryn Holsti's hand and taken her with me. She had an eye affliction. Her father was bedridden and my

father visited him and helped him become a Bahá'í. I pushed Katheryn ahead of me as 'Abdu'l-Bahá came to His doorway and said in a low voice, "This is my sister". So 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a discourse on being sisters. Then all of a sudden I could not see Him. There was just a brilliant warm light. I was not afraid. It was something I could not write about or tell for some time afterwards. Later, downstairs, Katheryn said she was disappointed. She expected a miracle for her eyes. I was the one who experienced the miracle!

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave an afternoon farewell talk at His home in San Francisco I spoke of the spiritual fragrance like musk and the last atmosphere of His talk was so beautiful and touching, He walked by all of us and taking hands usually the way He did, but not as He came to me; He did not look at me and walked right by me. As He turned to look at all of us, as He stood at the bottom of the outside stairs, He looked just like that photograph of Him taken in Paris—very serious and penetrating. Usually He looked like the smiling photo of Him(self) in Chicago.

For some time I felt, maybe I had done something to displease Him and then the inner happiness came—He did not say goodbye to me!

In 1915, the family moved to Rincon Valley, near Santa Rosa, 60 miles north of Oakland. There, too, their home was outside the bustle of city noise and traffic, where Juanita daily fed wild deer and birds from her hands. She lived in this valley from 1915 until it became necessary for her to move into a convalescent home, in Santa Rosa, just before her passing.

Juanita was elected to the Santa Rosa Spiritual Assembly year after year, serving on committees and attending the many meetings at the Geyserville home of John and Louise Bosch 30 miles north of Rincon Valley. The Bosch home and acreage, nestled between two mountain ranges, was eventually deeded to the National Spiritual Assembly to become known around the Bahá'í world as the Geyserville Bahá'í School. Among the notable traditional gatherings she particularly loved to attend at the School was the annual Unity Feast. She also helped arrange and attended many summer outings of the Bahá'ís of San Francisco, Oakland, and other communities at Griffith's Grove, a wooded area not far from Geyserville, owned by a Bahá'í.

Educated at the California School of Arts and Crafts, she was known locally as a fine painter. The Sonoma County Museum in Santa Rosa held an exhibit of her paintings posthumously in 1990. Her passing was memorialized by Gaye LeBaron, a columnist for the major Santa Rosa newspaper, extolling her 70 years' work with the Camp Fire Girls organization from her 21st birthday until the frailty of age intervened.

She was married on 28 April 1920 in New York City to Ahmad Sohrab, whom she met as a result of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Oakland. She lost her United States citizenship thereby because in those times U.S. statutes decreed that an American must give up U.S. citizenship to marry a foreigner. She gave birth to a daughter, Laila, who eventually settled in the Seattle, Washington, community. However, her marriage lasted less than two years, and many years' efforts to regain U.S. citizenship were finally rewarded in the 1940s, when she reclaimed her maiden name.

A dear friend reminiscing about Juanita's later years said of her: "She always disliked our celebrating her birthday because it was a Bahá'í Holy Day and she didn't want to distract from the usual festivities that day... She was a source of inspiration, knowledge, and comfort to the Friends, a shining example to (everyone)."

She died 26 January 1987 and was buried in Santa Rosa Memorial Park near her father.

Juanita wrote many poems during her life. This is but one of them:

O Day of Love!

O Day of Love! I sit and dream of thee! A day apart from other days, yet in thee do I find them all; For thou art all eternity!

O Day Divine! Thou art the universe! Into the heights of thy starry dome, and deep beneath the depths of thy tossing foam do I feel my soul immerse!

O Dazzling Day! Like unto the sun thou art! But lest thy brilliance blind mine eyes, I find a misty smoke of incense rise; The peace-veil from thy heart!

O Beauteous Day! Thou art an angel form! Pure, happy and perfect, abideth thou, in the garden of delight; To forever and ever and ever roam!

O Day of Love! Thou art a prayer! I hear thee issue from the sacred chambers of Baha, as music sweetly chanted; Ah, my life is there!

WALDO T. BOYD

LOUISE CASWELL
1896–1987

SADDENED NEWS PASSING RADIANT WARM-HEARTED SELF-EFFACING SERVANT CAUSE LOUISE CASWELL FOLLOWING LONG ILLNESS. RECALL WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS HER DEDICATED PIONEERING SERVICES SPANNING FIFTY YEARS. AMONG FIRST TO ARISE IN 1939 FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT GUARDIAN FIRST SEVEN YEAR PLAN INTRODUCE FAITH PANAMA. SHE CONTINUED HER DEVOTED ENDEAVOURS THROUGHOUT STAGES UNFOLDMENT CAUSE LATIN AMERICA DURING SUCCESSIVE TEACHING PLANS INCLUDED TEACHING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES GUATEMALA TEN YEAR CRUSADE AND CONCLUDED LIFELONG SERVICE TEACHING BELOVED CAUSE YUCATAN PENINSULA MEXICO. OFFERING PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Universal House of Justice
19 March 1987

Louise Caswell, long-time pioneer to Central America, died at her post in the Yucatán, Mexico, at the age of 91. She was buried at sunset, her favourite time of day, in the Bahá'í section of the public cemetery in Mérida after a funeral service attended by friends from the town and nearby villages where she had taught the Faith.

Louise was born on 18 March 1896 into an affluent family in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A. Her parents were progressive and involved in the community. Her father once said, "What the world needs is a world religion", and no doubt such sentiments influenced her when she met the Bahá'ís of Portland.

Louise enrolled in the Faith in 1927, and was blessed with having outstanding Bahá'í teachers including Helen Pilkington, Mr. and Mrs. George Latimer, Ella Cooper, John and Louise Bosch, Keith Ransom-Kehler, Leroy Ioas, and Martha Root, after whom she patterned her own teaching methods.

In 1936, when the Guardian cabled the National Convention with a call for pioneers to go to Latin America, Louise volunteered to go to Mexico. As circumstances would have it, she did not leave the United States that year, but went instead to Knoxville, Tennessee, as a homefront pioneer.

In 1939, after helping to form the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Knoxville, Louise felt that her time had come to pioneer overseas, and in October she arrived in Panama. Together with Cora Oliver, who arrived a few days later, she helped establish the Faith in that country to which the Guardian had given so much attention in *The Advent of Divine Justice.*

Louise remained in Panama for 10 years, helping to form the first Local Spiritual Assembly in that country in 1945. She also was the teacher of the first Indian believer in Panama. She did not limit her activities to that country, however, but travelled to many of the neighbouring countries and islands, and in 1951 she was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of Central America, Mexico and the Antilles.



Louise Caswell

In response to the great teaching needs throughout Central America, she left her post in Panama and, after spending nearly a year each in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Honduras, settled in 1953 in Guatemala where she spent the next 22 years. The National Spiritual Assembly of Guatemala was formed in 1961, and she served as its secretary for many years.

In 1975, Louise left Guatemala for Mexico to join her long-time friends Artemus and Dora Lamb, Valeria Lamb Nichols, and Edna Ford. In Mérida, Yucatán, she continued to teach the Faith, not only with words, but with her presence, with her life. People remarked on her exquisite personality and the great love she communicated. Friends enjoyed her good humor and the artless grace with which she sometimes unexpectedly expressed herself. Many stories of her services to the Faith were recorded in *Divine Springtime*, a book by Daniel Wegener about the development of the Faith in Central America which was published in 1977.

During the last 13 years of her life, many of which she spent bedridden, Louise lived with Teresa MacGregor, a Bahá'í whom she had met in El Salvador in 1974. A little more than a year before her death, Teresa remembers being in the kitchen making a dessert for the commemoration of the Birth of the Báb when she suddenly heard a loud thud from Louise's room. When she ran to see what had happened, she found Louise on the floor, smiling brightly. She widened her big expressive blue eyes and with contagious joyfulness, exclaimed: "'Abdu'l-Bahá came to see me and He told me He's going to take me with Him, and so I wanted to come running to tell you about it."

Teresa cared for "Doña Luisita" until that dedicated servant passed away on 2 February 1987, at the age of 91.

Adapted from an article in The American Bahá'í, April 1987, and from a memoir by TERESA MACGREGOR

ELEANOR HOLLIBAUGH
1897–1987

On 15 February 1987, two days before her 90th birthday, Eleanor Hollibaugh, longtime pioneer, passed away in Montreux, Switzerland. She was laid to rest in Glion, near her beloved fellow pioneer Dagmar Dole who had laid down her burden so many years before in that village above Lake Geneva.

On hearing the news of her passing, the Universal House of Justice sent the following message on 18 February:

> PASSING GRACIOUS NOBLE ELEANOR HOLLIBAUGH WHOSE PATIENT WISE STEADFAST EXEMPLARY SERVICE AS PIONEER LATIN AMERICA AND EUROPE SPANNED ALMOST HALF A CENTURY DEPRIVES BAHÁ'Í WORLD OF MODEL OF TIRELESS UNFLINCHING DEVOTION. HER EXAMPLE WORTHY EMULATION PIONEERS EVERYWHERE AND NOTABLY EUROPE WHERE RISING GENERATIONS MUST ZEALOUSLY SAFEGUARD SEEDS SHE AND CO-WORKERS PLANTED AND ENSURE BOUNTIFUL HARVEST.

She was born Eleanor Smith on 17 February 1897 in Hastings, Nebraska, U.S.A., the elder of two children from her mother's first marriage. Very rapidly she became the moral support of her unhappy mother and, later on in the second marriage, her mother's help with her five new brothers and sisters.

As a young woman, she left her family to go West, eventually arriving in California. She lived in Hollywood for some time, working as a fashion model, chorus dancer and actress, and marrying film writer, Felix Adler, whom she later divorced.

Eleanor accepted the Bahá'í Faith in 1939. The opportunity to attend her first fireside was so important to her that when she was called to jury duty the same day, she appealed to the judge to postpone the session—and the request was granted.

Entering the Bahá'í Faith with fervour and high dedication, Eleanor almost immediately decided to go pioneering. To obtain sufficient cash for the venture she sold her jewellery and headed for Bolivia, the only country left in South America without a pioneer at that time. "I felt raised by the Power of the Greatest Name, and while everything seemed strange, I did not feel alone ... in the sense of loneliness".

Upon her arrival in La Paz, Bolivia, Eleanor developed altitude sickness. A woman who saw her great need took her to the home of a Mrs. Cuellar who, incidentally, became very rapidly interested in the Faith. "Too glowing an account cannot be given of Señora Yvonne de Cuellar", Eleanor later wrote.

> Her immediate response and thoughtful and unqualified acceptance [of Bahá'u'lláh] opened the gates in regard to freedom of teaching and contacts. She was a channel for the free flow of the Teachings. I know of no other soul whose contacts were so varied or who was so free from prejudice. Through her, the other two women who declared were contacted.

Eleanor developed a deep interest in the future of the native Indians. Her tender heart identified with their plight and spiritual potential. After seven months of intensive work, however, she had to return to California for health and personal reasons.

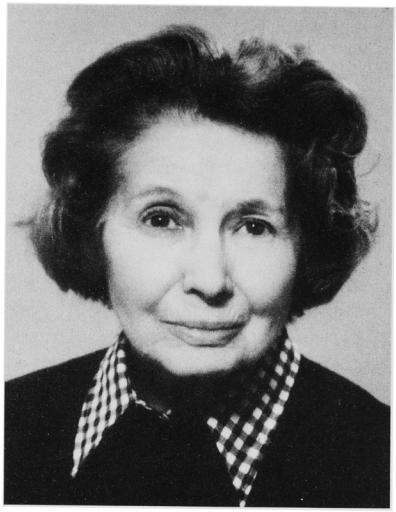
She later pioneered to the southern United States, and also to Reno, Nevada, where she was associated with Florence Mayberry. In the words of friends who knew her then,

> Eleanor was a godsend to these struggling Bahá'ís, especially to the Mayberry family with their weekly firesides. She was valuable not only as a speaker but in adddition she put us on fire. As a discussion leader she was a dynamic catalyst, so convinced of the truth of this Revelation that she magnetized others to recognize it. An impulsive and passionate individual, she did not follow paths devised by others, but tended to clear her own.

She moved from Reno to Glendale, California, where she met and married her second husband, Merle Hollibaugh.

At the end of World War II the European Teaching Committee asked Eleanor, who still was on fire for pioneering, to join Dagmar Dole in Copenhagen, Denmark. She stayed there from May 1947 to October 1948, and then again from March 1950 to October 1950.

She played a very important part in the history of the early days of the Bahá'í Faith in Denmark. She and Dagmar began firesides and study classes, and during her stay 14 people became Bahá'ís in Copenhagen. It is recorded that "some of the success can be attributed to Eleanor, who was very charming, full of humour and laughter, always ready to proclaim the Faith, very valuable when making contact with new people". And early Danish believers have written the following about Eleanor: "Although we have not seen her for a long time, she is still part of our daily life and will continue to be so as long as we live. We owe her and Dagmar Dole so much for having introduced us to the Bahá'í Faith more than forty years ago."



Eleanor Hollibaugh

In 1949, the European Teaching Committee asked Eleanor if she would serve in the Netherlands, where one year before the first Spiritual Assembly had been formed in Amsterdam. She accepted, moving to Amsterdam where she spent a few years. From there she moved to The Hague and took up residence in the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds.

The Local Spiritual Assembly of The Hague was established in 1952 and Eleanor was elected as its secretary. She was a great stimulus towards co-operation between the Benelux countries (Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands) which culminated in the election of the first National Assembly of the Benelux Countries in 1957.

It must be remembered that those historic days were materially extremely difficult, especially for pioneers. Eleanor is reported to have said on one occasion, "Are we not lucky to live with such inconvenience?".

During all of these hard times Eleanor was sustained by the love of Bahá'u'lláh, and the encouragement of Shoghi Effendi, who wrote to her on several occasions words such as these (30 May 1947):

> May the Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh guide, sustain and bless your meritorious and historic labours, aid you to surmount every obstacle, however formidable, in your path, and enable you to establish in the near future a flourishing and exemplary centre and assembly in that city.

Eleanor went back to Copenhagen to help with the organization of the third European Teaching Conference which was held in July 1950. Apart from further short periods assisting in the teaching work in Luxembourg, Eleanor stayed in the Netherlands for nine years. When she left to go to France in 1958, the Dutch community counted two Local Assemblies and a number of groups well on their way to becoming Local Assemblies. Among them was the community of Rotterdam, which enjoyed particularly close contact with Eleanor. A friend in the Netherlands wrote:

> Eleanor was goodlooking, gracious, intelligent, with a good sense of humour; she was also determined and had an independent mind; was very wise in her way with friends and contacts, and was an excellent hostess who got on well with everybody. Her only goal was to serve the Faith for which she had a great love. She succeeded in transmitting this love to many people who had the great fortune of meeting her.

In France, Eleanor served for a short time in Nancy and then went to Dijon where she remained from August 1958 until March 1960. She was the only Bahá'í and pioneer in that town, far away from others, but apparently in those days there were many French people who were eager to make contact with her. Eleanor, at that time, had no knowledge at all of the French language, but was able to attract 75 persons in that town for a public conference she organized singlehandedly for Mrs. Meherangiz Munsiff.

In 1960, the European Teaching Committee of the United States requested her to go to Switzerland, where she lived until her

passing. She was instrumental in forming the first Local Assembly in Vevey. There she joined another valiant American pioneer, Mrs. Marion Little. There again, due to the tremendous impetus of the pioneers, including Eleanor, the Assembly was formed in 1961.

Eleanor remained steadfast at this pioneering post, never giving up until 1984 when she moved to a Home for the Aged. This was a very great test for her, because she had the feeling that her independence, which had been a mainstay of her life, both as a woman and as a Bahá'í, had come to a close. From then on, though, her heart opened in very tender affection to the believers, and they loved to visit her until the end, and weep sorely when she departed.

It may be interpreted as characteristic of Eleanor to have died two days before her 90th birthday, which would have been celebrated both by the municipality of Montreux and the Bahá'ís. She had always preferred to avoid the limelight. She was a pioneer in the true sense: she broke the ground, found the first contact, animated the seekers and gave them the vision through her devotion and loyalty to the Cause. Eleanor was deeply loyal to the Central Figures of the Faith, and would stand no criticism, not even from a new Bahá'í.

Eleanor Hollibaugh had not attended college or university. Her level of formal education was minimal. From the time she accepted the Faith she was self-taught, open not only to Bahá'í literature but also other literature, and always interested in new fields of science or development. She made it a point to be abreast of political events and whatever was new in the world of religion and science. She was appreciated as a very animated listener.

As a great friend of hers put it: "On one subject she was steady as the proverbial rock, that was love for and devotion to her Faith. The fiery flickering part of her nature was saved for teaching and in that she was a flame thrower."

AGNES GHAZNAVI-FISCHER

SAEED NAHVI
(Sa'íd Naḥví)
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1910–1987

Sa'íd Naḥví was born on 28 April 1910 in Mashhad, Persia. His father was 'Alí-Akbar Naḥví, a descendent of the scholarly Fayḍ family. His mother was Munírih Khaḍrá'í. His parents were both devout Muslims.

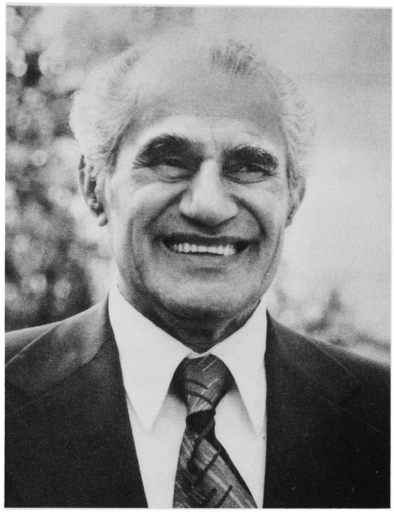
Sa'íd obtained his primary education in Mashhad and his secondary education at the Tarbíyat Bahá'í School in Ṭihrán, which was owned and managed by the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia. He graduated in about 1925, then went to Toulouse, France, for advanced studies in physics and mathematics. While in France he associated very closely with Bahá'í students, including his dear friend 'Abdu'lláh Miṣbáḥ, a well-known fellow Persian believer.

In 1935, he went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land and attained the presence of the beloved Guardian. This was the most significant event in his life, and he related many loving and inspiring stories of that visit to people around the world. Other pilgrims present during those meetings affirmed the deep emotion Sa'íd felt in the Guardian's presence.

On 18 December 1943, he married Shawkat 'Alá'í, (Shokat Alai) sister of Shu'á'u'lláh 'Alá'í, who was later named a Hand of the Cause of God. Sa'íd and Shawkat had two children, Asad (Randy) and Susan.

Sa'íd studied law, and became a lawyer of 'The First Class' entitled to appear in all courts and tribunals throughout the country—tribunals of First Instance, Courts of Appeal, and the Supreme Court of Privy Council. He also provided translation services to the Persian Government (and to Bahá'í institutions) because of his knowledge of Persian, Arabic, French, English and German.

He was a member of the National Teaching Committee of Írán. When the Guardian's call for pioneers came at the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade, he and his family left



Saeed Nahvi

Persia for India on the Twelfth Day of Riḍván 1953. In Bombay, Sa'íd was advised by the National Spiritual Assembly of India to settle in a virgin territory, so he took his family to Pondicherry, a French colony in southern India, because of his fluency in French. He arrived at his goal on 22 July 1953 and received the following telegram from the Guardian on 28 July 1953: 'Assure Nahvi of my loving prayers—Shoghi'. For this move, both Sa'íd and Shawkat were named Knights of Bahá'u'lláh.

The Naḥvís stayed in Pondicherry for seven years, making many friends for the Faith including Mr. Kheval Singh, the Governor, and Mr. Goudon, the French Consul. In 1960, upon the request of the National Spiritual Assembly of Írán, they moved to Sri Lanka to provide assistance with the establishment of that county's first National Spiritual Assembly. The Naḥvís were the first pioneers to Kandy, Sri Lanka. The National Assembly was elected in 1963.

In 1964, Sa'íd and his wife returned to Ṭihrán, Írán. In 1969, he was elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Ṭihrán and served as its secretary, and from 1974 to 1979 he served as a member of the Administrative Committee of the Abas Abad region. He often taught classes at Bahá'í schools.

In 1979, the Naḥvís moved to the United States of America, settling in southern California. From 1979 to 1986 he served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Dana Point, and from 1986 to 1987 he was a member of the Local Assembly of Huntington Beach.

From the United States, Sa'íd travelled widely to serve the Faith. Among his teaching destinations were French Guiana in 1980, and American and Western Samoa, the Cook Islands, Fiji, the Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Tahiti, Tonga, and Vanuatu in 1982.

The events surrounding Sa'íd's passing are living testimony to his steadfastness, devotion, and purity of motive in serving the Cause until the end. His daughter, Susan Fothergill, recounts the following:

> On Friday, 27 February 1987, the second night of Ayyám-i-Há, B.E. 143, my father was scheduled to speak at the Bahá'í fireside held at Dr. Roshan's home in Newport Beach, California. That evening he took his shower, said his prayers, ate dinner and drove to the Roshan's home around 8 p.m.
>
> Following his arrival, he was greeted warmly by the friends. The Roshans were very happy that he had come because they said every time he attended the fireside there would be a declaration. This was to be true to his very final visit.
>
> After the opening prayer was recited the people gathered realized that my father was no longer in the room. He had exited to an adjacent room saying he felt very hot. Soon after he laid down on the floor and told Dr. Roshan, 'I am leaving now'. He never regained consciousness and passed away at Hoag Hospital in Newport Beach at approximately 9 p.m.
>
> On Monday, 2 March 1987 the funeral service was held in Huntington Beach.

The readings and selections for the service were those which my father had himself selected for my cousin Kávús 'Alá'í's funeral service three years earlier.

Suddenly, after the completion of the service, a young slender American lady came up to the podium and requested a few moments from the 300 or so gathered. She said her name was Jean Reed and she had a few words. She said on the night of my father's passing she had arrived at the Roshan's home shortly after my father had passed away. She said when she entered the room 'I felt Mr. Naḥví's spirit and I declared immediately, because I knew the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh were the Truth.'

The gathering was astonished at her unsolicited, simple, frank and sincere testimonial and wept loudly. My non-Bahá'í friends were very moved and were anxious to know what Jean Reed meant when she said, 'I declared'.

SHOKAT NAHVI
(Shawkat Naḥví)

MANSOUR AHDIEH
(Manṣúr 'Ahdíyyih)
1906–1987

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING STEADFAST SERVANT CAUSE MANSOUR AHDIEH. HIS SERVICES IN IRAN AND MOROCCO, WHICH CULMINATED IN DEVOTED LABOURS AS CUSTODIAN SHRINE OF BAB, IN COLLABORATION WITH HIS DEAR WIFE, UNFORGETTABLE. ASSURE HIS WIDOW, AND RELATIVES LOVING PRAYERS PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Universal House of Justice
8 March 1987

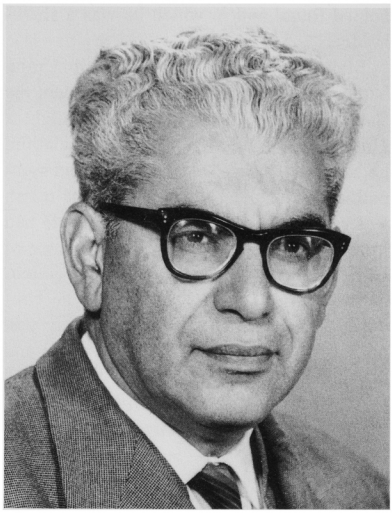
Manṣúr 'Ahdíyyih was the son of Mírzá Ḥasan Khán and Bilqís Khánum of Káshán. The name "'Ahdíyyih" ("trustworthy") had been given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the cooperative business which Manṣúr's father had helped found and in which he was a shareholder.

Manṣúr's grandfather, Fakhru'l-'Urafá, had been the first in the family to accept the Bahá'í Faith. As soon as he had caught a glimpse of the light of the new Revelation, he had been deeply impressed and had sympathized with the Faith. While Bahá'u'lláh was exiled in Baghdad, Fakhru'l-'Urafá had moved to that city to obtain the presence of Him Whom he thought to be the Originator of the Cause. A few months later he conveyed openly in a letter to his family that his journey had been a blessing to him and through God's mercy he had been privileged to attain the presence of Him Who was the object of his heart's desire. Soon his son, Manṣúr's father, was led to embrace the Faith. Not long after the whole family followed him.

Manṣúr was born in Ṭihrán in 1906. His primary and secondary education was at the Tarbíyat School and the Alliance Française, and then at the Teachers' Training College. From the time he was twelve years old, he simultaneously studied for half of each day at the Fine Arts College headed by Kamálu'l-Mulk, the most accomplished and illustrious painter and sculptor of Persia. The College had been founded through the goodwill and cooperation of Manṣúr's father, Mírzá Ḥasan Khán, and his uncle, 'Abdu'l-Báqí.

'Abdu'l-Báqí was a devoted believer who had made several pilgrimages to the Holy Land and had attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. He was the photographer at the Court of the Qájár Dynasty and took some of the pictures of early believers in prison, in chains, or being tortured—including Badí', the "Pride of Martyrs".

Manṣúr had just finished the first stage of his studies in Persia when a new door was opened to him. The previous year the Ministry of Education had launched a five-year plan during which they sent a contingent of one hundred students to complete their education in Europe each year in exchange for a certain number of years of service to be



Mansour Ahdieh

rendered to Persia upon their return. These students were selected from among the best candidates who took part in a scheduled competition.

Manṣúr participated in the competition and was among the winners. He was sent to France to pursue his studies in engineering. After six years of study he received a diploma in electrical engineering from the University of Toulouse and a year later, after entering l'École Supérieure d'Électricte in Paris, he obtained another diploma from that school.

After returning to Persia and performing his one-year military service, he was employed as a general assistant to the Central Electric Company in Ṭihrán and served in that capacity for twenty-three years. During that time he was sent on several important assignments, including going to France to purchase a powerful and efficient central power plant.

Simultaneous with his work for the government, Manṣúr was busy with Bahá'í activities in Ṭihrán. He served the Faith in various capacities such as membership on the National Youth Committee, the committees for the National Bahá'í Centre, and the organizing committees for summer schools.

It was also during this period that, through his marriage to Aqdas Miṣbáḥ, the families of 'Ahdíyyih and Miṣbáḥ became more closely and intimately tied together. When the forty-five-month plan of the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia was launched, the two families left their homes in Ṭihrán and pioneered to the goal village of Qulhak, near Ṭihrán, where they, with the help of other pioneers, established the first Local Spiritual Assembly.

In 1953, when the Guardian launched the Ten Year Crusade, Manṣúr and Aqdas, accompanied by their two children, aged eight and thirteen, decided to pioneer to one of the goal countries. Manṣúr asked permission to retire from the government-owned company where he worked, but his request was denied although he was legally entitled to do so. Two years later, after successfully achieving an assignment in France, he repeated his request to retire but the request was denied again. Finally, Manṣúr resigned without a pension. He wanted to pioneer, and he proceeded to do so, placing his great hope in assistance from on high.

The family went to Morocco, staying in Casablanca for two months, then moving to Rabáṭ for four years. Finally, they were transferred to Meknes where they remained until they left the country. Upon reaching Morocco, Manṣúr presented his curriculum vitae to the Ministry of Education, requesting a suitable position. With his qualifications, he was soon engaged as a high-ranking physics and chemistry teacher in secondary schools. He served in this position for sixteen years, until 1968. Then, the contracts of almost all Bahá'í pioneers working for the government were either cancelled or were not renewed as a result of persecution.

During the time the family was living in Rabáṭ, Manṣúr attended courses in Arabic literature at the University of Rabáṭ. His endeavours proved to be fruitful. He received a diploma of proficiency in Arabic

literature, but more importantly he acquired a much better ability to speak to the people in their native language, to conduct Bahá'í classes, and to be active in the teaching field.

In view of the problems in Morocco, Manṣúr made a trip to Írán to settle his affairs. Upon his return, while contemplating what course he should pursue, a letter reached him from the Universal House of Justice inviting him and his wife to go to Haifa for consultation.

Upon their arrival in the Holy Land they were asked if they would serve as custodians of the twin Shrines of the Báb and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. With joy and enthusiasm, they accepted immediately. Thus in June 1971, Manṣúr and Aqdas 'Ahdíyyih started their service at the Bahá'í World Centre—a service which extended for almost fourteen years. It was only due to the condition of Mr. 'Ahdíyyih's health that they were compelled to leave the Holy Land and terminate their services which were so dear to their hearts.

One of the privileges Mr. 'Ahdíyyih enjoyed during his long years of service in Haifa was answering the questions of tourists who would come to visit the Shrines. Being deepened in the Faith and speaking French, English, Persian, and Arabic, he was able to speak to many of them in their own language and give them the Message.

Manṣúr 'Ahdíyyih was a person of many talents—a musician, a painter, and a calligrapher in Persian and Arabic. In art he used a variety of techniques including oil painting, water colours, pastels, and pencil drawings. The themes of his work were diverse: scenes of family life, portraits of great men, and landscapes.

He was a true and faithful friend, sociable, calm, patient, firm and steadfast in his belief, a kind father and a loving husband. He will be greatly missed.

AQDAS MIṢBÁḤ 'AHDÍYYIH

MOHAMED LAMIN SUMAH
1961–1987

They that have forsaken their country in the path of God and subsequently ascended into His presence, such souls shall be blessed by the Concourse on High and their names recorded by the Pen of Glory among such as have laid down their lives as martyrs in the path of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsistent.

—Bahá'u'lláh[1]

O MOTHER! Grieve not over the loss of thy son; rather pride thyself therein. Indeed this is an occasion for gladness and rejoicing, not for despondency and sorrow.

—Bahá'u'lláh[2]

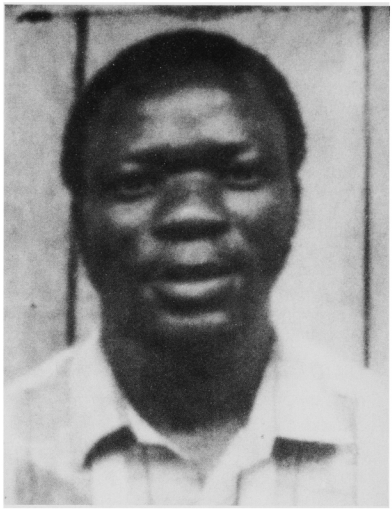
Mohamed Lamin Sumah (Fallah Sumah), nicknamed Jamil, was born on 28 April 1961, to Pa Kabba Sumah and Madam N'mah Kamara of Thadie Village, Sierra Leone. He was from the Susu Tribe. As a child he attended Holy Cross Primary School in Lungi, and later Tomlinson High School in Songo. He was a very special youth. He had a friendly personality and was very honest, reliable and responsible. He was simple yet dignified and respectable.

Sumah was given the Message of Bahá'u'lláh in December 1984 by his aunt, Hawa Kamara, who had first invited the Bahá'ís to Thadie Village. In a little over two years he laid down his life serving the Faith as Sierra Leone's first international pioneer.

As soon as he had accepted the Faith he had started studying the Writings of the Faith to deepen himself. In December 1984, he attended the annual Bahá'í school in Bo, and in March 1985, he attended a teacher training institute in Masongbo where he

[1] *Messages from the Universal House of Justice 1968–1973*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976) p. 102.

[2] *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVIII, p. 9.



Mohamed Lamin Sumah

intensely studied the Writings including the Tablet of Aḥmad, and the Tablet of the Holy Mariner.

He immediately began holding regular Bahá'í children's classes in Thadie, and soon all those entering Thadie were greeted by children saying "Alláh'u'Abhá". He was the assistant to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Thadie for Bahá'í activities. Often he would use his own money to provide transportation for teaching trips. Even when he was in great need he would not ask for money. He opened localities and formed Local Spiritual Assemblies around Thadie and continued to consolidate them.

In 1984, a number of African countries had received a pioneering call from the Universal House of Justice. The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sierra Leone had asked the Universal House of Justice if its community could be given the goal of sending one pioneer to Guinea, to which the House had kindly consented with the condition that the pioneer must know either French or one of the native languages. As soon as the goal was announced Muhamed Tamin Sumah wanted to volunteer. He knew Susu, a widely used local language, and was determined to learn French to teach more effectively.

Sumah first met Friday Ekpe, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa, in May 1985. Mr. Ekpe travelled to Thadie several times to encourage Sumah to go pioneering.

In June 1985, the Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sierra Leone, Alusine Kabia, and other friends with the Bahá'ís of Thadie said farewell to Sumah. They were proud that their son was going to serve the Cause. After receiving his letter of credentials in July 1985, he travelled by boat to his pioneering post. It was a difficult trip. He had to spend 48 hours on a small island where he was given no food and had no place to sleep. When he arrived at his pioneering post he contacted the Bahá'ís. He was active in Bahá'í functions and taught the Faith. He earned his living by dying lappas (cloth). He always sent money he had saved, no matter how small the amount, to his parents in Thadie because he knew they were old and needed his help.

Sumah soon had to go back to Sierra Leone to obtain a valid passport, which was not an easy task, and he was anxious to return to his pioneering post as soon as possible. After the National Spiritual Assembly helped him obtain a passport, he was unable to leave right away because the Local Spiritual Assembly of Thadie needed his help with a social and economic development project. He was very excited to return to Guinea because the Faith had just been officially recognized in that country.

Before his departure, Sumah and his aunt stayed with Sadeh Hakiman and Abdul Karim Sillah. Every night after everyone went to bed they would stay up and study the Holy Writings. He loved reading the Bahá'í Scriptures, and studying them made him happy. Sumah said that the reason he became a Bahá'í was because when he read

the Holy Writings of the Bahá'í Faith he understood them, but when he read the Holy Writings of other religions he didn't.

Sumah had a final meeting with the National Assembly of Sierra Leone in August 1986, during which they gave him encouragement for his teaching and consolidating plans in Guinea. He left Sierra Leone that same month, and friends had a letter from him dated October 1986. He wrote another letter to the National Spiritual Assembly. Aminata Turay and Shidan Kouchekzadeh [Shídán Kúchikzádik] also visited him in Kindia where they taught the Faith.

On Saturday at 8:45 a.m. on 7 March 1987, he arrived in Conakry at Shidan and Susan Kouchekzadehs' with a severe stomach ache and could barely walk. He was examined by a physician who said to take him directly to the hospital. He had acute abdominal pain which was probably appendicitis. They operated on him at midday. At about 7:00 p.m., without ever regaining consciousness, his pure soul went to the Abhá Kingdom. One of the last things he said was to ask if one of the friends, to whom he had taught the Faith, was attending the meetings.

On Sunday seven Bahá'ís met with members of Sumah's family. As one of his cousins stated emphatically that Mohamed was a Bahá'í, it was agreed that he would receive a Bahá'í burial. He was the first pioneer from Sierra Leone to fulfil a goal and also the first Bahá'í to have a Bahá'í burial in Guinea.

Sumah was only 26 years old. We pray that God will bless him and that he helps all of us from the Concourse on High to be firm in the Covenant and that the Faith will grow in Sierra Leone and Guinea.

O my God! O Thou forgiver of sins, bestower of gifts, dispeller of afflictions!

Verily, I beseech Thee to forgive the sins of such as have abandoned the physical garment and have ascended to the spiritual world.

O my Lord! Purify them from trespasses, dispel their sorrows, and change their darkness into light. Cause them to enter the garden of happiness, cleanse them with the most pure water, and grant them to behold Thy splendours on the loftiest mount.[1]

—'Abdu'l-Bahá

SADDENED NEWS PASSING MOHAMED SUMAH PIONEER GUINEA. ASSURE LOVING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL DIVINE WORLDS.

Universal House of Justice

SADEH HAKIMAN AND ABDUL KARIM SILLAH

HENRY BERTRON FITZPATRICK
1943–1987

They that have forsaken their country in the path of God and subsequently ascended unto His presence, such souls shall be blessed by the Concourse on High and their names recorded by the Pen of Glory among such as have laid down their lives as martyrs in the path of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsistent.

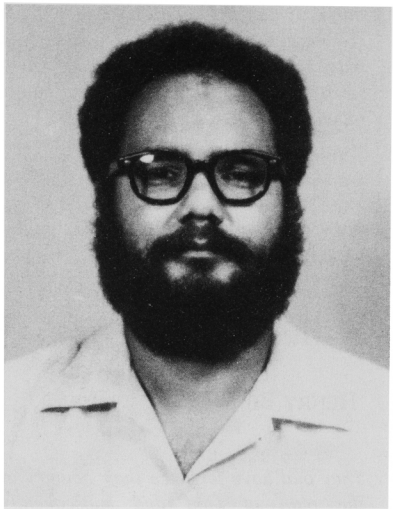
—Bahá'u'lláh[2]

We are often at a loss to adequately recount the greatness of a loved one who has winged his way to the immortal realm. Henry Bertron Fitzpatrick was only 44 years old when his third heart attack struck as he slept. He had told his beloved wife, Yvonne, countless times that he would never live to see the age of 50. His only desire was that the prayer he had copied and slipped into the end of his prayer book would come true: to die at his pioneer post, steadfast in the Cause of the Blessed Beauty.

Henry was born on 30 January 1943, the eldest of four children, to John and Earlene Thomas Fitzpatrick. His father distinguished

1 *Bahá'í Prayers* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), pp. 45-6.

2 Quoted in *Messages from the Universal House of Justice*, p. 102



Henry Bertron Fitzpatrick

himself serving in the United States Marine Corps during World War II, and in his career with the U.S. Postal Service, receiving many notable awards. The Fitzpatricks raised their two boys and two girls on the south side of Chicago, a predominantly black neighborhood. Their family tree blended the roots of African slavery with an American Indian heritage, as John's father was a member of the black Seminole tribe. Catholicism was the heart of their family life and the children's schooling. Young Henry's love for God and church blossomed well into his adolescence.

At 14, Henry entered a seminary for high school students in the State of Maryland. It was more than 1,000 miles away from home, but was the best school for him to pursue his religious yearnings. He had thus far developed a great reverence for the clergy, and were it not for a racial slur which one of the seminary clerics made against his ancestry, he might have continued his studies to enter the priesthood. Instead, he devised his own moral code of ethics, kept them as a standard in his own heart, and closed the door on any further religious pursuit.

After finishing high school, Henry enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and worked as a pharmacist technician. While in the military, he was invited to a New Year's Eve party in 1967. Henry enjoyed parties and was looking forward to a good time when he entered the home of his date's friend. But as the moments passed he became acutely aware that everyone there was having a good time without any signs of alcoholic beverages or drugs. On that night he was introduced to the Bahá'í Faith. He had never shared with anyone his formulated moral code, but after hearing the principles of the Cause of God, he embraced the Divine Standard of Bahá'u'lláh.

Henry was stationed for a period of time in Seoul, South Korea, where he had the privilege of meeting, working, and travelling to teach with the Bahá'ís of that community, and where he was elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly. Upon his discharge from the Air Force, Henry returned to the United States and sought to pioneer in a community where he could further his education. In Cheyenne, Wyoming, he fulfilled this goal, and was able to complete his bachelor's degree in the field of education.

In 1969 Henry met and married a Bahá'í from Indiana named Yvonne Brown. The newlyweds left the prospering Cheyenne community, arising to pioneer to the neighboring community of Laramie to help save its Assembly.

Henry's desire to pioneer never ceased; he yearned next to fulfill an international goal. It wasn't long before the young couple reached the shores of Jamaica with their two small children. They served the community for four difficult years, struggling to remain and support themselves at an isolated post. Although Henry was finally offered a better teaching position, he agreed with his wife to return to the United States to better provide for his family's welfare, deciding to take the opportunity to further his studies as well.

True to form, Henry and Yvonne moved their family to another goal area, this time

settling in the heart of South Carolina where the mass teaching efforts were in need of consolidation. And, as prayed for, the family did prosper, multiplying from a daughter and son to four children with a set of twin girls!

Henry completed his master's degree and obtained an educational specialist degree, finishing the course work for his doctorate. South Carolina was special for him, particularly as it gave him the chance to be near and work at the Louis Gregory Institute whenever he could. The Institute honored his wife and him with a plaque for meritorious service which he henceforth displayed proudly in his study.

Again Henry and Yvonne longed to return to the international field. Consulting the International Goals Committee they were directed to southern Africa. Henry accepted a post at the University of Transkei where he was appointed senior lecturer in 1978, progressing to Associate Professor and acting Dean of the Faculty of Education. In 1980, Henry had the distinction of serving on the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Republic of Transkei and held the position of Chairman in subsequent years.

Unfortunately, Henry's condition of hypertension, the stress of work, and service to the Faith took its toll. He had two mild heart attacks in Transkei. He even ignored his second attack so he could drive to the university and give his students their assignment. Only after his duties were completed did he tell his wife of the attack, and then sought proper medical assistance.

After consulting with the Continental Board of Counsellors and his National Assembly, the couple decided for Henry's health to pioneer to a neighboring state where the pressures might be easier. In the small republic of Venda, geographically just beneath Zimbabwe, he accepted a comparable post and filled another pioneering need.

Henry was dedicated to his profession and gave it all he could as a Bahá'í. In slightly more than one year, "Professor Fitzpatrick" captured the imagination and esteem of his Venda colleagues and students, attracting them with his magnetic personality. He always made time to listen to people, especially the Bahá'ís, and shared his opinion with genuine thoughtfulness. With his students he was always there to help, and yet never afraid to make them strive to earn their passing mark of distinction.

The news of his tragic passing on 11 March 1987 travelled quickly throughout the region. His memorial service was indeed a testimony of the truly Bahá'í character which he possessed. Friends, students, and colleagues travelled distances over 1,000 miles and from half a dozen countries to pay their final respects.

The Venda national radio station aired a program about Professor Fitzpatrick, with the University's Dean of Education highlighting Henry's deep religious convictions and professional outlook. The President of Venda sent his personal emissary to attend the memorial service, and the Rector of the University asked to be included in the program so that he too could express his regards for one whom he had come to respect and admire.

Following Henry's passing the Universal House of Justice cabled:

> DEEPLY SADDENED SUDDEN LOSS DEDICATED SERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH HENRY FITZPATRICK. KINDLY CONVEY OUR LOVING SYMPATHY HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN. ASSURE THEM OUR ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL DIVINE WORLDS AND CONSOLATION THEIR HEARTS.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States of America and its International Goals Committee cabled the following:

> WE JOIN YOU IN SPIRIT AS YOU OFFER PRAYERS PROGRESS SOUL BELOVED HENRY FITZPATRICK. HIS NINE YEARS TRANSKEI, VENDA, WITH WONDERFUL WIFE BONNIE, DEAREST CHILDREN KAREN, KEVIN, KATH-

ERINA, AND KENDAA ASSURE HIM LIMITLESS LAURELS POSTERITY. DEEPEST SYMPATHIES, GRATITUDE, LOVE.

Henry had achieved his heart's desire, and fulfilled yet another goal, one established by the Master for every Bahá'í:

> *...ye must conduct yourselves in such a manner that ye may stand out distinguished and brilliant as the sun among other souls. Should any one of you enter a city, he should become the centre of attraction...so that the people of that city may cry out and say: 'This man is unquestionably a Bahá'í, for his manners, his behaviour, his conduct, his morals, his nature, and disposition reflect the attributes of the Bahá'ís.'* [1]

YVONNE FITZPATRICK AND
JEFF ALBERT

JUAN SÁNCHEZ MARTINEZ
1916–1987

Juan Sánchez was born in Puente Tocinos, Múrcia, Spain, on 15 March 1916 in the bosom of a humble Catholic family. His father, Antonio Sánchez, was an affable baker. His mother, Rosario Martinez, dedicated her life to looking after her 10 children. Due to their poverty, Juan never went to school. He started to work making fishing rods when he was still only a small boy.

With the start of the Spanish Civil War in July of 1936, Juan, who was then 20, was enlisted into the ranks of the Republicans, who dominated the eastern side of the country. For nearly three years his eyes continually witnessed scenes of cruelty and barbarism, in a blood-stained scene where brothers fought between themselves in a ferocious whirlwind of senseless hate. The misery of the war left an everlasting painful impression on young Juan's soul. It was normal to see him, until he died, remembering with grief and a melancholy air his experiences in that conflict.

Freed, by a miracle, from the claws of the war (in his battalion no more than five soldiers survived), he returned home to find that his father was imprisoned and his mother and brothers hardly surviving the hunger. Even though his father soon came out of prison, the poverty of the family lasted for a long time. To worsen the situation, Juan was called up to fulfil his military service and was sent to the Spanish Sahara, a destiny which would unite him in later years with another radically different one.

After three years of service he returned to Múrcia where he married Josefa Cuenca Baeza on 31 March 1943. Their marriage, solid until the end, slowly became enriched with the birth of their four children: Antonio, José, Carmen and Rosario.

Adverse circumstances led Juan Sánchez and his family to Sabadell, a city very close to Barcelona. It was there at the end of 1960 that they heard for the first time of the Bahá'í Faith. To begin with, Juan was hesitant, and attended the first meeting with doubt, encouraged by his wife and one of his daughters. However, soon his heart was burning with love for Bahá'u'lláh. This love changed his whole life. He became a restless lover of the Court of his Lord, and a brave soldier of a spiritual army.

The declaration of Faith by Juan Sánchez took place on 5 February 1961. Along with him, his inseparable wife Josefa and his daughter Carmen acknowledged the Cause. The spiritual career which started at that moment lasted 25 years, until his death. When Juan Sánchez accepted Bahá'u'lláh, he declared that for him there would be nothing more important in his life. His later services were a constant testimony of this statement.

Among all his activities, one stands out from the rest: his determination to fulfil one of the most difficult goals that the Universal House of Justice had offered the Spanish

[1] *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978), p 71.

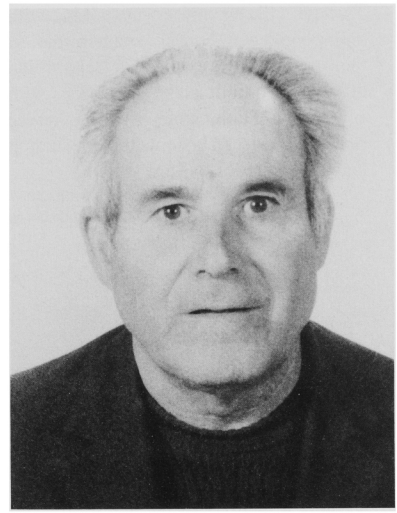
Bahá'í community during the Nine Year Plan—pioneering to the Spanish Sahara. With no prospects of work, previous experience of pioneering, or possession of exceptional aptitudes, Juan, as a lover who would not admit cold calculations in such sacred questions, challenged friends and strangers and, in a show of courage, decided to accomplish this objective. It is interesting to see that the day he decided to become a pioneer, his son Antonio, moved by his father's example, recognized the truth of the Faith.

Juan's services in the Spanish Sahara lasted for nine months, from May 1966 until January 1967. He taught the Faith in the cities of Villa Cisneros and Rio de Oro, and managed, despite the extreme difficulty of the area, to attract one soul to the Cause. When he returned from the Sahara he could frequently be heard to say: "Only a pioneer knows what others have suffered on the path of Bahá'u'lláh".

Juan was always an example of tenacity and steadfastness in the teaching field. A detail which shows this is the nickname he was given by the people that knew him; they called him "the book man" because he always took a Bahá'í book with him to help with his teaching. It was this eagerness to teach the Cause which pushed him, even though he had never been to school, to study in depth the Bahá'í literature. He was a lover of the books *Some Answered Questions* and *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*. It is no exaggeration to say that he knew them nearly by heart.

His pioneering spirit and his capacity to serve the Cause became evident in the sheer number of his journeys: between August 1967 and January 1968 he was in Valencia; in October of that year he went to Casteja (Navarra); in 1969 he pioneered to Villacarlos, on the island of Menorca (Balearic Islands), where he taught the Faith for two years; he returned to Sabadell; and in 1973 he spent seven months teaching on the island of Ibiza.

Only illness could cut short his constant pioneering activity. In 1985, cancer forced



Juan Sánchez Martinez

Juan Sánchez to remain closed in his home for over one year. During this time his main grief was not being able to fulfil his sacred duty of teaching. Every day Juan said to his dear wife, "Fina, today I haven't gone outside, I haven't spoken to anybody about the Faith."

I will never forget the angelic expression which covered his face the last time I saw him. Lying in bed, he looked at me with an indescribable tenderness and serenity. His eyes revealed the depth of his devotion and loyalty. Days later, his luminous expression slowly extinguished. He died on 27 April 1987.

Of Juan remains a small compendium of poems entitled *God is Love*, written after his acknowledgement of the new Revelation. They are songs of love to the Manifestation of God, shining jewels of purity and detachment, reflections of a sensitive and attracted heart. One of them, maybe his best known poem, "Canticles to Bahá'u'lláh" recalls his pass through this ephemeral plane:

> I walk on pathways and lanes like
> a wandering peregrine proclaiming unity.

Through villages and towns, talking with their people with honesty and humility, of the very intense Message that Bahá'u'lláh offers us. To unite all of the nations with a common Faith, a new society where rich and poor, can become united, singing together canticles to Bahá'u'lláh.

NAVID MOHABBAT
(Navíd Muḥabbatí)

ROBERT GULICK, JR.
1912–1987

Robert Gulick, Jr., was born in Paradise, California, U.S.A., on 6 October 1912, a second-generation Bahá'í through his father, Robert Lee Gulick, who had received a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1900. Robert Jr. became a believer at the age of 14, and from then on his life, wherever it took him, was single-mindedly focused on the Bahá'í Cause.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in social science from California State University, Chico, in 1933, he attended the University of California, Berkeley, where he received his master's and doctorate degrees in education. He worked five years for the U.S. Customs Service in San Francisco, and later, having served as an economist at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in New York City, he returned to U.C. Berkeley as a faculty member.

Robert had the gift of making his work a part of his entertainment. He surveyed the world with a kind of amusement, enjoying the play of events and people and their foibles with real pleasure. Even so dull a procedure as shopping at the supermarket was a game to him, and he explored the aisles as if seeing them for the first time, experimenting with new products. He put his knowledge of people to work in ways that were all his own. For example, noting that many believers came late to meetings, he suggested that we should attend concerts and the opera and get the names and addresses of all the late-comers, since they were the potential Bahá'ís.

He enjoyed puns and playing with languages. He planned to write his autobiography and call it *Up From Paradise*. He said that when people ask you to "cooperate" with them they really mean, "You coo while I operate". Anxious to acquire Persian, he learned to read and write the language from Marzieh Gail during his lunch breaks at the U.S. Customs. In Írán, when told that a certain project was impossible (*maḥál*), he replied, *Maḥál maḥálih* (impossible is impossible). Hiring a carriage to tour Rome, but not knowing Italian, he put his musical terminology to use (he was a fine amateur pianist) and instructed the driver: *Allegro ma non troppo*.

He did a considerable amount of writing, including an introduction to the 1952 U.S. edition of The Seven Valleys. His thesis, "Muḥammad the Educator", is of lasting value, and other works from his pen which have attracted favorable attention include "American Higher Education: Uncertain Trumpet", and "World Trade and World Plenty". He wrote frequent well-received letters to distinguished people and also to the press, usually with an aim to reconciling East and West.

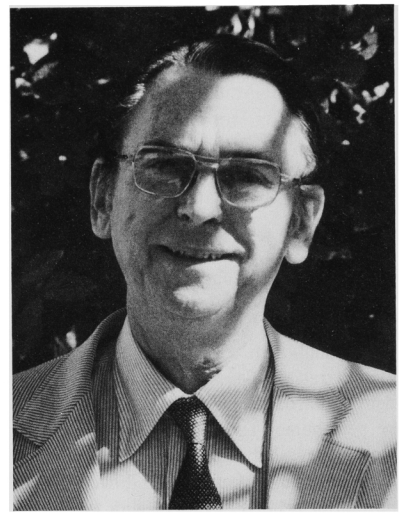
His work for the Faith was continual and innovative. At a time when the Faith was little known, he introduced it on the radio in northern California by featuring the internationally famed artist, Max Pollak, who was friendly to the Bahá'ís and had done a notable etching of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He devised a pamphlet adapted to the Armed Forces, called "Headlines Tomorrow" which circulated for many years. He induced 'Alí-Kuli Khán and his daughter Marzieh to write "Mírzá Abu'l Faḍl in America", a memoir published in *The Bahá'í World* and which otherwise might have been lost. In New York City, he planned important Bahá'í-sponsored events relating to matters of current interest, such as a commemoration of Woodrow Wilson, and a Wright Brothers

anniversary. He would invite prominent non-Bahá'ís to share the platform and thus attract audiences and media coverage.

His wide range of interests included horticulture, and here again he put his finds to work for the Faith, presenting shrubs and trees to the Bahá'í School at Geyserville. He later introduced the cultivation of safflowers into Libya.

An outstanding characteristic of Robert's was his special love for Persia, which he visited a number of times. He seemed to the Persians like one of their own. His first visit, in 1947, was even announced by a precognitive dream. Húshang Mavaddat told how he was standing on the steps of the Ṭihrán Ḥaẓíra when Persian friends arrived with a tall stranger, and before introductions could be made, Mavaddat said, "This is Robert Lee Gulick. A few nights ago I dreamed that he came to the entrance of the Ḥaẓíra with a stranger who introduced him and told me his name." Over two thousand came to hear him at a later meeting in the Ḥaẓíra, every inch of sitting or standing room packed, and Mr. Na'ímí, son of the great Bahá'í poet, translated. Robert won the audience over with words of cheer and encouragement, interspersed with Persian phrases, and chanted prayers in the original language flavored by a touch of Western music. Persia's national *Bahá'í News and Reviews* (June 1947) reported the event.

As an economist studying Írán's needs and the possibility of American investments, Robert received the red carpet treatment wherever he went. Following his pilgrimage to the House of the Báb, he travelled on with his party to Ábádih and along the way found military escorts and guards of honor. Arriving in Ábádih, he found crowds gathered about his new Hudson car (provided by the authorities) and voices were heard asking, "Which one is the Pope?" It turned out that a telegram from Shíráz announcing his visit had mistakenly reported the name Húshmand Fatḥ-i-A'ẓam, a member of the group, as Páp-i-A'ẓam, the great Pope.



Robert Gulick, Jr.

On May 22, at exactly the same moment when in 1844 the Báb had declared Himself to His first disciple, Robert was in the Holy House, praying at the threshold of the Declaration chamber. On his various visits to Írán he saw other precious landmarks that would soon disappear. In 1948 he climbed to the top of the crumbling Ark (Citadel) where the Báb had been confined in Tabríz and risked his life walking around on the roof edge to reach the Báb's cell, by then completely open to the sky, and he said this was one of the greatest experiences of his life. A picture, unidentified, appeared of this day in *The Bahá'í World*.

Longing to make pilgrimage, Robert had tried to telephone Haifa for permission, but because of the world situation no pilgrimages were possible then. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum took the call, and he seems to have told her of wanting to marry a Persian. In any case, he received a letter from her recommending that he might wish to meet Bahia [Bahíyyih] Faraju'lláh. They met at a dinner party in Baghdád, where Bahíyyih was training teachers in the Girls'

College (*Dar al Muallemat*), but nothing happened between them for two years. In fact, Bahíyyih went home and told her mother that the American was conceited.

Back in California, Robert brought his problem to Harold Gail; he planned on using an intermediary to tell Bahíyyih he would like to marry her. Harold replied, "You are a Westerner. If this goes through somebody else, it might be garbled. You write Bahíyyih direct."

With her mother, Madame Faraju'lláh, Bahíyyih went to America in 1950, and Robert met them at the airport in New York. Here a tragedy almost took place: their visas were inadequate, and they were about to be sent home. The officials were adamant. Nothing availed until Robert went through his wallet and found a yellowed bit of newsprint headed "Confers with President" which described him "as one of the leaders of the Bahá'í movement" and "advisor to Winthrop W. Aldrich, president of the International Chamber of Commerce", and told of his conferring at the White House with President Truman and his interest in freeing world trade. Immediately, all doors opened. Apologies were made, and the ladies were ushered into the United States. Robert and Bahíyyih were married the next day at the National Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds in Wilmette, Illinois, and many notables of the time, including Horace Holley, Juliet Thompson, the 'Alí-Kuli Kháns with their daughter Ḥamídih, attended their reception at the Orrington Hotel.

The marriage was blessed: he and his bride grew very close. He was tremendously proud of her achievements. She earned a master of arts degree and became a sought-after speaker and a noted professor of Arabic at the American Graduate School of International Management (Thunderbird) in Arizona. She translated *The Secret of Divine Civilization* from the original Persian into Arabic, and translated from English into Arabic *The Promise of All Ages* by George Townshend. Robert also came to love his mother-in-law, a cordon bleu cook and an excellent teacher for their little boy, Ḥusayn (Robert III).

The Gulicks' many travels together included a journey to Kurdistán, where they visited the *Takyiy-i-Mawláná Khálid*, the seminary where Bahá'u'lláh had stayed. Bahíyyih acquired a property there for a future Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds in her father's memory.

In 1953 the Gulick family, taking Bahíyyih's mother, Shawqat Faraju'lláh, and Ella Bailey and Laura Allen with them, left to pioneer to Tripoli, Libya. There they formed a Local Assembly of which Robert was chairman. He was also elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Northeast Africa. He engaged in educational and business activities and visited countries including Algeria, Egypt, 'Iráq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, and Tunisia. These pioneering services lasted 11 years. Unfortunately, travel restrictions prevented him from meeting the Guardian in Haifa. "*That's* what it cost me to pioneer," he told a friend.

Returning to the United States in 1964, he served as Dean of Admissions at the American Graduate School of International Management (Thunderbird) for 18 years, promoting enrolment from 221 to 1,084. He taught the school's first course on the Middle East, and was named Outstanding Educator for 1972. He became a member of American Professors for Peace in the Middle East, and is listed in *Who's Who in Asian Studies*, *American Men of Science*, and other reference works. Meanwhile, even when ill he remained active in Bahá'í administrative affairs in Glendale and Phoenix, Arizona, usually attending the annual Bahá'í Convention in Wilmette, as a delegate.

After a long illness, Robert Gulick died on 3 May 1987. An overflowing crowd heard the eulogy, delivered by the President of the College, Dr. William Voris, as its flag flew at half mast. A scholarship for foreign students was established in his name.

Among the many tributes he received were two cherished cables from the Holy Land:

DEPLORE LOSS YOUR COMMUNITY DEVOTED SERVANT BAHA'U'LLAH ROBERT L. GULICK. SUPPLICATING HOLY THRESHOLD ABUNDANT DIVINE REWARD FOR ONE WHO PLACED CAUSE GOD FIRST IN HIS TIRELESS EFFORTS PROMOTE ITS INTEREST AT HOME AND THROUGH HIS TEACHING WORK IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES INCLUDING CRADLE FAITH AND NORTH AFRICA. HIS ASSOCATION PIONEERING ACHIEVEMENT HEROIC ELLA BAILEY UNFORGETTABLE. KINDLY CONVEY OUR SYMPATHY HIS DEAR WIFE BAHIA, HIS SON ROBERT AND OTHER MEMBERS FAMILY FOR WHOSE CONSOLATION PRAYERS BEING OFFERED.

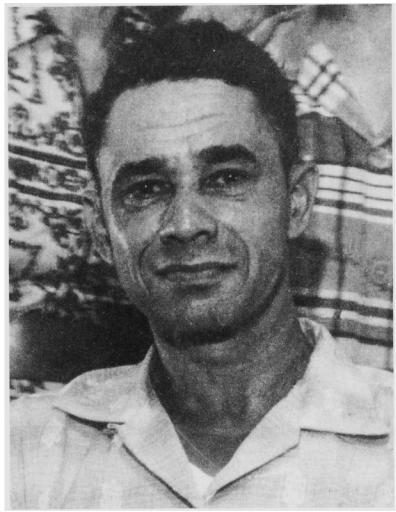
Universal House of Justice
5 May 1987

SHARE GRIEF YOUR LOSS BELOVED COMPANION BOB DEVOTED PIONEER CONSTANTLY ACTIVE SERVICE EVERY FIELD FAITH ASSURE LOVING REMEMBRANCE SHRINES.

RUHIYYIH
4 May 1987

On what would turn out to be his last birthday in this world (6 October 1986), at St. Joseph's Hospital in Phoenix, Arizona, Robert wrote a kind of farewell to his fellow-Bahá'ís. Here, among his comments on teaching the Faith, he told of an encounter in the 1940s with Fred Schopflocher, a highly successful Canadian businessman, later designated a Hand of the Cause of God. When the two met at a railroad station in San Francisco, Robert was wondering what motivated Fred in his remarkable services to the Faith. Mr. Schopflocher answered Robert's unspoken thought, saying, "The most important thing is to recognize the Beauty of Bahá'u'lláh...to recognize Him... is to love Him, to serve His Cause, and to live as He prescribed".

MARZIEH GAIL



Knud Jensen

KNUD JENSEN
1917–1987

When Knud Jensen ascended to the Abhá Kingdom on 30 April 1987, the Bahá'í community mourned the passing of the first native believer in the Virgin Islands. Born 10 December 1917 in Denmark of a Danish father and a St. Croix, Virgin Islands, mother, Knud was brought to the Islands while still an infant, and he was raised and educated in the Virgin Islands. He declared his belief in Bahá'u'lláh in 1957.

Knud was one of the nine believers who formed the first Local Spiritual Assembly in the Virgin Islands, in St. Thomas, and remained active in the Administrative Order of the Faith throughout his life. He later moved from St. Thomas to St. Croix and went to work for the Cruzan Rum Bottle Company. Finding the making of alcohol incompatible with his beliefs, he resigned and accepted a position with the Martin Marietta Alumina Company. Concerned always with brotherhood, he wrote articles from the Bahá'í viewpoint for the company publication.

When Knud died, he left behind his wife, Louise, and children, Knud Christian, Eric, Audie, Olive, Sandra and Jean. His daughter, Olive, described her father as "very true to the Bahá'í Faith, and always willing to perform any task for his fellow Bahá'ís. He loved the Faith and his Bahá'í brothers and sisters very much."

Adapted from an article in the July/August 1987 issue of *the Island Bahá'í,* published by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Virgin Islands.

AZIZOLLAH NAVIDI
('Azízu'lláh Navídí)
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1913–1987

GRIEVED PASSING DEVOTED DEDICATED SERVANT CAUSE KNIGHT BAHA'U'LLAH AZIZ NAVIDI. HIS FEARLESS DEFENCE OPPRESSED BAHA'IS CRADLE FAITH HIGHLY PRAISED BY BELOVED GUARDIAN. HIS CONTINUOUS SERVICES PIONEERING FIELD CROWNED BY OUTSTANDING SUCCESSES GAIN RECOGNITION FAITH BY MANY AFRICAN COUNTRIES OBTAINED THROUGH HIS UTTER RELIANCE BAHA'U'LLAH AND HIS INDEFATIGABLE RESOURCEFULNESS SACRIFICIAL EFFORTS. ALL SHED LUSTRE UPON HIS LOVING MEMORY. REQUESTING NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY UGANDA HOLD MEMORIAL SERVICE MOTHER TEMPLE AFRICA RECOGNITION UNIQUE SERVICES THAT CONTINENT. ASSURE ARDENT PRAYERS PROGRESS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERING LONDON.

Universal House of Justice
2 July 1987

'Azízu'lláh Navídí was born on 9 September 1913 into a Bahá'í family in Hamadán, Persia. His maternal grandfather was Mírzá Mihdí Arjumand, an illustrious teacher at the time of the beloved Master. His parents were Mihdí and Badí'ih Arjumand Navídí.

Even as a youth 'Azíz displayed qualities of resourcefulness and perseverance, and he showed a logical mind and a gift of eloquence which in the future served him well in the courtroom in the defense of the oppressed. Following his innate talents, he studied the law, and at the age of 24 began a law practice which flourished with time.

As the years passed, the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia asked him to defend the oppressed Bahá'ís of Sháhrúd, where, on 8 August 1944, three friends had been martyred and 17 Bahá'í homes had been plundered and set on fire. 'Azíz defended them with great eloquence and undaunted courage, braving the vicious opposition of the clergy. His unceasing endeavours won him the praise of the beloved Guardian.

From then on, he tirelessly defended the rights of the innocent, be they Muslim or Bahá'í, rich or poor. The doors to his office were always open to the innocent, the poor, and the downtrodden, whom he defended with zeal and passion, free of charge.

Never did he agree to defend a guilty client. Only once in his life was he deceived by a client, whom he turned back to the judge upon finding out that the client had been guilty.

Soon, the government chose him as legal advisor to the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defense. As he made more valuable contacts, the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia assigned him the task of alleviating the injustices perpetrated against the oppressed Bahá'ís by the Persian government. It was his task to approach high officials and make a plea for the innocent Bahá'ís.

'Azíz and his wife, Shamsí, were among the first groups of Persian pilgrims to visit the beloved Guardian and the Holy Places in Haifa when pilgrimages were resumed in 1952 following their ten-year hiatus due to war.

Great was the pilgrims' awe as they beheld for the first time the countenance of their Beloved and laid their eyes upon the Holy Shrines. It was during this pilgrimage that the beloved Guardian received 'Azíz

Navídí in his office. For an hour, they discussed the situation of the Bahá'ís in Persia and the Guardian told him that he had been chosen to safeguard the security of that country, that he was the shield of the Cause, and that in the future he would defend the Bahá'ís internationally. The Guardian also announced to those first pilgrims his intention of elaborating a ten year plan, and that the Bahá'ís should spread to the four corners of the world. He particularly asked those present to pioneer in Africa, but asked Dr. Navídí to remain in Persia and continue there to defend the rights of the oppressed Bahá'ís.

Upon his return from this historic pilgrimage, 'Azíz Navídí continued to serve the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia with renewed devotion, in the capacity of legal advisor, and to defend the innocent Bahá'ís of Yazd who had unjustly been condemned to imprisonment and death.

In 1953, the Ten Year Crusade was unveiled to the Bahá'ís, who initially found it hard to fully comprehend the scope of the vision of the beloved Guardian, and who stood in awe at the ingenuity of its author.

'Azíz and Shamsí attended the Stockholm Conference in 1953 and, seeing the immediate need for pioneers and wanting with all their heart to obey their beloved Guardian and make him happy, asked if they could be of service in his Ten Year Plan. His reply was that at the completion of the case of the Bahá'ís of Yazd, they could go either to Africa or to the Pacific as pioneers. Shortly thereafter, they sold their house and began preparations for pioneering.

About this time, the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Ugo Giachery came to the cradle of the Faith to encourage the Persian Bahá'ís to spread to the four corners of the earth, and thus participate in laying the cornerstones of the edifice of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, and to fulfil the goals of the Ten Year Plan.

Nellie Stevison French, who had worked for the Faith in Monaco, had just passed away, and Dr. Giachery suggested that 'Azíz and his wife go there. The beloved Guardian approved of the suggestion, but since 'Azíz had still not finished the defence of the Bahá'ís of Yazd, Shamsí and their two daughters, Vídá and Gildá, left before him, in March 1953. Nine months later, 'Azíz joined them, and he and his wife became Knights of Bahá'u'lláh.

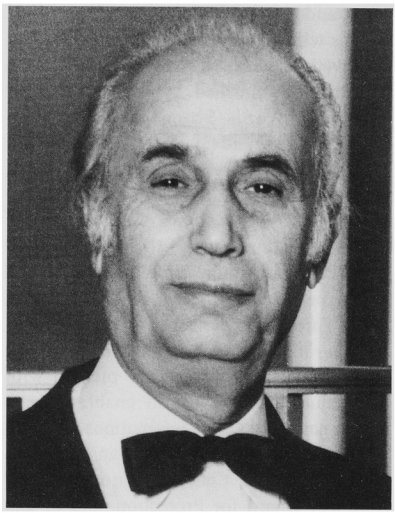
When 'Azíz went to Monaco, he embarked upon studies that led to a degree in International Law from the University of Paris. Through Dr. Giachery, who was then on pilgrimage, the beloved Guardian let 'Azíz know that he was very pleased with these studies which would enable him to further serve the Cause internationally.

During this time, 'Azíz was appointed by the Hands of the Cause in Europe to their Auxiliary Board for Protection, and in this capacity he helped many National Spiritual Assemblies with their legal difficulties.

In 1955, after severe persecutions which climaxed in the destruction of the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds of Ṭihrán, the beloved Guardian appointed Dr. Navídí as a member of the commission that appealed to the United Nations in New York and Geneva. The Persian government had planned to exterminate the Bahá'í community in its country, but because of this intervention the government momentarily halted its cruel plan.

In 1957, with the tragic passing of Shoghi Effendi, 'Azíz Navídí transferred his loyalty to the Hands of the Cause—"the stewards of the embryonic World Order of Bahá'u'lláh". He was called to the Holy Land at this difficult period and helped, with ardent devotion, to resolve the many legal problems that had been created by the sudden passing of the beloved Guardian.

It was about this time, with the trials of the Bahá'ís in Morocco, that Dr. Navídí's long association with the African continent began. During the course of many years he travelled to Algeria and Morocco, remaining in close association with the Bahá'ís in these countries, helping to solve numerous legal



Azizollah Navidi

problems, and obtaining legal residencies for Bahá'í pioneers. He was intimately linked to the cause of the Moroccan prisoners, and did everything in his power to alleviate their distress. The Universal House of Justice recognized in him a loyal and faithful servant who was capable of putting the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh above everything else in his life, and who was able, through the strength of his faith, to draw enormous power and assistance from the bestowals of the Blessed Beauty.

In 1968, with the encouragement of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, 'Azíz and Shamsí resolved to take part in the Nine Year Plan of the Universal House of Justice and left for the Mauritius Islands. In this way, Dr. Navídí took part in the formation of several National Assemblies in the Indian Ocean and contributed to their legal recognition.

During this time, the Universal House of Justice gave him additional responsibilities on the African continent, and appointed him the representative of the Bahá'í International Community in Africa. The numerous cables received from Africa on his passing attest to the degree of his involvement in the development of the Cause in that continent.

It is easy to say that he received recognition of the Faith in Africa, but every case has its special history. Each case represented many months of anguish, of solitude, of disappointments in a difficult and often inhospitable environment, and sleepless nights, beseeching Bahá'u'lláh for assistance and strength.

In the path of his Beloved, he gave liberally of himself, of his material possessions, and of his spiritual talents. Even his human frailties were transformed into a source of strength for service. He displayed extraordinary resourcefulness, courage, love and distinction in his encounters with high officials, be they presidents, judges, or administrative officers. He never took "no" for an answer, persevering until victory was obtained.

His days in the service of the Cause in Africa tell the tale of an absolute devotion to the Universal House of Justice and of his desire to alleviate its burden as much as he could. The Cause was his own, and he always felt complete responsibility for it. His family remember him saying, frequently, "but the Universal House of Justice has no one else to do the job, and I shall not fail them". He constantly sought the Supreme Body's advice and as he relied on its prayers and guidance, the result was victory upon victory.

The volumes of memoirs he has left behind are part of the history of the Cause in many countries. They recount his anguish, his hopes and his complete reliance on prayer and on the never-failing assistance of Bahá'u'lláh. They tell of his dauntless spirit, of his immense love and courage, and of his relentless efforts in the path of the Cause of God. They will, no doubt, be a source of inspiration for future generations.

At the funeral service in London, members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom bore 'Azíz Navídí's coffin

to its resting place in the Greater London Cemetery. The Bahá'ís of Írán, despite their own current difficulties, made a very poignant contribution by sending a cable and a floral tribute to the man who had served them so well.

SHAMSÍ NAVÍDÍ

SULEIMAN SULEIMANI
(Sulaymán Sulaymání)
c.1901–1987

Sulaymán Sulaymání-Mílání was born to 'Alí-Muḥammad and his wife Zahrá in Mílán, Ádharbáyján, Persia, around 1901. Although his parents were not Bahá'ís, they were close friends of the Faith, and Sulaymán recalled that they sometimes admonished him and their other children, "Don't make noise; the Bábís are saying prayers in the other house".

When Sulaymán was 10 years old, his parents, sister Kawkab, and brothers, Muḥammad Taqí and 'Alí-Akbar, left Mílán by mule to join his older brother, Muḥammad, in 'Ishqábád. Along the way, in the town of Tiflís, 'Ali-Muḥammad succumbed to injuries he sustained in a train accident, leaving his wife and three children to continue the journey to 'Ishqábád alone. When they eventually joined Muḥammad, the children were enrolled in the Bahá'í School where Sulaymán studied for six or seven years, and in his own words, "one by one, we became Baha'is".

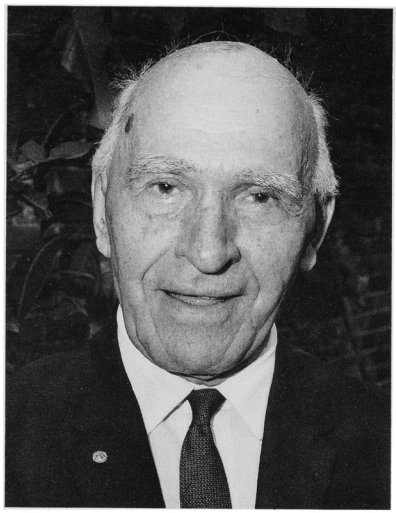
After finishing his studies at the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár School for Boys, he joined his two brothers, both of whom were cloth merchants, in their shop. A few years later, at the age of 23, he married Riḍváníyyih Ouskouli, who had attended the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár School for Girls. Riḍváníyyih was the oldest of four daughters and a son, who were born in 'Ishqábád to Mullá Ḥusayn 'Alí and his wife, Zahrá.

Sulaymán and Riḍváníyyih had been married approximately a year when, in 1923, together with Riḍváníyyih's father, two sisters, her brother and grandmother, they embarked upon a lifelong journey of devoted service to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, as they took their first steps toward their new home in Shanghai, China. They gave many years of distinguished service in that vast country.

Sulaymán would humbly and sweetly recount the occasion of his priceless privilege of accompanying Martha Root on her 1930 trip to Nanking, which was the capital of China at that time. Together with a few other Bahá'í friends, they attended numerous meetings at universities, the Royal Asiatic Society, and other places where many of the society's most influential members assembled to hear the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. Professor M. S. Tsao, an Honorary Consul for China in the United States, often visited Mr. and Mrs. Sulaymání's home in the afternoons, together with his wife, who was Swedish. One afternoon, when Martha Root was their guest of honor, Professor Tsao embraced the Faith. Later, in 1937, there was another visit by Martha Root, which he remembered with equal affection.

The Sulaymánís remained in China for 26 years, from 1924 to 1950, returning to Persia for a short period because of the socially and politically disturbed conditions in China. Mr. Sulaymání's father-in-law, Ḥusayn Ouskouli, decided to remain behind in Shanghai, and he passed the years remaining to him in continued service to his beloved Cause until, at the age of 82, he ascended to the Abhá Kingdom in 1956.

During their pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1952, the Sulaymánís were encouraged by the Guardian to attend the International Conference which was to be held in New Delhi the following year. At the Conference, over 70 people arose to pioneer, prompting the Sulaymánís to conclude that, "We had better go back to China, to Taiwan, because we know something about Chinese". When asked, "What will you do there?", Sulaymán recalled his answer: "Never mind. I can



Suleiman Suleimani

drive a taxi." He and his wife returned to Persia to get their personal affairs in order, and within a year they set sail aboard a ship bound from Khurramshar to Hong Kong, where they boarded another vessel and arrived in the port city of Keelung on 22 October 1954. On this momentous date, the Sulaymánís became the first pioneers in the history of Taiwan.

During their early years in Taiwan, the Sulaymánís worked side-by-side with great champions of the Faith who visited that land. Among these were the Hands of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, Agnes Alexander, Dhikru'lláh Khádim, Jalál Kházi', Dr. Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir, Collis Featherstone, Abu'l-Qásim Faydí, and Ṭarázu'lláh Samandarí. In the evening of his life, Sulaymán tenderly recounted stories of these visits with such overwhelming love and affection that the hearts with whom he shared these events could not help being profoundly touched with the spirit of those meetings.

When, in 1967, at the bidding of the Universal House of Justice, a National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Taiwan was formed, Sulaymán was elected as one of its members. He served on that august body until 1978. He also served as a deputy of the institution of Ḥuqúqu'lláh in Taiwan for about two decades.

A Bahá'í Centre was built in Tainan through the collective efforts of a number of friends: Bahá'ís in the community who helped secure a piece of property; Mr. and Mrs. Sulaymání who used the modest funds available to them; and a believer who was an architect who provided the designs. During the many years which followed, seekers from all walks of life passed through its doors and came to know the special embrace of "Mr. Su's" warm and kindly spirit. It was from this Centre that, in 1981, Riḍváníyyih winged her flight to the Abhá Kingdom.

Notwithstanding the fondness he might have developed for this dwelling-place of memories and the receptacle of the few material possessions remaining to him, Mr. Su's deepest heart was rooted elsewhere. In response to the suggestion that this Centre was a wonderful gift to the Tainan community, he shook his head "No." Standing at its entrance, Mr. Su seemed to dismiss the vision of the Centre before him with a wave of his hand, saying, "I hope one day soon, they can tear it all down." The surprised guests asked him why, and he gestured upwards with his arms as he said, "So they can build a bigger one...a better one than this, for the Faith".

Sulaymán Sulaymání passed away at the Tainan Bahá'í Centre on 6 July 1987, even as the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tainan, on which he and his beloved wife had served from its inception, was convened in its counsel chamber in a room near his bedside.

On 7 July, the Universal House of Justice sent the following message to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Taiwan:

> SADDENED LEARN PASSING DEVOTED SERVANT BAHA'U'LLAH SULEIMAN SULEIMANI.

HIS DEVOTED LABOURS AS PIONEER WITH HIS LATE WIFE TO CHINA IN 1923 AND IN 1954 AS FIRST PIONEERS TO TAIWAN LOVINGLY REMEMBERED. ASSURE ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS IMMORTAL SOUL ALL WORLDS GOD.

JAMES MANNERS

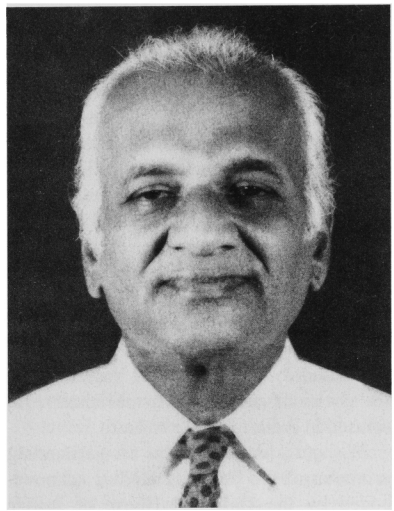
KANDIAH SIVAPIRAGASAM
1918–1987

Kandiah Sivapiragasam was born in 1918 in Ceylon. He married Thambiah Sarojinidevi, and together they had five children: Kanunakaran, Sivajini, Prabakaran, Bahakaran, and Shohikaran.

Sivapiragasam embraced the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh on 23 January 1953, one of the early believers enrolled by the first pioneer, Dr. Mohammed Ebrahimji Lukmani. He was a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Colombo from its inception, and was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly at the first Convention, held in 1962. Thereafter, except for a few times when he was stationed as an Assistant Food Controller in Trincomalee and Vavuniya, he served as a member of the National Assembly until 1969.

During 1969, an Administrative Committee for Ceylon was appointed by the Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone and Counsellor Sankaran-Nair Vasudevan, acting on behalf of the Universal House of Justice. This Committee, under Sivapiragasam's chairmanship, was responsible for the affairs of the Faith on the island until the Convention in 1972. It is worthy to note that until incorporation of the National Assembly in 1972, he was one of the trustees of the properties of the Faith.

From Riḍván 1975 until Riḍván 1982, he served as chairman of the National Assembly, and for a short period as vice-chairman during the following year. In 1983, he had the privilege of attending the International Bahá'í Convention in Haifa in April, but in July of that year he had to resign from the National Assembly because of poor health.



Kandiah Sivapiragasam

Sivapiragasam served on various National Committees, and was the Bahá'í speaker at the World Religion Day observance held in January 1982 at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall in Colombo. He also addressed the World Religion Day gatherings in Jaffna in 1986 and 1987.

He was fairly well-known as a Bahá'í in his home town, Chunnakam. This locality had a Local Spiritual Assembly and year in and year out he served as chairman of that institution.

When he was serving as an Assistant Food Controller in Vavuniya, one could see him every evening on a bicycle visiting the Bahá'ís in the remote villages. One such evening when it was too late and unsafe to ride back to town, owing to elephants crossing the path, he sent his companion (a Bahá'í) to get permission from the owners to spend the night in a school. Sivapiragasam's instruction was not to disclose his identity as the authorities would feel uneasy and would want to treat him well. Before going to sleep

the companion had offered Sivapiragasam his bedsheet. Refusing his kind offer, he said that he had brought his, but on waking up in the morning, his companion saw him sleeping on the bare floor. When asked why he chose to sleep on the floor when a sheet was offered, he had said "Is it justice for me to sleep on your sheet that you brought for yourself?"

In his career as a government officer he was well-known for his integrity and uprightness. Following submission of his papers for retirement, the government offered him the post of Government Agent (the administrative authority responsible for implementing the decisions of the District Minister). He refused in order to serve the Faith.

Without a doubt he was an outstanding promoter of the Cause of God as acknowledged by the Universal House of Justice in its message on hearing of his death on 2 August 1987. The text reads:

> SADDENED PASSING OUTSTANDING PROMOTER CAUSE K. SIVAPIRAGASAM. HIS LONG SUCCESSFUL SINCERE SERVICES FAITH SINCE ITS INCEPTION SRI LANKA UNFORGETTABLE. ADVISE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS. ASSURE FRIENDS RELATIVES LOVING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS SOUL ETERNAL KINGDOM.
>
> THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF SRI LANKA

FREDERICK LAWS
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1913–1987

Many years of exemplary Bahá'í service began for Frederick Laws in 1935, when he decided to enter an essay contest called "World Peace and Understanding".

Try as he might, he could not come to a conclusion in his essay how this could be accomplished considering the problem of so many languages. His essay was never mailed. At about this time, Frederick's mother noticed an advertisement in a Seattle, Washington, newspaper for an Esperanto class and she brought it to his attention.

The teacher of the class was Lorrol Jackson, a very active and well-loved Bahá'í, who in later years pioneered to Hawaii. Through Lorrol, Frederick became a Bahá'í and proficient enough in Esperanto to take over her class when she left to pioneer to Spokane, Washington, in 1936.

Frederick was born on 21 December 1913 in Pineridge, Alabama. While teaching the Esperanto class which had led him to the Faith, he met Elizabeth Stanley,[1] who became a Bahá'í through him in August of 1937. He had been a Bahá'í only 11 weeks when they first met. In spite of a 25 year age difference, they fell in love and married in June of 1939 and began a long and happy life in tandem, serving the Faith, beginning in the Seattle area where Beth served on the Local Spiritual Assembly in 1938.

In answer to calls for pioneers, Frederick and Beth decided in 1940 to go to Chile. However, because of World War II, the Chilean Consul would not grant visas to them. Instead, they went to San Diego, California, where they had been advised that the Bahá'í community needed administrative assistance. They stayed there until after the war, when they returned to Washington State.

In 1948, Frederick began to study at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon, and graduated in 1953 with a bachelor of science degree in education. Beth also took some classes there, learning to paint, which allowed her to create some lovely pictures of places to which they later pioneered.

With a degree to work with, they responded to the Guardian's call for pioneers to Africa and their long-awaited adventure began. On 10 March 1953 they set sail, with their car and trailer, on the Farrel Lines' *African Sun*, arriving at Mombasa, Kenya, about six weeks later.

[1] See In Memoriam for Elizabeth Laws, *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVII, p. 459.

They arrived in Nairobi in May 1953 and felt immediately at home. The climate was ideal: cool nights and pleasant days. They found the Kenyans very receptive to the Faith. They also made friends with Indians living in Nairobi, enabling them to introduce the Faith to that segment of the population as well.

In August 1953, Frederick secured a teaching position at the Kabete Trade and Technical School eight miles west of Nairobi, and they began to live on the campus. He was able to do sheet metal work there, which was what he liked to do most, next to his Bahá'í work, so he was very happy.

Five months after arriving in Kenya, Frederick and Beth were given another assignment and were off on a new adventure, leaving for Basutoland on 26 September 1953. During this 3,100 mile trek their trailer broke down four times, but with temporary repairs they managed to get to Teyateyaneng, where they stayed in a hotel until they decided how to proceed. Those pioneers who had reached their goal countries by 15 October 1953 were designated Knights of Bahá'u'lláh by the Guardian, so Frederick and Beth were both "knighted" for being the first Bahá'ís in Basutoland.

By December, they were in Maseru, where they settled in a cottage waiting to see if they would be asked to remain there or go on to Northern Rhodesia or Southwest Africa. They grew a garden while there.

By August 1954, they had received permission from the chief of the Basuto village of Chadwick's Halt to move into the village to teach the Faith. Eventually they moved back to the Government Reserve in Maseru, and by December 1954, they had obtained a permit allowing them to stay in Basutoland until 31 January 1956 so they rented a house and Frederick set up a small workshop.

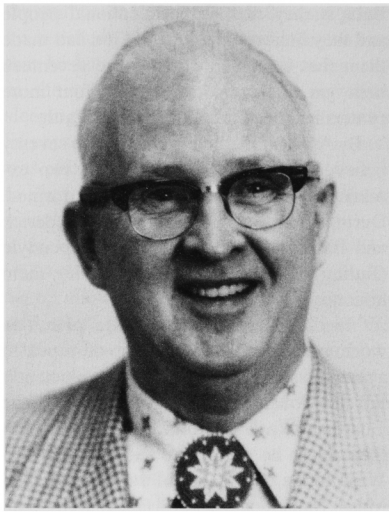
Almost every week Frederick and Beth had visitors from Johannesburg to help with the teaching work in Basutoland. The Africans were now beginning to feel that all the Bahá'ís they met were exceptional people and they believed the love of God had made them that way. Soon there were seventeen believers in three locations and four more centers had been introduced to the Faith.

By April 1955, there were close to seventy believers in Basutoland, including two ex-ministers, with seven Assemblies formed. During their stay in Basutoland, Frederick and Beth were adopted into the Crocodyle (Ruling) Clan of the Basuto, making them honorary Basuto.

Frederick was never given a permit to work in Basutoland, in spite of repeated attempts, so in May 1956 they reluctantly left for Johannesburg. They wrote to the Guardian to ask where in Africa he thought they might be of service and he suggested West Africa. The Hands of the Cause of God Músá Banání and Paul Haney were both present at the Johannesburg Convention, and after consultation it was decided Frederick and Beth should proceed to Gambia, where 300 believers and six Assemblies were in need of administrative assistance.

Unfortunately their stay in Bathhurst, Gambia, was cut short as they were not allowed to stay either as visitors or to teach the Faith. They applied for a six month pass to help train the Assemblies but had to leave while waiting for a reply. The pass was never issued.

By July 1956 they were in Monrovia, Liberia, and were planning to settle there with Frederick possibly going into partnership with George and Bessie Washington. These Bahá'ís had become naturalized citizens of Liberia and were permitted to hold 400 acres of property on which they planned to build a trade school, and some of which was already growing fruits and vegetables. This partnership was short lived so our travellers went on to ZarZar where Frederick procured a position with Brown and Blauvelt, a consulting engineering firm with head offices in New York. The company was to do the engineering, survey and supervisory inspection work on the building of a bridge



Frederick Laws

and its access road. Frederick set up the field office in ZarZar as well as the river camp.

They remained at this camp until they decided to return to the United States in late 1956.

The couple was active in the Seattle area until 1964, when they pioneered to the Omaha Indian Reservation in Macy, Nebraska. They were not able to live in the center designated for them due to flooding, so the teaching work became a weekend affair while Frederick attended Wayne State Teachers' College to do graduate work for a teaching degree. Unable to find a teaching position after he finished school, they were forced to leave the area and return to Seattle, where Frederick found a position as drafting engineer at General Electric.

In 1976, Frederick retired from General Electric and in April of that year they set off again for Africa, stopping in Haifa on the way to visit the Bahá'í Holy Places and the friends there. They proceeded to Moshi, Tanzania, and upon arrival there in May they sent for some of their household items. They felt at home with Mt. Kilimanjaro visible 20 miles to the north and the people were friendly to the Bahá'ís.

Frederick was appointed to the National Properties Committee, for which he tried to facilitate a lease on some property on which to build a centre. He also attended the Nairobi International Bahá'í Conference in October 1976. This was a big success, with nearly 1,000 Africans participating and more than 50 countries represented.

In spite of repeated attempts to obtain a permanent residence pass valid for three years, Frederick and Beth were only able to get extensions of three months at a time. This uncertainty, plus an injured ankle, became so hard on Beth, who longed to be more settled in her advancing years, that her health suffered and they decided to return to the United States in December 1976, after having the crates, which had just reached them, turned around unopened.

They returned to Washington State, and in April 1977 pioneered to Wapato, on the Yakima Indian Reservation, where they served until Beth departed this world for the Abhá Kingdom on 24 June 1978, just three months short of reaching her 90th birthday. She was the first Bahá'í to be buried on the Yakima Reservation.

Left on his own, Frederick began to move about from community to community wherever he was needed. In the fall of 1979, Frederick and his sister, Alberta MacCartney, went on pilgrimage.

In January 1982, he had his first operation for a brain tumour from which he recovered sufficiently to continue his travelling, going as far as San Diego. However, the brain tumour overtook him once more and he never really recovered from a second operation. He finally joined his beloved Beth on 16 November 1987. He was buried in Sequim, Washington.

JEAN LAWS

ALESSANDRO BAUSANI
1921–1988

O my God! O my God! Verily, thy servant, humble before the majesty of Thy divine supremacy, lowly at the door of Thy oneness, hath believed in Thee and in Thy verses, hath testified to Thy word, hath been enkindled with the fire of Thy love, hath been immersed in the depths of the ocean of Thy knowledge, hath been attracted by Thy breezes, hath relied upon Thee, hath turned his face to Thee, hath offered his supplications to Thee, and hath been assured of Thy pardon and forgiveness. He hath abandoned this mortal life and hath flown to the kingdom of immortality, yearning for the favour of meeting Thee.

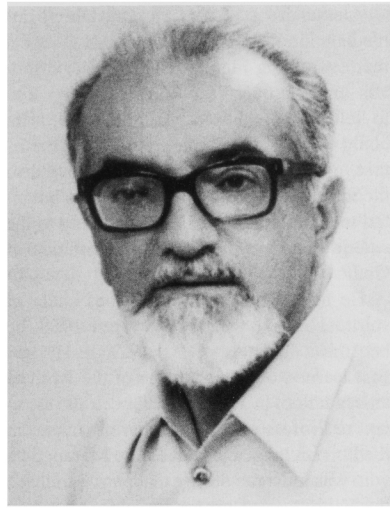
O Lord, glorify his station, shelter him under the pavilion of Thy supreme mercy, cause him to enter Thy glorious paradise, and perpetuate his existence in Thine exalted rose garden, that he may plunge into the sea of light in the world of mysteries.

Verily, Thou art the Generous, the Powerful, the Forgiver and the Bestower.

—'Abdu'l-Bahá[1]

Alessandro Bausani was a highly esteemed scholar whose unceasing search for knowledge was expressed through his numerous articles, essays, and books. At home, he was the honoured Professor Emeritus and director of both the School of Oriental Studies and the Institute of Islamic Studies at the University of Rome *La Sapienza*. He was also a member of the *Lincei* National Academy. Abroad, he received many awards such as the *Sitara-Imtiyaz*, bestowed upon him by the government of Pakistan in 1967 for his work in promoting the spread of the Urdu language and culture.

[1] *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre; 1978), pp. 196-7.



Alessandro Bausani

Among Professor Bausani's best known works were *Persiana Religiosa (Religious Persia)* and *Islam*, his translation of the Qur'án into the Italian language, and his excellent translation of *The Mystical Poems of Rumi*. Yet these titles and accomplishments cannot singularly represent his multi-faceted personality, his versatility and his spiritual knowledge.

Alessandro Bausani was born in Rome on 29 May 1921. He received religious education during his youth, and expressed a capacity for literary studies. His field of specialization was linguistics, and he studied many languages and the relationships between languages. But he also did research in other branches of human knowledge such as astronomy and mathematics.

His international reputation as a scholar of various disciplines was based on his extraordinary ability to express scientific and religious concepts with a kind of meticulous precision. His startling paradoxes would leave his readers not only amazed at his originality, but also extremely interested in his perceptions.

Alessandro was very cordial, taking immediate interest in others. He loved to repeat that everything required a deliberate effort. His endless quest for knowledge led him to believe that all men, including those who could be considered among the most important, are as but nothing when compared to the infinite. He affirmed that people's potential to acquire value is developed only to the extent that they follow the Manifestation of God.

He had already made a serious study of spiritual reality when, on 8 April 1950, he became a follower of Bahá'u'lláh. He had first learned of the existence of the Faith as an academic. In 1948, he had been the assistant to Professor Rossi, teacher of courses in the Persian language. Mr. Philip Marangella, who was in Rome during that period to teach the Faith, signed up for the class as a way of meeting people. Later, Dr. Ugo Giachery, future Hand of the Cause of God, and then Miss Elsa Scola, future wife of Professor Bausani, joined these courses. Dr. Giachery invited Alessandro to the celebration of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, and it was this that changed the direction of Alessandro's search for truth.

From the moment of his declaration of faith, Alessandro's knowledge and actions converged in service to the Cause. His ardent desire was to share the Message with all he met. He was an untiring speaker at schools, seminars, courses, and conferences, to which he dedicated virtually all of his time. He was director of the Italian quarterly magazine *Opinioni Bahá'í* from its foundation. He helped sustain every institution or committee, national or local, on which he was called to serve, with his presence and effort. He was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy and Switzerland during all the years of its existence, then was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy from 1964 to 1984.

The cruel and lengthy illness which struck him during his last years of life kept him from publishing books on the Faith, but his essays and articles were gathered together and published in one volume in 1991 by the National Publishing Trust of Italy under the title *Saggi sulla Fede Bahá'í (Essays on the Bahá'í Faith)*.

The honour and glory of this sorely-missed friend belong not only to this world but to the world of the spirit as well. Only the message sent to the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy on 15 March 1988 from the Universal House of Justice, three days after his passing, can summarize his rank:

> DEEPLY SADDENED PASSING PROFESSOR ALESSANDRO BAUSANI. HIS DEATH DEPRIVES BAHÁ'Í WORLD COMMUNITY ONE OF ITS FEW OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS AND ITALIAN FRIENDS ONE OF THEIR MOST DISTINGUISHED BELIEVERS. HIS LONG YEARS STEADFAST SERVICES AS MEMBER NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY ENRICHED BY ACADEMIC RECOGNITION WHICH HE USED UNSTINTINGLY FOR SERVICE CAUSE LENDING IT AUTHORITY AND PRESTIGE WORLD OF LEARNING ASSURE HIM HIGH HONOR ANNALS FAITH ENDURING LOVING MEMORY ITALIAN COMMUNITY. EXTEND HEARTFELT SYMPATHY RELATIONS FRIENDS ASSURANCE PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Adapted from an article by
GIOVANNI PAPPALETTERA

BEATRICE OWENS ASHTON
1890–1988

When Beatrice Owens Ashton passed away in Cleveland, Ohio, United States of America, on 8 May 1988, the Universal House of Justice cabled:

> SHARE DEEP SORROW PASSING DEVOTED HANDMAIDEN BAHA'U'LLAH BEATRICE OWENS ASHTON. IN HER TIRELESS, INCALCULABLE SERVICES FAITH SPANNING SEVEN DECADES FROM CLOSING YEARS HEROIC AGE, SHE DREW CONSTANT INSPIRATION FROM HER

CONTACTS WITH BELOVED MASTER AND SHOGHI EFFENDI. HER EXTENSIVE TRAVELS IN EUROPE, HER PIONEERING TO ALBERTA, CANADA, DURING TEN YEAR WORLD CRUSADE AND LATER SERVICES AT BAHA'I WORLD CENTRE FOR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT COMBINED WITH ALL HER NUMEROUS ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES HAVE PRODUCED LEGACY EXEMPLARY SINGLEMINDED DEDICATION TO CAUSE TO WHICH SHE GAVE LAST MEASURE HER EARTHLY STRENGTH. EXTEND LOVING SYMPATHY HER DEAR FAMILY. ASSURE ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER PRECIOUS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Born in Cleveland, on 17 May 1890, to John R. Owens and Louise Benton Owens, Beatrice attended and graduated from Hathaway Brown School in 1907 and from Vassar College, New York, in 1911. In July 1918, she went to a new job in Urbana, Illinois. There, in the summer heat, she was sitting on a porch opposite a forest preserve when she saw a group of people picnicking. She was told they were Bahá'ís and that "they believe that Christ has returned". She soon met them, read *Paris Talks*, and went to classes taught by Dr. Jacob and Mrs. Anna Kunz. "It was a beautiful group of Bahá'ís to grow in", she later said. As Bahá'ís did in those days, she immediately wrote to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and she received treasured replies.

When Beatrice moved to the Boston area and worked as an editorial secretary for the *Journal of Industrial Hygiene*, she served on the Local Spiritual Assembly and on the programme committee for Green Acre Bahá'í School, where she met Frank Ashton. They were married at Green Acre in August 1919. She said later in her life, "Green Acre has always meant a great deal to me". She went back whenever she could.

There followed a long period in which Beatrice was busy earning a living and raising her son, John. She moved to Ohio, where she worked in university hospitals in Cleveland doing editorial research, and then to Illinois, living in Evanston, Wilmette, and Winnetka while she worked for Abbott Laboratories in Waukegan. She was a member of the Local Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'í communities in which she resided.

After World War II, Beatrice felt she could finally devote the time to Bahá'í activities that she had so longed to do, and in 1945 she was appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States to be the international relief representative for Germany and the Philippines.

Each summer from 1947 to 1953, Beatrice undertook two- to three-month teaching trips for the United States European Teaching Committee, visiting Bahá'í communities in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. During these travels she gave many talks, held firesides, and presented courses she had developed on Bahá'í Administration and on the World Crusade. As she wrote in one of her reports to the ETC, "Teaching the Faith through the Administrative Order seems to appeal to their need for a practical plan that works".

Going back to many of the same places year after year, she could provide the Guardian with a running account of the growth of the Faith in these countries and the problems they were facing. As if these efforts were not enough, Beatrice was also chairman and secretary for the publication of Volume XII of *The Bahá'í World*, and she corresponded extensively with the Guardian about this international record. He expressed his appreciation by writing:

> May the Almighty abundantly reward you for your truly remarkable and meritorious efforts and service in distant fields, remove every obstacle and enable you to win still greater victories for the Faith.

In April 1952, she went on pilgrimage to Haifa and was enabled to meet the beloved Guardian for the first time.

After 1953, Beatrice focused her efforts on administrative tasks in the United States:



Beatrice Owens Ashton

Volume XIII of *The Bahá'í World*, the worship programmes at the House of Worship, and the editorial committee of *Bahá'í News*, among other tasks. In addition to these efforts, for which she was well qualified as an editorial assistant, she taught numerous courses at Green Acre, Louhelen, and Geyserville Bahá'í Schools in the United States, and at Beaulac, Banff, and Toronto in Canada.

Teaching courses in Canada brought her into closer contact with the Canadian Bahá'ís and when the Ten Year Crusade called for pioneers (she had then retired from Abbott Laboratories), she volunteered to pioneer in Canada, and was sent to Lethbridge, Alberta. During the years 1958 to 1966, while stationed in Lethbridge, she continued teaching throughout Canada, especially her course on the Ten Year Crusade, and represented Canada at the dedication of the House of Worship in Germany.

By 1966, Lethbridge had a Local Spiritual Assembly and Beatrice went back to European teaching, making four trips to Norway and other European countries by 1970.

In April 1970, Beatrice again went to Haifa, where she was offered the opportunity to use her editorial skills in the Research Department at the Bahá'í World Centre. She jumped at the chance. For two years she catalogued and indexed the Guardian's letters and other correspondence, made frequent trips to the Bahá'í Shrines, and soaked up knowledge of the Faith from the many knowledgeable and dedicated Bahá'ís at the World Centre. When, at the age of 82, she was being overtaken by poor health and had to return to the United States, the Universal House of Justice wrote:

> You have performed highly meritorious service at the World Centre and have endeared yourself to all members of the staff here. We are deeply grateful to you.

Although Beatrice then officially "retired", her great love for the Faith drove her on to accept work from the House of Justice that she could carry out in her apartment in Cleveland. She compiled a subject index of *Citadel of Faith* and of *Messages to America*, thereby enabling the House of Justice to find immediately what the Guardian had said on many subjects. She also indexed those parts of the Writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh which had been translated by Shoghi Effendi. She crowned this phase of her services by indexing *The Dawn-Breakers.*

By the fall of 1976 she was practically blind, and could no longer perform the services at which she had so ardently labored for so long. But for another decade she continued to correspond with the many devoted Bahá'ís she had met around the world. Their news of the growth of the Faith sustained her in her last years.

Throughout Beatrice's teaching and administrative services to the Faith, people were always impressed with her whole-hearted and loving devotion to the Administrative Order, the Guardianship, and then to the Universal House of Justice. She was tireless in her devotion, and indefatigable in her desire to do the very best she could to help her beloved Guardian and then the House of

Justice. For these reasons, the high points of her life were the times spent in Haifa. As the Guardian wrote her in the midst of her endeavors, *"...your share in deepening the faith and understanding of the believers regarding the essentials of the Revelation of Baha'u'llah and its distinguishing features has been truly outstanding"*.

While at the Bahá'í World Centre, Beatrice worked closely with Mr. 'Alí Nakhjavání, a member of the Universal House of Justice, and continued an extensive correspondence with him thereafter. Mr. Nakhjavání probably knew Beatrice best in her later years of Bahá'í service. He wrote to her, "The services you are rendering are precious beyond description", and later, "The determination and thoroughness with which you are pursuing the work given to you by the Universal House of Justice are truly most remarkable". And then, "I sense the vibrations of your indomitable spirit, your unwavering constancy and your inflexible resolve to pursue nobly and courageously the path of selfless stewardship to God's Holy Cause".

But Beatrice certainly treasured most the words of the Guardian:

> May the Almighty bless abundantly and continuously your manifold, incessant, and highly meritorious activities to enable you to enrich the record of your splendid accomplishments in both the teaching and administrative sphere of Bahá'í service.

JOHN ASHTON

CYNTHIA AND EDGAR OLSON
1903–1988/1908–1989

Cynthia Ruth Barnard Olson was born of English stock on 7 November 1903 in Hennepin, Illinois, U.S.A., the second eldest of five children. Her great-grandfather, Williamson Durly, was an abolitionist, and his home in Hennepin was one of the stations on the "underground railway" by which slaves from the South were able to escape to freedom in the North. Cynthia often speculated that the bold stand taken by this forebear with respect to God-given rights of all mankind may have contributed to the bounty of her eventually finding and accepting the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

At the age of 14, Cynthia entered Indiana University. After one year she took a position as teacher in a one-room country school, later returning to the University to complete her studies in philosophy and journalism.

Upon graduation, she accepted a job as reporter and feature writer for the *Miami Herald*, in Florida, soon thereafter transferring to the field of hotel and resort publicity. This took her to New York City and Washington, D.C., and it was then that she came in contact with the Bahá'í Faith. Her earliest teacher was Clara Weir of California, who arranged for her to meet Mariam Haney and her son, Paul Haney, and Cora Oliver, all of whom were living in Washington, D.C. On 22 June 1939, her letter of acceptance into the Bahá'í Faith was received from the Local Spiritual Assembly of Washington, D.C.

These early days of her life as a believer were spent in the company of many other legendary Bahá'ís, including Genevieve Coy, Juliet Thompson, Stanwood Cobb, Borrah Kavelin, and Philip Sprague. While attending weekly deepenings in New York City, Cynthia heard Shoghi Effendi's appeal to the friends to "leave the big cities" and help establish Local Assemblies in those states which did not yet have them. In November 1942, she moved to Wilmington, Delaware, and was soon elected to the first Local Assembly of that city.

Within weeks of her arrival, Cynthia met her future husband, Edgar "Olie" Olson.

Edgar A. Olson was born in Wilmington, Delaware, on 6 August 1908 to Swedish immigrants, Charles and Hilda Olson. His father died while Olie was still an infant, and so by the age of 12, he was contributing to the family income, first by selling newspapers on a street corner and later by



Cynthia and Edgar Olson

working at a soda fountain in a local pharmacy.

After graduation from Wilmington High School, Olie received a scholarship from a member of the Dupont family to attend a one-year business course at Babson Institute in Wellesley, Massachusetts. On his final report card, the finance professor, Mr. A.H. Fittz, wrote: "An iconoclast, worthy of respect, who will do more for himself and for others and so will be able to accomplish more in life if he can learn to become more charitable toward the weaknesses of the conformists." Yet it was Olie's desire to always strive beyond status quo that led him to embrace the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh and to serve that Faith so illustriously his entire life.

From Babson, Olie worked for several different companies in the East and Midwest United States before returning to Wilmington at the time of his mother's death. He was operating a retail food store there when he met Cynthia and she introduced him to the Bahá'í Faith. It speaks eloquently of their relationship that, after Olie's death, the original check that Cynthia wrote to Olson's Food on her first visit to the store was still in his personal papers. He had never cashed it, and Cynthia has written in her memoirs that Olie discovered her name, address, and telephone number from that check.

In April 1944, Olie became the first native of Delaware to become a Bahá'í and their marriage, on 25 August that year, was the first Bahá'í marriage recognized by the state of Delaware. Shoghi Effendi hung their marriage certificate on the wall of his room at Bahjí.

Olie and Cynthia spent all their free time in Bahá'í work. In the same month he embraced the Faith, Edgar helped form the first Local Spiritual Assembly in the state of Delaware, and at a later date, he was one of the incorporators of that Assembly.

During this time Cynthia served on the United States National Bahá'í Information Service. In 1953, when this committee was charged with arranging press conferences in Chicago for the visit of the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum and the dedication of the House of Worship there, the Olsons heard of Shoghi

Effendi's plans for the Ten Year Crusade and his call for pioneers to settle the remaining virgin territories of the globe. They immediately made their commitment to arise to this call.

After much prayer, consultation, letter writing, and several false starts searching for an opening to settle in one of these 131 countries—which had to be reached by 2 May 1954, the final day of the first year of the Crusade, in order to meet the beloved Guardian's hope—they finally chose the Mariana Islands as their goal. In fact, they received the necessary security clearance from the United States Department of the Navy just two weeks before the first year of the Crusade was to end. Since the family business had to be sold, Olie stayed in Delaware to wind up their affairs, so Cynthia arrived alone on Guam on the morning of 2 May 1954, the very last day of the first year of the Ten Year Crusade. Olie joined her there on 6 April 1955.

So it was that Cynthia was named Knight of Bahá'u'lláh to the Mariana Islands. She often expressed her belief that, although Olie was not able to arrive at his post before the close of that year, it was due to his sacrifice that she was able to do so, and he shared with her in her heart that distinction.

Many "firsts" were to follow over the next few years. The first mention of the Faith on the air in the Marianas was made by Cynthia in 1954 on her "Woman's World" radio program; the first Micronesian believer was enrolled in April 1956 in time to form the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Guam, the first Spiritual Assembly in Micronesia, which was then incorporated in 1957; the first Chamorro language translation was made at that time; and the first Bahá'í wedding in Micronesia was held in the Olson home, receiving publicity in Guam's newspaper.

The Ten Year Crusade goal set by the Guardian for the Mariana Islands had been for one pioneer to reside in the area. The goal was exceeded three-fold within the first three years with (1) the establishment of the National Spiritual Assembly, (2) its incorporation and legal recognition, and (3) an indigenous translation. Consequently, the Mariana Islands was designated an "outstanding center" on the Guardian's Ten Year Crusade map.

While employed by the local radio station, Cynthia was offered a position on the headquarters staff of the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, which she accepted. This fortunate turn of events placed her in a position of direct contact with many Micronesians, and with the able and enthusiastic cooperation of fellow Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, Virginia Breaks of the Caroline Islands, friendships were formed and many Micronesians learned of the Faith and its teachings. When Cynthia was appointed Supervisor of Student Affairs for the Trust Territory government, charged with arranging for sponsors for the Micronesian students who went to Guam for school, and for otherwise looking out for their welfare while they were away from home, many for the first time, this had an impact of far-reaching proportions.

Her kindnesses and concern for these students, which on innumerable occasions included providing hospitality in the Olsons' own home, are remembered today throughout the far-flung islands of the northwest Pacific. Many of those students are now the leaders and legislators of the newly formed governments of the area, as well as teachers and businessmen, and their respect and knowledge of the Faith, which they associate with Cynthia, is often publicly and sympathetically acknowledged.

Olie worked for KUAM television as a reporter, commentator, and station manager, as well as managing a radio and television station for the same company on the island of Saipan. And he is still fondly remembered on Guam for the restaurant he built in the village of Inarajan, the building which now serves as the Inarajan Bahá'í Center. His Swedish pancakes were so renowned that Olie often remarked that he hoped he would

be remembered for those services he had rendered the Cause, rather than for the pancakes that he had made!

Those services were considerable. He travelled to teach extensively in the Pacific region, including a six-month trip in 1969 to many of the islands of the South Pacific. Everywhere he went, he was involved in proclamation and publicity activities for the Faith, especially in the realm of presentations to prominent public figures. He was a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Guam, which formed the same year he arrived. In 1971, when smaller Assembly areas were instituted, he became a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Inarajan, serving on that body until the time of his death. Olie was instrumental in the acquisition of the property for both the Temple site and the National Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds on Guam, and for the erection of the present National Center on that island. He also arranged for the purchase of a Temple site and endowment land in Taiwan, Republic of China, on behalf of the Universal House of Justice.

Cynthia was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the North West Pacific Ocean when it was formed in 1972, embracing the Marshall, Caroline and Mariana Islands, and she continued to serve as a member until the National Spiritual Assembly of the Mariana Islands was formed in 1978. She was then elected to the Marianas Assembly and served for the first two years of its existence. During this time she was also active as a member of various national committees and Local Assemblies and made several teaching trips throughout the Pacific, as well as attending many international conferences and the International Convention of 1973.

In 1978, the Bahá'í community of the Mariana Islands gathered for a banquet to honour their Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, to mark the 75th year of Cynthia's life, her 40 years as a Bahá'í, and 25 years as a resident at her pioneer post. The Governor of Guam and his wife attended, along with other dignitaries. In 1984, another public commemoration was held, noting the 30th anniversary of Cynthia's arrival in the Marianas.

A few days before the 11th National Bahá'í Convention, marking the first decade of a national community in the Marianas, Cynthia Olson passed away. Appropriately, her funeral was held as part of that Convention, and was attended by Bahá'ís from throughout the Marianas as well as by many neighbors and government officials. It also received extensive media coverage in Guam.

Her qualities of perseverance and persistence, and of devotion to detail, contributed more to the progress of the Cause in the Mariana Islands than possibly any other acts by any other believers. Even when homebound and later bed-ridden, as she was for the last few years of her life, always her first question when greeting visitors was, "What is new with the Faith?" Her regret that she was no longer able to be actively involved in service to the Cause during those last years was acute.

On 21 May 1988, the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh to the Mariana Islands was laid to rest on a beautiful hill in the central portion of Guam, fulfilling her earnest wish to "bury my bones at my post." Upon learning of her passing, the following cable was sent on 19 May by the Universal House of Justice:

> GRIEVED LEARN PASSING DEARLY LOVED KNIGHT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH CYNTHIA OLSON WHOSE DEVOTED SERVICES FAITH SPANNED NEARLY HALF CENTURY, THIRTY-FOUR YEARS OF WHICH WERE SPENT AT HER PIONEER POST IN GUAM WHERE SHE SERVED ON FIRST NATIONAL ASSEMBLY NORTHWEST PACIFIC OCEAN. ASSURE LOVING FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER IMMORTAL SOUL ALL WORLDS GOD. KINDLY CONVEY CONDOLENCES TO HER DEAR HUSBAND EDGAR AND HER FRIENDS.

In spite of his beloved wife's death and his own ill-health, Edgar Olson remained

active to his last days, completing a trip to Palau and Yap just before departing on his last vacation. He had even planned to speak to the children of the Inarajan Bahá'í School upon his return from vacation.

This was not to be, however. Olie passed away in his sleep while visiting Bahá'í friends in Nova Scotia, Canada, on the morning of 5 September 1989. He was laid to rest in Maple Wood Cemetery on 8 September, the first Bahá'í to be interred in a recently purchased Bahá'í burial plot.

Many exemplary qualities come to mind when describing Olie. He was steadfast, audacious, and extremely dedicated. Olie often asked a great deal of those around him, but not nearly as much as he asked of himself. It was always more important to him to have done his best for the Cause than to have accolades for his work. As one believer on Guam noted, Olie's life showed what one ordinary person whose life was completely consecrated to the love of Bahá'u'lláh can and did accomplish.

Compiled from memorial articles by
SHERYL MELLOR AND THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE MARIANA ISLANDS

THELMA PERKS
1901–1988

With the passing of Miss Thelma Perks on 21 May 1988, the Australian Bahá'í community lost one of its remaining links to the first pioneers to this vast continent, Clara and Hyde Dunn.

Thelma was born on 21 July 1901. Her affluent background allowed her to travel extensively in Europe and North America as a young woman, just as it later enabled her to devote all her time and energy to the propagation and administration of the Bahá'í Faith throughout the Australasian region.

She was on a ship sailing from Southhampton to New York when she saw a photo of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in a friend's cabin and remarked, "That's an interesting face!" The boat was about to cross the Atlantic, and her friend, who said she would tell Thelma about Bahá'í when they arrived in New York, took her to visit the Kinneys at their home on Riverside Drive. This notable Bahá'í couple loaned Thelma their copy of *The Dawn-Breakers*, which she read in the early hours of each morning after returning from various New York night clubs. On one occasion tears streamed down her face as she realised the truth of the Faith.

While in America, Thelma met May Maxwell and Sylvia Matheson, as well as many other Bahá'ís, to whom she promised that she would visit Clara and Hyde Dunn when she returned to Sydney. The Dunns, who had brought the Bahá'í teachings to Australia in 1920, were then living in Randwick. They later moved to Kiribilli on the north side of the harbour, close to Thelma's residence in Mosman. Thelma thought them such wonderful people, she happily became Clara Dunn's driver and helped the Dunns in whatever way she could, but it was not until early 1947 that she declared herself a Bahá'í.

Between 1947 and 1953, the Australian Bahá'ís pursued a six year teaching plan in which Thelma's support for Clara Dunn, and companionship with her during innumerable teaching trips, was invaluable. Together they visited Bahá'í communities in such far-flung places as Wollongong, Adelaide and Brisbane.

At Riḍván 1948 they flew, together with Mariette Bolton, to participate in the formation of the Woodville Local Spiritual Assembly in the suburbs of Adelaide, South Australia. At this time Thelma served on the Library Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly, on the Regional Teaching Committee for New South Wales, and on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Sydney. She helped organise National Conventions at the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds at 2 Lang Road, Paddington, and participated in summer and winter schools at the Yerrinbool Bahá'í School. Meetings were conducted at "Bidura", Thelma's residence at Bowral close to the

Yerrinbool School, and at her home in Mosman. In 1950, she donated several acres of land to the Yerrinbool School on the condition that the fact not be publicized and that the land not be named after her.

Great efforts were being made at this time to establish Bahá'í communities in the larger country towns, away from the big city centres where large communities already existed. Thus, in January 1952 Thelma was in Ballarat for World Religion Day, and in March she and Dulcie Dive visited Wollongong and secured the Miners' Hall for that community's holding of Feasts and special anniversaries for the remainder of the year. In 1953, at the close of Australia's Six Year Plan, Thelma moved temporarily to Grafton in northern New South Wales, to fulfil her commitment to establishing a locality there.

During the World Crusade, Thelma served simultaneously on the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, and as an Auxiliary Board member to the Hand of the Cause of God Clara Dunn. She was first elected to the National Assembly in January 1954, when a by-election was held to replace five members who had chosen to pioneer in the Pacific. At this time the relationship between the two arms of the Administrative Order was evolving, and Clara Dunn announced the appointment of Thelma Perks and Collis Featherstone as her Auxiliary Board members during National Convention in 1954. After explaining to the assembled delegates and observers that the Guardian wished her to appoint two assistants, she placed her hand on the shoulder of Collis Featherstone who was sitting beside her as chairman, and said, "I appoint Collis, and Thelma Perks, standing at the back of the room!"

From that time forward, Thelma travelled constantly both in Australia and around the Pacific, visiting Bahá'í communities to encourage them in their work. In 1954, she accompanied Clara Dunn in visiting Bahá'í communities in Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania; the following year, the two revisited Victoria and Queensland. In 1955, Thelma visited New Zealand, and late in 1956 she made her first visits to Noumea, New Caledonia; Port Vila, New Hebrides; Papeete, Tahiti; Apia, Western Samoa; and Suva, Fiji, before returning to Sydney via Auckland.

No one was more capable of raising the spirits of the isolated pioneers, of cheering their hearts, and comforting them in the midst of their physical hardships and deprivation. And yet, no more incongruous scene can be imagined than this woman, regal in appearance, gracious in manner, and elegant under all conditions, travelling and living in circumstances of extreme discomfort and improvisation. No one enjoyed this paradox more than Thelma herself.

She later recalled her first visit to Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Bertha Dobbins who had settled in Port Vila in the New Hebrides (later known as Vanuatu). For ten days in 1956 she slept on three boxes in a spider and cockroach infested room beneath swarming mosquitoes, in a mosquito net full of holes. "Once I got into that bed", she recalled, "I just lay still. I wouldn't stick my big toe out for anything...because the rats were mighty things. Bertha had slung a wire across the room with a bit of a curtain and the rats used to walk up and down that wire while you were just sitting there". Such situations were encountered in many other locations during the next two decades.

In 1957, Thelma attended the first New Zealand National Convention before moving on to Fiji, Samoa, the Cook Islands and Tahiti. While in Fiji visiting Irene Williams and the Fijian Bahá'ís, she stayed overnight in a traditional village. In the evening she joined in traditional dancing and singing until midnight. She regarded the landscape of Papeete as the most glorious of any natural settings she ever experienced.

It was in 1957 also that Thelma first visited Alvin and Gertrude Blum in the Solomon Islands, and Violet Hoehnke and Rodney Hancock in Papua New Guinea. A

trip organised by Rodney Hancock to take Thelma to meet the Bahá'ís on New Ireland provided yet another tale which she later enjoyed retelling. In order to make the trip down New Ireland's only and remote road, Rodney hired a utility on which Thelma rode in comfort seated on a lounge chair placed on the back. When a jeep appeared travelling in the other direction and the two vehicles had to slow to pass each other on the single track, an Australian man observed Thelma with her white raincoat, red umbrella, all dressed up for any type of weather, and called out, "What are you doing here?", to which Thelma replied, "Well, I'm staying with friends of mine". He said his wife was up ahead and that she was welcome to stay with them, or call on them if she needed help, to which she replied that she was with her Bahá'í friends and that they were all brothers and sisters. Many such tales did Thelma have for the telling.

In 1957, at the instruction of the Guardian, the Auxiliary Board was expanded. Collis Featherstone was appointed a Hand of the Cause, and the two Hands in Australia, Clara Dunn and Collis Featherstone, appointed Thelma an Auxiliary Board member for Propagation. Thus while still a member of the National Assembly of Australia, Thelma was occupied throughout Asia and the Pacific as deputy for two Hands of the Cause. In September 1958, she represented the Auxiliary Board members in Australia at the Intercontinental Conference in Singapore.

Within Australia, Thelma continued to travel to various states explaining the plans of the National Spiritual Assembly. During 1959–60, she visited more than 20 Bahá'í communities in cities and towns in Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and the Australian Capital Territory. In 1961, she visited the Northern Territory, South Australia, Tasmania, and Victoria. While in New Zealand with Nell McMiles in 1962, Thelma visited nearly all of the Bahá'í communities in that country.

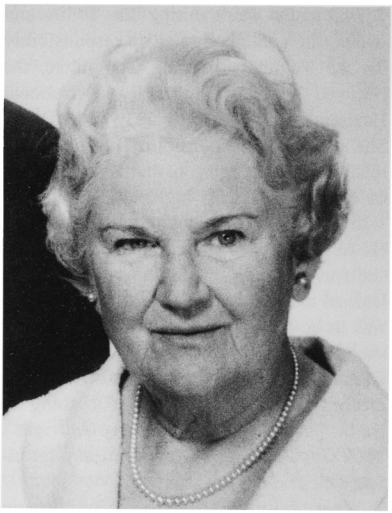
For many years during the 1950s and 1960s, she continued to share responsibility for the National Teaching Committee, the National Reference Library, the National Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds, and the care of Clara Dunn. She also shared responsibility for the events related to the opening of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Sydney in September 1961.

It was in 1961 that Thelma first visited Haifa. Clara Dunn had often asked when she was planning to go, and when Thelma learned that the Universal House of Justice was to be elected in 1963, she thought that she should go before then. She turned to Greta Lake during a National Assembly meeting and asked "How about going to Haifa?" to which Greta replied, "All right". Thus Greta and Aub Lake went on pilgrimage with Thelma in April 1961.

When both women were once again elected to the National Assembly in 1962, Greta turned to Thelma and said, "We'll be going to Haifa for the International Convention". En route, Thelma visited Vietnam, rode elephants in Cambodia, and cruised through Greece. In Haifa, she enjoyed sharing a room with Bahiyyih Ford from South Africa.

During the Nine Year Plan, Thelma continued to serve as an Auxiliary Board member. In 1964, she attended the establishment of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Southwest Pacific in Honiara, Solomon Islands, and visited the Bahá'ís in the Papua New Guinea cities of Port Moresby, Lae, Madang, Manus, and Rabaul. She continued to travel within Australia, although in 1965 she resigned as chairman of the Temple Services Committee when the Universal House of Justice decided that Auxiliary Board members could no longer also be members of such committees.

In 1968, Thelma was appointed to the Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia, together with Howard Harwood and Suhayl 'Alá'í. The Australasian region included Australia and New Zealand, plus all islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans lying south of the equator and between



Thelma Perks

longitudes of 80 degrees east and 120 degrees west including Portuguese Timor and the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, but not including Indonesia. Thelma was designated Trustee of the Continental Fund.

When addressing Bahá'í gatherings, Thelma reminded the friends of the responsibilities and the devoted work of the Hand of the Cause of God in Australia, Collis Featherstone. She was able to draw the attention of the friends to their high calling, and enthuse them about the tasks at hand. The words with which she closed the Australian community's National Convention in 1970 convey something of the uplifting effect she had on the community. She began by reminding her listeners that the Dunns were the "spiritual conquerors of a Continent" and that Shoghi Effendi had given nobody else this station. She went on to say:

> The Guardian used to praise the Australian Bahá'ís—we must justify his faith and confidence in us... If we do not arise to serve, 'Abdu'l-Bahá says we fall to the rear in the Army of Life—perhaps go out of the Faith... There are many Bahá'ís moving about, footloose and irresponsible. We must be disciplined people. How are we going to bring in the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh if the Bahá'í Faith comes last in our lives? ... Let us have more enthusiasm! We must draw upon each other. When we think each day of our bounties, it gives us new life. This Cause can renew every atom of the body... Call on us (the Counsellors) to help you to serve.

Thelma was loved and respected by the Australian Bahá'í community because she led by example. Although weighed heavily with responsibilities as Counsellor, Thelma continued to travel throughout Australia and the Pacific. In 1971, she was accompanied by Nell McMiles to the Oceanic Conference in Sapporo, Japan. Soon after their appointment, the Counsellors arranged in conjunction with the National Assembly a conference in Melbourne to mark the 150th anniversary of the Birth of the Báb. It was Thelma's privilege to introduce to the conference the Hands of the Cause of God Abu'l-Qásim Faydí and Collis Featherstone.

The Counsellors organised other major conferences, including one immediately following the annual convention in Melbourne in 1974 to mark the commencement of the Five Year Plan, attended by the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir and some 500 participants. In October 1974, the Counsellors organised a conference in Sydney to coincide with the 155th Anniversary of the Birth of the Báb, which was attended by 200 Bahá'ís. Thelma closed the conference by saying:

> The Five Year Plan has something personal about it—it touches our hearts. Self-sacrifice is at the core of everything—sacrifice of our time, energy and resources. This is the challenge of each one of us. We have the inspiration of the pioneers that have gone out. Each one can do something, according to our capacity.

Early in 1974, the Counsellors met in Noumea, then visited the New Hebrides. Thelma and Vi Hoehnke went on to visit the Solomons, where about 60 islanders became Bahá'ís during a conference. The two women then moved on to Papua New Guinea.

In January 1977, all the Counsellors of the Australasian Board attended the Sixth International Teaching Conference, held in Auckland, New Zealand.

Thelma's retirement from the Continental Board of Counsellors was announced by the House of Justice in a letter dated 3 November 1980. Thelma spent her years of retirement in her Mosman home, and continued to visit the House of Worship and participate in Bahá'í activities in the Sydney area.

Thelma retained her dignified bearing and cheerful nature in her final years, though hampered in her movements and activities by a paralysing stroke. She will be remembered as a pure soul and a gracious lady. Following her passing, the Universal House of Justice sent a message to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Australia on 25 May 1988 which read:

> WE ARE DEEPLY GRIEVED TO LEARN OF THE PASSING OF THELMA PERKS WHOSE OUTSTANDING SERVICES FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE FAITH IN AUSTRALASIA WILL LONG BE REMEMBERED. HER LOVING CARE OF HAND OF THE CAUSE CLARA DUNN, HER DISTINGUISHED WORK AS A MEMBER OF THE FIRST CONTINGENT OF AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBERS FOLLOWED LATER BY HER APPOINTMENT AS A MEMBER OF THE FIRST BOARD OF COUNSELLORS IN AUSTRALASIA, TOGETHER WITH HER MANY YEARS OF SERVICE AS A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF AUSTRALIA, STAND AS SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF HER DEVOTED LABORS. PRAYERS ARE BEING OFFERED IN THE HOLY SHRINES FOR THE PROGRESS OF HER SOUL IN THE ABHA KINGDOM. ADVISE HOLD A BEFITTING MEMORIAL SERVICE IN HER HONOUR IN THE MASHRIQU'L-ADHKAR, A SIMILAR SERVICE IS BEING REQUESTED IN SAMOA.

GRAHAM HASSALL

JOANNE L. MENKING
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1927–1988

JoAnne L. Kinsey was born to Wylton and Leila Kinsey on 29 April 1927 in Harlan, Indiana, U.S.A. She and her two brothers grew up during the Great Depression, and her hard-working Protestant parents showed love with strictness as did many parents of that time and place. That encouraged independence, and JoAnne and her brothers were on their own at a young age.

When she was eighteen years old, JoAnne began a new job as a secretary at International Harvester in Fort Wayne, Indiana. There, she met a young woman named Betty, whose first impression of JoAnne was her overwhelming physical beauty and, despite that beauty, her humility. The two started a friendship that lasted for more than forty years. They became integral parts of each others lives, sharing many common interests such as sewing and entertaining.

JoAnne met Howard E. Menking on a blind date during a furlough from his U.S. Navy service, before he departed for the Pacific front during the second World War. They met again after the War through a chance meeting in a drugstore in Fort Wayne. They were married on 28 May 1948.

JoAnne and Howard were joined on their honeymoon by JoAnne's friend, Betty, and her new husband, Bud (Robert) Hopkins. They went to Chicago, and as they were driving along Lake Michigan, north of the city, they passed an unusually beautiful structure. JoAnne stuck her camera out of the window and took a blurred and crooked photograph that, for her family, serves as a remnant of the moment the seed of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation was planted in their lives, as that building was the Bahá'í House of Worship.

Back in Fort Wayne, the two new couples settled down. JoAnne continued working for International Harvester and Howard sold and repaired Royal typewriters. On one of



JoAnne Menking

his sales calls Howard met an elderly Bahá'í woman who took an interest in him. Once a week, on Wednesday nights, she would join the four young people in the Hopkins' home and talk to them about the Bahá'í Faith. With infinite patience she met with them every week for a year. That woman, responsible for nearly single-handedly raising up a thriving Bahá'í community in Fort Wayne, was Pauline Roth.

JoAnne and Howard enrolled in the Faith in 1949, during a special fireside with a Bahá'í pioneer to South America. That same night they decided to pioneer to Brazil, and within a few months they had travelled to New York to board a ship to São Paulo. While in New York the couple met Juliet Thompson in her apartment there.

Despite the adventure and romance, JoAnne and Howard found it impossible to make a living in Brazil and returned to Indiana. They discussed beginning a Year of Patience and JoAnne, requesting clarification on this law from Shoghi Effendi, received a letter written on behalf of the Guardian in which he added a postscript in his own hand assuring her he would pray for their marriage. Miraculously, their difficulties were resolved by a course of events initiated on that date penned by the Guardian.

Together JoAnne and Howard attended the dedication of the Mother Temple of the West, which JoAnne had photographed during their honeymoon. This took place during the Jubilee Convention in 1953, and they joined in the mood of the American Bahá'í community that was both compelling and historic. Bahá'ís literally went to the front of the auditorium in answer to the Guardian's call for pioneers during the Ten Year Crusade.

JoAnne and Howard stayed quiet, after their experience in Brazil, but at one point Dorothy Baker approached them and asked, "When are you two going to stand up?" Exactly what happened next is a matter of debate, but that winter the Menkings were sailing towards a Portuguese penal colony 300 miles off the coast of West Africa.

The Menkings arrived in Cape Verde in January 1954. Life was difficult for them, and JoAnne did not like the place. To her it was dry, miserable and tedious, but she found comfort in her sewing and the friendships they made. Howard, on the other hand, loved Cape Verde as for him it was challenging, exciting, and a virgin territory for the Faith. A pattern developed of JoAnne serving as gracious hostess to guests Howard met and brought home.

Although they made friends, they could not find anyone interested in the Faith. Howard was having a difficult time earning a living and he wrote to the Guardian, asking his permission to leave and join the Bahá'í teachers on the mainland of Africa where Howard had experience with Músá Banání in enrolling large numbers of believers in the Gambia. The Guardian advised them, difficult as it was, to remain at their post, recalling the prophecy of Daniel that in the last days the angels of the Lord would spread to the four corners of the earth. Theirs was, as all the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, the fulfilment of this prophecy.

JoAnne had been told that she was medically incapable of bearing children. But in Cape Verde they met a young Angolan doctor in exile, trained in Lisbon, who, upon hearing of JoAnne's problem, offered to examine her. To everyone's amazement, she consented to exploratory surgery right there in Praia.

Whatever the mysterious operation, it resulted in the birth of Cristina Pauline Menking, a namesake of Pauline Roth who had taught the Menkings the Faith. Cristina's birth date was 25 December 1955, and the Cape Verdeans embraced her as "our little *caboverdeana*". They also embraced the Bahá'í Faith: "How could these people, with such a beautiful child—born on our soil on Christmas Day—be heathens as the church says?"

The little *caboverdeana* provided exactly what the Faith needed to take root in Cape Verde. Some months later Frutuoso ("fruitful") became the first local Bahá'í, and by Riḍván 1956 the first Local Spiritual Assembly was formed in Praia.

Feeling that the Faith was established in Cape Verde, JoAnne decided that their job was done. When Cristina was strong enough to travel, JoAnne set off for the United States while Howard stayed behind to complete his work and arrange for a passage back. While still in Praia, he received correspondence from the Guardian giving his best wishes to their "children" in a hand-written postscript. This seemed like a mistake as they only had Cristina at the time.

Upon returning to America, Howard learned that the beloved Guardian had passed away and that their second child had been conceived. The Guardian's wishes had been conveyed even before JoAnne's pregnancy had been confirmed by doctors. Named after an early Cape Verdean Bahá'í, Claremundo ("light of the world"), Clare Howard Menking was born in Clarksville, Tennessee on 27 January 1958.

Following a brief stay in Clarksville, the Menkings joined the Hopkins in Dallas, Texas. Pioneers were badly needed in an affluent suburb named University Park and it was there that the Menkings settled in 1959. In 1964, JoAnne gave birth to her third child, Cornell Howard Menking, conceived upon the Menkings' return from the first Bahá'í World Congress in London, England.

JoAnne's passion and devotion in life became her children. Inspired by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, she served the Cause through example and hospitality. For the next thirty years JoAnne graciously served as hostess for the Bahá'í community in University Park. Her home was open to those of every race, religion and class, striving to have what Shoghi Effendi called "a true fortress upon which the Cause can rely while planning its campaigns".

JoAnne was a trustworthy, humble, truthful and loyal woman whose love for justice dominated her daily life. She was an impeccable dresser, always punctual, and an immaculate housekeeper. A practical woman when it came to truth, she wondered why everyone couldn't see as she did. "Anyone with half a brain should be a Bahá'í", she would say. It was simple for her.

The Menkings' life developed a routine, which is how JoAnne liked it. She loved stability and the education of her children was of the utmost importance to her. One of her grandmothers had been a librarian and her brother was a respected judge in Indiana, yet she, herself, had been unable to complete high school due to a double case of scarlet and rheumatic fever when she was seventeen years old. She was actively involved in the children's education, putting all three through Southern Methodist University by working as a secretary to the Provost, taking advantage of tuition benefits for dependents of university employees.

The Menkings raised their children to have open minds and hearts, free from hate and free to choose their own destinies. All three arose to serve the Faith, and this is how JoAnne would like to be remembered—by the fruit she yielded.

O ye loving mothers, know ye that in God's sight, the best of all ways to worship Him is to educate the children and train them in all the perfections of humankind; and no nobler deed than this can be imagined.

—'Abdu'l-Bahá[1]

JoAnne Menking died in Dallas, Texas, on 26 May 1988—two days before her fortieth wedding anniversary. She is buried beside her son, Clare.

CORNELL MENKING

'AZÍZU'LLÁH SHÁYÁNÍ
1900–1988

'Azízu'lláh Shayání was born on 10 January 1900, in Hamadán, Persia. He was from a Jewish background, and only his father, Áqá Raḥím, and one of his uncles had become Bahá'ís. 'Azízu'lláh personally took on the task of independent search after truth and attended the classes and firesides of Ḥájí Mihdí Arjumand (author of *Gulshan-i-Ḥaqá'iq*). After a thorough investigation of the Faith, he embraced the Cause wholeheartedly.

As a result of his extreme enthusiasm and intelligence during his youth, 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledged 'Azízu'lláh in reply to a letter from Ḥájí Amín, saying, "In truth, this youth is worthy of affection". Following this, 'Azíz chose Sháyání as his surname. (Sháyán means "worthy" in Persian.)

Upon completion of his studies, including learning the French language, in Ḥamadán, 'Azíz moved to Ṭihrán with his family, where he worked in trade, importing electrical supplies. He actively served the Faith in Ṭihrán, particularly in the area of education. In 1922, he married Ján Khánum, and they raised four children dedicated to the Cause. Ján accompanied and aided him through 30 years of pioneering.

'Azíz had the bounty of going on pilgrimage for the first time in 1936, when he was honoured by being in the beloved Guardian's presence for eleven days. He had the privilege of meeting the Guardian for a second time in 1953, after attending the inauguration of the Temple in Wilmette, Illinois, U.S.A.

On the first day of Riḍván 1955, 'Azízu'lláh Sháyání left Ṭihrán to begin the successful teaching and pioneering efforts which were to last close to 30 years. He went first to Cairo, Egypt, on his way to attend the National Convention, then to Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar. When after three months he found he could not renew his visa, he left Madagascar for Mauritius. After a three month stay, he set out for Reunion. On each of these three islands he was successful in teaching many souls and forming Assemblies.

'Azíz pioneered next to Asmara, Ethiopia. Later, he set out for Nairobi, Kenya, and continued his teaching efforts there. While in Nairobi, he carried out certain assignments as requested by the Hands of the Cause of God residing in East Africa. As a result, in addition to his teaching efforts, he travelled to Mogadishu, Somalia, and other parts of East Africa.

After a short trip to Ṭihrán to consult with the pioneering committee, 'Azíz set out for Italy to await the advice of the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Giachery about moving to Portugal. Dr. Giachery, however, rather than suggesting Portugal, recommended pioneering to Sicily with the hope of forming the Assembly in Palermo. After 'Azíz had stayed in Palermo for two years and had helped establish an Assembly there, Dr. Giachery proposed he pioneer to Torino in Italy. 'Azíz stayed there for six years, where he was quite successful in teaching the Cause.

In 1968, 'Azíz attended the Palermo Conference, then had the bounty of having a third pilgrimage to the Holy Land. While there, a member of the Universal House of Justice suggested that he take on the task of

[1] *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982), p. 139.

establishing the National Spiritual Assembly of the Malagasy Republic and overseeing the construction and repairs on the National Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds in Antananarivo. He accepted the challenge and was in Madagascar until 1974. In addition to constructing and repairing the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds, purchasing the land for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, making the preliminary arrangements for making the Bahá'í Faith official in Madagascar, and attending the International Convention, 'Azíz was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Madagasy Republic in 1973. During these six years, he travelled to teach in Ethiopia during the rainy season in Madagascar. He also made two more trips to Reunion and Mauritius in this period.

When 'Azíz left Madagascar, he visited the friends in Uganda, Nigeria, Senegal and Mali, then took residence in Casablanca, Morocco. He participated in teaching trips in West Africa in 1975, but after attending the Paris Conference in 1976, he was hospitalized and underwent surgery in the city of Montpelier. His health began to deteriorate after this illness, and he was not able to travel any more.

In addition to having the bounty of being in the presence of the beloved Guardian twice, 'Azíz had the privilege of pilgrimage on three other occasions. He was also able to attend the dedication ceremonies of the Temples in Chicago, Sydney, and Frankfurt, and to attend the World Congress in London in 1963. His other trips included such destinations as Japan, India and Pakistan.

He was a devoted and active Bahá'í who, in his 30-year-long pioneering endeavours, was engaged day and night in teaching and promoting the Cause. Among his other services was the donation of a chandelier to the Shrine of the Báb.

He passed away on 11 June 1988 in his home in Casablanca. His funeral was conducted in utmost dignity at the Bahá'í cemetery in Casablanca. The following telegram was sent by the Universal House of Justice on 13 June:



'Azízu'lláh Sháyání

DEEPLY SADDENED PASSING STAUNCH STEADFAST PROMOTOR FAITH AZIZOLLAH SHAYANI. HIS PIONEERING SERVICES OVER THREE DECADES IN AFRICAN CONTINENT LOVINGLY REMEMBERED. ASSURE MEMBERS FAMILY FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

MR. LOTFOLLAH SCHAYANI AND
DR. NOSRATOLLAH SCHAYANI
(Mr. Luṭfu'lláh Sháyání and Dr. Nuṣratu'lláh Sháyání)
Translated from the Persian by Goli Yazdani

ADIB RADHI BAGHDADI
(Adíb Raḍí Baghdádí)
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1905–1988

> We are saddened to learn of the passing of Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Adib Baghdadi whose services in the pioneering field will be lovingly remembered. We will offer our prayers in the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh for the progress of his soul in the world beyond....
>
> Universal House of Justice
> 4 July 1988

Shortly after his birth in 'Iráq during the early years of this century, Adíb Baghdádí's parents, as was the custom among some of the eastern Bahá'ís of that day, asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá to name their son. The name 'Abdu'l-Bahá chose was "Adíb Raḍí": the pleasing one. No man was ever more faithful to his name and to a trust placed on him than Adíb Baghdádí was to the Master and to His gift. A man of extraordinary patience who avoided giving offense to any person and whose life was marked by devotion and sacrifice, Adíb pleased all who knew him.

He could trace his family lineage through three generations of faithful servants to the Cause. His great grandfather, Muḥammad al-Shibl, was the first Arab to become a Bábí. It is his son, Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Baghdádí, who is characterized by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in *Memorials of the Faithful* as having recognized Bahá'u'lláh's station before He publicly declared, and as the only Bahá'í in Baghdád during those early years who stood his ground in the face of opposition. When Bahá'u'lláh sent instructions to the Bahá'í community of 'Iráq to put aside its weapons, Muḥammad Muṣṭafá called the believers together, collected the arsenal of the community in his cloak, and threw it into the Tigris River. Defenseless, the Bahá'ís of Baghdád often turned to him for the protection of his indomitable personality. He became a way station to the Bahá'ís travelling to 'Akká and spent almost all that he had to assist the friends to visit Bahá'u'lláh. It was this heritage of service rather than material wealth that he left for his children.

The earliest memory that Adíb had was of being held by his mother while 'Abdu'l-Bahá took coins from His pocket to play with the child. The last time he saw 'Abdu'l-Bahá was as a university student shortly before the Master's ascension. But Adíb never claimed special privileges by his descent; he rather made his family feel ennobled to have had spiritual forefathers of such stature, and by the example of his devotion he showed them how to be faithful to this inheritance.

Adíb's father died when Adíb was just a boy, so Adíb took an early graduation to teach school to support his family and assist with the education of his brothers and sister. While still young he became the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of 'Iráq and for many years corresponded in that capacity with the Guardian, having the opportunity to meet Shoghi Effendi twice. He was transformed by the dynamic vision of the Guardian, crediting Shoghi Effendi's influence with having recreated him.

While a teacher in 'Iráq, he pioneered in the north of that country in Mosul and Sulaymaniyyih. In 1953, he resolved to attend the conference in New Delhi that was to inaugurate the Ten Year Crusade. When he was refused leave, he quit his job of 32 years. While in India, before the conference began, he had a dream in which the Guardian called for pioneers to virgin territories. When that historic summons did in fact arrive from Shoghi Effendi urging the assembled Bahá'ís to open the remotest regions of the world to the Cause, Adíb chose one of the most inhospitable goals and left directly for Hadramut (now South Yemen).

He could not find work in Hadramut for a year, in a country so desolate that when he was finally able to send for his wife, Vaḥídih, she used to keep an onion in a glass of water just to see a green growing thing.

As there were no schools there, they had their three oldest children board at the New Era School in India. Adíb was not able to see them for almost four years. He remained at his post for six years, not leaving until he was sure that the Cause of God would remain established in that land. It was for this service that Adíb and Vaḥídih Baghdádí were made Knights of Bahá'u'lláh and had their names inscribed on the Roll of Honour deposited in the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí.

When pioneers were needed in northern 'Iráq, the family went there. Five years later they went to Kuwait, and another six years later to Lebanon. Each time when they were called they left to go to another remote and often hostile environment. But the protection and divine help that Adíb and his family experienced often reminded them of the promise of Bahá'u'lláh to those who would arise to test the power of His Cause.

It was during those years that his two younger brothers, Dr. 'Abbás and Dr. Jamíl, who had served the government and people of 'Iráq loyally and selflessly for many years, were imprisoned for their religious beliefs. Dr. 'Abbás died in prison; Dr. Jamíl spent six years there. Adíb and his family were forced to leave Lebanon when the 'Iráqi government refused to renew the passports of Bahá'ís living abroad. They went as refugees to Canada, leaving behind any hope of pension for their many years of service in those countries, bringing with them only a small savings.

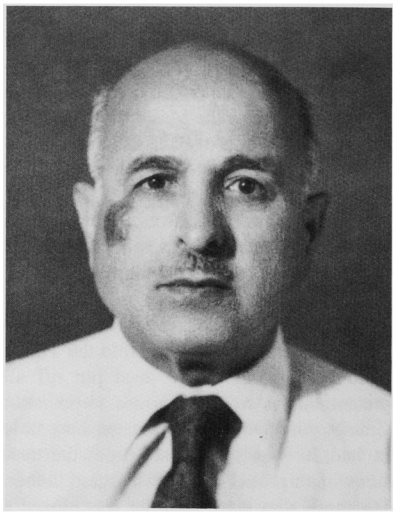
It requires time and care to appreciate the contributions and influence of steady and self-effacing men and women such as Adíb Baghdádí who quietly further the goals of civilization. He was fluent in five languages, especially so in the three languages of the Faith. He taught himself Persian by studying the Kitáb-i-Íqán in both Arabic and Persian; Shoghi Effendi described his communications and translations in English and Arabic as both accurate and literary.

Adíb was always ready to share his profound knowledge and understanding of the Writings and did so with the greatest humility. Having been in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá several times, he always carried with him the inner conviction and calm of those who knew the Master. In his chosen corner of the edifice of Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order, Adíb laid his bricks humbly and without ostentation.

In many ways he reaffirmed the sacrifices of his grandfather, and in a spirit appropriate to this generation of the Formative Age. Just as Muḥammad Muṣṭafá had plunged his weapons—the means and symbols of his strength and independence—into the Tigris, Adíb in both word and deed put off all pretention: he wore no armor to impress. Gracious and generous, no matter how little he had, he was as detached from the treasures of this world as was his grandfather. For those who knew him, he was indeed a "pleasing one". He kept calm in the eye of the storm, and was an anchor of certitude in the communities in which he served.

Having served selflessly and for most of his adult life on Bahá'í administrative bodies, including National Spiritual Assemblies, and having undertaken the most arduous pioneering challenges, he continued to the end of his life to protect and teach the Cause of God. For the last three years of his life, when he was past 80, at a time when even heroic men become captive to their mortality, he served as an assistant to the Auxiliary Board, travelling in North America and speaking throughout Ontario and New York.

His love for Shoghi Effendi was consuming; he could not speak of the Guardian without experiencing great emotion. Some 35 years before his death Adíb had seen Shoghi Effendi in a dream. The Guardian was climbing ahead of him effortlessly up a steep grade. Adíb felt himself falling behind, overwhelmed by the enormous slope ahead. Shoghi Effendi turned back, and with the gentlest words encouraged him. The dream ended when he lost sight of the Guardian who had pressed on ahead. This dream of his Beloved returned to him once again just two



Adib Radhi Baghdadi

weeks before he died. In this last dream he was climbing the same steep slope, this time further up, but again despairing of reaching the top. On looking up he saw Shoghi Effendi standing only a short distance away at the summit. As he watched, the Guardian reached down, and taking Adíb by the hand, gently lifted him up.

As always, he had anticipated the summons of his Lord. On the third day of Mercy in the Year 145 B.E., within three days of his 84th birthday, and the day after attending an international Bahá'í picnic where he saw many friends for whom he was a spiritual father, Adíb Baghdádí died suddenly of a heart attack. Faithful and courageous to the end, his last words were, "I am a Bahá'í".

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF CANADA

ROSE HAWTHORNE
1882–1988

Rose Hawthorne, born Rose Elizabeth Brooks, was one of nine surviving children born to Margaret and David Brooks, farmers from Booleroo Centre, South Australia. Born on 1 August 1882, Rose astonished her elders while still a young girl by walking down the street in a skirt which displayed her ankles. This small episode, recounted as she neared the age of 100, was indicative of her desire to break with past traditions, particularly those which inhibited the advancement of women.

The Brooks family was one of strong Christian belief, and Rose's father regularly recited Bible passages to his children. He frequently read aloud and pondered over the passage, "The Glory of God will cover the earth, even as the waters cover the sea". Most of the Brooks children retained their interest in religion as they matured, although Rose, who married Will Hawthorne when she was 26 and moved to his property adjoining the township of Yaninee on the Eyre Peninsula, had given up all hope in the established religious and secular leaders. The loss of a brother, Norman, in the first World War, contributed greatly to the family's disillusionment with the condition of the world.

In about 1930, Rose's brother David began attending meetings of "New Thought", and Rose herself went to a meeting on the New Thought platform addressed by Clara Dunn. She returned home to tell her sister Hilda of this woman who had spoken of a man thrown into prison. Lucy Trueman, who was also attending the New Thought meetings at that time, told Hilda that an American woman, Keith Ransom-Kehler, was about to visit Adelaide to speak further about the Bahá'í religion. Thus, although they already knew of the Bahá'í Faith from Clara Dunn, it was principally through Keith Ransom-Kehler's lecture tour of 1931 that Rose and Will Hawthorne, Rose's sister Hilda, Mrs.

Lucy Trueman, and eventually the remainder of the Brooks family, became Bahá'ís.

Hilda Brooks, who lived in Adelaide, soon became a member of the Adelaide Assembly, and when the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Australia and New Zealand was formed in 1934, she was elected as its first secretary. Rose and Will Hawthorne had travelled with Hilda to attend the historic first National Convention in Sydney, and were among the few Adelaide Bahá'ís present.

Although not wealthy, the Hawthornes were sufficiently comfortable financially to undertake inter-state teaching trips. Early in 1939 they had the privilege of accompanying Martha Root from Adelaide on her lecturing visits to Melbourne and Hobart. Miss Root had arrived in Adelaide from Perth on 28 January 1939. Afflicted with the cancer which was to claim her life before year's end, she was barely able to complete her schedule of public appearances. Only the kindness and care shown her by such Bahá'ís as Stanley Bolton, Hilda Brooks, and Rose and Will Hawthorne permitted her to continue. Shoghi Effendi later thanked the Hawthornes for the kindness which sustained her during this period. It was Martha Root's heroic example that sustained Rose in her subsequent years of ceaseless effort to promote the teachings in which she so whole-heartedly believed.

Eventually, Rose and Will retired to the Adelaide suburb of Millswood; they had never had any children. Over a period of many years they donated Bahá'í books to the library at Adelaide University, and to interested seekers in Adelaide and elsewhere. Throughout the 1940s, Rose contributed to the functioning of the Adelaide community. She was not a public speaker as was her sister. She preferred to offer practical assistance, such as being responsible for the organisation of the Feasts, social activities, and the Bahá'í library.

Through the many years that Hilda Brooks served as secretary to the National Assembly, Rose acted as her loyal and competent assistant. At first she fulfilled this function informally but the importance of her role was later recognised by the National Assembly, which officially appointed her as clerical assistant to the National Secretary. Throughout the same period Rose worked with her sister to carry out significant and effective teaching activities.

In 1941, for instance, Rose accompanied Charlotte Moffitt and Hilda Brooks to Brisbane to undertake the first teaching work there since the Dunns had lived in Brisbane more than a decade previously. The three women stayed one month in Brisbane, and Hilda and Rose organised public meetings in Melbourne on both the forward and return journeys, in April and June. Two years later, in September 1943, Rose and Hilda visited Broken Hill, where they again met up with Mrs. Moffitt, and with Miss Gladys Moody, for another teaching campaign.

In 1944, Rose assisted in Adelaide community's planning for celebrations marking the Centenary of the Declaration of the Báb. She continued to hold firesides and to travel following her husband's passing in July 1947.

In addition to working with her sister, and with other Bahá'í friends, Rose maintained her individual teaching efforts. For a period of eight years in the 1950s Rose travelled regularly to Clare, a small country town far from Adelaide, to hold public meetings. Departing Adelaide on Thursday night laden with books, pamphlets, crockery and cakes, she conducted public meetings and returned home on Sunday evenings. Often such meetings occurred in the Mayor's parlour, which Rose rented for the occasions. The meetings were often chaired by a prominent non-Bahá'í businessman of the town whom Rose had befriended. Although audiences never fell below four or five, and sometimes rose to seventeen or eighteen, the tangible results were few. Australian country towns were notoriously conservative, and the influence of the churches remained strong.



Rose Hawthorne

When the editor of Clare's paper, the *Northern Argus*, printed a lecture which had been delivered by Hilda (who was now married to Ewart Thomas), he was confronted in his office by the clerics of the town's seven Christian denominations. Their intolerance so outraged him that he informed Rose he would print "anything Mrs. Thomas cared to give him". No fewer than 15 articles subsequently appeared in the paper, provoking continued persecution from an incensed body of clergymen. In March 1956, Rose received a cable from Shoghi Effendi which read "Assure Fervent Prayers Shoghi".

Before retiring from the *Northern Argus*, the paper's editor printed in instalments the entire work by George Townshend entitled *Christ and Bahá'u'lláh*—a feat due entirely to Rose's persistent efforts in the town, and to her ability to convey to others the absolute conviction of her faith. This success, and the opposition it provoked, caused the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land to state in a letter to Rose in October 1958:

> The wide-spread opposition which you have encountered from orthodox elements is exactly what the Master and the beloved Guardian told us would happen when the Cause emerged from obscurity. These attacks will not halt the spread of the Faith; on the contrary, they will hasten the day when the people of the world will in large numbers accept the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

Together with Ewart and Hilda Thomas, Rose travelled to teach in other South Australian country towns, including Quorn, Port Lincoln, and Yaninee. When the original Adelaide community evolved into smaller communities based on municipal boundaries, Rose became a founding member of the Unley community.

Rose continued to serve the Faith right up to the end of her life. When she began to go blind, she would ask people to read to her, always from the Bahá'í Writings, introducing them to the Teachings that way. Rose remained alert and a source of wisdom to the Adelaide Bahá'ís. She died 7 July 1988, at the age of 105.

GRAHAM HASSALL

ELEANORE LORRAINE (RENE) HOPPER WELSH
1903–1988

Rene, as she was known and loved, was born in Paris, France, on 25 February 1903 during a time when her father, Herbert Hopper, and her mother, Marie Squires Hopper, were studying there. Her parents had met at a Bahá'í gathering in the Paris home of May Bolles, after which Herbert made a pilgrimage to 'Akká to visit the Master, returning to Europe in the company of Thomas Breakwell. While in Paris he finished his studies of architecture at the École des Beaux Arts.

While Rene was still very young, the Hoppers returned to the United States where her father began to practice his profession until his untimely death from tuberculosis when Rene was approximately five years old. Marie supported herself and her daughter

painting portraits and teaching art while living in Champaign, Illinois, and later on the East Coast. Rene grew up hearing her mother and friends speak of 'Abdu'l-Bahá constantly, to the point that she identified Him as a father figure. Once when her mother asked her to learn a prayer, Rene said that is was too long. She said that if 'Abdu'l-Bahá wanted her to learn a prayer He would reveal one for her because He would know what she wanted to say. When the next pilgrim, Lua Getsinger, returned from the Holy Land, she brought Rene's prayer, a prayer which she used constantly and repeated during the last hours of her life.

Rene was nine years old when 'Abdu'l-Bahá made His historic journey to the West. Whenever possible, the Bahá'ís flocked to the cities where He was visiting, hoping to catch a glimpse of Him or to attend a meeting. The majority of the early Bahá'ís in the United States knew each other and offered hospitality to each other. For example, an English friend who worked for the Library of Congress invited Marie and Rene to Washington, D.C., to share her apartment. Marie took her cook, Eurithra, to one of the meetings and when they returned she told Marie, "He is my Lord, He is my Lord".

Since both Marie and Eurithra desired to serve 'Abdu'l-Bahá with their own hands, He was invited to tea at the apartment. He accepted on the condition that some black people be invited. The only black person Marie knew, besides the cook, was Louis Gregory, who was invited. When the blessed afternoon came, all Eurithra's family were present and Marie was able to serve them all with her own hands. They were all speechless with joy and Rene sat with the other children as close as possible to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, almost afraid to breathe and bother Him. He patted the children and put candies in their mouths while He was talking to the adults and then told the children to go out and play.

Rene had the privilege of being in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's blessed presence several times, but



Eleanore Lorraine (Rene) Hopper Welsh

two other occasions stand out in her memory. One time, when He was speaking from a public platform, the children were seated on the steps leading up to the stage. As He spoke, He walked back and forth emanating tremendous force and power. Rene's shoulder was level with the platform where the Master was speaking with such eloquence that he held everyone spellbound. As he walked and turned she felt pressure on her shoulder, and she realized that if she kept firm she would have the strength to meet that holy test, a lesson she remembered all her life.

In May 1912, Rene and her mother were granted an interview with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. As it was the custom in the United States at that time for the children to make baskets filled with flowers for their friends, Rene made one for her "Very Special Friend," and filled it with pansies and violets. His room was at the end of a short hall, and when they were announced and Rene saw Him standing in the door, she ran down the hall into His outstretched arms with her nine-year-old heart bursting with love. He hugged her and

patted her saying in English, "Herbert's daughter, Herbert's daughter". His room was like a garden filled with flowers, and only the spirit and love of that blessed occasion, not the words, remain.

But as was so often the case, another lesson was learned that day. After their visit, the next guests were another mother and her daughter. The little girl had beautiful golden curls and blue eyes in contrast to Rene's straight black hair and grey-green eyes. Rene was a beautiful person physically as well as spiritually, but when she was nine she definitely felt inferior. Rene and her mother had asked permission to stay in the waiting room for the hope of another glimpse of the Master when He went for His walk. But before that blessing, Rene first saw the little girl with the golden curls walking down the short hall, carrying with such joy the flower basket that Rene had made with all her love. This is when Rene began to meditate on her actions and began to learn the true spirit of giving. She said she learned from this one experience lessons for the rest of her life.

'Abdu'l-Bahá gave Rene the name of Núríyyih, "follower of the Light." She was too shy to use a Persian name when she was growing up, something that she regretted later in her life.

When Rene became a young adult she moved from Urbana, Illinois, to New York City, where she was a member of some of the early Local Assemblies. In 1926 she married Clarence Loher Welsh, known as Pete, who was a commercial photographer. At that time Pete had not accepted the Faith, although they met because he had come to a meeting in Urbana to investigate the new religion.

Rene followed the career of commercial art, making use of her talent and helping her husband in his career as he progressed from still black and white photography to colour, and then to motion pictures. In 1936, they moved to Greenwich, Connecticut, where in 1946 Pete accepted the Faith. They helped to establish the first Local Assembly and Rene served for many years on the Green Acre Summer School Committee, on the Regional Teaching Committee, and as a delegate to state and national conventions.

In 1953, Pete made a documentary on the dedication of the Temple in Wilmette. In 1969, they sold their photographic studio and pioneered to El Salvador. After learning enough of the language to become independent, they became homefront pioneers, moving to San Juan Tepezontes. Even though they could not speak the language well, they served any way they could and have left the beautiful legacy of two slide programmes, one about the Life of the Báb and the other about Bahá'u'lláh, both partially illustrated with Rene's pastel drawings.

In April 1980, Pete was the first pioneer laid to rest in El Salvador. He was joined by Rene on 3 August 1988.

JEANNE FARRAND

DORA (DEE) WORTH LAMB
1903–1988

Dora Worth Lamb, generally known as Dee, was born 17 March 1903 on a farm near Moran, Kansas, U.S.A. A few years later, the family moved to Oskaloosa, Iowa, where she grew up. As she told it, she was deeply concerned at an early age about what she was going to do with her life. She was determined not to stay in Oskaloosa and become a "drudge", and finally opted for music and voice with which she was enamored. With the aid of a partial scholarship and working as a private secretary, she was able to study at the Conservatory of Music at Appleton, Wisconsin, and graduate with honors. She continued her voice lessons in California, becoming a soloist in several churches in Los Angeles.

As a youth, Dee had been very active in the Methodist Church. One day she confided in her pastor that she wanted to know more about God, and she put to him some very sincere questions. He refused to answer, telling Dee just to accept what she had been

taught and not ask questions. This started Dee's search which was to lead her many years later to the Bahá'í Faith. She decided that she was going to throw out all creeds and limitations until she found something that would satisfy her spiritual inquietude. The search included Theosophy, which she studied intensively for four years with the grandson of Madam Blavatsky, its founder. According to Dee, Theosophy was a useful stepping stone which aided her to enlarge her vision of life and the universe, but it still left her soul unsatisfied.

While she was still studying Theosophy, a friend, a former Theosophist, told Dee about the Bahá'í Faith, giving her the book *God Passes By*. Dee said she had no real interest but felt that it would be prejudiced to make any judgment without an investigation, so she read the book, according to her "combing Persian names out of my hair in the process." Later, she asked her friend why she had selected that particular book to start, and the friend answered that it was to show Dee that the Bahá'í Faith was something entirely different from anything she had known so far. It worked, and Dee bought a number of Bahá'í books and started her search in earnest. After an exhaustive investigation, she knew that this was what her soul had been looking for and she formally entered the Faith in the summer of 1953 in Beverly Hills.

In November of the same year, her future husband visited Beverly Hills immediately following his pilgrimage to the Bahá'í World Centre. It happened that Dee was on vacation so she offered to drive him around to the different communities to share his experiences and the latest news of the Guardian. She became so fired up that she made her offer to go pioneering anywhere in the world. Some six months later she arrived in Costa Rica, on the first lap of her pioneer life which ended only with her passing to the Abhá Kingdom.

In Costa Rica, she served on the National Teaching Committee for Central America and the Antilles, and one year on the National Spiritual Assembly of the same area. In 1956, she transferred to the Dominican Republic to help with the formation of the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Greater Antilles, serving on that body as secretary. In 1958, she returned to Central America, to El Salvador, for her marriage to Artemus Lamb who was then pioneering in that country. The following 30 years were spent with her husband in different countries in Central America, serving the varying needs of the Faith, including the filling of many administrative posts.

Dee's entire Bahá'í life was centered around serving the Faith with all her heart. In addition to devotion and steadfastness, one of her outstanding qualities was an outgoing love for people which she constantly expressed and which automatically attracted to her persons of all ages and walks of life. Since her own long search had been a deeply spiritual one, she was particularly apt in counselling individuals on personal problems and sharing with them spiritual solutions. Another outstanding quality was her cheerfulness and radiant spirit. She constantly wore a smile and possessed a very infectious laugh, and was always ready to hear the humorous side of things.

In later years, arthritis and other infirmities increasingly cut down on her physical activities, so she spent more and more time praying for others and for the institutions and work of the Faith. Even though confined to a wheelchair and racked with illness, she usually managed to attend Nineteen Day Feasts and other important Bahá'í activities. During her final months of existence on this earthly plane, when she could no longer really function physically, she constantly expressed her gratitude to Bahá'u'lláh for His goodness to her. It is this loving and radiant spirit that people almost always remember when they mention Dee's name.

On 14 August 1988, her soul passed to the Abhá Kingdom, leaving "her bones" in La Ceiba, Honduras, in accordance with



Dora (Dee) Worth Lamb

the wishes of the beloved Guardian for all pioneers, as expressed through the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum during the All-American Teaching Conference held in Wilmette, Illinois, in 1953.

The following cable was sent by the Universal House of Justice on 26 August 1988 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Honduras:

> DEEPLY SADDENED PASSING OUTSTANDING MUCH-LOVED VETERAN PIONEER TEACHER CAUSE GOD DEE LAMB. HER LONGTERM AND EXEMPLARY SERVICES, STERLING QUALITIES AND UNFLAGGING RADIANT DEVOTION WILL LONG BE REMEMBERED. ASSURE ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES FOR JOY AND UPLIFTMENT HER CHERISHED SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. KINDLY EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES DISTINGUISHED HUSBAND AND GRIEVING FRIENDS.
>
> ARTEMUS LAMB

SHIRLEY LINDSTROM
(Adaz Ayamdagoot)
1937–1988

Shirley Lindstrom was born to Peter and Agnes Johns of Carcross, Yukon, Canada, on 19 July 1937. She was a member of the Daxlawedi clan under the Gooch (Wolf) nation moiety of the Tlingit people. Her tribal name, Adaz Ayamdagoot, meant "it got up with a purpose and walked away from there". She lived up to this name by embracing the Bahá'í Faith in 1963 and walking with the purpose of taking the Faith throughout the world.

Shirley was raised in the Carcross area. During 1957 she married Claire Lindstrom and together they raised a family of six children: Darla-Jean, Beverly, Ralph, Calvin, Colin, and Tim. She was a wonderful, loving mother, not only to her children but to the many people with whom she came in contact. She always had time to hear a person's joys or sorrows and to assist in the healing process of that individual.

Shirley and Cal moved to Stewart Crossing in the Yukon, and during this time they became Bahá'ís. Several Bahá'í travelling teachers had given the message to Shirley, but it was not until her father, aunt, and other elders accepted the Faith that she declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh. Once they embraced this truth, Shirley and Cal moved to Mayo to open this community to the Faith, and assisted in the formation of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Mayo. Shirley served on this sacred institution for many years.

Shortly after becoming a Bahá'í, Shirley made her first pilgrimage to Haifa, Israel, to visit the sacred shrines and lands of the Faith. It was the incredible love and strength she received that drew her back to the World Centre a second and third time. On her second pilgrimage she also visited the House of the Báb in Shíráz, Írán. She was one of the first indigenous North Americans to visit the birthplace of the Bahá'í Faith.

Shirley's thirst to serve the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh took her to many places around the world, such as to Mexico and Europe, and she travelled extensively throughout Canada and the United States. Because of her love for her Indian brothers and sisters and her desire for their spiritual education, she served as the director of the Fort Qu'Appelle Institute for two years. She was a major participant in the proclamation in the Yukon in the early 1970s, which resulted in the enrolment of more than 100 Bahá'ís. She made every effort to educate the people who accepted Bahá'u'lláh. These efforts finally led to the construction of the Yukon Bahá'í Institute at Lake LaBarge—a dream come true.

Shirley served Bahá'u'lláh in many ways. She was entrusted by the people of the Yukon to act as their representative at the sacred elections of the National Spiritual Assembly. She carried out this duty with dignity, love, respect, and honour. In the latter part of the 1970s, she became an assistant to the Auxiliary Board member for the Yukon, Howard Brown of Alaska. She served in this capacity until 1985, when she herself was asked to take on the duties and responsibilities of an Auxiliary Board member.

Shirley's life was devoted to the service of this mighty Cause, a service which she carried out joyfully. She was constantly moving from one area to another until, shortly after returning from a teaching trip, she was hospitalized and was no longer able to travel.

By becoming a well-known and devoted international Bahá'í teacher, Shirley lived up to her Indian name. She moved with a purpose and a strong conviction the world over, spreading the healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh. She will always be regarded as a valiant, noble servant of His Cause and will continue to be honoured and loved by those many nations to whom she was a guest. Even in her times of suffering and illness, she continued to be a selfless and radiant spirit, passing away peacefully in her sleep on 17 August 1988.



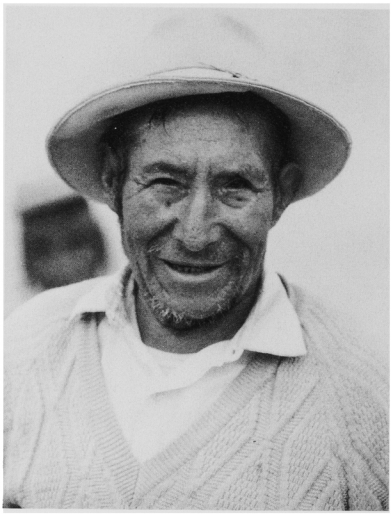
Shirley Lindstrom

After her death, a tribal elder bestowed Shirley's name upon the Yukon College. Thus her name lives on, giving knowledge and enlightenment to the people.

MARK WEDGE

MELITÓN SAAVEDRA GALLARDO
1910–1988

Melitón Saavedra was born 15 March 1910 in the village of Tapalilla, located in the province of Oropeza, department of Chuquisaca, Bolivia. His native language was Quechua, but he learned a little Spanish while he was a soldier during the Chaco War (1932–1935). Melitón was a prisoner of war for two years in Paraguay. He and other indigenous people suffered intensely during this period, when they were forced to endure hard labor with only bread and water to eat. Melitón said that if it hadn't been for his faith and God's help he would surely have died during that time. He always wondered why one must suffer and even die for a piece of land that



Melitón Saavedra Gallardo

doesn't belong to him. After Melitón was liberated he returned to Bolivia, settling in Sucre.

It was because of these experiences that Toribio Miranda, a wise man and spiritual leader of a large group of indigenous people known as "Alcaldes Mayores Particulares," chose Melitón to help him guide the people of indigenous villages toward freedom and justice. They climbed to the top of the mountain, killed a rooster or a lamb as a sacrifice begging God (*Janajpacha Tatanchej)*, Father Sky, or Father Sun and Mother Earth (*la Pachamama)*, that they be protected and blessed in their path. This deeply spiritual movement bridged five of the nine departments in Bolivia and gathered thousands of indigenous peoples who said they walked with the spirit. The Quechua word they used for spirit could also mean "to fly." Their enemies used this double meaning to accuse them of flying as evil demons. The native authorities along with the department leaders in the capital didn't understand them; they persecuted them, and to this day the names of the martyred are remembered.

This group fervently recalled their former culture and also the promises and principles of their previous religion, such as (*ama sua*) do not steal, (*ama llulla*) do not lie, (*ama qhella*) be diligent in your work. These principles continued to inspire them. They still believed in the prophecies of Wiracocha, the Inca prophet, who spoke of His people's return to their former greatness, and the return of the dignity of their race. Another prophecy they remembered said that a messenger would come from across the sea to instruct and protect them.

Melitón wanted to meet people of other nations so he joined a group of Protestants led by foreign missionaries. A short time later he was criticized for his ideas and ostracized. One night he had a dream in which many of his people wore their hair with yellow, black and white braids and he heard a voice that said, "Don't feel sad, because I will send you a religion of unity." Thus, when Melitón heard the Message of Bahá'u'lláh about unity of all the races as one family, and of His plan for world peace and justice for all the nations, he understood that his dream had been fulfilled. After three days of inquiry and discussion, he entered the Faith in July of 1960.

Soon after entering the Faith, Melitón arose to spread the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh across the mountains and valleys of Chuquisaca, usually alone and on foot. For many years he and his wife Ricarda, later an Auxiliary Board member, opened their house in Sucre and it became a major teaching center for the next 28 years.

In 1962, the Central Union for Indigenous Peoples accused Melitón of confusing and misleading the people in various provinces with the Bahá'í teachings. Because of this he was held in jail for three days, once again on a diet of bread and water. During those days he was kicked and beaten. He suffered and lamented because of this unjust punishment, but he never lost faith. After several months of recuperation he began again walking through the mountains teaching the Faith

and inviting the friends to his home, where they would deepen in the Faith each night.

In 1964, when Melitón heard that the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum would visit Chuquisaca, he refrained from cultivating his parcel of land in order that a huge conference of indigenous people could be held there.

On one of his teaching trips to the mountains, Melitón rode in the back of a truck loaded with cement. The truck turned over, causing the bags of cement to fall on top of him and break his hip. From then on he had trouble walking and suffered great pain, but he continued travelling to teach in spite of his physical handicap. Melitón always had an illumined spirit, a love of God, and a desire to lead people toward their spiritual path. Along with the friends in Chuquisaca, he always wanted a center of education for indigenous people which he referred to as "The House which Illumines the World." With this goal in mind, he and his family donated a piece of land and a bull to the National Spiritual Assembly.

Toward the end of his life, Melitón suffered from cancer, but he remained steadfast with an attitude of detachment and prayer because he knew he was nearing the Abhá Kingdom. During the last few days of his life he asked that his Bahá'í credentials be sent to Sucre from La Paz, in case Bahá'u'lláh asked for them. The last day he called his family and told them to continue teaching in his name, that, against custom, no alcoholic beverages should be served at his funeral, that he be buried according to Bahá'í law, and that his Bahá'í credentials be buried with him. With steadfastness and serenity, in spite of great pain, Melitón passed to the next world on 6 October 1988. Playing a funeral march, veterans of the Chaco War accompanied the funeral procession through the streets of Sucre to the cemetery, where they bid him a soldier's goodbye. After the Bahá'í funeral, our dear friend, Meliton, was given to the care of Bahá'u'lláh.

When the Universal House of Justice heard of his passing, it sent the following message to Bolivia on 7 October:

> DEEPLY SADDENED LEARN PASSING OUTSTANDING QUECHUAN PROMOTER FAITH MELITON SAAVEDRA OF CHUQUISACA. HIS STEADFASTNESS UNDER PERSECUTION HIS COURAGEOUS DEFENSE CAUSE OVER EXTENSIVE PERIOD OF SERVICE WILL BE LONG REMEMBERED. HIS ENCOURAGING INFLUENCE AMONG HIS FELLOW BELIEVERS WILL BE SORELY MISSED. KINDLY EXTEND OUR DEEP HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES GRIEVING FRIENDS AND MEMBERS HIS DISTINGUISHED MUCH-LOVED FAMILY. ASSURE ALL OFFERING FERVENT PRAYERS FOR THE BOUNTIFUL REWARD COMFORT AND PROGRESS HIS SOUL KINGDOM ON HIGH.

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum and Counsellor Mas'úd Khamsí sent the following cable:

> ...KINDLY EXPRESS TO HIS FAMILY OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY PASSING SUCH COURAGEOUS FAITHFUL BAHA'I TEACHER WHOM WE KNEW, TRAVELLED WITH AND LOVED FOR MANY YEARS. ASSUREDLY THIS EXEMPLARY SERVANT BAHA'U'LLAH RECEIVING RICH REWARDS HIS SERVICES ABHA KINGDOM. MAY FAMILY AND FRIENDS FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE OF SACRIFICIAL SERVICE TO FAITH. LOVING CONDOLENCES ENTIRE BOLIVIAN COMMUNITY LOSS THIS OUTSTANDING FOLLOWER BAHA'U'LLAH.
>
> ATHOS COSTAS

JOHANNE HØEG
1891–1988

Johanne Høeg passed away shortly before midnight on 13 November 1988, and with her passing, the first link of the Bahá'í history of Denmark was gone. Mrs. Høeg, born Johanne Sorensen on 5 January 1891, had learned about the Faith at a public talk given

by Orcella Rexford in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1925 and had accepted it immediately. After her first pilgrimage to Haifa, she had brought the Faith to Denmark and for 22 years was the only believer in the country.

Although she was alone she served the Faith in many ways. As early as December 1925 Johanne wrote to the Guardian asking for advice and guidance. Through him and others to whom he referred her, she arranged for a number of Bahá'ís to visit Denmark and give public addresses. When Martha Root visited Scandinavia in 1927, she was Johanne's guest and the Message was delivered to King Christian X. During the same trip the two women visited Iceland.

Johanne focused her energies, however, on ensuring that Danish readers had access to Bahá'í literature. In 1926, she translated and sponsored the publication of two pamphlets. In 1932, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* was translated into Danish and published through her efforts. She had the Kitáb-i-Íqán translated directly from Persian and Arabic by the renowned orientalist, Arthur Christensen. In 1947, Johanne arranged for another Oriental scholar, Professor Raj Barr, to translate the three daily obligatory prayers to be distributed in booklet form. Finally in 1948, The Hidden Words was translated from Arabic and Persian by Professor Barr.

In 1945 Johanne married a physician, Dr. J.C. Høeg, and moved with him to a small Danish island and subsequently to Jutland. She was an excellent housewife and maintained a warmly hospitable and beautiful home.

Mrs. Høeg sent Bahá'í literature and a picture of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to all radio stations and outstations in Greenland, and for more than 15 years corresponded with the Greenlandic translator, Mr. Hendrik Olsen, who became the first native believer in Greenland. Nearly 75 years old at the time, Mrs. Høeg went to Holsteinsborg, now called Sisimiut, to meet him personally and accept his declaration of faith according to his wish. Dr. Húshang Rafʿat, then a young pioneer to Denmark, insisted on accompanying her, and they were able to have a number of public meetings at stops the boat made along the coast en route from Godthåb to Holsteinsborg. Later, Mrs. Høeg helped John and Lotus Nielsen move to Greenland as pioneers.

Mrs. Høeg was a remarkably humble person who had neither time nor inclination to speak of herself, but when the Cause was involved she forgot all about her shyness and with determination and courage took on great tasks, persevering until the charge was brought to perfect conclusion.

Her deep social insight and warm understanding made her a true citizen of the world. When she was faced with what we call a "cultural cleft", she bridged it in her own way, going to the country where she had encountered the problem and finding out about the background.

Her love for the Greatest Holy Leaf, and for the beloved Guardian who maintained a long and precious correspondence with her, gave her strength and support.

After her passing the Universal House of Justice cabled:

> GRIEVED NEWS PASSING JOHANNE HØEG, DEVOTED MAIDSERVANT BAHA'U'LLAH. HER EXEMPLARY STEADFASTNESS SERVICE CAUSE GOD OVER PERIOD SIXTY-THREE YEARS, FOR FIRST TWENTY-TWO OF WHICH SHE STOOD ALONE UPHOLDING LIGHT FAITH HER HOMELAND, CONSTITUTES UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION ANNALS THAT COUNTRY, FULLY ENTITLES HER BE REGARDED AS MOTHER DANISH COMMUNITY. HER UNSWERVING DEVOTION BELOVED GUARDIAN, HER CHERISHED LINK WITH GREATEST HOLY LEAF, HER THREE PILGRIMAGES TO THE WORLD CENTRE, HER INDOMITABLE DEDICATION TASK TRANSLATION BAHÁ'Í LITERATURE DANISH LANGUAGE, HER COLLABORATION WITH RENOWNED ORIENTALISTS ARTHUR CHRISTENSEN AND KAJ BARR, HER ASSOCIATION MARTHA ROOT AND JOHANNA SCHUBARTH, HER PROMOTION TEACHING WORK IN DENMARK AND HER PART IN ESTABLISHMENT FAITH IN GREENLAND,



Johanne Høeg

ALL LOVINGLY RECALLED. PRAYING SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER RADIANT SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. ADVISE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL SERVICES ALL BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES DENMARK AND GREENLAND. KINDLY CONVEY SYMPATHY MEMBERS HER FAMILY BEHALF BAHÁ'Í WORLD.

INGER HJELME

EDNA M. TRUE
1888–1988

MAGNITUDE LOSS DEARLY-LOVED, STEADFAST, DEVOTED, HIGHLY RESPECTED MAIDSERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH EDNA M. TRUE PROFOUNDLY FELT. RECALL WITH DEEP APPRECIATION RADIANT, DIGNIFIED COUNTENANCE OF ONE WHOSE EVENTFUL LIFE SPANNED MORE THAN THREE DECADES HEROIC AGE AND SIXTY-SEVEN YEARS FORMATIVE AGE. HER LONG PERIOD OUTSTANDING DEDICATED SERVICES CAUSE, ESPECIALLY ILLUMINED BY HER ATTAINMENT PRESENCE BELOVED MASTER AND PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE SHOGHI EFFENDI, COMPRISED WIDE RANGE HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS AS STALWART PILLAR AMERICAN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY DURING CRITICAL DECADES ITS EARLY ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT AND AS SINGLE-MINDED, ENERGETIC, RESOURCEFUL PROMOTER EUROPEAN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY WHOSE RISE AFTER SECOND WORLD WAR IS FOREVER LINKED WITH HER EXTENSIVE ACTIVITIES FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS BEHALF EUROPEAN TEACHING COMMITTEE. HER TWENTY-TWO YEARS ON NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY UNITED STATES AS ITS RECORDING SECRETARY INDICATE HOW INTIMATE WAS HER INVOLVEMENT IN SHAPING BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY THAT COUNTRY. HER MEMORABLE MEMBERSHIP CONTINENTAL BOARD COUNSELLORS NORTH AMERICA AND TRUSTEESHIP CONTINENTAL FUND CROWNED CENTURY-LONG, EXEMPLARY LIFE WHOLLY WORTHY HER ILLUSTRIOUS BAHÁ'Í HERITAGE.

PRAYING FERVENTLY HOLY SHRINES HER LUMINOUS SOUL MAY BE ACCORDED JOYFUL REUNION HER DISTINGUISHED MOTHER ABHA KINGDOM AND MAY EVER PROGRESS THROUGHOUT DIVINE WORLDS.

EXTEND HEARTFELT SYMPATHY HER RELATIVES. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS IN HER HONOUR AT MOTHER TEMPLE WEST AND IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT UNITED STATES. ALSO ADVISING OTHER COMMUNITIES NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE HOLD SIMILAR GATHERINGS.

Universal House of Justice

Edna Miriam True was born 29 July 1888, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A., where her parents had moved and where they remained until early 1891 when they returned to Chicago. This city, and its suburbs of Evanston and Wilmette, were their home for the remainder of Edna's life, although the world became her arena of activity.

Edna's mother, Corinne Knight True, became interested in the Bahá'í Faith about 1899. From that time, Edna was brought up under the influence of the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Although she was not quite four years old when the Blessed Beauty

ascended, the child must have been richly blessed to be alive while He walked this earth. She became a dedicated servant of His Cause. 'Abdu'l-Bahá also blessed this daughter of Corinne True, the handmaiden whom He called "O thou who art turning unto God."[1]

Edna graduated from Smith College in 1909 where she was outstanding in many ways, especially in sports, having become captain of her basketball team. After graduating she accompanied her younger sister, Katherine, to Rome where they both entered school and where Edna took some post-graduate courses before returning to the United States.

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in America in 1912 He was a guest in the True home on one of His trips to Chicago. Edna was in contact with Him many times in both Chicago and New York, and she attended the meetings at which He spoke. This was a time when there were indications of unfaithfulness among some of the believers, and after one of these meetings 'Abdu'l-Bahá requested her to follow Him, and He introduced her to a woman, placing their hands together and remarking that He wished them to become close friends. Edna did not understand the reason, but she attempted to comply with the Master's wishes. Finally, however, the friendship dwindled away and Edna was left wondering about the purpose of the Master's request. Later, possibly when she was in Haifa in 1919 and the opportunity arose, she asked Him, and His reply was that He was "trying to save her" for the woman had become an associate of the Covenant-breakers. Edna never waivered in her faith and was confirmed even more strongly when in later years she became fully conscious of what she referred to as the "peace program" given in the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and further strengthened by the interpretations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

[1] *Corrine True* (Oxford: George Ronald, Publishers, 1987), p 46.

Service to others was an outstanding quality of Edna True throughout her life. She became engaged in social work among children and youth in Chicago. During the first World War she joined the Smith College Relief Unit, a volunteer service in France that resettled people driven from their homes and villages. 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave her His approval and praised her for this action. The Unit also helped to establish canteens for the American troops, cared for the wounded and provided transport to hospitals. The Unit was awarded a silver medal from the French government, the "Reconnaissance Francaise."

When concluding her work in France, Edna received an invitation from 'Abdu'l-Bahá to visit the Holy Land, an invitation later extended to include her mother. This pilgrimage, Edna's second encounter with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was made in early 1919. She went directly from France. It was also her first of many contacts with Shoghi Effendi, under whose guidance she served the Faith until his death in 1957. Her last pilgrimage to the Holy Land was in 1986 when she was almost 96 years old.

In the 1920's Edna opened a travel agency in Evanston, Illinois, the first such agency on the north shore of Chicago. In addition to becoming a prestigious travel bureau, her "North Shore Travel Service" was of special service to the Faith in securing travel arrangements for many pioneers at a time when the means of travel were very difficult to obtain. Even before and during the first Seven Year Plan (1937–1944) Edna made the services of her travel agency available to the believers and to the institutions of the Faith, thereby adding greatly to their convenience as well as to the economy of the Faith.

Edna was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada in 1946, following service in the Latin American field, and was immediately appointed to the European Teaching Committee, serving as its chairman through the years of attaining

the goals set by the beloved Guardian for what became known as the "European Campaign" in the "war-torn, spiritually famished European continent", the "most afflicted, impoverished, and agitated continent of the globe" as described by the Guardian in his *Messages to America*.

These duties took her to Europe at least once a year, as well as to Haifa many times to visit the beloved Guardian. She turned to him for his guidance whenever any new or special activity arose: opening of an office in Europe for the European Teaching Committee; settling of pioneers; publication of an information organ for the pioneers and later for the communities; establishment of conferences, schools; formation of Assemblies. In fact, she turned to him for guidance in all aspects of reaching the goals of this second Seven Year Plan. She reported immediately and fully to the Guardian following each event or project. He never failed to respond, first to extend his guiding hand and give encouragement and then to express his congratulations and appreciation whenever appropriate, oftentimes in the form of cablegrams.

This exchange of correspondence between the Guardian and Edna or the European Teaching Committee commenced at the very beginning of the work and no doubt lent tremendously to Edna's capacities and strength in accomplishing this arduous task. Usually, his many letters were written on his behalf and he would then add a postscript in his own handwriting. For example:

September 2, 1946
Dear and valued co-worker: I feel that your contemplated trip to Europe will be most valuable, and will enable you, on your return to the States, to conduct the affairs and activities of the committee with greater understanding and efficiency. All efforts must be concentrated on the formation of strong and permanent groups in carefully chosen localities, which will rapidly evolve into stable Assemblies. I feel confident that your splendid and indeed historic achievements in connection with the Latin American work will prove but a prelude to still mightier achievements in the European field, and will greatly enhance the record of services associated with your dear family ever since the early days of the Faith in the Western Hemisphere. I will continue to pray for your success and the fulfilment of every hope you cherish in the service of our beloved Faith.
Your true and grateful brother, Shoghi

January 27, 1948
Dear and valiant co-worker: I trust and pray that the work so splendidly initiated will steadily expand and will be rapidly consolidated, and bear the fairest fruit in the years immediately ahead. The flow of pioneers, the visits of itinerant teachers, the extension of teaching activity, the translation, and the dissemination of suitable Bahá'í literature, the deepening of the faith and of the understanding of the new believers, must uninterruptedly continue and culminate in the formation of solidly established Assemblies and of perhaps a few nuclei of future groups and Assemblies in each of the ten designated countries. The greatest care and the utmost effort must be exercised and exerted to ensure the success of the forthcoming Conference which will constitute a landmark in the history of this newly launched and historic campaign in Europe. I will pray from the depths of my heart for its success and for the realization of every hope cherished by those who organized it, as well as those who direct the activities and co-ordinate the efforts of all those who participate in the execution of this vital aspect of the second Seven Year Plan.
Your true and grateful brother, Shoghi

As a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, Edna partici-



Edna True

pated in the first election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963, and in 1968 that Body appointed her as one of the three members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for North America, naming her Trustee of the Continental Fund. She continued her service as Counsellor and Trustee through the many changes which took place in that Board until 1980 when she was past 92 years of age.

One of the Counsellors once stated that Edna charged a room with spirit: when she entered, the whole atmosphere and direction of the meeting would change, although she was unconscious of it.

In all her services to the Faith she loved so well, Edna strove for perfection in both spiritual and material aspects. She felt all her talks, reports, articles, correspondence, conferences, selecting and settling of pioneers, etc., should be as perfect as possible, and she was willing to sacrifice her own personal wishes to achieve it. This was demonstrated in September 1971 when she had been invited to give two talks in Reykjavik, Iceland, at one of the eight Oceanic and Continental Conferences called by the Universal House of Justice during its Nine Year Plan for the Expansion and Consolidation of the Bahá'í Faith. One talk was on "The Relationship of the Continental Boards of Counsellors to National Spiritual Assemblies." Edna felt this to be a very important subject because the Boards of Counsellors was a new institution (since 1968) and there was confusion about its relationship to other institutions in the Faith.

Edna had been working on this address, in addition to other duties, for days and days and had planned to leave home early, spend a few days in Luxembourg with a pioneer, Honor Kempton, and then proceed with her to Iceland. Edna was not at all happy with the talk she had prepared and felt it needed further work; therefore, on the morning planned for her departure she decided not to go to Luxembourg but to stay at home for the few remaining days and use that quiet time to work on the talk. It was a wise decision, for her talk was a great success and was later printed in *The Bahá'í World,* volume XV.

Her other talk given in Reykjavik was equally successful. It was about the beloved Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and was later published in the *U.S. Bahá'í News*.

Edna's talents were many and varied. She had an extraordinary organizational ability evidenced in the very early years of her service on the editorial committee of *Star of the West*; in her organization and planning of her services in South America and for the 1944 Convention and Centenary celebrations; in the work in Europe; in the finishing work on the Temple in Wilmette; in the work of establishing the Bahá'í Home, the first dependency of the Temple; and, lastly, in her work as Counsellor and Trustee of the Continental Fund.

Although she bore herself in a regal manner, she also possessed a deep humility, even timidity. She often stated that any recognition given her was due to her mother's accomplishments. She used to worry some-

what about whether her station was so far below that of her mother's that she might not have the blessing of associating with her in the next world. She never claimed any credit for herself or her own abilities. Yet, the records evidence that she earned all the esteem and honor given her.

The quality of humility became increasingly apparent during the last years of her life. She grew even more loving and tender and grateful to all, and loved, especially during the last two years, to laugh with anyone with whom she came in contact as though she wished, not so much to be happy herself, but to make them happy.

When Edna's very fruitful life came to an end on 9 December 1988, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum sent the following message:

> DEEPLY SHARE SENSE LOSS WITH NORTH AMERICA BAHÁÍ COMMUNITY PASSING EDNA TRUE LAST VALIANT MEMBER OLDER GENERATION TRUE FAMILY, WHOSE DEVOTION AND SERVICES TO 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ CENTER COVENANT AND LATER HIS SUCCESSOR SHOGHI EFFENDI THE GUARDIAN MARK THEM AS ONE OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED BAHA'Í FAMILIES OF THE WEST DURING FORMATIVE AGE FAITH. ARDENTLY HOPE YOUNGER GENERATION BELIEVERS WILL PAY BEFITTING TRIBUTE MEMORY THIS OUTSTANDING, EXEMPLARY SERVANT AND ARISE AS NEVER BEFORE TO SPREAD THE CAUSE OF GOD AMONG THE MASSES OF EVERY COLOUR RACE AND BACKGROUND IN THE UNITED STATES AS A WORTHY REMEMBRANCE THIS WONDERFUL SOUL.
>
> D. THELMA JACKSON

ELSA LILLIAN (JUDY) BLAKELY
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1895–1988

Elsa Lillian "Judy" Blakely was born in London, England, on 11 July 1895. That she was adventurous, inquisitive and enterprising seems evident just from knowing that by the time she became a Bahá'í at the age of 27, she had already been a member of the Church of England as well as a Theosophist, had journeyed throughout Europe as a secretary for an acting group, and had travelled the length of Canada as a cast member of the Montreal Community Players. Of these early experiences she later wrote that "witnessing the World War of 1914 in Europe and living in Russia during the first part of the Revolution brought conviction of the utter ineffectiveness of orthodox religion or such movements as Theosophy to cure world chaos".

Elsa learned of the Bahá'í Faith in Montreal. Among her first teachers were May and Sutherland Maxwell, in whose home she spent a great deal of time. She also worked with the first youth groups in Montreal, and later served on that city's Local Assembly.

In 1928, Elsa moved to New York City where she worked as an interior decorator. It is not clear whether it was here or elsewhere that she also gained experience as a literary researcher and a writer, but she later published at least one book.

It was at the Bahá'í Center in New York City that Elsa met Dudley Moore Blakely, a nephew of Lua Getsinger. Dudley, whom Elsa described as a man of limitless gentility and generosity, was an accomplished artist and a Fellow of the prestigious Royal Society of Arts of Great Britain. The couple was married in June of 1934. Although they never had any children, they later raised Elsa's niece and nephew to adulthood.

Elsa served the Faith in many capacities during this period and the years which followed. She was elected a member of Local Spiritual Assemblies in New York City, Detroit and Eliot, Maine, in addition to Montreal. She served on the Michigan and Central States Regional Teaching Committee, the Maine and New Hampshire Regional Teaching Committee, and the Green Acre School Committee. She was also a delegate to several national conventions.



Elsa Lillian (Judy) Blakely

At the encouragement of Loulie Matthews, the Blakelys undertook a teaching trip in 1936 to Venezuela and Guyana (then British Guiana). A letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, dated 6 March 1936, expressed his enthusiasm for their journey into "virgin soils" and declared that they were undertaking "the work of a true pioneer". They made numerous trips to South America during the next two decades to help with the formative stages of the teaching work there.

It was in 1954, however, that Elsa and Dudley began a teaching project which would immortalize them in Bahá'í history. The previous year Shoghi Effendi had inaugurated the Ten Year Crusade, calling for the establishment of the Faith in 29 virgin territories. One of these was Tonga, a group of islands with a land mass of 270 square miles located some 2,800 miles south-west of Hawaii.

On 28 May 1953, Shoghi Effendi cabled the United States, encouraging Bahá'ís to travel to the distant lands he had designated.

> Would to God that Bahá'í warriors... will promptly arise and enroll themselves to achieve the goals ere the conclusion of the opening year of the decade-long, greatest collective enterprise since the memorable episodes associated with the Dawn-Breakers of the Heroic Age.

Elsa and Dudley were among the Bahá'ís who answered the soul-stirring call, and were consequently designated as Knights of Bahá'u'lláh.

Why the Blakelys chose Tonga is not entirely clear, although Elsa once recounted being quite captivated by a picture of Tonga's Queen Salote which she had seen during the coronation of Elizabeth II of England in 1952. Whatever their reasons, they set out in the spirit that Tonga would become their new homeland and arrived in the capital city of Nuku'alofa on 12 July 1954.

While Dudley pursued his painting and sculpture as well as applied his engineerng skills to several diverse projects which benefitted Tonga, Elsa was active in teaching and promoting women's rights. She became acquainted with Queen Salote and had the honour of frequently visiting the palace, often for tea. An institute for women was formed by the Queen and she directed Elsa to employ her writing skills to produce a monthly newsletter for the fledgling organization. Elsa also wrote a pamphlet, *The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, Abraham's Descendent*, which was translated into Tongan by the islands' first native believer.

Not only did Elsa and Dudley hold numerous teaching and proclamation meetings in their home, they frequently journeyed to remote villages and built friendships with countless Tongans. Their reports to the Holy Land elicited assurances from Shoghi Effendi of his high regards for their efforts and the importance of the Polynesian peoples embracing the Faith.

By the latter part of the decade the Faith began to grow rapidly in Tonga. The first Local Spiritual Assembly was formed in Nuku'alofa in 1958 and a second at M'ua

two years later. In 1959, the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific was formed, encompassing 10 territories including Tonga. When Elsa and Dudley departed from Tonga in 1963 they left behind a strong Bahá'í community.

After living for a while in Hawaii, the Blakelys returned to the American continent and established residence in Bennington, Vermont. They pioneered again in September 1977 to the Bahamas (Elsa was 82 years old), but unforeseen circumstances forced their departure in less than six months. They moved to Savannah, Georgia, and then homefront pioneered to nearby St. Simons Island, Georgia, becoming an integral part of that community for many years. Elsa passed away in St. Simons on 31 December 1988.

During the early days of the Ten Year Crusade, Shoghi Effendi exhorted the Bahá'ís of the world:

> ...never to turn back in the entire course of the fateful decade ahead until each and every one will have contributed his share in laying on a world-wide scale an unassailable administrative foundation for Bahá'u'lláh's Christ-promised Kingdom on earth...

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Elsa Blakely contributed her share and far more not only during the wondrous years of the Crusade but throughout the nearly seven decades she steadfastly served her Lord.

BRUCE WHITMORE

ṢALÁḤ JARRÁḤ
(Ṣaláḥi'd-Dín Jarráḥ)
1918–1989

Ṣaláḥi'd-Dín Jarráḥ, whom all the Bahá'ís who visited the resting place of Shoghi Effendi from 1983–1988 remember with great affection and respect, was a descendant of one of the very few Arab families in 'Akká that had recognized the Station of Bahá'u'lláh, and possibly the only family that had believed in Him at the time He was a prisoner within the walls of 'Akká. Ṣaláḥ's ancestors had gone to 'Akká from Egypt in 1832, with the Egyptian army that fought the Turks and occupied 'Akká under the command of Ibráhím Páshá.

The first member of the family to believe in Bahá'u'lláh was Aḥmad Jarráḥ, an officer in the Turkish army. Aḥmad's brother Khálid—who was the personal physician of Bahá'u'lláh and of whom it is reported that Bahá'u'lláh said, 'With his coming, there is healing'—was Ṣaláḥ's grandfather on his father's side. A third brother, Amín, who was head of the Arab community of the city of 'Akká, was Ṣaláḥ's forebear on his mother's side. It is reported that Bahá'u'lláh said, 'The family of Jarráḥ are the stars of 'Akká,' referring to the three brothers.

Ṣaláḥ was born in 'Akká on 6 March 1918, the eldest child of Mu'ayyad Jarráḥ and Fáṭimih Jarráḥ. On that day his grand-uncle, Aḥmad Jarráḥ, suggested that the family ask 'Abdu'l-Bahá to name the child, as was the custom in those days. Ṣaláḥ's father said, 'I will go to see 'Abdu'l-Bahá. But today a peace treaty was signed [probably, the Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk signed between Russia and the Central Powers on 3 March 1918] and I want to name him Ṣaláḥ' (a name derived from the Arabic word for peace). When the two men went to see 'Abdu'l-Bahá, He said: "A peace treaty has just been signed and therefore let the boy be called 'Alí Ṣaláḥi'd-Dín." His father did not utter a word, but was obviously very moved.

Ṣaláḥ became a believer at an early age, following the devotion of his mother, who had declared her faith in Bahá'u'lláh in 1913. When he was 12 or 13, his father asked him, "Are you a Bahá'í, like your mother?" Ṣaláḥ replied, "I am a Bahá'í, like your father." [Khálid Jarráḥ]

Ṣaláḥ was educated at the regional school in 'Akká and later at the Government College in Jerusalem. He was excellent at mathematics, and was called 'Mathematics Champion'. In 1935, when he was 17 years old, his

father died so Ṣaláḥ was obliged to abandon his studies and go to work to support the family. He got a job as a postman, and gave his entire small salary to his mother. Even at this young age, his high sense of duty and his generous nature were evident.

When Ṣaláḥ's sister, Ḥayát, was 14, she finished school in 'Akká. In those days, the only hope local girls had for continuing their education was to be admitted to the Women's Training College in Jerusalem. Normally, each year the best students from the first class, one Christian and one Muslim, were selected. But the year Ḥayát finished, no one was taken. She was very upset because she longed to go back to school. When the summer ended and she saw the boys and girls carrying their books on their way to school she burst into tears. She would have been happy to repeat the same studies she had already completed, but that was not allowed.

When Ṣaláḥ saw Ḥayát's sadness he told his mother, 'I will do whatever I can so as not to leave her broken-hearted.' He contacted a nun from Haifa, Sister Elia Saati, the Headmistress of Schmidts Girls College, the best private girls' school in Jerusalem. She told Ṣaláḥ that there was one vacant place and he could bring his sister. The cost, no doubt, was an added burden to Ṣaláḥ, who still was supporting his mother and a younger sister and brother, but whenever he was praised for his gallantry and self-sacrifice, his only words were, 'Astaghfiru'lláh', which literally means 'I seek refuge in God' but which in common usage is an expression of self-effacement.

Ṣaláḥ served the beloved Guardian directly for 15 years, from 1942 to 1957. During the disturbances in 1948, he carried Shoghi Effendi's mail from Haifa to Beirut by way of small fishing boats, in the face of innumerable dangers and risks. In that same year he and his mother were appointed caretakers at Bahjí, where they sought to protect the Shrine and the Mansion, and to serve the pilgrims. Besides this, he served the Guardian in the various and sundry tasks undertaken for the beautification of the Holy Places. For example, it was Ṣaláḥ's joy to nail pictures on the walls of the Mansion, with his beloved Guardian standing behind him to judge the correct position for each frame.

How he loved the Guardian! He himself has testified to the sense of joy and happiness he experienced in his presence. His greatest pleasure was to complete each task given him by Shoghi Effendi as quickly and as well as possible so as to be able to ask for more work. Whatever the Guardian asked him, he would answer, 'Yes, my Guardian', before even thinking whether it would be possible or not.

Once, Shoghi Effendi mentioned that he needed 70 cypress trees two metres in height delivered to Haifa in a few days. As usual, Ṣaláḥ answered, 'Yes, my Guardian'. Then he began to think. They had a small nursery at that time in Bahjí, but in it there were only three cypress trees. What could he do? He went to a nearby kibbutz and discovered a great number of cypress trees, many of which met the height which the Guardian had specified. He sought permission to buy some. The one responsible invited him to take all he wanted, and free of charge. He arranged for workers to dig up the trees and the next day in the afternoon was able to transport them to Haifa. Shoghi Effendi's words to Ṣaláḥ, 'very well done', were worth more to Ṣaláḥ than all the treasures in the world.

Besides his role in razing the three old, dilapidated houses of the Covenant-breakers which detracted from the beauty of the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh and the Shrine at Bahjí, Ṣaláḥ played an important part, with the beloved Guardian's permission, in arranging for the two Covenant-breakers who were living at Bahjí to move. His success in this difficult task brought Shoghi Effendi immense relief.

Although he gave thought to marriage on several occasions, he put the idea behind him so that he would be able to give his

undivided attention to his duties as Custodian of the Holy Places.

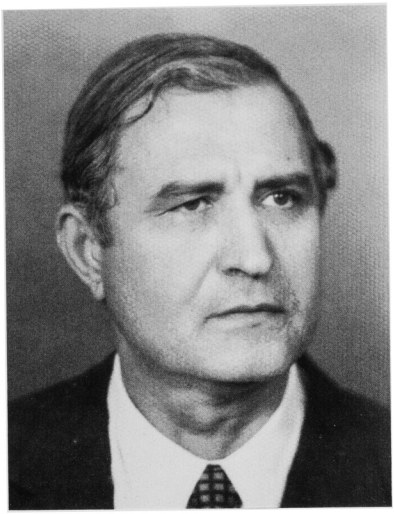
After the passing of Shoghi Effendi, Ṣaláḥ assisted the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land in fulfilling some of the plans for the Holy Places which the Guardian had left. Then in 1958 he pioneered to Djibouti in Africa. He remained there for ten years, until he was involved in an accident. He was hit by a French military vehicle and subsequently taken to France for treatment.

Following the acquisition of the House of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá in 1975, the Universal House of Justice took steps for its restoration. The advice and assistance of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum were sought, and she felt that once the House was restored Ṣaláḥ would be the best person to help her buy some of the furniture. Before there was time to ask him to come, a cable was received from Ṣaláḥ saying he was out of the hospital and asking where the House of Justice would like him to go. Thus, in 1976 he went to the Holy Land to serve the Universal House of Justice.

In 1982, upon the advice of the Universal House of Justice, he transferred his residence from the Holy Land to London near the New Southgate Cemetery, the resting place of the Guardian. There he served as custodian, an appointment made by the House of Justice. Here again, he showed his trustworthiness and loyal character. In small ways, such as in arranging the flowers which the friends brought to the resting place of the Guardian, and in his concern for dignity and respect, he tried to do what would be pleasing to the Guardian and in the best interests of the Faith.

During the winter of 1988–89, Ṣaláḥ was in the Holy Land. On 12 January he was struck by a car and died instantly, leaving in the hearts of a multitude of believers in both the Holy Land and the United Kingdom a sense of deep loss.

The following message was sent by the Universal House of Justice on 13 January 1989:



Ṣaláḥ Jarráḥ

Deeply grieved passing outstanding faithful servant Cause Salah Jarrah in tragic car accident. His exemplary custodianship resting place beloved Guardian was culmination of lifelong record loving self-sacrificing exertions at World Centre, chiefly as caretaker Shrine Bahá'u'lláh, followed by devoted pioneering services in Africa. Convey members his family deep sympathy. Praying Holy Shrines eternal progress his noble soul Abhá Kingdom.

Universal House of Justice

Based on biographical information
PROVIDED BY ḤAYÁT JARRÁḤ

DR. HARILAL M. MUNJE
1911–1989

Dr. Harilal M. Munje will long be remembered as one of the Indian Bahá'í community's most outstanding teachers, consolidators, and scholars of the Faith. He was born in Bombay on 27 November 1911 to parents who were both noted Bahá'í teachers. His



Dr. Harilal Munje

father, Meher Ali, was originally a Hindu who then became a Christian, a Muslim, and finally a Bahá'í, while his mother, Mariam, was a Muslim who became a Bahá'í.

From an early age, at his father's suggestion, the boy began learning languages and studying the scriptures of the world's great religions, in time becoming fluent in 14 languages including English, Arabic, Persian, Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, Pali, Sanskrit, and Urdu. As an example of his linguistic abilities, he translated The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh from Arabic, Persian and English into Sanskrit. This book was praised by a professor of Sanskrit at Fergusson College as "reading just like the Vedas".

In about 1937, he married Nalini Irani, the youngest daughter of Bomas and Morwarid Irani, Bahá'ís of Parsi background. Nalini was a very helpful, kind, and thoughtful person who was a pillar in the Bahá'í communities in which she lived. The couple had three children.

Both Harilal and Nalini became homeopathic doctors, practicing first in Bombay and then at their pioneering posts in Benares and Kanpur. Often other doctors referred difficult cases to them for treatment, and many doctors were Harilal's patients. Dr. Munje helped establish a homeopathic medical college in Kanpur. He also established Bio-Science Research, and patented several medicines.

Dr. Munje always mixed his profession with his Faith and modified his practice, with the invaluable help of his devoted wife, so that he could be away from his home base much of the time. He valued his independent service to the Cause and wanted to stand on his own feet financially so that he was not dependent on the Fund. He would carry a box of medicines with him on his travels so he could work whenever there was time or opportunity.

Dr. Munje understood the philosophical pulse of the Hindu. He was tremendously interested in Hindu prophecies and was the first scholar to relate the advent of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh to Hindu prophecies. He discussed Bahá'u'lláh and Hindu beliefs at great lengths with Hindu pundits.

He could also bring both Hindus and Muslims together, demonstrating to them that the two religions are one. In his deepening classes Dr. Munje could convince the followers of both Faiths of the reality and coming of Bahá'u'lláh.

Dr. Munje's deep knowledge of the Bahá'í Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Zoroastrianism, and other religious teachings, and his constant zeal in teaching the Cause and deepening the believers, enabled him to effectively convey the Message of Bahá'u'lláh on various levels to what must have been hundreds of thousands of people over his lifetime. He was one of the first believers in Bombay who started mass teaching. For 50 years there was not one month during which he did not leave his home to serve the Cause. His humility was evident in his willingness, despite his broad knowledge, to learn from others. He even sought knowledge of the Faith from Bahá'í youth.

With individuals or small groups, he would listen to people for hours. Then when he spoke to them, they were enthralled by his knowledge. He would literally spend weeks, months, or even years teaching an individual at any time of the day or night, often discussing the Faith with a man all night.

Dr. Munje was a spellbinding, powerful, and well-organized public speaker, capable of expounding on a wide variety of subjects, convincing the masses listening to him. Often one or more speakers following Dr. Munje on a program would take his lead and reinforce what he had stated. He spoke to general audiences as well as specialized groups with equal confidence. He also travelled to teach in such countries as Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Dr. Munje's devotion to the Faith was unquestioned. He would arise before dawn for prayers each day and would pray for long periods of time. He would not attack or condemn any institution or individual; instead he remained silent.

He wrote several important Bahá'í booklets, including "The Whole World is But One Family", "1844: Pinpoint Target of All Faiths", and "The Reincarnation Mystery Revealed", as well as a chapter relating the Bahá'í Faith to Hinduism that was added to the Indian publication of *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* in Hindi and English. At times he included his own important translation of portions of sacred scriptures, particularly from Hinduism, in these publications.

Dr. Munje did not go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land during Shoghi Effendi's lifetime, but he carried on an extensive correspondence with the Guardian. In approximately 37 letters Shoghi Effendi encouraged him to pioneer, to write books, to research Hinduism and how it related to the Bahá'í Faith, and to teach Hindus.

For over 20 years—from 1960 to 1986 (except for the years 1965–66, 1966–67, and 1977–78)—Dr. Munje was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of India, much of that time as chairman. In consultation he would stress the fundamentals of the Faith from the Writings. He would never get angry or annoyed at others. At times he travelled and carried out tasks at the request of the Assembly.

In 1987, his beloved wife died. Then in 1988 he went on his first and only pilgrimage to the Holy Land. During his last days, bedridden in a hospital in Kanpur, Dr. Munje gave no sign that he wanted or expected to die. But he passed away in the arms of one of his grandsons on 19 June 1989. A very great man had gone to the Abhá Kingdom.

DR. H.T.D. ROST

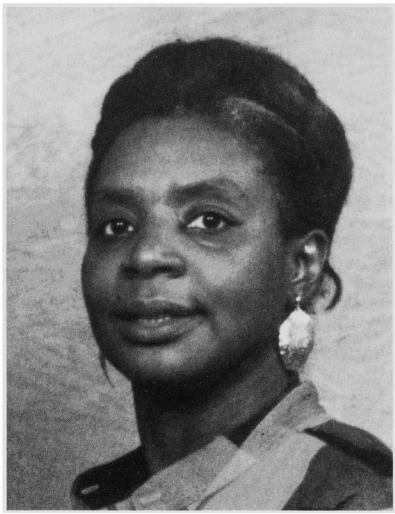
ZLMARIAN STOAKLEY WALKER
1944–1989

DEEPLY SADDENED PASSING SELFLESS RADIANT PROMOTER CAUSE GOD ZLMARIAN WALKER. HER DEVOTED LONGTIME PIONEER SERVICES BRAZIL UNFORGETTABLE. HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES OFFERED YOUR COMMUNITY THIS LAMENTABLE LOSS. KINDLY EXTEND LOVING SYMPATHY HER FAMILY. ASSURE FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER SOUL KINGDOM ON HIGH.

Universal House of Justice
10 July 1989

Peace education has always been implicit in the Bahá'í Cause, but the peace education movement in Brazil and elsewhere owes much to the efforts of Dr. Zlmarian Walker. In the 1980s, when the concept was still new in Europe and practically unknown in Brazil, she grasped its potential for direct and indirect teaching.

The Escola das Nações, the international school of Brasilia where she taught, provided an ideal setting for introducing and developing the idea of peace education, together with that of cooperative learning. With students of many different nationalities, races, and religions, it served as a kind of laboratory. However, to have an impact on the



Zlmarian Walker

nation, it would be necessary to introduce the idea into the public schools. There proved to be tremendous receptivity in schools throughout the land, as well as in other countries of Africa and Latin America, where Zlmarian made numerous presentations under the auspices of National and Local Spiritual Assemblies. Even wider audiences were reached through peace conferences and exhibitions. It would often happen that after a number of rather "dry" academic presentations, the warmth and enthusiasm of Zlmarian's talks would captivate conference participants. Her genuineness of character, as well as her public speaking skills, enabled her to break through racial barriers and appeal directly to the heart.

Zlmarian was born on 15 April 1944 in Washington D.C. She had fond recollections of the dedication of the House of Worship in Wilmette in 1953, to which she was taken by her family, who were Bahá'ís.

When she was 12, Zlmarian pioneered with her family from Batavia, Illinois, to Mississipi. This courageous initiative, involving an unheard-of migration of northern blacks to the heart of the Deep South, won the profound admiration of the friends gathered at the National Convention that year.

In 1967, Zlmarian was married to Robert K. Walker in a beautiful ceremony in the garden of the House of Worship, uniting the extended families of both races. They were to be blessed with two daughters: Shanta Navváb, born 1970; and Leili Leonora, born 1976.

In 1973, Zlmarian and Robert received their Doctor of Education degrees at the University of Massachusetts, where they participated in the development of the Anisa Model of education, under the direction of the late Dr. Daniel Jordan. Zlmarian became an assistant professor at Texas Southern University in Houston, and vice-director of the Multicultural Teacher Corps Program, where she was able to develop principles of multicultural education. These she carried to her pioneering post in Brazil, where she moved with her family in 1974.

As a Latin American Teaching Fellow at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, and subsequently as a visiting professor at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, she was able to combine graduate teaching and research with Bahá'í and family activities. She also lived in Vitória for two years before joining the Escola das Nações in 1981. She served as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly from 1985 until her passing.

Dr. Walker's booklet, "World Peace through World Education", was published in Portuguese in 1986 by the Brazilian Bahá'í Studies Association. An interview with her on the topic was published in the volume, *Perspectives on Peace Education* (Ake Bjerstedt, ed.), published in 1990 by the Malmö School of Education in Sweden. At the time of her death, which occurred 9 July 1989, she was working on a handbook in Portuguese on peace education. This manual was completed by Josephine Kuntz, Jeannine Sacco and Fabienne Lopez, of the Escola das Nações. The continuing efforts in the

field of peace education by the National Spiritual Assembly and Bahá'í communities all over Brazil are another part of her legacy.

The first year of the pilot teaching project in Guyana, launched in 1989 under the auspices of the Bahá'í World Centre, was dedicated to the memory of Zlmarian Walker and a Guyanese Bahá'í, Kenneth Brisport. An old friend who came to visit the project brought two pictures of Zlmarian wearing a sari at Green Acre Bahá'í School, in 1968. The photographs, one of which shows her with her head bowed and another with it lifted, inspired her daughter, Shanta, a participant in the project, to write the following:

Sitting

The field so vast,
The green so fresh,
A queen,
Examining every flower in her garden,
The sari wrapped around her body,
Like the sky involves the birds.
And now you lift your head.
I see you smile.
Are you singing?
Or does the music come from your stance?
Is the sun really so bright,
Or is your face of ebony lighting the day?
The flowers are so bright, so fresh, so full of life,
Like your laughter.
I feel I could almost touch them.
Oh, was it really just yesterday,
Mother?

O Lord, glorify his station, shelter him under the pavilion of Thy supreme mercy, cause him to enter Thy glorious paradise, and perpetuate his existence in Thine exalted rose garden, that he may plunge into the sea of light in the world of mysteries.[1]

ROBERT WALKER

[1] *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982), p 197.

BEATRICE NEWMAN
1898–1989

Grieve passing of the maidservant of God Miss Beatrice Newman. Her devoted services to the Cause of God stretching over three decades are fondly remembered. Her zeal and enthusiasm in teaching the Faith in Wales, her exemplary pioneering activities undertaken at an advanced age in England and Ireland, her deep love for Bahá'u'lláh which dominated her life, all have considerably contributed to the advancement of the Faith in the British Isles. Praying at the Holy Shrines for the progress of her radiant soul in the Abhá Kingdom.

Universal House of Justice
7 September 1989

Beatrice Newman was born in 1898, one of seven children, in Pontypridd, Wales, a land of music, literature and poetry. The Welsh are a deeply religious people, and in the middle of the nineteenth century religious fervour in Wales was heightened by a strong conviction that the return of Christ was imminent. To focus attention on this, Big Tent Missions were set up. As the movement grew, more permanent accommodation was needed, and throughout Wales stone chapels were erected, often several in each town or village. Each had a date inscribed into the stonework and many were dedicated "To the Glory of God". The dates ran from the late 1840s to the early 1890s. A revival in 1904 produced even more chapels.

It was into such a background that Beatrice was born. Both her father and mother were Deacons of the Welsh Baptist Chapel in Cilfynydd, a mining village on the outskirts of Pontypridd. In time, Beatrice too became a Deacon of the Chapel. Having trained as a teacher she began a career in education, eventually becoming headmistress of the Hawthorn School near Cilfynydd.

In such a coal mining community joy was often mixed with sadness as mining disasters

were not uncommon. The pit at Cilfynydd was a deep one and it was not spared its share of calamity. Thus Beatrice developed a deep sense of compassion and love for those around her and an awareness of the omnipresence of God. Along with this she also developed a delightful wit and sense of humour.

Beatrice first heard of the Faith in 1948. The Local Spiritual Assembly of Cardiff, Wales, had been formed, and Claire Gung (later to be a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Southern Rhodesia and designated the Mother of Africa by Shoghi Effendi) was undertaking extension teaching in Pontypridd. To gain financial support, Claire was working as a seamstress and was recommended as such to Beatrice. The Welsh are often eager to know as much as possible about the people they meet, and Beatrice was no exception. With each visit, the amount of dressmaking diminished so that more questions could be answered about the Faith and the return of Christ.

Beatrice was enchanted with the beauty of the Message and the way in which long-cherished prophecies had been fulfilled. However, there was one serious impediment. If one agreed to serve as a Deacon of the Baptist Chapel, it was a lifetime commitment. Also her mother, in the closing years of her life, would never be able to understand if Beatrice changed her Faith, to say nothing of the members of the Chapel who were her close friends.

Claire Gung left for Africa, and for a time she and Beatrice lost touch with each other. Nonetheless, the spark she had ignited in Beatrice's heart was still there when next she saw the name Bahá'í eight or more years later. The Cardiff Assembly had been holding a series of meetings and teaching in Pontypridd, and Beatrice noticed that a friend of hers was reading an introductory pamphlet on the Faith. Asked if she could see it, the friend gave it to Beatrice saying that "it was no use to him". An address and phone number on the back was that of Dr. Ernest Miller, the chairman of the Cardiff Assembly, and a conversation with him revealed that there would be a weekend school in Porthcawl in a week's time. Beatrice decided to go, receiving a warm welcome from a delighted Cardiff community who found that she already had an excellent knowledge of the teachings of the Faith.

The intervening years since her first contact with the Faith had seen remarkable changes. Her mother, now in her 90s, was able to accept Bahá'u'lláh as a Messenger of God. The congregation of her Chapel had split into two opposing factions, each with its own minister insisting that he was the only one with the right to preach the Gospel there. Beatrice had decided to announce her resignation so that she could become a Bahá'í but had been dreading the moment. When it came, there was such a commotion and confusion between the two congregations that her voice was barely heard. She was at last able to make her declaration as a Bahá'í and she was accepted into the Faith in January 1959, becoming the first Welsh-speaking Bahá'í in Wales.

Such was Beatrice's enthusiasm that by August of that year the local newspaper reported that there were now four declared believers there, including Mary Newman, one of Beatrice's sisters. By Riḍván 1961 it was possible to form the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Pontypridd. At that time, the Assembly was unique in the British Isles as it had been formed entirely of local believers without any pioneer move to establish it. The Assembly included all three Newman sisters: Beatrice, Mary, and Flo.

Beatrice's love for Bahá'u'lláh inspired her to be ever active in His Cause. Apart from the many pioneering moves and teaching trips she made, she actively promoted the translation into the Welsh language of prayers and introductory literature. These were used extensively at exhibitions set up by the Welsh Bahá'í community at National Eisteddfods, many of which Beatrice attended.

In January 1961, she attended the dedication of the Mother Temple of the African Continent, in Kampala, Uganda, as one of the four representatives of the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles. These were, befittingly, one each from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Beatrice took with her the precious gift from the National Assembly of the original cable from the beloved Guardian inaugurating the Africa Campaign for which the British Isles had 'chief responsibility'.

In 1962, Beatrice and her sister Flo were the first Welsh Bahá'ís to go on pilgrimage from Wales. In 1963, Beatrice attended the World Congress in London. The year 1964 saw her pioneer to Inverness, Scotland, and also attend the dedication of the Mother Temple of Europe at Langenhain, Germany, near Frankfurt. In 1965, she pioneered to Southport and later that same year to Llandudno in North Wales.

The Pontypridd Assembly had grown by this time so that both Beatrice and Mary were able to pioneer to Winchester, the ancient capital of England, with two other pioneers from Wales to save the Assembly there. They were to have their home there for more than ten years, Beatrice serving as the Assembly chairman for several years. During this time she made many teaching trips, including those to Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Zanzibar.

In 1969, all three sisters pioneered for six months in Cork, in the Republic of Ireland. There, Beatrice arranged for and gave an illustrated talk, the first Bahá'í public meeting held in Cork. Nearly seventy people attended who were nearly all of Catholic background. Before leaving, Beatrice persuaded the carillonneur of Shandon Church to play Alláh'u'Abhá on the church bells while she prayed for the spread of the Faith in that country. The bells can be heard all over the city, and the carillonneur said that after they had left he would be glad to play the tune each day until the Birthday of Bahá'u'lláh.



Beatrice Newman

In September 1971, Beatrice attended the Oceanic Conference in Reykjavik, Iceland. In 1972, all three sisters made their second pilgrimage, and in March 1973 Beatrice and Mary made a teaching trip to Malta. Seeing the urgent need to form the Assembly, they decided to remain there as pioneers and so were members of the first Spiritual Assembly of Malta. When they were able to be released, they went back home to Winchester.

In 1975, Beatrice and Mary moved their home to Poole in Dorset, pioneering once again to save the Assembly. They were joined by Flo a year later. Despite her age, Beatrice continued to be very active and the home in Poole became a centre of attraction both for the local community and those interested in investigating the Faith.

Eventually, unable to take an active part in affairs, she kept in touch with her Bahá'í friends in the United Kingdom and overseas by correspondence. Always her warm friendliness and radiant personality remained with her until she passed away just before her 92nd birthday. There is no doubt that the Bahá'í community is poorer for her loss.

DAVID LEWIS

RODDY DHARMA LUTCHMAYA
1932–1989

> At the gate of the garden some stand and look within, but do not care to enter. Others step inside, behold its beauty, but do not penetrate far. Still others encircle this garden, inhaling the fragrance of the flowers, but having enjoyed its full beauty, pass out again by the same gate. But there are always some who enter, and becoming intoxicated with the splendour of what they behold, remain for life to tend the garden.

This quote, attributed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in a pilgrim's note,[1] beautifully describes the "gardener's life" of Roddy Lutchmaya. The flowers he tended with so much care and love were not only the men, women, and children in his island-home of Mauritius, but those living in the other islands of the Indian Ocean as well. His every action was an expression of love and kindliness, and he was never happier than when serving Bahá'u'lláh and the Bahá'í friends.

Roddy was born on 7 June 1932 in Mesnil, St. Paul, Mauritius. He was the sixth child in a family of nine children. His formal education ended at the age of 17, and at 18 he joined the Government Service as a clerk. A few years later he was recruited as a senior officer cadet in the Prisons Service and underwent a one-year training in England in prison management.

After being appointed Superintendent, and then Deputy Commissioner of Prisons, Roddy became the first Mauritian to be appointed Commissioner of Prisons, a post which he held from 1967 until he passed away. He was also the first Commissioner in the annals of the Prisons Service in Mauritius to occupy this high office for such a long time.

Roddy came from a family that belonged to the Church of England, and was an active member of that Church from childhood. He was always interested in religious and spiritual matters.

In 1956, he and a group of friends listened to a talk on the Bahá'í Faith and universal brotherhood given by an American doctor who was staying in Mauritius, after having pioneered in Reunion Island. The whole group was conquered by the principles of the Bahá'í Faith, and Roddy the more so because of his Christian background and his already profound knowledge of the Bible. He accepted the Faith in November of that year.

He had always been an earnest seeker after truth, so once he was convinced of the importance of the Bahá'í Faith—that it was in truth the religion of the New Age—he diligently studied it and put his trust in God, until he had an exceptionally deep understanding of its outer and inner significance.

Because of this spiritual endowment, and because of his complete trustworthiness, his innate capacity, and his great sincerity and faithfulness in his Bahá'í services, he became a much-respected and honoured servant of the Cause. He manifested at all times devotion, vigour, and intensity in his services. His firmness in the Cause was exemplary and many of the young Bahá'ís who were closely associated with him learned what it meant to be a loyal and sincere follower of Bahá'u'lláh.

From 1957 until his appointment as a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in 1985, he served on Local Spiritual Assemblies, first in his home town of Quatre Bornes and then in the town of Beau-Bassin/Rose Hill. He was also a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Indian Ocean from its inception in 1964 until 1972, then a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Mauritius from its inception in 1972 until 1985.

In his capacity as member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa, he contributed enormously to bringing the Bahá'ís of the Indian Ocean islands closer together.

[1] First printed in *The Garden of the Heart*, compiled by Frances Esty and published in New York in 1930.



Roddy Dharma Lutchmaya

Roddy was truly a remarkable man, judged by any standard. He possessed that rarest of combinations: a spiritual and pious nature, a joyous, kindly and radiant heart, and a sound, discreet and well-balanced mind. In everything he did there was a special mark of quality, of excellence.

In 1966 he had married Premabye Appa, and together they had had four children. He enjoyed his life fully and had a genuine and enthusiastic interest in many things. For example, he was a founding member of the Amateur Dramatic Club of Mauritius. He was like a fountain, constantly giving of himself, forever doing something for someone. He always had a large and friendly smile and a kind word for all he met.

His honesty, integrity and love for humanity won for him the trust and respect of his fellow men (Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís alike), high government officials, and the people who worked under him.

At his Bahá'í funeral service, a friend who had known him very closely for more than thirty years movingly eulogized Roddy, extolling his outstanding character, exemplary life, and devoted service to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. He said,

> Roddy possessed a rare and exceptional gift as a shepherd. His motive was always pure and his spirit lofty. People were happy and comfortable in his company. His great quest for unity and brotherhood amongst men brought him early in life to embrace the Bahá'í Faith. And very soon he became one of its most ardent promoters and fearless defenders.

The funeral was attended by hundreds of people from all strata of the Mauritian society, including government ministers, heads of departments, high government officials, a host of Bahá'í friends from far and near, and many of the men and women he had befriended.

The Universal House of Justice paid tribute to Roddy's memory when it cabled on 25 September 1989:

> DEEPLY GRIEVED SUDDEN UNTIMELY DEATH DEVOTED PROMOTER FAITH RODDY LUTCHMAYA. HIS INCESSANT INTENSIVE EFFORTS TEACHING FIELD MAURITIUS FROM EARLY YEARS ESTABLISHMENT FAITH THAT ISLAND, HIS LONG RECORD ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES ON NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY, CULMINATING IN HIS MEMBERSHIP ON BOARD OF COUNSELLORS IN AFRICA, WILL ALWAYS BE LOVINGLY REMEMBERED. HIS HUMILITY, STEADFASTNESS, PERSEVERANCE UNFORGETTABLE. HIS REWARD ABHA KINGDOM UNDOUBTEDLY BOUNTIFUL. MAY RISING GENERATION BAHÁ'ÍS ISLANDS INDIAN OCEAN FOLLOW HIS NOBLE FOOTSTEPS.
>
> PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL. CALLING FOR SPECIAL MEMORIAL GATHERINGS MOTHER TEMPLE KAMPALA AND IN BAHA'I COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT AFRICAN CONTINENT. CONVEY RELATIVES HEARTFELT SYMPATHY.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF MAURITIUS



Esther Evans

ESTHER EVANS
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1899–1989

On 29 March 1899, Esther Marie Evans was born in New York City. Her family was Roman Catholic and her father had even studied for the priesthood. Esther herself had always been a seeker, and her first major break with traditional thinking occurred at about age 35, after a discussion with her father who had studied the world's religions. Esther had asked him, in a teasing way, what he thought was the true religion, and he had answered: "Well, it would take a lifetime to study the religions of the world, but I've made a superficial study and I believe that it's the Muslim Faith." Esther had been deeply impressed as this was certainly not a popular or well-known concept in the United States at that time. It left the way open for her to later accept the idea of progressive revelation.

Esther was introduced to the Faith when she was about 53 years old, by John and Valerie Woolson, on whose farm near Victor, New York, she lived with her husband of thirty years, Paul Edwards Evans, and her mother-in-law. On Esther's prompting, John explained the idea of progressive revelation, and as he spoke of the Prophet Muḥammad, she accepted Him immediately. Esther recalled later, in an interview, that as John spoke of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, she was "suddenly filled with tremendous joy and was enveloped in great, golden light. I felt as though there was no me and I was conscious of nothing about myself. I heard myself saying, 'John, this is the truest thing that was ever said.' And I believed. This was my answer."

The following year, Esther attended the Temple dedication in Wilmette, Illinois, on 2 May 1953. She had had no intention of pioneering then, but a call for pioneers was made at the conference following the dedication. She remembered Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum saying, among other things, "Now you old girls that have independent means and can do this, go to the far places of the world, stay there, live there, put your roots down, die there. Perchance, someone might come along and say, 'Who is Bahá'u'lláh? What is a Bahá'í?' You'll be able to tell them...."

Esther, accompanied by her friend Mrs. Lillian Middlemast, arrived in St. Lucia on 13 October 1953. Thus the "Helen of the West," as St. Lucia is known, was blessed with the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. She recalled later that although she had not heard of St. Lucia before making the decision to pioneer, upon her arrival there she felt as though she had landed in paradise.

As Knights of Bahá'u'lláh for the Windward Islands, Esther and Lillian were instrumental in bringing the healing Word of the Blessed Beauty to all St. Lucians. Upon Lillian's return to the United States due to ill health after 10 months of pioneering, Esther remained at her post.

Esther's warm, gracious personality endeared her to young and old alike. She was in touch with persons of influence and prominence in St. Lucia and established the good

name of the Faith among her wide circle of friends. In later years she regularly hosted Bahá'í meetings at her home for friends and seekers. During her lifetime, Esther witnessed the growth and fruition of the seed planted by her arrival in St. Lucia. The National Assembly of the Bahá'ís of St. Lucia was inaugurated in 1983, 30 years after her arrival there. At the time of her death in 1989, believers numbered over 1,800.

Upon receiving news of her passing on 17 October 1989 at the age of 90 after a short illness, the Universal House of Justice cabled the following message:

> GREATLY SADDENED PASSING VALIANT KNIGHT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH ESTHER EVANS. HER MANY YEARS STEADFAST DEVOTED SERVICES EVIDENCED BY ADMIRABLE GROWTH COMMUNITY ST. LUCIA. KINDLY CONVEY HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES HER SON AND FRIENDS. ASSURE ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER NOBLE SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.
>
> NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF ST. LUCIA

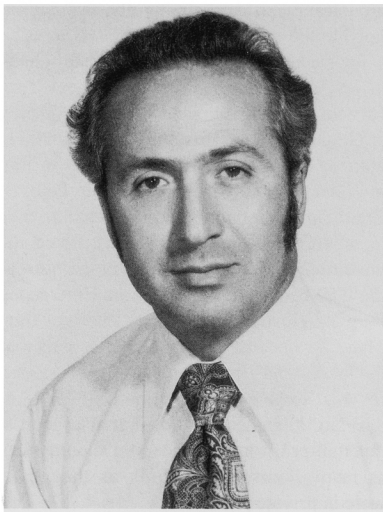
EHSANOLLAH MALAKOOTI
(Iḥsánu'lláh Malakútí)
1932–1989

Iḥsánu'lláh Malakútí was born in Kirmánsháh, Persia, in 1932. His family soon after moved to Ṭihrán where he was educated, to the completion of medical school at Ṭihrán University. He was in that blessed generation of Bahá'ís who could happily recall Friday classes with Mr. Furútan and Mr. Fayḍí, while he himself progressed to teach the early grades whilst attending the senior Bahá'í classes. He would recount precious memories of Ṭihrán Youth Committee members standing on stools perilously perched upon chairs, balanced on card tables to hang their creation, the handmade chandelier that swung so elegantly from the dome of the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds in Ṭihrán. Life revolved around the Faith and the family, from childhood to the end of his life.

In December 1956, soon after the death of his father, Iḥsán travelled to New York City for his internship and surgical residency at New York City Hospital at Elmhurst. He married Veronica and they returned to Írán in 1962. Acutely aware of the beloved Guardian's admonition to the Persian friends to move out of Ṭihrán, Iḥsán accepted the position of chief surgeon/administrator of the 150-bed Red Lion & Sun Emergency Surgical Hospital in Ábádán, southern Írán. There he became a very active member of the local Bahá'í community and well-known for his services to the poorer people of Ábádán; it was unheard of that a surgeon at this non-profit making hospital should work as many hours, as skillfully as though he were in private practice.

His reputation grew, and in the manner prejudices can be set aside when the skill of the Bahá'í is exceptional, the people became fond of him. Not far north, along the Euphrates, stood Khurramshahr, at that time Írán's main port. There an elderly Arab had built a simple 20-bed hospital, and he was looking for a doctor he could trust to be his partner. He heard of Iḥsán Malakútí in Ábádán and sent a very frank invitation, the gist of which was, 'I have searched long and hard and cannot find an honest doctor of my own faith. I know Bahá'ís are honest and I've heard you are a good man so come see my hospital'.

Not everyone in Khurramshahr was as liberal as the good Ḥájí, and for the first few months after his arrival friends regularly reported talks given at the local mosques against "the Bahá'í surgeon who will kill all the true believers". But 'Abdu'l-Bahá tells us how we must each live and serve so that anyone coming to a town will know we must be Bahá'í, and so it was. Dr. Malakútí's home was always full of friends, committees, the Local Assembly, distinguished Bahá'í guests, future martyrs, Muslims, Christians, Jews; even deposed Arab royalty graced his house.



Ehsanollah Malakooti

On occasion, when pressure would come from Ṭihrán, and the local government officers were forced to take action against the Bahá'ís, Dr. Malakúti would go to the police station to plead for the release of Bahá'í properties or visit the local education officer to ask that the Bahá'í children not be humiliated in class or beaten. When the local police chief apologized for confiscating all the Bahá'í books from their storeroom on the piece of land the community owned for its future Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds, Dr. Malakúti, as chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly, asked the chief to read The Hidden Words and see for himself what he was doing.

The doctor's good humour, candour, love of people and devotion to His Faith stood him in good stead with everyone. After quite a short time in Khurramshahr the same mullas who had denounced him came to him for treatment. When the ousted King of Abu Dhabi was exiled to Khurramshahr, it was the local magistrate who brought the King's family to Dr. Malakúti as the physician who wouldn't disgrace Írán by cheating the King and his family.

Dr. Malakúti's knowledge of the Faith as well as his use of it in his daily life were outstanding even in that community rich in knowledgeable and sincere believers. He served on the Local Assembly and as delegate to the National Convention until leaving Írán in 1970.

By 1970, the Malakútís had two sons, ages three and six, and they had decided to move to the United States until the boys were well along in their education. But then they heared Counsellor 'Azíz Yazdí speak about the urgent need for pioneers to Africa. The decision to go to Africa was made the very evening Mr. Yazdí spoke in Khurramshahr.

After settling down to a private medical practice in Nakuru, Kenya, Dr. Malakúti served with devotion members of the African, Asian, and European communities for nineteen years. Before being appointed to the Auxiliary Board for Protection in 1976, Dr. Malakúti had been a founder-member of Nakuru's first Local Spiritual Assembly, member of the Nakuru District Teaching Committee, the National Teaching Committee, and the National Legal and Properties Committee. Despite his very full practice (it was very rare for him to have an unbroken night's sleep in his entire adult life), he was very active in Rotary International. One of his happiest experiences was serving as the first non-British Chairman of a Rotary Club in Kenya. His hobby throughout his life, but most particularly in Nakuru, was his garden.

He rarely spent fewer than two weekday evenings and at least half the weekend in the villages, teaching, deepening and consolidating. On the afternoons when he travelled to the villages, the doctor would close the office early, fill up the car with local Bahá'ís, many of whom he had taught and deepened, and drive out of town, dropping off a Bahá'í at a village where there was a contact to be met, or perhaps a community to be deepened. When the car was empty, he would teach at the last village, and later begin the drive back, picking up the friends

he had earlier dropped off. His seemingly tireless energy was an inspiration to many Bahá'ís, as was his capacity for patience and loving understanding. It is not easy to return to the same village again and again for many years, encouraging, always patient, full of love, planting the seeds for the future.

Dr. Malakúti had a unique rapport with the African friends; much love and respect was felt on both sides.

He tried to be generous in all ways and to inspire others to vision, and so the Nakuru Centre, with a meeting room for 200, a dormitory for 100, a covered dining area, and an office for the Local Assembly of Nakuru, was built which serves the more-than 35 Local Assemblies around Nakuru as well as hosting most national conferences and National Conventions. Well-known for his frugality, Dr. Malakúti couldn't bear to see Bahá'ís rent facilities they should own!

Dr. Malakúti became ill and travelled to the United States for treatment but died on 22 October 1989 at University Hospital, Seattle, Washington. Three months later, when his wife returned to Nakuru, more than 600 persons attended his memorial, and the speakers were of all colours and creeds. Bahá'í, Christian, Hindu, and Muslim prayers were read. Representatives of the Kenya National Medical Association and the Moslem Medical Association spoke of his unselfish services. But above all, the Bahá'ís, who had an additional memorial meeting at the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds, appreciated his services to the Bahá'ís of Kenya.

At one of the memorial meetings in Kenya, Isobel Sabri, a member of the International Teaching Centre, said that the characteristic she most associated with him was "absolute integrity". The other attribute which characterized his every action was his absolute and loving obedience to the institutions of the Faith based on his love for Bahá'u'lláh. Whether it was deciding to settle out of Ṭihrán, or to move to Africa, or to settle outside a capital city in Africa, these moves that at the time appeared to be disadvantageous, were made *unquestioningly* after guidance from an institution.

The Universal House of Justice sent the following message to his wife on 24 October 1989:

> DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING DEARLY LOVED STEADFAST EHSAN MALAKOOTI. HIS GENEROUS NATURE, HIS COMMITMENT TO HIS RESPONSIBILITIES IN PIONEERING FIELD, HIS STRENUOUS SELFLESS SERVICES, HIGHLY VALUED, LOVINGLY REMEMBERED. EXTEND YOU, DEAR SONS, MEMBERS FAMILY HEARTFELT SYMPATHY. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Iḥsánu'lláh Malakúti lies buried in a beautiful garden facing the Olympic Mountains of Washington, to the end a selfless, loving husband, father, and servant of His servants.

VERONICA MALAKOOTI
(Veronica Malakúti)

KAZEM KAZEMZADEH
(Káẓim Káẓimzádih)
1898–1989

Káẓim Káẓimzádih was born in 1898 in 'Ishqábád, Transcapia (now Turkmenistan), when it was a recently acquired possession of Russia. His grandfather, Ḥájí Muḥammad Káẓim, like many Persian Bahá'ís, had found refuge there from persecutions at home.

As a youth in Iṣfahán, Ḥájí Muḥammad Káẓim had attained the presence of the Báb, and later of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdád and in 'Akká. His son, Áqá Muḥammad Riḍá, known as Arbáb, was among the founders of the 'Ishqábád Bahá'í community and the builders of its House of Worship.

Káẓim's mother was Liqá'íyyih Khánum, granddaughter of Mír Jalíl, who was martyred in the siege of Zanján, and his wife, 'Anbarnisá, known to Bahá'í history as Umm-i-Ashraf. Liqá'íyyih Khánum's father

was Ḥájí Ímán, a survivor of the siege of Zanján and of the martyrdoms of 1896 in Ṭihrán.

At the age of five, Káẓim entered the school run by several outstanding Bahá'ís, among them Shaykh Muḥammad 'Alí Qá'iní, posthumously designated by the Guardian an Apostle of Bahá'u'lláh. It was from him and other Bahá'í scholars that Káẓim acquired his mastery of Persian, his love of poetry, and his knowledge of classical Arabic.

At 13, Káẓim was enrolled in a Russian classical gymnasium, a school designed to provide a European education for the sons of Russian officials in this Asian province. Instruction was in Russian, a language Káẓim learned to perfection. He had acquired Azeri Turkish as a child, and later in life French and English as well. It was at the gymnasium that Káẓim was exposed to western science and culture and decided to pursue higher education in Moscow where he studied law and international relations. While at Moscow University, he married Tatiana Romanovna Yevseyeva, a fellow student and one of the early Russian Bahá'ís.

On completing his studies, Káẓim was employed by the Persian Embassy in Moscow and continued to serve there until 1940, when he moved to Ṭihrán, left the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and dedicated virtually all his time to the service of the Cause, only occasionally practicing law.

He had begun to serve the Cause in his early youth as a teacher in the Bahá'í school in 'Ishqábád, as editor of the Russian version of the Bahá'í newspaper, *Khurshíd-i-Khávar*, and as a participant in various youth activities. In Moscow he was elected to that city's first Spiritual Assembly, serving until its dissolution in 1929.

In 1928, Káẓim made his first pilgrimage to Haifa. Meeting Shoghi Effendi then, and again in 1941, were the high points of his life.

By the mid-1930s, all Bahá'í activity in the Soviet Union ceased, as thousands of Bahá'ís were arrested and imprisoned in the Great Terror. Some were deported to Írán, others sent to concentration camps where many perished. Káẓim became a link between Bahá'í prisoners and the outside world. The Káẓimzádih home was used to make packages of food and warm clothing for shipment to camps in Siberia and Northern Kazakhstan.

In Persia, Káẓim served on a number of Bahá'í national committees, on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Ṭihrán, of which he was chairman for several years, and on the National Spiritual Assembly, frequently discharging the duties of its secretary. With the establishment of the Auxiliary Boards of the Hands of the Cause, Mr. Káẓimzádih was made a member of that institution. He worked on translations of Bahá'í literature into Russian, and taught classes for Bahá'í youth of college age. The alumni of those classes remember them with gratitude and delight.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Persia was in turmoil. The Shi'ite clergy had made a political comeback and was influencing the government and provoking attacks on the Bahá'ís. There were killings by mobs, but there were also pseudo-judicial proceedings designed to destroy Bahá'í institutions. One such case was the trial of the members of the Spiritual Assembly of Yazd who were accused of provoking murders in a nearby town.

The members of the Yazd Assembly were tried in Ṭihrán in an atmosphere of hatred and intimidation. Non-Bahá'í lawyers, with one notable exception, refused to defend the accused even if their innocence was patently clear. Mr. Káẓimzádih led the defense team. In a courtroom packed with mullás and street toughs shouting imprecations at the defendants and their counsel, Mr. Káẓimzádih rose to his full stature as a defender of the Cause. He addressed the court over the screams of the mullás and their henchmen, many of whom brandished knives. The judges, instructed by the government, caved in and found the defendants guilty, but no one doubted the injustice of the verdict.

In recognition of Mr. Káẓimzádih's role in this and other cases, Shoghi Effendi called him the "Shield of the Cause of God."

In 1956, Mr. Káẓimzádih moved to the United States. He was in poor health and underwent surgery. When his health improved, he was able to resume normal activity. He taught Persian at Harvard and at the University of California, Los Angeles, contributed to *World Order* magazine, taught at the Green Acre and Bosch Bahá'í Schools, travelled to Canada to teach Russian-speaking Dukhobors, served on Local Spiritual Assemblies in New Haven, Connecticut, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Santa Monica, California, and was the first Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh in the Western Hemisphere, serving in that capacity for many years. When open teaching was allowed in the former Soviet Union, a pamphlet that he wrote in Russian proved very useful.

One cannot conclude this brief sketch without mentioning Mr. Káẓimzádih's personality and character. A true aristocrat of the spirit, courtly and dignified, he was entirely free of arrogance or pride. His integrity, gentleness, and humility endeared him to all who knew him. Indeed, he was a man without enemies. Deeply devoted to the principles of the Faith, he was never fanatical, and never forced his opinions on others.

Káẓim Káẓimzádih died of heart failure on 14 November 1989, at his home in Pacific Palisades, California, and was buried at the Inglewood Cemetery a few feet from the grave of Thornton Chase.

The Universal House of Justice cabled the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States on 16 November:

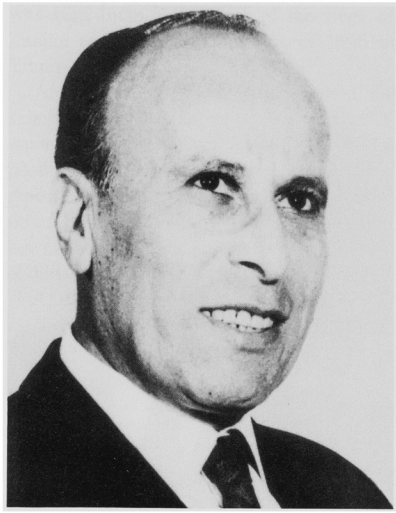
> DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING GREATLY TRUSTED STEADFAST PROMOTER FAITH KAZEM KAZEMZADEH. HIS DISTINGUISHED SERVICES RUSSIA, HIS EXEMPLARY PARTICIPATION IN ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES FRIENDS IRAN, INCLUDING DISCHARGE HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS SECRETARY NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY THAT COUNTRY, HIS TRANSLATION WORK INTO RUSSIAN, HIS UNDEVIATING LOYALTY INTERESTS BELOVED CAUSE AT ALL TIMES, ARE IMPERISHABLE TOKENS OF HIS SELF-SACRIFICING ENDEAVORS OVER SEVERAL DECADES. HIS REWARD ABHA KINGDOM UNDOUBTEDLY ABUNDANT. PRAYING PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL WORLDS BEYOND. CONVEY DEAR MEMBERS HIS FAMILY OUR LOVING SYMPATHY.
>
> DR. FIRUZ KAZEMZADEH
> (Dr. Fírúz Káẓimzádih)



Kazem Kazemzadeh

HABIB HABIBI
(Ḥábíb Ḥábíbí)
1912–1989

Ḥábíb Ḥábíbí was born in Hamadán, Persia, in 1912. His father, Mashíya, was of the Jewish Faith but became a Bahá'í at the age of 94. His mother, Shamsí, was a Bahá'í. Hábíb was very active as a young man of 17 or 18 years in Ṭihrán, serving on the National Youth Committee and the Social Service Committee.



Habib Habibi

In the early 1940s, the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Ṭihrán was purchased for the Faith. Ḥabíb was the principal contributor, and his contribution was made under great financial stress.

Ḥabíb went to Manchester, England, which was a very active community. He was soon elected to serve on the Local Spiritual Assembly, and gave his valued support to the many activities upon which the Manchester community ventured, not the least of these being the 1953 Bahá'í Centenary Exhibition staged at the Manchester Bahá'í Centre.

In another area of service, Ḥabíb supported the move of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust from the warehouse of Jacob and Ibrahim Youseph (Jeff and Albert Joseph), to larger premises.

The Assembly spent a great deal of time discussing the letters received from the beloved Guardian, which included plans to set up goal areas. One goal area was an adjacent town, Stockport, and Hábíb volunteered to pioneer there for a short time.

The development of the Guardian's Plans called for more goals to be established and many pioneers went out from Manchester. Ḥabíb was one of these; he rented a small flat in Chester, where he spent some time each week, together with his son Jimmy. Business commitments did not permit full time residence there, but their sojourn was sufficient to establish Assembly status.

Ḥabíb always wanted the Manchester Local Spiritual Assembly to have its own Bahá'í Centre, and he was one of the initial instigators to bring that dream to fruition. A large Victorian house was purchased in Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, the ground floor was converted, and the National Assembly granted permission for this to be designated as the Manchester Bahá'í Centre. He was proud that the Centre has been used most fully over a great many years.

His services to the Faith continued throughout the British Isles until, in September 1971, Ḥabíb went on his first extended teaching trip for four months in Africa. A year after his return, he again left England, this time for about six months in Africa and Portugal.

He served the Faith with distinction in Belgium and Malta, then for the last 10 years of his life pioneered to India. In Himachal Pradesh, he attracted many dignitaries to the Faith, and in 1983, he launched the first medical eye camps in India—Mysore and Mandya—in the State of Karnataka. These were the beginnings of service efforts which treated thousands of people, and which successfully operated on hundreds of others.

He served on many Local Spiritual Assemblies and one State Bahá'í Council in India. His last pioneering post was Goa, in which he donated two Bahá'í Centres.

Because of ill health he was forced to go back to Karnataka to a more temperate climate. Then, he passed away suddenly on 21 November 1989 while in England for one of his regular medical checks.

Of his loving devotion to the Faith and its many needs there is ample confirmation; at no time did a call for help go without response. This service was fully reflected

in the following cable received from the Universal House of Justice:

> GRIEVE PASSING STEADFAST STALWART SERVANT CAUSE GOD HABIB HABIBI. HIS UNTIRING EFFORTS RELATED ACQUISITION ONE OF THE HOLIEST SITES IN IRAN, HIS DEVOTED BAHÁ'Í ACTIVITIES ENGLAND, HIS PIONEERING TO MALTA AND INDIA, HIS GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CAUSE OF GOD, ARE FONDLY REMEMBERED. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. KINDLY CONVEY OUR LOVING CONDOLENCES ALL MEMBERS FAMILY.
>
> PAULINE SENIOR AND WILMA HABIBI

ROBERT JOSEPH QUIGLEY
1912–1989

Robert Quigley was 19 years old when he first heard of the Bahá'í Faith. He was acting in a show in Washington, D.C., when he was offered a ride to his home in New York City by Philip Sprague, a prominent Bahá'í teacher who, as a young man, had met 'Abdu'l-Bahá when He visited New York. Bob Quigley frequently referred to this journey as the turning point in his life.

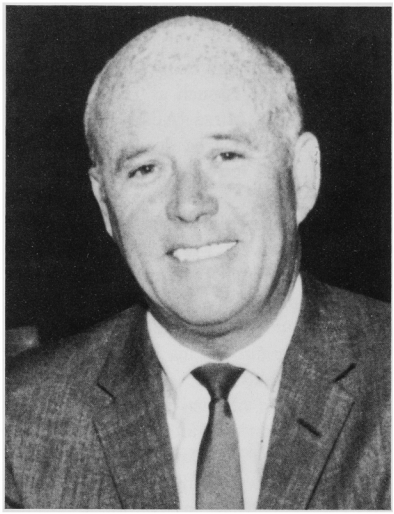
En route to New York, Mr. Sprague explained the Station of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá and answered the young actor's questions. Although he had been raised a Roman Catholic since his birth on 13 March 1912, and he was not consciously seeking an alternative religion, Bob could hardly believe what he heard. As soon as they arrived, he went directly to St. Agnes Church where he and his family had been members for years. He knelt at the altar and opened the Bahá'í prayer book Mr. Sprague had given him, and his acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh and His Faith was instant. Shortly thereafter he was enrolled as a Bahá'í youth and became very active in teaching, his natural charm and radiant spirit attracting many seekers.

At 21, he was elected to the New York Spiritual Assembly, and, as the youngest member, served with many of the early distinguished Bahá'ís such as Horace Holley, Philip Sprague, Mírzá 'Alí-Kuli Khán, and others. At this time he decided to give up any aspirations toward an acting career so that he might devote more time to Bahá'í activities. During those early years, he was actively involved with the Green Acre Summer School where he studied with many early disciples of 'Abdu'l-Bahá who would eventually be responsible for the spread of the Faith throughout North and South America and abroad.

In 1941, he married Keith Gettinger to whom he taught the Faith, and they became the parents of Philip James, Kimon Joseph and May Maxwell Quigley. During World War II, he enlisted in the non-combatant branch of the United States Navy where he served for three-and-a-half years. Shortly after being discharged, Bob and Keith started a television production company, which became highly successful over the years.

In May of 1956, Shoghi Effendi gave permission for Bob and his wife to travel to the Holy Land for pilgrimage. While there, Bob was inspired to join his close friends, William and Marguerite Sears, who were pioneers to South Africa. Within three weeks Bob too was in South Africa, to be joined shortly after by his wife and three children. They remained in Johannesburg for over three years, where Bob served as an Auxiliary Board member as well as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of South Africa.

When the Quigley family returned to the United States in 1960, Bob resumed his career in television and his production company reached even higher peaks of success, resulting in several "Emmys", the prestigious award given for excellence in the television industry. He was elected to the National Assembly of the United States and served for five years. Throughout this period he continued his long collaboration with the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears



Robert Joseph Quigley

producing audio-visual material, books, plays, films, and other teaching aids and projects which were used throughout the world. Using his outstanding creativity as a television producer, he was dedicated to advancing the awareness of the Faith through the media.

His enthusiasm and dedication remained constant for over 50 years as he witnessed the Faith grow into a world-wide community, resulting in the dedication of Houses of Worship in Wilmette, Kampala, Sydney, Frankfurt, and Panama, in addition to many world conferences, all of which he felt privileged to have been able to attend. Many have heard him speak of his unforgettable meeting with the beloved Guardian. He always felt that his Bahá'í life was filled with unlimited bounties.

Bob Quigley passed away on 27 November 1989 and was buried at Inglewood Cemetery in California, near the grave of Thornton Chase, the first American to embrace the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

When his physical life ended, the Universal House of Justice cabled the following message:

DEEPLY SADDENED PASSING DEARLY LOVED ROBERT QUIGLEY. PROFOUNDLY GRATEFUL HIS LONG YEARS CONSTANT DEVOTION CAUSE BAHA'U'LLAH DISTINGUISHED BY HIS OUTSTANDING, SACRIFICIAL SERVICES AS PIONEER AFRICA TOGETHER WITH HAND OF THE CAUSE WILLIAM SEARS AND HIS MEMBERSHIP NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY UNITED STATES. HUMOR WITH WHICH HE ENCOURAGED SERVICE AND LIGHTENED BURDENS OTHERS WARMLY REMEMBERED. ARDENTLY PRAYING PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL DIVINE WORLDS. KINDLY CONVEY OUR LOVING SYMPATHY DEAR KEITH AND FAMILY.

PHILIP O'BRIEN

ROBERT W. MCLAUGHLIN
1900–1989

Robert William McLaughlin was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan, U.S.A., on 24 June 1900, but most of his childhood was spent in Brooklyn, New York. His father was a well-known Congregational minister and author who, in his books, strove to demonstrate that Christ's perfect character and perfect teaching had been "the two supreme events of history", and had shaped world events ever since. Growing up in this atmosphere, young Bob and his three sisters were shielded against the agnosticism which was then becoming fashionable in the United States.

After receiving his bachelor's degree from Princeton University in 1921, Bob found his plans for graduate studies in architecture interrupted by tuberculosis, which he overcame by spending two years at a sanatorium in Saranac Lake, New York. During this period of enforced rest, he read voraciously and corresponded widely, developing a love for literature and scholarship that was to distinguish him throughout his life. After regaining his health he returned to Princeton and received his Master of Fine Arts degree in architecture in 1926.

In 1931 he married Katherine Lockwood Thurber, known as Kakine, who was to be

his life-long partner in all things—especially in service to the Bahá'í Faith.

During the 1930s and 1940s, Bob practiced architecture with increasing success and prominence. His more traditional designs ranged from family residences to large corporate and public buildings. At the same time, he developed new pre-fabrication techniques for low-cost housing, and was awarded more than 20 patents in that field. He was also known for studies of construction techniques, climate control, and what would today be called the "ergonomics" of buildings. He was a complete architect, possessing a broad knowledge of architectural history but willing and able to use the newest techniques and materials. He was not beholden to the architectural fashions of his day.

During 1944, Bob and Kakine became dissatisfied with what they saw as un-Christian attitudes prevalent in their Christian community of Bedford Village, New York, a community which rejected a proposal by the United Nations to establish its world headquarters in that part of New York State. The McLaughlins began to search for a religion whose adherents would embrace the entire world, and were soon introduced to the Bahá'í Faith by Peter and Rene Welsh of nearby Greenwich, Connecticut.

Bob became a Bahá'í in October 1944, and Kakine followed suit a few weeks later. In the summer of 1945, the McLaughlins attended Green Acre Bahá'í School, beginning a relationship with Green Acre that would span four decades. During the 1950s they returned to Green Acre several times with their two children, Meredith and Robert.

In November 1945, Bob and Kakine were appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly to the Regional Teaching Committee for the State of New York. During the next seven years, they were both active in teaching activities throughout the State.

Starting in 1947, Bob McLaughlin served on a Technical Advisory Board for construction of the interior of the House of Worship in Wilmette. He published several articles about the architecture of this Mashriqu'l-Adhkár (*The Bahá'í World*, volume XI), and often used it as a theme in public lectures about the Faith.

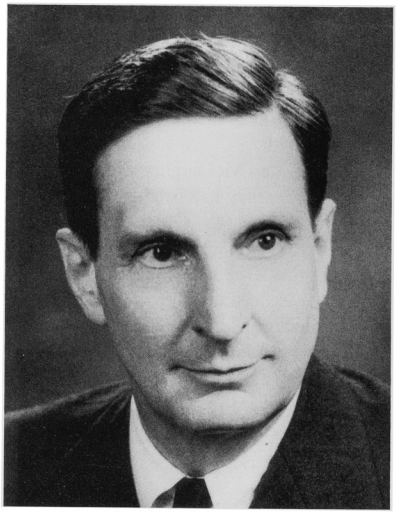
In 1948 the McLaughlins left Bedford Village where they had been isolated believers and moved to Greenwich, thereby helping to strengthen the Bahá'í community. Then, in 1952, Bob was invited by Princeton University to become Director of the School of Architecture. Knowing this demanding position would reduce his time available for teaching the Faith, he sought advice from the beloved Guardian, who replied by cable:

> ADVISE ACCEPT PRINCETON POST LOVING PRAYERS—SHOGHI.

Bob served as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States for almost four years, from late 1953 until mid-1957, when he resigned because of other commitments. From 1957 until his retirement from Princeton in 1965, he divided his time between university duties and travelling with Kakine to teach the Bahá'í Faith, mostly in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. During his many trips to Mexico and Central America, he became knowledgeable in Mayan art and architecture. In 1965, he donated to Princeton University a photographic index of some 20,000 pre-Columbian artifacts that he had analyzed.

In 1965, the McLaughlins moved to York, Maine, where Bob had lovingly restored an old farmhouse not far from Green Acre. Freed from the demands of university life, the McLaughlins used their farmhouse as a base for local, national and international Bahá'í activities and as a quiet haven for Bahá'í visitors from all over the world. In about 1970, the McLaughlins helped to form a Local Assembly in York.

In 1962, the International Bahá'í Council had requested Bob's help in confronting a serious threat to the Bahá'í properties on Mount Carmel: plans by local Haifa authorities



Robert W. McLaughlin

to "improve" existing roads running through those properties and to add new ones. In 1964, the Universal House of Justice had amplified this request, calling for a master plan that would show the long-term development of the Sacred Properties, including new terraces, buildings, monuments and gardens that would one day adorn Mount Carmel.

Bob first submitted such a plan to the House of Justice in 1965. In subsequent meetings with local authorities in Haifa, his gentle manner and impressive knowledge of city planning helped to convince them that the long-term interests of Haifa would be better served by a verdant and beautiful Bahá'í World Centre, open to all, than by a series of little roads that would do little to alleviate the city's growing traffic problems.

From 1964 through the mid-1970s, Bob continued to serve as architectural consultant to the Universal House of Justice for the development of Bahá'í properties on Mount Carmel, visiting Haifa many times to offer his suggestions as new challenges arose. In June 1972, in a cablegram announcing its decision to begin the selection of a design for the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, the House generously noted:

> ...MOVED PAY TRIBUTE EXPRESS HEARTFELT GRATITUDE OUTSTANDING SERVICES ROBERT MCLAUGHLIN IN PREPARATION FOR THIS HISTORIC UNDERTAKING.

Bob also served as architectural consultant to the Universal House of Justice for the building of the Panama Temple. In 1964, Bob had advised the Universal House of Justice about solicitation of design proposals for the House of Worship in Panama, then from 1966 to 1972 he worked closely with the architect, Peter Tillotson, and with the National Assembly of Panama, to ensure that the instructions of the House of Justice were followed and that the Temple was ready for its joyous dedication in Riḍván of 1972.

In 1977, Bob served as consultant to the Universal House of Justice in evaluating several designs submitted for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Apia, Samoa. None of the designs submitted that year was judged adequate, but the process of evaluation helped to clarify architectural options, and thereby contributed indirectly to selection of the superior design that was later submitted and built.

After moving to Maine, both McLaughlins taught courses and gave lectures at Green Acre. Bob served on the Green Acre Council and helped the school on questions of construction, renovation and landscaping. In 1980 he received the Reimer Award from the Green Acre Council in recognition of dedicated services to that school over many years.

Throughout his years as a Bahá'í, Bob was fascinated by the richness and power of the language used in the Bahá'í Writings. As he studied copies of the Sacred Texts he annotated them in his fine architect's hand, adding thousands of definitions, derivations and cross-references. In 1977 he informally circulated to some Bahá'í friends copies of *Words about the Word*, a compilation of

uplifting passages drawn from the Sacred Writings.

In subsequent years, he devoted himself to analysis of a single passage that appears three times in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, and of which Bob wrote: "This Tablet stands as a pinnacle from which salient points of past Revelation may be viewed. About it are spread the fertile plains, towering peaks and flowing streams of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Each word of these verses is a sign-post leading to riches in His Word." The resulting study was published as *These Perspicuous Verses* (George Ronald, 1982).

During his later years, Bob became intrigued by similarities between some of President Woodrow Wilson's "14 Points and subsequent addresses", as enunciated in 1919—especially those describing a League of Nations—and the principles of the Faith. He began to investigate whether President Wilson or his close associates had any contact with Bahá'ís or access to Bahá'í literature. After considerable research, he found a possible connection through the President's first wife, Ellen Wilson, an artist who before her death in 1914 had close contacts with at least one Bahá'í artist. Before his passing Bob prepared a short monograph on this subject, identifying additional leads that future researchers might follow.

Shortly after Bob McLaughlin's passing on 30 November 1989, the Universal House of Justice cabled:

> DEEPLY DEPLORE LOSS STEADFAST, OUTSTANDING SERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH ROBERT W. MCLAUGHLIN. GENTLENESS, DILIGENCE CHARACTERIZED HIS UNSTINTING SERVICES CAUSE OF GOD OVER PERIOD MANY YEARS, DISTINGUISHED BY EXPERTISE WHICH AS ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANT HE LENT TO MANY BAHÁ'Í PROJECTS, INCLUDING TEMPLES WILMETTE, PANAMA CITY, APIA AND WHICH INVOLVED HIM PROMINENTLY IN CREATION PRELIMINARY PLANS TOWARDS REALIZATION CONCEPT FOR DEVELOPMENT SACRED PROPERTIES MOUNT CARMEL. HIS MEMBERSHIP NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY UNITED STATES AND ACTIVITIES CONNECTED WITH GREEN ACRE SCHOOL AND AS TRAVELING TEACHER GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED. ARDENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. OUR LOVING SYMPATHY SURROUNDS DEAR KATHERINE AND FAMILY FOR WHOSE CONSOLATION AND WELL-BEING PRAYERS ARE ALSO BEING OFFERED.

ROBERT T. MCLAUGHLIN

PA TEPAERU ARIKI
(Lady Davis)
1922–1990

It is recorded in a letter from Edith Danielson dated 21 January 1960 that: "Pa Ariki, queen of the Ngatangiia District of Rarotonga, Cook Islands, has become a Bahá'í".

Edith became acquainted with Pa Ariki in 1953, shortly after Edith had arrived in Rarotonga. "She was one of the very few who asked about the Faith," Edith wrote She read *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*. Before long she was speaking of the Faith and expounding its principles far and wide.

> One day I asked her why it was that she believed but did not affiliate. She had two problems. One was being of the nobility. It was her ancestors who had welcomed the first Christian missionaries (London Missionary Society) to the island and became pillars of the church. The second problem was that by tradition, if she were to change her religion, at least the elders of her district would be duty bound to follow where she led and this was not the Bahá'í way of independent choice. I remember the many star-spangled evenings and even rainy nights we drove about the island talking, finally ending up in her front yard sitting in the little car, talking until two or three in the morning about the Faith, the world, the education of people. Once she asked permission to use Bahá'í material in a talk she was going to give. On Sunday afternoon or

evening each village holds a meeting at which a speaker is elected to pose questions prepared by the Oramatua (minister), and one question of his own, then general discussion follows. Pa had been asked many times but had always refused. She said she had never felt she knew anything about God and was not qualified to speak but 'now,' she said, 'I know something about Him and I want to tell it!' When I bade her a reluctant farewell in March 1958 she said, 'I think I will be a Bahá'í some day, but there are some things I feel I must work out in my mind.'

Pa Tepaeru Ariki became a Bahá'í on 4 October 1959.

Tepaeru had been born 14 August 1922. Her mother was Takirikou Potikitaua Manarangi, of Rua-o-te-Tonga, and her father was Taike Ariki Mitiau, of Takitumu. Tepaeru was only nine years old when she received the title of Pa Ariki. From that time on she knew that she would become the Takitumu leader and was trained accordingly. She received her education in New Zealand.

In later years she became the distinguished President of the House of Ariki—the house of the traditional chiefs—and was affectionately known by her people as "Aunty Pa."

"During the 30 years that I knew Pa Ariki," Suhayl 'Alá'í recalls, "I witnessed the love and affection she showered upon everyone in her charming and joyful manner. She was so proud of her extended family.

"On my visits to the Cook Islands she would often say to me, 'Let us walk through the town and meet some of my people'. We would walk through Avarue, stopping here and there, and she would introduce many of her family and friends.

Pa Ariki was a staunch and outspoken defender of her ideals. Her membership in the Bahá'í community and her familiarity with its principles greatly influenced her way of thinking. She strongly supported the rights of women, the ideal of the oneness of humanity, the oneness of religion, and the rights of the individual.

During the hours that we sat and talked, she often expressed her great desire for her people to advance and her islands to prosper. She was immensely proud of her heritage.

In 1984, the people of Samoa welcomed Pa Tepaeru Ariki for the dedication of the Bahá'í House of Worship near Apia. On that occasion she insisted on remaining with the Cook Islands contingent at a simple dwelling, rather than an accommodation for dignitaries as befitted her rank. This was typical of her humble attitude.

She was a member of the Local Spiritual Assemblies of Te Au O Tonga and Takitumu. In 1985, she was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Cook Islands.

Pa Ariki rendered many important services to the Bahá'í Faith, attended many conferences and represented the Cook Islands in the Pacific. In 1985, she presented the Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh to the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands on behalf of the Universal House of Justice and the National Assembly of the Cook Islands.

The climax of her life came in 1986, when, accompanied by her distinguished husband, Sir Thomas Davis, then Prime Minister, she paid a visit to the Holy Land and the Universal House of Justice at its seat on Mount Carmel, followed by a brief pilgrimage to the Bahá'í holy places.

Ever mindful of her position in Cook Islands society, Pa Ariki often called attention to a passage from the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh addressed to the kings and rulers of the world:

Fear the sighs and tears of this Wronged One, and lay not excessive burdens on your peoples. Do not rob them to rear palaces for yourselves... Thus We unfold to your eyes that which profiteth you, if ye but perceived. Your people are your treasures.

These words governed all her actions.

Pa Tepaeru Ariki passed away suddenly on 2 February 1990 at the age of 67 while on



Pa Tepaeru Ariki

a visit to New Zealand. The *Cook Island News* reported: "As day breaks tomorrow, Rarotonga will be half way through eight hours of solemn ceremonies to mark the return home of the late Pa Tepaeru Ariki, Lady Davis."

She was accorded the largest state funeral ever seen in the Cook Islands and the only one recognised by an official day of mourning.

LILIAN 'ALÁ'Í

MANUEL GARCIA VAZQUEZ
1923–1990

Manuel Garcia Vazquez was born to Maria and Juan Garcia in Cabreiros, Orense Province, Spain, on 20 August 1923. He lived in that locality until he was 20 months old; then he lived in Chipiona, Cadiz, where his father had moved as a teacher of primary school.

In 1939, Manuel moved with his family to Madrid, where he began to work for the Hispano-American Bank, becoming secretary to the regional director of the central office of that banking corporation.

His restlessness and advanced ideas led him to study Esperanto and to correspond in that language with 72 people around the world. One of his correspondents was a Bahá'í Esperantist in the United States, who gave his address to Virginia Orbison when she decided to pioneer to Spain in December 1946, thereby opening that country to the Faith. Mrs. Orbison was responding to the call of the Guardian who had asked the American Bahá'í community to send nine pioneers to Europe during the second Seven Year Plan undertaken by the American believers.

From the moment Manuel heard of the Faith, he felt captivated by it and lived dedicated to its service. He accepted it formally on 5 July 1947, becoming the third believer to embrace the Faith in Spain. He was then 24 years old.

His family rejected him for his decision, and he began a new life in connection with the Faith. He participated actively in all the teaching plans that Shoghi Effendi transmitted to the community in the Iberian Peninsula, and he represented the Spanish community on various occasions at many international Bahá'í events. He was a member of the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal), elected on 24 April 1957.

Later in 1957, Manuel married Emilia Garro Bermejo, and the couple pioneered to the Dominican Republic, where Manuel became the secretary of the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Santiago de los Caballeros. They set up a school for native radio announcers in their home, and their first daughter, Zoraida, was born there.

After the National Convention of the following year, he and his family left for Ciudad Trujillo as pioneers.

Manuel served as secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Dominican Republic and as a member of the first National Radio Teaching Committee. The programmes about the Faith he created for radio were broadcast on many stations. In 1962 he was



Manuel Garcia Vazquez

appointed to the Auxiliary Board.

In 1965, he, his wife and their four children—Zoraida, Juan Manuel, Alberto, and Kasim—were forced to leave the country due to the revolution, and to leave their publicity business which had a staff of 32 people. They returned to Spain, settling first in Madrid, and later in Zaragoza where Manuel served as Secretary of the Local Spiritual Assembly.

Responding to the need for pioneers in the Basque area of the country, he settled with his family in Algorta, Vizcaya, in 1969, where they remained for nine years. At that time, he was a member of the National Radio Committee, to which he devoted much time and energy. He created programmes for radio and attended all the Bahá'í schools held in Liria so that he could tape the sessions for broadcast afterwards for those who were unable to attend, or for the believers in general. He carried out this activity for 14 years.

While living in Algorta, he travelled each week to one of the capitals of the northern provinces of Spain, from the border with France to that of Portugal, to teach and open those provinces to the Faith.

In 1980, the family moved again to Saragossa, where Manuel served as secretary of the Local Assembly until 1989. In that city, he created the Sisfor Institute, a centre which conducted personal development courses for groups of professionals.

The course of Manuel Garcia Vazquez's Bahá'í life was truly exemplary. He was an untiring, sincere, dedicated, and enthusiastic soldier for the Faith from the time, at 23 years of age, when he read, in only one night, Dr. Esslemont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*.

Responding to the news of his death on 9 February 1990, after an illness, the Universal House of Justice sent the following message on 16 February to the National Spiritual Assembly of Spain:

> SADDENED NEWS PASSING STALWART SERVANT BAHA'U'LLAH MANUEL GARCIA VAZQUEZ, ONE OF THE FIRST TO EMBRACE THE CAUSE IN SPAIN. HIS RECORD DEVOTED SERVICES SPANNING OVER FOUR DECADES UNFORGETTABLE. HIS MEMBERSHIP HISTORIC FIRST LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY MADRID, SECRETARY FIRST NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY IBERIAN PENINSULA, HIS PIONEERING DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND SEVERAL HOMEFRONT GOAL TOWNS, HIS UNTIRING EFFORTS TEACHING, DEEPENING FIELDS ARE WARMLY REMEMBERED. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. CONVEY LOVING CONDOLENCE MEMBERS HIS FAMILY.
>
> ZORAIDA GARCIA GARRO AND
> EMILIA GARRO BERMEJO

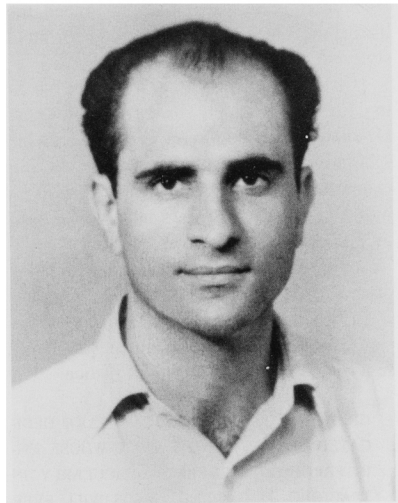
KHODADAD H. VAJDI
1928–1990

Born of Zoroastrian parents in Bombay, India, in 1928, Khodadad Vajdi lost his mother at the tender age of two and was brought up by his aunt, Mrs. Daulat Vajdi, who was very devoted and the only Bahá'í of the family. When Daulat went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1931, she took Khodadad, who was then three years old, and the child had the privilege of sitting on the lap of the Greatest Holy Leaf, Bahíyyih Khánum. The Greatest Holy Leaf was reported to have said that he would grow up to be a devoted and sincere servant of the Faith.

Upon completing his high school education at the age of 18, he offered his services as one of the first pioneers from Bombay to Dehra Dun in Uttar Pradesh in 1948–49, under the Four-and-One-Half Year Teaching Plan of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India. He remained there for one year, then had to return to Bombay to join his aunt's business.

In 1953, Khodadad pioneered to East Africa under the Ten Year Plan of the beloved Guardian. He opened Zanzibar, and was also responsible for opening Mafia and Pemba islands to the Faith. His pioneering services were greatly appreciated by the Guardian. He returned to Bombay in 1955 as he could not extend his visa. Thereafter, he served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Bombay until 1959 and finally pioneered to Ujjain after his marriage to Tahirah Boman, daughter of Bahman and Shirin Boman.

Inspired by the Hand of the Cause of God Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir, Khodadad and Shirin Boman initiated the mass teaching campaign in Ujjain and Indore, Madhya Pradesh, in 1961. Later, Khodadad encouraged a few Bahá'í friends from Bombay to undertake mass teaching activities in the Saurashtra and Dang areas in Gujarat, Balia in Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan. He also contributed to opening the tribal areas of Bastar and Jhabua to the Faith.



Khodadad Vajdi

His love for mass teaching and his enthusiasm in spreading the Faith in the vast virgin land of India made him restless to open new territories. He went to the north-eastern areas of India in 1964 where he took with him the available manpower from Madhya Pradesh, in consultation with the National Spiritual Assembly, and settled them as pioneers in Nagaland, Tripura, Assam, Manipur, and the border of Bhutan. He was elected to the National Assembly of India in 1962, and served on this august institution until 1985 when ill health made it necessary for him to resign.

His international teaching trips extended to Sikkim, the Andaman Islands, Mauritius and the Seychelles, Tanzania, Australia, and Fiji.

Khodadad was a man of the masses; they adored him from their hearts. He would confer with them, sit with them, and share in their joys and sorrows. During mass teaching the villagers would listen to his talks on the Faith with rapt attention, as he had the art of capturing the minds of audiences. His talents were also exhibited in his book

Human Happiness, wherein he traced the history and teachings of the Faith in lucid style.

His temperament and technique of reaching the elite classes was also noteworthy. He endeared himself to the audience with his scholarly discourse punctuated by wit and examples from daily life. People remember him for his illuminating talks which left indelible impressions on their minds.

A selfless and devoted Bahá'í, Khodadad passed to the Abhá Kingdom on 16 February 1990. As a tribute to his services to the Cause of God, the following message was sent by the Universal House of Justice:

> GRIEVED PASSING KHODADAD VAJDI DEDICATED SERVANT FAITH INDIA WHOSE UNINTERRUPTED SERVICES PARTICULARLY IN TEACHING, PIONEERING FIELDS WILL EVER BE REMEMBERED. HE IS NUMBERED AMONG THOSE FEW STALWART PROMOTERS FAITH ASSOCIATED WITH PROCESS MASS TEACHING IN INDIA. HIS EXPLOITS IN EXPANSION CONSOLIDATION PROJECTS AMONG RURAL AND TRIBAL AREAS BLESSED THE INDIAN COMMUNITY WITH OUTSTANDING VICTORIES. ASSURE LOVING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL ABHA KINGDOM SOLACE BEREAVED FAMILY.
>
> DR. TAHIRAH VAJDI

DR. EDRIS RAWSHAN RICE-WRAY
1904–1990

Edris was born in Newark, New Jersey, U.S.A., on 21 January 1904, to Theron Canfield and Mabel Rice-Wray. She had two brothers, Landon Carter, who died as a child, and Colston, two years younger than Edris. Mabel had become a Bahá'í sometime before 1900, a few years before her marriage. Although Theron never became an active Bahá'í, he held 'Abdu'l-Bahá in great esteem.

In 1909, the family moved to the Los Angeles area where Mabel became a good friend of Kathryn Frankland, one of the distinguished early American believers. With Kathryn's help, Mabel began to serve the Faith quite diligently. She held firesides and study classes in her home, and became active in women's organizations.

On 18 October 1912, having heard that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in Los Angeles, Mabel took Edris and Colston to the hotel where the Master was staying. They spent over an hour with 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His room. Both Edris and Colston sat on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's knee and were given cookies. Some years later, in response to a letter from their mother, 'Abdu'l-Bahá bestowed the name Rawshan ("brilliance") on Edris, and Rúḥí on Colston, and revealed in their honor the well-known prayer for children that begins: "O my Lord! O my Lord! I am a child of tender years. Nourish me from the breast of Thy mercy..."

The family moved to Detroit, Michigan, in 1914, and during the next few years, summers were passed at Green Acre Bahá'í School where Edris and Colston spent much time with many of the most distinguished of the early North American believers: the Maxwells, Haneys, Randalls, Obers, and Keith Ransom-Kehler, among others. Theron and Mabel eventually divorced, and in 1920, Mabel married Howard Colby Ives.

Edris graduated in 1927 from Vassar College, then entered Cornell University Medical College. She soon transferred to Northwestern University Medical School, there receiving her medical degree in 1932. On 30 March 1929, she had married Robert Carson, and later bore two daughters, Lynn and Barbara.

In the midst of this intense period, she was a devoted Bahá'í, speaking on occasion at the House of Worship in Wilmette. She was famous for her hospitality, sometimes having guests for months. One frequent guest was Dorothy Baker, who often stayed with Edris during the late 1930s when she was in Wilmette for the meetings of the National Spiritual Assembly. During this

period Edris deputized her mother's and Howard Colby Ives' teaching trips, and later, when they were living with her, Edris persuaded Mr. Ives to record his memories of the Master, resulting in the much loved book, *Portals to Freedom*.

After a residence in medicine, and 15 years of practice as an internist in the Chicago area, Dr. Rice-Wray moved to the Caribbean in answer to the call of the Guardian for pioneers to Latin America. She arrived in Puerto Rico in 1948 with her two daughters (she and her husband had divorced), and she accepted a position with the Health Department of Puerto Rico. This change to the field of public health brought forth her organizational skills, her zeal and public spirit as she became Director of Field Training for the Health Department.

She accepted a scholarship in Public Health at the University of Michigan, receiving her Master's degree in 1950 and qualifying for the American Board of Preventive Medicine. Plunging into service to the disadvantaged, she found the grave problems of poor and ignorant mothers to be an overwhelming concern, and she seized upon the resolution of their material problems as her primary interest for the remainder of her professional life.

In 1956, Dr. Gregory Pincus enlisted her services as a research collaborator for field tests of Enovid, the first endocrine contraceptive agent which permitted rational family planning for needy women. Moving with her two daughters to Mexico City in 1957, she accepted a position with the World Health Organization.

In Mexico City, Dr. Rice-Wray opened a family planning clinic, organized the first national Family Planning Association for Mexico, established a Maternal Health Association, and later a Foundation for Population Studies. She published a number of scientific papers, and received international recognition and a number of awards including the Sesquicentennial Award for "Knowledge, Wisdom and the Courage to Serve" from the University of Michigan in 1967,



Dr. Edris Rice-Wray

and the Margaret Sanger Award from the Planned Parenthood Federation a few years before her death.

On her retirement in 1973, she became professor of population studies at the University of the Americas in Puebla.

Dr. Rice-Wray's Bahá'í activities in Mexico continued apace with her busy professional years as physician, pioneer, mother, and teacher. She was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico in 1961, and continued to serve on it for the following six years. She was also very active in many women's organizations, speaking at conferences and events, including the First Asian Bahá'í Women's Conference, held in India in 1978.

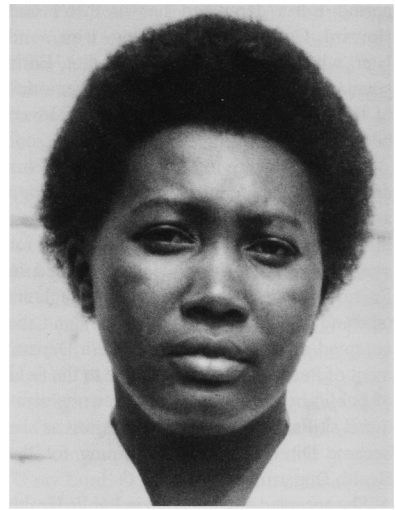
On 19 February 1990, Dr. Edris Rawshan Rice-Wray passed away at her pioneering post in Puebla, Mexico. The National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico received the following message from the Universal House of Justice, sent on 22 February 1990:

SADDENED NEWS PASSING DEDICATED VETERAN PIONEER TIRELESS DISTINGUISHED

PROMOTER CAUSE GOD DR. EDRIS RICE-WRAY. HER LONG RECORD UNFORGETTABLE SERVICES BOTH TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE FIELDS ESPECIALLY MEXICO HOLDS PROMISE BOUNTIFUL REWARD. OUTSTANDING SCIENTIFIC SERVICES MANKIND ALSO RECALLED. FERVENTLY SUPPLICATING SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER RADIANT SOUL WORLDS BEYOND. KINDLY CONVEY HEARTFELT SYMPATHY HER RELATIVES AND FRIENDS.

Adapted from Tributes by
MRS. JEANNE SERRANO AND DR. DAVID RUHE

APARICIA ORTIZ GUTIERREZ
1957–1990



Aparicia Ortiz Gutierrez

Aparicia Ortiz Gutierrez was born in Honduras in the Garifuna village of San Pedro de Tocamacho, municipality of Iriona in the Department of Colón, on 14 February 1957. Her parents were Mr. Máximo Ortiz and Mrs. Paula Gutierrez.

Her childhood was spent in the place of her birth, and she attended primary school to grade five. Her mother was a Bahá'í, and in her youth Aparicia was devoted to teaching Bahá'í children's classes in addition to demonstrating to her own people and to strangers the qualities and virtues pointed out in the Sacred Writings.

Aparicia married Daniel Martinez and gave birth to four children: Patricia, Claudia Ondina, Julia Vanessa, and Melvin Omar, all of whom became believers. When her sister passed away, Aparicia also adopted her sister's twins: Juan Eloy and Juan Guillermo. Following ancient customs, she worked in planting and harvesting the root vegetable yucca, and preparing cassava. She did not neglect her good habits and the fulfilment of her material and spiritual duties, particularly in the raising of her children and assisting her mother at home with support of the family.

In January 1990, a new national teaching initiative was launched by the National Spiritual Assembly of Honduras. The first permanent teaching team was established in the village of Sambo Creek, and Aparicia decided to give two months of her time to work on this group. The team consisted of six Garifunas drawn from around the country. She was the heart of the team: an example of purity, devotion, self-sacrifice, and dedication for all the others. In all the towns she rapidly won the respect and admiration of the people for her radiant example of service and sacrifice.

Then in February, the National Spiritual Assembly of Honduras decided to send a team of Garifuna travelling teachers to the Garifuna people of Livingston, Guatemala, for the first time. Although Aparicia was eager to return home to be with her children, she agreed to travel to Guatemala to serve her Lord in the new field of service.

Nearing Livingston, she fell ill from a pain in her heart. Three hours after arriving, she died suddenly of a heart attack. She had a Bahá'í funeral at the cemetery of Puerto Barrios in Guatemala. She is survived by her children and by her siblings: Jorge, Nolasca, Edna, and Jerónimo.

Aparicia was the first Garifuna believer to give her life for Bahá'u'lláh. As one of her companions on the team expressed, "she was too good and pure for this world".

Upon hearing of her passing, the Universal House of Justice sent the following message on 16 March 1990 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Honduras:

> DEEPLY TOUCHED ACCOUNT LOVE DEVOTION APARICIA ORTIZ. MAY HER EXAMPLE BE SOURCE STRENGTH FOR BAHA'I COMMUNITY HONDURAS ENSURING HER LABOURS IN CAUSE MAY YIELD ABUNDANT HARVEST. KINDLY ASSURE FAMILY FRIENDS OF APARICIA OF PRAYERS IN HOLY SHRINES FOR PROGRESS HER SOUL IN ALL WORLDS OF GOD.
>
> NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY
> OF HONDURAS

HABIB SABET
(Ḥabíb Thábit)
1903–1990

Ḥabíb Thábit was a distinguished Íránian Bahá'í, an entrepreneur and an industrialist. He was born in a modest family in Ṭihrán in 1903 and passed away in Los Angeles, California, U.S.A., on 20 February 1990.

The more successful he was in material gain and fame, the more enthusiastic he was in his service to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, especially to fulfil the wishes and plans of his beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi. Therefore, to describe the life of Ḥabíb Thábit, one should write about the parallel progress of the material and spiritual.

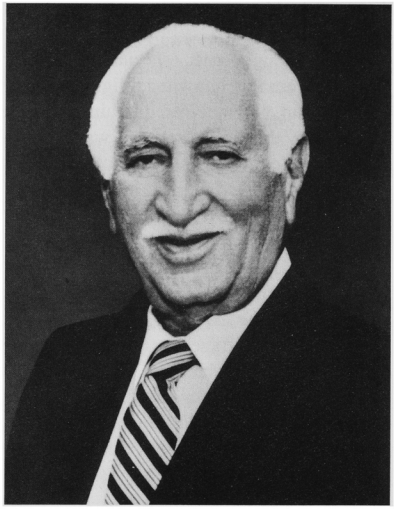
A self-made man, Ḥabíb only had the privilege of a few years of education, first at the Tarbíyat Bahá'í School, and then at the Saint Louis French School in Ṭihrán which he attended while receiving payment as a private tutor of affluent children. Therefore, it was neither his education, nor his family background which brought him to the highest position of entrepreneurship, nor distinguished him in his personal, social, and spiritual life.

As a child his parents, especially his mother who was from the renowned religious family of Arjumand, had inculcated in him love and respect for the Faith and he was always filled with devotion. When he obtained his first automobile and worked as a taxi driver, on any trip when he took passengers to 'Iráq or Lebanon, he would take the opportunity to visit the Holy Places of the Bahá'í Faith as a pilgrim and had the privilege of many meetings with the beloved Guardian.

Ḥabíb married Bahereh (Báhirih) Khamsí of Rasht, the daughter of Siyyid Aḥmad Khamsí Báqiraf, a prominent Bahá'í and a companion of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Paris, Germany, Austria and Budapest. Her grandfather was Sádát Khamsí, a title given by the Blessed Beauty. Ḥabíb and Báhirih had two sons, Iradj (Íraj) and Hormoz (Hurmuz).

Ḥabíb began his career in a bicycle repair shop, subsequently becoming the founder of a woodworking factory and over 40 companies, amongst which are Television of Írán, the Pepsi Cola subsidiary in Írán, General Tire, and Írán Volkswagen. He was a member of the Board of Directors of Íránians' Bank, the Industrial Mining and Development Bank, and the Bank of Írán. He was at the same time Board member of many other companies and prestigious banks of Írán as well as the Bahá'í Children's Saving Company of Nawnáhálán.

When the Sháh closed the Bahá'í schools in Persia in 1934 and communication with the Bahá'í World Centre was cut off, Ḥabíb and Báhirih, on instruction of the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia, immediately departed from Ṭihrán and reached the Holy Land within 48 hours. They presented the plea of the National Spiritual Assembly and received the answer and guidance for them. On this occasion the beloved Guardian showered love and bounty on the couple and told them that they were the first to reach the World Centre so quickly. He said that soon they would be able to have breakfast in



Habib Sabet

Ṭihrán and lunch at the World Centre. This was realized within a few years when the air service was established between Persia and the Holy Land.

While expanding his commercial activities, Ḥabíb was proud that thousands of Bahá'ís, who were not able to work as civil servants or at private jobs, could make their living by working in his companies and factories. This was a great service in those days of bitter animosity toward the Bahá'ís.

Ḥabíb's wealth and wise behaviour towards prominent people allowed him to befriend them, socially or officially, including the highest government officials. This helped him to protect the Bahá'í friends and to accomplish the most difficult goal Shoghi Effendi assigned to Persia during the Ten Year Plan. He managed by long, wise, and careful planning to purchase the Síyáh-Chál, the dungeon in Ṭihrán. The Guardian, in a message to the Bahá'í world on 6 April 1954, stated:

> On the eve of this Riḍván Festival marking the opening of the second decade of the second Bahá'í century, and coinciding with the termination of the first year of the World Spiritual Crusade... The site of the Síyáh-Chál—that pestilential subterranean Pit, the scene of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh's prophetic Mission, and the holiest place in the capital city of His native land—has been recently purchased, together with the surrounding area, involving an expenditure of approximately four hundred thousand dollars contributed by a Persian follower of the Faith...

For over 20 years, Ḥabíb Thábit served as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia, often using his good relationship with the authorities or friends to protect the Bahá'ís from persecution. In 1955, the Bahá'ís of Persia were endangered when Shaykh Muḥammad Taqí Falsafí made false accusations against the Bahá'í Faith on the government radio and incited the people to massacre the Bahá'ís and confiscate their precious centres and properties, a plan in which the Sháh, the government, and the clergy became involved.

Mr. Thábit, under the guidance of the Guardian, and without regard for the danger and risk to his life, met with the authorities, including the Sháh, government ministers, and influential friends. Consequently, along with other measures taken at the instruction of the Guardian, such as appeals to the Sháh, Parliament, and the United Nations by all Bahá'í localities in the world, the situation changed and instead of massacre, the army received orders to protect the Bahá'ís.

On that occasion, Shoghi Effendi sent to Mr. Thábit the following cable:

DEEPLY APPRECIATE OUTSTANDING SERVICES.

On the eve of the last day of Mr. Thábit's last pilgrimage, on 17 December 1956, the beloved Guardian, in the presence of other pilgrims, stated: "He is the standard bearer of the oppressed, defender and helper of the Faith." Then turning to Mr. Thábit, the Guardian said, "Your title will be Náṣiri'd-Dín" (Defender of the Faith).

Mr. Thábit resided in the United States for some years before the Islamic revolution and never returned to Írán after 1978. The new government confiscated all his assets, companies, factories, properties and private residences, and so on, which he had acquired over 70 years of struggle and personal initiative. Consequently all the Bahá'ís working in these establishments were discharged, without compensation for their many years of labor and without pensions, and several were subsequently executed.

When Mr. Thábit passed away, the Universal House of Justice sent the following message to his widow on 22 February 1990:

> Share your grief passing veteran servant Cause Habib Sabet. His steadfastness in devotion Beloved Guardian, his courageous efforts in defense community cradle Faith, his unique role in acquisition vital sacred site Teheran lovingly remembered.
>
> Offer heartfelt condolences to you and through you to entire family. Praying Holy Shrine progress his soul Abha Kingdom.

At his funeral at the Los Angeles Bahá'í Center, over 3,000 people, including the Bahá'í friends of California and nearby states and a great number of non-Bahá'ís, were present and witnessed the simplicity and dignity of a Bahá'í ceremony. Mr. Thábit was buried at the Inglewood Cemetery near Thornton Chase's grave.

Newspapers, including the New York *Times* of 24 February 1990, radio and television broadcasters announced his death and praised his life. In New York, the Canadian Ambassador to Írán, a former Prime Minister, and prominent personalities spoke at a Bahá'í commemoration service attended by over 1,000 persons.

HORMOZ SABET
(Hurmuz Thábit)

ROSTAM SABET
(Rustam Thábit)
1902–1990

Rustam Thábit was born in Poona, India, on 15 July 1902. His father, Khusraw Bimán, a Zoroastrian farmer who emigrated from Persia to escape religious persecution, had been led to embrace the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in India through his contacts with Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid Afnán. His mother, Sarvar, worked unceasingly to help run the family business and to rear their seven children to be dedicated believers, thus enabling her husband to be free to teach the Cause.

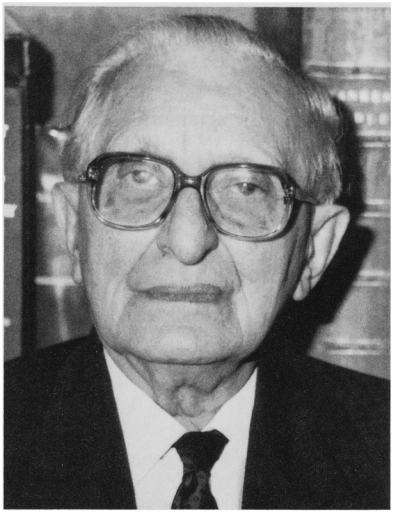
Poona had a flourishing Local Spiritual Assembly by the time Rustam finished his secondary education. He has written:

> I was 18 when the first general letter of the Guardian to the Bahá'í world was received, followed by others, and by his superb translations of some of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. How captivating they were, how enthralling. Like a magnet they gripped one and you could not put them down till you reached the end. I well remember starting on the Kitáb-i-Íqán in the afternoon of the day it was received and reading on until the early hours of the next morning.

Rustam enrolled in Bombay University in 1918, but his formal education ended after one month when he got typhoid, and then his brother Suhráb died, requiring him to return home to help with the business. In 1926, he married Banoo (Bánú), who came from Yazd, Persia, and their union brought forth two children, Mary and Ruhi (Rúḥí).

After working assidiously for the Faith, he was elected to serve on the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma in 1933, and was duly elected secretary. On 28 December 1935, he arrived in Haifa for his first pilgrimage and meeting with the Guardian, whom he would come to correspond with often in the following years.

Rustam served as the secretary of the National Assembly of India and Burma until



Rostam Sabet

1938, when the Thábits joined Rustam's brother and his wife and moved to Persia. Before making the trip, they cashed in their insurance policies to use for acquiring Holy Places in Persia, saving only enough cash for their own travel expenses and enough to survive for a few weeks.

Rustam took employment with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, and became known for speaking up for the rights of labourers. He was also known for his honesty and integrity, which caused him to be promoted several times until he was offered a top management position in Qazvín. But because pioneers were not needed in that city, he rejected the job and applied for a visa to pioneer to Quetta in Balúchistán, India, where he and his family arrived in April 1944. In all, during his lifetime, he and his family completed eight moves from one country to another, twenty-one moves within countries, and occupied forty-two houses.

Rustam arrived in India in time to participate in the Bahá'í Centenary celebrations which were being held in Bombay. Quite soon, he again found himself elected to the National Assembly and resumed the arduous task of secretary. It was around that time that the Assembly transferred its headquarters from Poona to New Delhi. Evidently when the move was completed, the Guardian sent a message to the Assembly to the effect that the Bahá'ís of India were at last emerging from the confusion which had surrounded their community since its birth in their native land, followed by a gracious line of praise of Mr. Thábit's contribution to this transformation.

After a time, Rustam approached Shoghi Effendi for permission to move from India and was advised that he could go to Europe. The last letter he received from the Guardian while in India, dated 4 November 1950, included these words:

> Dear and valued co-worker:
> I wish to assure you in person of my deep and abiding sense of appreciation of your long record of historic services to our beloved Faith, and of my loving and ardent prayers on your behalf, that you may, wherever you may labour in the days to come, be graciously assisted to enrich this splendid record, and render still greater services to the infant institutions of our glorious Faith.
> Your true and grateful brother, Shoghi.

The Thábit family left India in December 1950, and initially took up residence in Brighton, England, where they helped form the Local Assembly. The scarcity of work forced them to move to London where, among other jobs, Rustam sold insurance. Their time in London was followed by various moves to at least 15 different locations in the United Kingdom, some of which were pioneering posts, including the towns of Hove, Reading, Corby, and Wokingham Rural District. The family spent 12 years in Hamilton, Scotland, and were instrumental in forming the Local Assembly of East Kilbride.

In his later years, Mr. Thábit's services mainly involved his amazing capacities for

reviewing and editing, much use being made of his exceptional personal library, where his immense knowledge of the Bahá'í Writings and his eagle eye for errors proved invaluable. At one point he was invited by the Universal House of Justice to spend six precious months at the Bahá'í World Centre proofreading material for *The Bahá'í World.*

Rustam Thábit passed away on 21 March 1990. The following message was sent by the Universal House of Justice:

GRIEVED NEWS PASSING DEVOTED PROMOTER CAUSE GOD ROSTAM SABET. HIS SINCERE SERVICES DURING HIS ENTIRE LIFE MANIFOLD CAPACITIES UNFORGETTABLE. CONVEY SYMPATHY LOVE RELATIVES FRIENDS. ASSURE ARDENT PRAYERS PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Based on information provided by the LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF BRIGHTON, ENGLAND, and on the memoirs of Mr. Thábit.

RUFINO GUALAVISÍ FARINANGO
1905–1990

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
DEAR RUFINO GUALAVISI TREASURED MASS TEACHER INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF ECUADOR PASSED ABHA KINGDOM MARCH 23. REQUEST YOUR PRAYERS FOR THE PROGRESS OF HIS SOUL.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF ECUADOR

The renowned indigenous Bahá'í teacher, Rufino Gualavisí Farinango, passed away on 23 March 1990 in Otavalo, Ecuador. His wife, Alejandrina de Gualavisí, was with him, and pioneers Ralph Dexter and Nooshin Burwell were at his bedside praying softly and continuously the Greatest Name as he winged his flight toward his Beloved Bahá'u'lláh.

Rufino was without a doubt one of Bahá'u'lláh's most radiant, audacious, yet humble, and persevering teachers. He taught the Faith to thousands of country folk, and he helped to open up many difficult areas throughout Ecuador.

He had been taught the Faith by Counsellor Raúl Pavón, who later related how Rufino suffered in some areas from the hands of the people he went to teach, and how in one village they beat him until he was unconscious and left him for dead. Raúl said when he tried to encourage Rufino to return to that village, Rufino feared being killed, but after a year he found strength and courage to return. To his surprise the people came running to greet him and wanted to know where he had been and why he had not returned to tell them more about the Faith. On this trip the whole village accepted the Faith and treated him royally.

On another occasion Rufino and the renowned Bahá'í teacher, Teresa Jara, were imprisoned because the police suspected they were communists. The police brought him to Quito and put him in prison. They finally said he could go free if he paid a small fine, but Rufino said he was innocent of wrongdoing and would not pay anything. When the National Assembly heard that he was incarcerated, they sent a commission to get him out of jail. The commission was successful in obtaining his release, but Rufino had already charmed the guards and the prisoners by telling them about the Bahá'í Faith and reading prayers to them. The prisoners asked him if he could stay longer and teach them some more prayers and he was allowed to stay two more days!

When he left prison he went directly to the home of the Auxiliary Board member in Quito smiling and as happy as he could be. A number of friends present gathered around him to listen to his account of his experiences during the previous ten days. All were awed, for they had only heard of the martyrs being happy in prison!

Almost everyone who met Rufino felt he was "special" because he was so courteous, considerate, and kind, and the pioneers and visiting teachers felt that it was a privilege to

go on a teaching trip with him. He seemed never to get tired and would laugh at the younger teachers who could not keep up with his pace. It would take a book just to mention the highlights of his teaching activities as a Bahá'í!

It was announced in August 1970, at the Continental Conference in La Paz, Bolivia, that Rufino, among others, had been made an Auxiliary Board Member for Propagation. The next day, the President of Bolivia graciously invited the Bahá'ís who were still in the city to the Presidential palace. A large number of friends, led by the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, were warmly received by the President. Among the indigenous believers who went forward to greet him personally was Rufino. It is doubtful if anyone could hear what Rufino said to the President because he spoke so softly, but everyone could see his radiant face and the happy smile of the President who, after listening to Rufino's words, lifted him up from the floor in a warm embrace and kissed him on both cheeks. He later said he thanked the President for his kindness.

Rufino seemed to have had all of the qualities which the beloved Guardian said a Bahá'í teacher should have—and his love for Bahá'u'lláh and His prayers knew no bounds. The Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir and Rufino adored each other. On one of his visits Dr. Muhájir began calling Rufino "Samandarí." He said Rufino reminded him so much of the beloved Hand of the Cause Tarázu'lláh Samandarí, both in spirit and stature, and he was sure that the Hand of the Cause would not mind if he gave a Bahá'í like Rufino his name. He said he felt sure that if Mr. Samandarí had the opportunity and the strength, he would have been in the countryside helping Rufino to teach!

From that time on, whenever he arrived in the country, Dr. Muhájir would always ask about his "Samandarí." On one of his visits, he said that a statue of Rufino should be made and placed at the Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum Institute in Otavalo as a symbol of the indigenous teacher. The night before Dr. Muhájir passed away, the members of the Continental Board of Counsellors, the Auxiliary Boards, and the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador were convened by the Hand of the Cause for a meeting in Quito. Rufino arrived last and Dr. Muhájir beckoned to him and said "Come and sit beside me, Samandarí." Then he said to everyone present, "I want you to have a statue made of Rufino."

When Rufino was sent by the National Assembly to open up the province of Loja where the Saraguro Indians live, he found them very receptive, and two of the more outstanding ones wrote a letter to Raúl Pavón, whom they had met, saying:

> We have heard the Message brought by our brother Rufino and it has filled our hearts with joy to hear that the Glory of the Father, our Redeemer of the World, who is Bahá'u'lláh, has arrived.

During the last few years of his life, Rufino suffered from dizziness and was unable to function to the extent he had been accustomed to. This caused him great anxiety and frustration. Finally, he passed to the Abhá Kingdom on 23 March 1990. His body was interred in the beautiful Remembrance Park cemetery in Quito, Ecuador, in a plot adjoining the resting place of the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Muhájir. He was survived by his wife and three children.

When the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum learned of his death, she wrote the following historic reminiscences of him to the National Assembly of Ecuador on 9 April 1990:

> My dear Bahá'í Friends:
>
> The news of the passing of dear Rufino Gualavisí brought back many memories, and I decided not to cable your National Spiritual Assembly but rather to write you this letter in more detail. I have known him since I first went to Ecuador in 1968

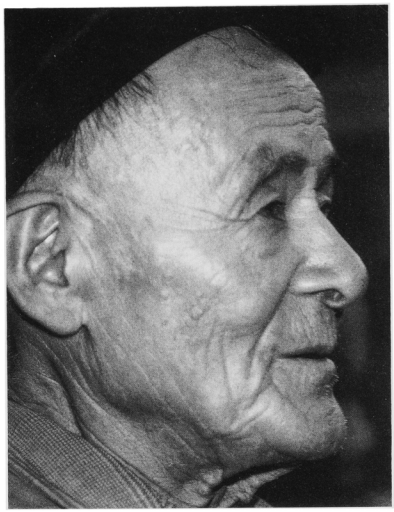
when I visited the Bahá'ís in the Otavalo area, and later had the opportunity to be with him at the Convention in Quito in 1970. I remember on that occasion, when at times the consultation had a tendency to be rather heated (there had been a certain amount of inharmony at that period in the community) and invariably Rufino, who was a delegate, rose to his feet and suggested we have a prayer. It put the lid on all the emotions, everything quieted down and it did a great deal to help the situation.

I can also remember visiting his home in the mountains above Otavalo; I was going to go on a trip in the area and his wife strongly objected to his being absent so long from his fields and his flocks and leaving all the work to her. You remember what a gentle soul Rufino was, but I clearly recall how he seemed to agree very sweetly with all her remarks, but when I left, he was one of my party! He sneaked away and accompanied me wherever I was going!

Another of my very happy memories of him was when the Bahá'ís of Ecuador arrived by bus in Cuzco, Peru, to attend the indigenous conference which took place there at the end of the Green Light Expedition. I can hear myself shouting "Rufino! Rufino! Rufino!" when I saw him get off the bus!

He was a small person but a very precious package. I can see him sitting with other Quechua-speaking Bahá'ís trying to work out the possibility of a common Quechua publication that could be understood by the Quechua-speaking Bahá'ís of Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador. Truly he was a heavenly soul and I am sure is associating now happily with other heavenly souls in the Abhá Kingdom—but I miss him.

The best memorial to Rufino's memory is to encourage the Bahá'ís in the Otavalo area to retrace his footsteps and bring back into the Faith some of the many hundreds who embraced it owing to his and other Quechua Bahá'ís' teaching



Rufino Gualavisí Farinango

work. He should be remembered in deeds, not words. After all, Bahá'u'lláh Himself says, "Let deeds, not words, be your adorning." Wishing you all every success in your teaching activities,

With most loving Bahá'í greetings,
(signed) Rúḥíyyih

After Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum had addressed the convention of 1970 in Quito, which she mentions in her letter, Rufino, who was noticeably moved, asked if he might speak for a moment. His request was granted, and he arose so tranquil and radiant and recited a beautiful poem which he had composed, after his prayer during the consultation, for his beloved Hand of the Cause of God.

Rúḥíyyih Khánum has brought us light and understanding
We must welcome this mysterious unfathomable message of God and Bahá'u'lláh.
Divine Wisdom, Mother and Queen of the entire world—
Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum![1]

[1] Free translation of the poem by Helen Hornby.

In honour of the dearly beloved Rufino, on 27 March 1990 the Universal House of Justice telexed this exalted condolence:

> DEEPLY SADDENED NEWS PASSING OUTSTANDING SACRIFICIAL TEACHER CAUSE GOD RUFINO GUALAVISI. HIS NOBLE QUALITIES, HIS LOVING NATURE, HIS IMMENSE SERVICES INDIGENOUS MASSES NATIVE LAND NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN AND WORTHY SOURCE PRIDE YOUR COMMUNITY. URGE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL MEETINGS HIS BLESSED MEMORY THROUGHOUT COUNTRY. ASSURE FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY THRESHOLD FOR PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL KINGDOM ON HIGH. KINDLY EXTEND HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES FAMILY AND FRIENDS.
>
> HELEN HORNBY

SOLOMON TANYI TAMBE
1912–1990

Solomon Tanyi Tambe was born in 1912 in Bakebe Village in the Manyu Division of the Republic of Cameroon. He died in Messing Bakebe on 2 April 1990 at about 3:30 p.m. It was a quiet and peaceful death for a loving servant of the Faith whom the Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga had called "one of the pillars of the Bahá'í Faith in Cameroon".

From his teenage years Solomon had been attracted to deism, and in 1932 he was baptized by a Basel Mission Missionary. He returned home and immediately started gathering people to the church. This action sent shock waves through the family, and particularly through his father, Tambe Eyong Enow, who was a combatant, a healer in traditional medicines, and a polygamist. Solomon was not physically large or strong. He was the only child of his mother, Enowambane, who was the first of six wives to his father. Consequently his father could not hand down much of his traditional skills: it was like a curse which he endured to his grave.

Denigrated as traditional misfit, Solomon's attachment to the church grew stronger and stronger. At the age of 23 he was admitted into the seminary, though he pulled out shortly after due to incongruities. "It looked like employment", he said.

By 1937 he had started plantation farming with the Germans in Tombel. That same year he found his spouse, Esther Agbortoko, in Mfaitock Village. The couple had eight children, five of whom had died before Solomon's own passing.

His years as a lukewarm Christian were brief. With an insatiable desire for the spiritual, and the Bible his cherished consort, he returned to the seminary in Nyassoso in 1943. This time he completed the three year course and gained "employment" in Tombel and later in Douala as catechist. But the "irreconcilables" persisted. Among these were dreary rituals and a strange realisation within church ranks that "not every cleric's turban is a sign of continence". Once again he was thrown in the lurch of unacceptables. At this point, by 1950, he was resolute to "quit catechism" and "return home to subsistence farming".

If Solomon was not a ready soul for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, he was certainly a man of sane judgment. He had demonstrated remarkable courage several times against despondent traditions and mortifying rituals. He was always quiet in meetings but affable in reply to committee puzzles. His opinion in most cases was respected as he was a cool-humoured man of wisdom.

His encounter with the Faith was quite peculiar. One fine morning, in December 1954, he woke up to find a vehicle standing in front of his door, off the roadside. The occupants—a man and a lady whom he recognised later as Enoch Olinga and Valerie Wilson—had just wakened. The man crossed to a neighbour, requested water from the old woman, and then left with his companion on their day's journey towards Mamfe.

Solomon noticed a foreign accent and a certain reverence in the stranger, but he

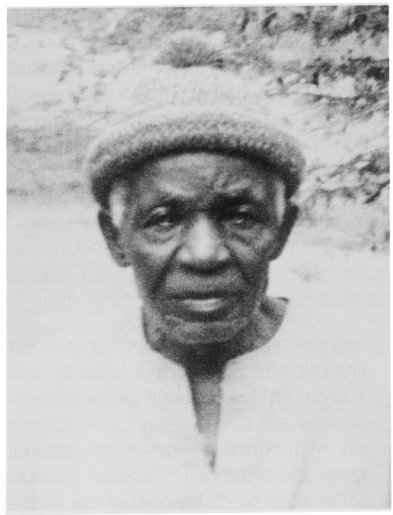
ignored them and went to farm. All the same, the circumstances remained enigmatic in his mind. Who were these intruders? Why had they stationed themselves only in front of his door? Why had he failed to talk to them?

That evening, while visiting a friend, Sampson Agbortoko, at Bakebe Corners, he was presented with a leaflet left by the stranger. "Solo" suddenly found himself captivated, attracted to the spell of its wording: "...a rose has the same fragrance no matter in which orchard... Man must be a lover of light whether it comes from the east or west". The pillars of faith remain shining no matter from which heart, especially a heart led by the spirit of God. Solomon's immediate remark was, "Whoever is the author of this leaflet has the same authenticity as the Bible." His embrace of the Faith came with a stark sense of responsibility and a loyalty even greater than to his catechism.

In the wake of the early spiritual fire that blazed through West Africa with Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings, Solomon played his part. Some Cameroonians, including his family members, responded to the call of the Guardian to open virgin territories but back home it was necessary to have the Faith's administration built and Solomon Tanyi was one of its indigenous architects.

By 1955, eleven people including himself had become Bahá'ís in Bakebe and were having regular meetings. By Riḍván 1956, 18 believers had made a joint declaration, permitting them to elect their first Local Spiritual Assembly with Solomon as secretary. Other of his early activities included participation in extensive teaching projects with Enyand Basi and Joana Ngo Mpek in the Mamfe-Kumba-Victoria areas, the opening up of Mamfe, including Kendem and parts of the northwest, and translations of the Holy Writings into the Kenyang language.

Solomon served on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of West Central Africa from its inception in 1964 until 1967, and then was elected to the newly formed



Solomon Tanyi Tambe

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Cameroon Republic for 1967 to 1968. His services figure conspicuously in the decree recognizing and incorporating the Bahá'í Faith in Cameroon. From 1969 to 1973 he was the first Cameroonian appointed to be an Auxiliary Board member for Propagation, serving alongside Jaward Mughrabi who was an Auxiliary Board member for Protection.

Besides his mother tongue, Kenyang, Solomon could speak Ejagham, Douala, English, and German. His appellations, "Ta Mfaw Tanyi" ("teacher"), and "Solomon" are indicative of a remarkable quality associated with a man who could literally sail in all winds and who was a father of wisdom dearly missed.

The following message was sent on 30 July 1990 on behalf of the Universal House of Justice:

> ...the Universal House of Justice was very saddened to learn of the passing of dear Mr. Solomon Tanyi Tambe who is so fondly remembered for his historic

services to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh in Cameroon.

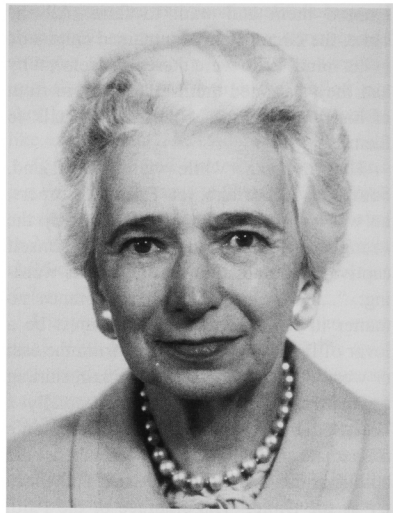
Kindly assure his wife, his three sons and his grandchildren of the ardent prayers of the House of Justice in the Holy Shrines for the progress of his pure soul in the realms above.

SAMUEL TANYI TAMBE

DORIS LOHSE
1899–1990

GRIEVED LEARN PASSING DEVOTED RADIANT PIONEER DORIS LOHSE. HER LONG RECORD SELF-SACRIFICING SERVICE CAUSE GOD PIONEERING FIELD, THE SPIRIT OF INFECTIOUS JOY WITH WHICH SHE CONVEYED MESSAGE FAITH UNFORGETTABLE. ASSURE PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER NOBLE SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Universal House of Justice
21 May 1990



Doris Lohse

Doris Lohse was born on 7 October 1899 in Brussels, Belgium, the daughter of a respected family from Berlin. She and her siblings spent their youth in Belgium under the shadow of the disturbances created by the first World War.

She learned of the Bahá'í Faith in the 1920s and immediately embraced it. Shortly after, she emigrated to the United States where she pursued her studies and for many years worked for the National Geographic Society in Washington, D.C., as a translator. In time, her entire family joined her in America and, in turn, each one of them accepted the Faith.

All of her love was dedicated to Bahá'u'lláh and to serving His Cause. In her free time she fully engaged herself in promoting race unity and in teaching countless children's classes. Even in her later years she always felt a very strong connection with young people.

Doris Lohse attended the first European Bahá'í Conference held in Geneva in May 1948, 100 years after the historic conference of Badasht. The conference took place in the Hotel de la Paix in which 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stayed during his trip through Europe. Doris was one of the American pioneers who, in response to the call of the Seven Year Plan of the Bahá'ís of America (1946–1953), settled in 10 European countries.

After her first pioneer posts in Belgium and Luxembourg she went to Zurich, Switzerland, at the request of the European Teaching Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States. For the then four-strong Bahá'í group in Zürich, hearing that she was coming was wonderful news!

A period of fruitful teaching activity began for Doris, pursued steadfastly in spite of the fact that only a handful of people showed interest. Doris's knowledge of English and German and her firm grasp of Bahá'í history and teachings proved invaluable. As a result of new enrolments, the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Zurich was established, with great joy, in 1950. Doris later moved to Germany and pioneered to Bonn. She was

also elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Germany and Austria.

In 1962 Doris settled in Switzerland, first in Biel and then in Lucerne. "With indefatigable devotion", wrote Josef Aregger in the Swiss *Bahá'í News* after Doris's passing, "she continued to serve the Cause, giving talks, organizing gatherings, going out of her way to strike up conversations with people, dedicating much time to translation and to the comparative study of religion. Her thoughts and her actions were tempered by her hospitality and her sense for the universal."

After National Spiritual Assemblies had been established in all ten goal countries of the second Seven Year Plan and when Doris had, so to speak, reached retirement age, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States suggested, offering financial support, that she return to her second homeland, having successfully fulfilled her assignment, to enjoy some well-deserved peace and quiet. Her response, "That doesn't even come into question", still rings in my ears. She really did want to serve Bahá'ulláh to the very last breath.

During the fall of 1987 the infirmities of old age began to manifest themselves, and in April of 1988 a move to the Eichhof Nursing Home became necessary. Here she was lovingly cared for and she would often say: "I am so happy, so grateful, that I am permitted to be here in Switzerland, in Lucerne."

Her passing on 18 May 1990 saddened all who had known her. Her humble, joyful spirit and her example in the pathway of service will serve as a shining star in the firmament of European Bahá'í history. Of all the statements of appreciation Doris Lohse received, the most beautiful came in the form of a telegram from the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum:

> DESIRE PAY TRIBUTE DORIS LOHSE MY OLD PERSONAL FRIEND WHO CAME FROM DISTINGUISHED EARLY JEWISH BAHÁ'Í FAMILY IN BERLIN. DORIS, WITH A HEART FULL OF LOVE FOR BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, CONSTANTLY SERVED HIM, IN HER LATER YEARS MOSTLY AS A DEVOTED PIONEER IN EUROPE. HER SELFLESS SPIRIT, AMIABLE AND UNASSUMING PERSONALITY, UNFLAGGING DEVOTION TO SPREADING THE FAITH SHE LOVED SO WELL, FOR MANY YEARS, WITH THE DIRECT APPROVAL AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF HER BELOVED GUARDIAN, NO DOUBT NOW ENTITLE HER TO THE REWARD OF THE FAITHFUL AND DISTINGUISHED SERVANTS OF THE BLESSED BEAUTY IN THE ABHA KINGDOM. WOULD DEEPLY APPRECIATE YOUR ASSEMBLY PLACING SOME FLOWERS ON HER GRAVE IN MY NAME.
>
> RUHIYYIH

DR. MASSOUD BERDJIS
(Mas'úd Birjís)

EPHRAIM TE PAA
1904–1990

Ephraim Te Paa was born at midnight on 1 January 1904, as the old year passed and a new one dawned. His birthplace was the remote settlement of Rangikohu, a small Maori village in the far north of New Zealand. Ephraim was one of many children, his family having lived in that area for many generations. He left school at the age of 12. His father died during an influenza epidemic and so, at the age of 14, Ephraim took over many of the family responsibilities.

Like other Maori children of the time, his school years were difficult, as the children were beaten for using their native tongue, even though this was the only language they knew when they first arrived at school. Nevertheless, throughout his life, Ephraim displayed a command of both English and Maori that others admired. As a young man he attended St. John's Theological College in Auckland, a city several days journey from his home. However, due to the barriers imposed by a limited education and the need to take on the responsibilities imposed by his father's death, he did not complete his training, but instead served for many years as a lay reader in the Church of England.

His marriage in 1928 to Hariata Hunia, a young Maori woman who had been one of his childhood companions, was the beginning of a lifetime of commitment and service both to his ever-growing family and to the community in which he lived. After their marriage, Ephraim and Harriet, as she came to be called, moved to Ahipara, a small coastal settlement near the sparkling Ninety Mile Beach, where they ran a dairy farm until the mid-1970s. They were blessed with 15 children, 48 grandchildren, and more than 20 great-grandchildren. Several of these offspring accepted the Faith.

Ephraim and Harriet were an integral part of their community, working in many areas of development for the benefit of their people. Much of this work was carried out through their close association with Te Ohaki Marae, the *Marae* being a place which serves as both the physical and spiritual centre of Maori community life. A unique feature of Te Ohaki Marae was the carved figurehead on the highest and most prominent part of this sacred building which, in a bold departure from Maori tradition, symbolised the equality of men and women.

The far north had always been geographically isolated from the rest of the country by reason of its mountainous terrain. Ephraim was part of a work gang which succeeded in building a road through the Mangamukas, a high mountain range which had previously only allowed access by horse and cart and thereby maintained the isolation of that region from the outside world. Ephraim was able, throughout his life, to foster a balance which supported the preservation of his own unique Maori culture whilst incorporating such new ideas as would benefit the growth of the community.

In his middle years, Ephraim was chosen by the elders of his tribe to be presented with a *taiaha*, a wooden weapon or staff that was for ceremonial purposes only, and never for the traditional use in battle. The *taiaha* symbolised a vision handed down by successive generations of his ancestors, which mirrored the Christian belief in a time when swords would be beaten into ploughshares. It was known as the Staff of Seers, but was renamed at the time of presentation as the Staff of Hope.

At the ceremony, Ephraim was told that he was the recipient of the testimony of forebears and that he held this staff on behalf of the people. The message he was given with the staff was: "Proceed to the Mountain and let your staff be the staff of Hope, but be ye robed with the cloak of Love."

Realising the importance of his mission, but being unsure of his direction, Ephraim began an intensive study of both Christianity and the history, myths, and legends of his own culture, seeking answers. He also travelled the perimeter of New Zealand searching for the mountain referred to in his message, but without success.

In June 1955, Ephraim heard of the Bahá'í Faith and inquiried about it. The National Teaching Committee sent two couples to give him the Message—Margo and Joseph Been and Leonie and Bertam Dewing—and they were received with great warmth. Many hours were spent in discussion that weekend, and when the visitors left they had the impression that here was a searching soul that just could not believe that his search was nearly over.

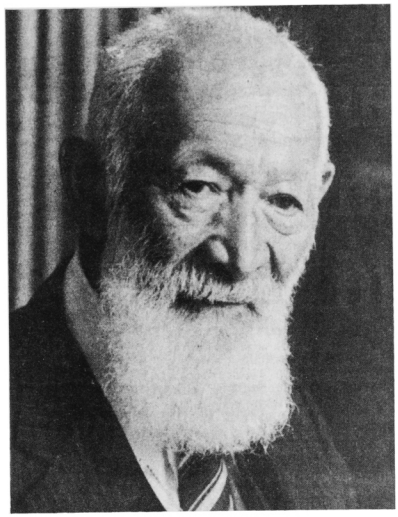
In the late 1950's, Ephraim met Les Simmons, a healer from Whangarei, some 100 miles distant, who was visiting the area, and staying at nearby Pukepoto. Ephraim had been told by his sister that this man could cure his arthritis. Ephraim arrived in Pukepoto and went to the Robson house, where Les was staying. He was ushered into the room where Les practised his healing. As soon as Les laid eyes on Ephraim, he exclaimed "God has sent you to me!" Ephraim was bewildered, but felt drawn to this unusual man.

In the following weeks, the two men began what became a mystical walk, beginning with an ascent of the mountain that overlooked the community marae and then to

other often remote and uninhabited areas of significance, the sites of ancestral homes and burial grounds.

On the mountain of Whangatauatia, Les Simmons told Ephraim that he could see a purple haze surrounding the Marae, and a spring that had been long overgrown about to gush forth with life-giving waters of spiritual regeneration for the people. He said he could see the people preparing a feast, but that the cooking stones were not yet hot enough; the food not yet ready to be given to the people. Ephraim remembered these words until the close of his earthly life. They seemed to symbolise the readiness of the Maori people to assimilate the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

During their time in the wilderness, Les Simmons had visions of ancestors dressed in full ceremonial costume. Ephraim was often discomforted by these experiences, but felt compelled to continue, being swept along by the escalating chain of events.



Ephraim Te Paa

They returned to Ephraim's home where, only a few days later, Les Simmons suddenly announced that they must proceed many hundreds of miles south to Turangawaewae Marae at Ngaruawahia, which was the seat of the Maori King, and the collective spiritual heart of his followers. Ephraim was loathe to do this, as approaching another tribal area without invitation was unheard of in Maori protocol. However, upon reflection Ephraim realised that he did indeed have tribal connections with King Koroki, through two female ancestors, Reitu and Reipae. Therefore, it was appropriate for him to ask for an audience with the court of Maoridom. Ephraim then sent a telegram to Ngaruawahia and received an immediate reply. The invitation was for a week's time. Little did Ephraim know that his appointment was to coincide with the official welcome of Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga, who was visiting New Zealand to proclaim the Bahá'í message, including a proclamation to the Maori Sovereign and his people.

Ephraim's formal welcome took place only about two hours before the welcome prepared for Enoch Olinga. Inspired by the Book of Isaiah, Ephraim called out to the people gathered that he had come to sound the trumpet to all four corners of the court of Maoridom, and that his message was: "Open, o ye gates of old, and the King of Kings will enter". Presently, he was led into the King's chamber and then, he recalled, a mystical rain swept the court and the place where, shortly afterwards, he was to make his first acquaintance with Enoch Olinga. Ephraim was often to recall his reception in honor of Enoch Olinga, who spoke of his wish that "this table could extend to all corners of the earth and all peoples could share in this bounty". Ephraim was profoundly moved by this meeting, and renewed his investigation of the Bahá'í teachings.

For five years he continued to study the Writings and to observe the Bahá'ís he met. He knew he could make no mistake in his assessment of this new religion as he would be held up to public scrutiny, his actions being viewed as an example by some, and the provocation of opposition and derision by others.

His final acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith came in 1962 when he was visited by Dr. Raḥmat'u'lláh Muhájir, who stayed for several days at Ephraim's tiny farm cottage. When Dr. Muhájir read the Tablet of Aḥmad, Ephraim was deeply affected from the very first line, which refers to "the Nightingale of Paradise". Once again, Ephraim heard echoed the voice of his ancestors, and shortly after Dr. Muhájir had departed, on 10 March 1962, sent him this "note of submission" via Douglas Weeks, a Bahá'í pioneer who had become a close friend of Ephraim.

> Dear friend,
> Greetings. Please convey and transmit this information to the President or the Hand of the Cause.
> The voice of the 'Huia,' the nightingale of the spirit, is heard in this court, calling the peoples to assemble in the Unity of Love, Peace and Concord, is received, accepted and recorded.
> Signed Your friend, Ephraim

Ephraim was privileged to receive a number of the Hands of the Cause of God in his home, including Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum during her visit in 1979, and Collis Featherstone. Of course, he met many other distinguished Bahá'ís as well. One of these was Richard St. Barbe Baker, who visited Ephraim and Harriet on several occasions.

In 1963, Ephraim was invited to attend the Bahá'í World Congress in London to represent the Maori people, but was unable to go. In his place, he sent the following message in his Maori tongue: "All praise be to God. Greetings and love to all people.'

In 1984, at the request of his National Assembly, Ephraim travelled extensively around New Zealand with respected Maori Elder, Mary Fox, and a group of younger Bahá'ís. The purpose of the trip was to visit other tribal groups, government officials, and local authorities, sharing pertinent Bahá'í teachings related to youth, race relations, women's issues, and encouraging the people to work towards the unity of mankind. In 1985, he met with the Governor-General of New Zealand, Sir Paul Reeves, to present him with a copy of *The Promise of World Peace*.

In May 1985, he was to realise the fulfilment of his mission as holder of the Staff of Hope, when he proceeded to the mountain of the Lord, Mount Carmel in Haifa. Here, Ephraim was later to recount, the myths of the ancestors became a reality. His pilgrimage was a journey of awe and wonderment which words cannot capture. Strangely, the "staff" disappeared at some stage of his journey to Israel, but he was unconcerned as the Elders had intimated when giving it to him that it would reach its destination but not return to them, as would have been usual with most ceremonial treasures.

Ephraim's services to his people were recognised in the New Year's Honours List of 1987, when he was awarded the Queen's Service Medal. He was also recognised as one of Maoridom's foremost authorities on Maori folklore and oral history, language and theology, and many considered him one of the last of the great orators of his Te Rarawa tribe.

Harriet accepted the Faith on 21 April 1990, and shortly thereafter, on 19 May 1990, and following a brief illness, Ephraim's soul took its flight. He had called family members into his bedroom to say prayers and asked his granddaughter's husband, an Anglican minister, to say a prayer from his Bahá'í prayer book. During the prayer for unity, Ephraim departed from this life.

For three days, Ephraim's body lay in state on his Marae, during which time a continual flow of mourners arrived to pay their respects and to mourn their loss. Many religions were represented during the three days of continual services and tributes, including Bahá'í, Ratana (a respected Maori religion), and Christian. As Ephraim's coffin was borne into the carved meeting house where those who loved him would say their final farewells on this earth, it was preceded by a fantail bird, spiritual portent of the Maori people and a Messenger of Joy, which

accompanied his body into the house and remained in that place for several hours.

On 22 May, the Universal House of Justice sent the following message to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of New Zealand:

> ...we are distressed to learn of the passing of Mr Ephraim Te Paa, whose steadfast services to the Faith for several decades have made a distinctive contribution to the unity of the races in New Zealand. Prayers will be offered in the Holy Shrines for the progress of his soul. Kindly convey our condolences to the members of his family.
>
> SUZANNE WORTERS

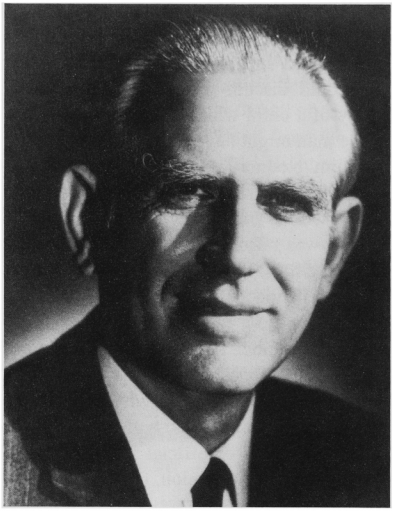
SALIM NOUNOU
1907–1990

In *Memorials of the Faithful*, 'Abdu'l-Bahá distinguishes those who have lived as lovers of the Cause by the stature of their faith. Their spirits soar like cypress trees. Their souls expand in seas of exaltation. They scintillate like stars. They bloom in the heart of the hundred-petalled rose. And having thus conjured them from the Concourse, He then lays their lives to rest with the gentlest of benedictions. He seats them at the banquet-table of their Lord. He gives them to drink of "the wine that has been tempered at the camphor fountain". He blesses them with the sweetest of sleeps after their tireless services. But even when a cypress sleeps it still stands sentinal.

Salim Nounou had a cypress tree in his soul. It was rooted in humility, soaring towards the infinite, and always with that delicate bending of the head that denoted complete submission to the will of his Lord. It was not only his physical build that recalled the cypress—for he was tall and slim and always elegant—but he also seemed to bend over the souls around him in a manner both unassuming and protective. With him, one felt the presence of a spiritual aristocrat. In his later years, when he was frail, this nobility acquired such a transparent quality that one could discern through it the essential purity of a child which the worldly wisdom of the man might have belied.

Salim Nounou was the eldest son of a well-to-do Jewish family in Baghdád. His father was a successful merchant and his mother was refined and well educated, and to these gifts of business acumen and culture, he himself added the quality of passionate commitment to a cause. He was born sometime in December 1907, during the period of Hanukkah, but after he became a Bahá'í on 8 March 20 years later, he adopted that day for his birthdate. It was typical of him to call this fudging of official records "cheating" by his own admission, for he was a man completely honest and scrupulous in all his dealings. And yet it was also characteristic that he should have done so, for his life as a Bahá'í was his only life, and he attributed all his material successes to his spiritual commitment to the Faith.

He was just 18 years old when he first heard of the Teachings from Daoud Toeg, a Bahá'í of Jewish background who was one of the pillars of the community in Baghdád and who had business dealings with his father. Mr. Toeg, Mr. Isháq Banáni, and Mr. Ezra Soffer, who were at least 30 years older than the impressionable Salim, first attracted his attention by the fact that they were altogether different from the other clients and business partners who came to his father's offices. Through their enthusiastic discussions they befriended and then gradually convinced the young man that "the Bahá'í religion was the real thing" and that he had to study its teachings seriously. Although he initially kept his convictions private in order to protect his family from scandal in the Jewish community of Baghdád, he began to frequent Bahá'í meetings, make friends among Bahá'ís of Muslim and Christian backgrounds, and in 1928 started to work on the art of becoming a Bahá'í himself.



Salim Nounou

The art of becoming a Bahá'í, according to Shoghi Effendi, requires transcending one's cultural and religious background. In the late 1920s and early 1930s the Bahá'ís in Baghdád and Ṭihrán were Jewish Bahá'ís, Christian Bahá'ís and Muslim Bahá'ís, according to Mr. Nounou. They brought all their prejudices with them into the Bahá'í community. To be a Bahá'í first, and an 'Iráqi Jew or a Persian Muslim second, in such a context, was not easy. In the early years after his acceptance of the Faith, until his first pilgrimage in 1937, Salim Nounou served his apprenticeship in that art.

He first transcended culture and language when he began to travel between the two capitals of 'Iráq and Persia, and sensed the freedom which this gave when he served as a translator for Western Bahá'í visitors sent by Shoghi Effendi. One of these was the great teacher Martha Root who came to Baghdád in the winter of 1929, and another was Keith Ransom-Kehler, whom he met in Ṭihrán in 1932. But the great influences on his spiritual life, after the patriarchs of the Bahá'í community in Baghdád already mentioned, were Persian men such as Mr. Dhikru'lláh Khádim, Mr. Ni'matu'lláh Khán 'Alá'í, Mr. Abu'l-Qásim Fayḍí, and others.

Salim acquired Persian citizenship and lived in that country between 1932, when he started a business with an Armenian partner, and 1964, when he moved to France, which became his second home. Although he kept all his connections in the Jewish community, both through his marriage and his successful business, and was well respected, he also maintained a passionate love for the Arabs, their religious fervour and their language. During his last years he served as the liaison between the Universal House of Justice and the Arabian Bahá'ís who corresponded with Haifa through his telex in Nice. By the time he retired, as a widower in England, he had truly mastered the art of transcendence without the loss of his culture. A Jew from Baghdád who spoke fluent Persian as well as Arabic and who was as much at ease in France as he was in England, Salim Nounou was first and foremost a Bahá'í. Nothing less could have contained his soaring aspirations or his love for Shoghi Effendi.

That love was first imprinted on his heart on a silent winter's day in Palestine when he entered the courtyard of the home of Shoghi Effendi in Haifa and stepped, as he himself put it, into "another world". It was 11 o'clock in the morning, in December 1937, and he was 30 years old. The sky was blue and the trees rippled in the pale sunlight. Time seemed to hold still in this place, and when he heard the step and saw the youthful face of the beloved Guardian he found himself curiously affected. The question of obedience dominated his pilgrimage: obedience to parental consent for Bahá'í marriage, obedience to the laws of Baha'u'llah, and most significantly, obedience to the Covenant.

When the 19 days of his pilgrimage were over—days of complete solitude, (for he was the only Eastern pilgrim to have the privilege at this time), punctuated by a tumultuous visit to Cairo during which all

the issues of obedience were tested—Salim, a transformed man, returned to Baghdád, to the home of his father. In his own words, "I was like a piece of clay in the hands of the beloved Guardian, and he moulded and imprinted on me the intense love and desire to behave as a Bahá'í." Although he had a second pilgrimage, the time he met Shoghi Effendi in 1940 was a completely different experience for he was not alone: he was in the company of many others from Persia. It was an opportunity for that initial seal of love to sink even deeper in his soul, but the imprint was unchanged.

From this point on, Salim Nounou's life throbbed with this love for Shoghi Effendi and this desire to be obedient to his instructions. The trip he took throughout Persia in 1939, sharing his pilgrimage with the friends, and the subsequent trip he took in 1950, when, with the Guardian's approval, he visited the Bahá'ís all over Europe in the company of his wife who was not a Bahá'í, were characterized by this intensity and this desire.

Years of service on the National Spiritual Assemblies of both Persia and France were also stamped by this fervor and passionate commitment. It is typical of Salim's exquisite fair-mindedness that in his brief memoirs written for his children, he asks Bahá'u'lláh's forgiveness for the very intensity of his commitment, which he admits was not always wise in relation to his Jewish family. He deplores the fact that his imperfections may have been an impediment to his dear wife's willingness to accept the truth of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, but finally concludes:

> When one is a perfectionist, he may lose a lot of chances while the other person, who lets things go and gives full vent to his feelings, may do a lot more errors, but perhaps he may do something good at the same time which will recompense all the errors he has made. I wonder if I was that much of a perfectionist, would I have ever become a Bahá'í?

There was one particular service which Salim Nounou rendered the Faith, however, among many others, which might be characterized as having been perfectly filled by him. It was his service as Deputy Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh. He received his training from Mr. Valíyu'lláh Varqá himself, whom he assisted from time to time, and with whom he developed a deep and abiding friendship, but it was a service for which his whole life seemed to have been a preparation. Both temperament and culture had given him a marvellous sense of what he called values—a sense of the true worth of things that combined several dimensions of the word. And years of business experience had sharpened his judgment to such a degree that he seemed to see past the literal transaction to its spiritual worth. He could feel the weight of people. The intensity of his devotion combined with a generosity of spirit to produce a servant of the beloved Guardian and later of the Universal House of Justice so true and so trusted, that according to the words of the cable sent at his passing on 20 June 1990:

> ...THE SPIRIT OF TOTAL DEDICATION, DEEP HUMILITY AND UNSHAKABLE LOYALTY WHICH HE EVINCED, WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED.
>
> BAHÍYYIH NAKHJAVÁNÍ

MAHVASH MASTER
1941–1990

This is the story of a unique and most remarkable lady upon whose passing to the Abhá Kingdom the Universal House of Justice sent the following message:

> SADDENED PASSING MAHVASH MASTER. HER CEASELESS DEDICATION TO TEACHING WORK MANY PARTS WORLD, HER DISTINGUISHED SERVICES AUXILIARY BOARD AND HER RADIANT SPIRIT ARE WORTHY EXAMPLE OTHERS, CONVEY BEREAVED FAMILY FRIENDS DEEPEST



Mahvash Master

SYMPATHY, PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

26 July 1990

Mahvash was so much in love with the Cause of the Blessed Beauty that nothing was strong enough to prevent her from sharing His Message. In the St. Vincents Hospital in Karlsruhe, Germany, where she spent the last two weeks of her life, she gave all of the staff, including specialists, doctors, nurses, orderlies and visitors, the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. She did this until her last breath. Indeed when she was failing and did not have the strength to speak audibly, two Catholic nuns came into her room to give her their blessings. Mahvash whispered in her husband's ear, asking him to give the nuns pamphlets and to tell them about her dream the previous night when she saw Bahá'u'lláh and Jesus conversing together.

Mahvash was born in Ṭihrán, Persia, on 22 January 1941, into a family with two very different and distinguished backgrounds. Her mother was a very staunch Muslim with royal blood, a descendant of Fatḥ-'Alí Sháh, one of the monarchs of the Qájár Dynasty. Her mother remained a Muslim until she met the Guardian in 1955. Her father, on the other hand, was the grandson of a devoted believer at the time of Bahá'u'lláh who was honoured by Bahá'u'lláh with a few Tablets and the title of Ṣaffár, meaning coppersmith. He was the son of Nì'mat'ulláh Ṣaffár, a renowned calligrapher who copied by hand the Báb's and Bahá'u'lláh's Writings and was an expert on the Writings and the Revelation of the Báb.

When she was a 14-year-old child on pilgrimage with her family in 1955, Shoghi Effendi pointed to a group of children, which included Mahvash, and said "These children will be successful in teaching the Cause of God". It seems as if this statement became the motivating force of her life. She knew she would be successful as long as she arose to teach, and because the Guardian had uttered these words she felt deeply and yet gloriously obliged to do so.

After pilgrimage, Mahvash's family, consisting of herself, four brothers and her parents, pioneered to Monte Carlo, Monaco. A few months later, the family transferred its pioneering post to Freiburg, West Germany. In August 1956, Mahvash's father died in Basel, Switzerland, from a heart attack while on his way to visit Írán.

Mahvash studied physiotherapy, while ensuring that her studies did not deter her from her teaching activities. She and her four brothers were deeply involved in Bahá'í activities, and their home was practically the Bahá'í centre of Freiburg.

On 21 March 1961, Mahvash married Íraj (Iradj) Master, and they moved to Bonn. At the end of 1964, Mahvash, along with her husband and their baby son, returned to Írán where Íraj was appointed as Associate Professor at the University of Shíráz. Bahá'í activities, such as children's classes, firesides and deepenings, continued to be a major part of Mahvash's life.

Professionally, Mahvash became very successful in Shíráz, and she was the co-founder

of the Physiotherapy Department of the University Hospital in Shíráz. She was renowned for her healing hands.

The oppressive conditions for teaching the Faith in Shíráz were a challenge for Mahvash, who was used to the freedom of teaching in Europe. Although Bahá'ís in Írán in those days were very active within the community, there were great pressures on them from various Muslim groups and government circles preventing them from teaching.

In spite of extremely favourable economic, social, and professional conditions and success, Mahvash and family pioneered to Melbourne, Australia, in late 1968. In those days Australia was in need of assistance, as the Melbourne Metropolitan area had only two Local Spiritual Assemblies, and indeed in the whole State of Victoria there were only three or four.

Mahvash's teaching efforts continued in Australia and she never failed to make the most of any opportunity that presented itself. For example, in 1969, when her husband was a visiting Senior Research Fellow with the Melbourne University, one of the daily newspapers approached the University and asked for the names of academic women from overseas to be interviewed for the paper. For some unknown reason they contacted Mahvash's husband and ended up interviewing her, and she did not miss the opportunity of proudly mentioning the Faith. This was the start of a number of interviews she obtained on radio stations, and opened the way for Mahvash to use the media for teaching the Faith.

Mahvash had a great organising capacity and while she was deeply involved in teaching work she could ably manage her own home and family. In addition she sponsored and greatly assisted her mother and her two younger brothers to happily and successfully settle in Australia. Even after the birth of her third son, she embarked on unprecedented mass teaching in Melbourne and country areas of Victoria. Mahvash persistently arranged and organised public teaching activities, pamphlet distribution, and held a fireside meeting at least once a week in her home.

Soon her teaching activities stretched beyond the borders of the State. First, she started to travel to Tasmania at least twice a year to teach. She used to relate a dream in which 'Abdu'l-Bahá was showing her a map of the Australian continent; He was pointing to Tasmania and telling her that Tasmania was important and that she should study the Book of Certitude. A number of Bahá'ís in Tasmania who became Bahá'ís through her efforts recall their encounter with Mahvash with affection and delight.

Crossing the state borders was not enough for Mahvash's high flying spirit. In 1973, she travelled to Germany to participate in their teaching activities to complete the final year of the Nine Year Plan. She travelled alone with great difficulties to the remote island of Borkum in the North Sea to form a Bahá'í group there. She managed to achieve that after a few days on that island.

Mahvash had an extraordinary love for Aborginals, and she repeatedly reminded herself and others of the importance of teaching indigenous people as mentioned so often by the Guardian of the Faith. In Melbourne she was always searching for the Aboriginals, and one summer day in 1974 she came home with a whole family consisting of the parents and six children. She explained to her husband that she had met them in the supermarket and had helped them to carry their shopping home. This was the Langley family from Mornington Island, who had come to Melbourne with other Aboriginals for an exhibition of Aboriginal art and dancing. During their stay in Melbourne the Langleys and a few other Aborigines became Bahá'ís and returned to Mornington Island.

Prior to the return of the Langleys, Mornington Island, with a population of 800 Aborigines, had only seven or eight Bahá'ís. Mahvash kept in touch with the Langleys,

and three years later, in 1977, she, with great enthusiasm, chartered a small four-seater plane and with three other Bahá'ís flew to Mornington Island to teach the Aboriginals. While there, during only eight days, several Aborigines accepted the Faith.

In the same year, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum went from Japan to Australia to recuperate from an illness, and she urged the National Assembly to have the Local Spiritual Assembly of Mornington Island formed. Mahvash could not stay quiet. Two months later her husband and three other Bahá'ís went to Mornington Island, with the result that a significant number of Aborigines became Bahá'ís.

Mahvash continued to travel to Mornington Island. In Normanton, the last stop before Mornington Island, she enrolled several more people in the Faith, and her travels to northeast Australia became a regular event. She never stopped teaching the Aborigines, and without any doubt a great number of Aboriginal Bahá'ís throughout Australia came into the Faith through her efforts.

In 1974, she was appointed Auxiliary Board member for Propagation in the state of Victoria, and served in that capacity until 1988. Of course, the additional duties of a Board member did not diminish her teaching activities, or her activities as a wife, mother of three boys, and physiotherapist. She still found the time to write reports and articles for the Bahá'í magazines and gain publicity for the Faith through government and commercial media.

She had no difficulty in approaching people high or low, rich or poor. Even when the family was living in a rented home without adequate facilities, she would not hesitate to invite people for firesides or dinners. The Speaker of the Australian Parliament, journalists for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and commercial media, and "modest" people all had lunch or dinner at her home.

Mahvash was a very attractive and vital personality. She "bubbled" and radiated love, enthusiasm, and sincerity when she spoke of the Faith she lived for, and it was this quality that was almost infectious and drew people to her. In her physiotherapy practice, no patient could leave without being taught the Faith in a loving and interesting manner.

She constantly reminded the friends of the urgency of teaching, and would repeatedly quote from *The Advent of Divine Justice* (p. 39) where the Guardian wrote:

> The field is indeed so immense, the period so critical, the Cause so great, the workers so few, the time so short, the privilege so priceless, that no follower of the Faith of Baha'u'llah, worthy to bear His name, can afford a moment's hesitation.

In conformity with this quote she would often state the following in her talks: "This day and age is of such importance according to Baha'u'llah that the prophets of the past would love to be back for one moment so that they could serve. We don't realise how privileged we are to live in this day and age. Please put the Faith as the first priority in your life before everything else."

She also used to say that every single day in one's life was a bonus and the opportunities should not be missed. Mahvash followed this advice herself very religiously.

One of her very many remarkable achievements was that in 1976, while on a visit to Írán and on pilgrimage, she managed to persuade her father-in-law, Ardishír Master, to purchase a house in Malvern (a fairly central suburb in Melbourne) and donate it to the Bahá'í community. This was the first Bahá'í Centre outside Sydney to be wholly owned by the Bahá'í community of Australia.

With tremendous energy and persistence, she worked to have this house renovated and made suitable for teaching and other Bahá'í activities. She was the motivating force behind the grand opening of Bahá'í House in 1978, officiated over by the Mayor of the City of Malvern in the presence of the Local Member of the Australian Parliament, reporters for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation,

newspapers, local radio, and representatives of the National Assembly, as well as a great number of Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís.

Furthermore, Mahvash was the major initiator and consistent supporter of Bahá'í children's classes, using the Bahá'í House as the venue. She would encourage every parent to send their children to the Bahá'í classes every Sunday.

On one memorable occasion, Mahvash and her husband were attending an anniversary celebration at the public school their children attended. The guest of honour was the Governor-General of Australia, Sir Ninian Stephen. Mahvash rather horrified Íraj by saying, "We will go and tell him about the Faith". The security guards were not so impressed with people wanting to speak to their charge but that did not deter Mahvash. With Íraj following behind she seized the opportunity and introduced herself to Sir Ninian and told him about Bahá'u'lláh's call. Sir Ninian was interested and respectful and thanked Mahvash. He said she had reminded him that he had an invitation to visit the Sydney Temple soon and he would look forward to that visit.

Mahvash became afflicted with breast cancer in January 1985. This calamity did not become a reason to stop her from teaching. On the contrary, she expanded her activities. She added New Caledonia to her travel list and visited that country several times. Friends who became Bahá'ís through her are now active in various parts of that country.

She organised groups of youth, including her own children, to travel to Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan to teach. She encouraged her sons to learn the Chinese language in order to be able to teach the Chinese people. Her last trip overseas consisted of teaching activities in the United States; she appeared on television in Atlanta, Georgia, and was planning to teach in East Germany. Alas, this wish was not fulfilled.

She fought her illness with great courage. When it recurred for a second time, her doctor became very upset, but she consoled him and told him that she believed in life after death and she would be happier in the other world.

Mahvash always, and especially during her illness, implored the friends to teach while they enjoy their good health.

Kate Dwyer, a respected ex-Catholic Mother Superior who became a Bahá'í wrote to Mahvash's family:

> Only one of the many, many, people she helped, I could never forget her kindness, especially in the early days of my Bahá'í life in 1972. Mahvash did all in her power to strengthen and deepen my faith in Bahá'u'lláh and His great Cause and I watched that dear soul do likewise for so many others.

Mahvash was like a candle burning herself to diffuse light and brighten others, and finally she burned herself out in Germany and her soul flew to the Abhá Kingdom on 25 July 1990, at the age of 49 years.

Perhaps her short life can be as a message to us all to serve the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh while we can.

> Mahvash, in her last statement, said,
> ...don't ever feel sad for me, instead say a prayer for my soul.

BILL JOHNSON

JANE VILLIERS-STUART
1919–1990

Jane Villiers-Stuart was born into the Fowler family in Kells, County Meath, Ireland, on 29 September 1919. The Fowlers were a well established family in the Protestant Anglo-Irish tradition, which tended to be land-owning, English-educated, and staunchly loyal to Monarch, Empire and Church. Life was privileged, conformist and imbued with a sense of upper-class exclusiveness. Such was the ambience in which Jane was brought up.

However, Jane was 20 years younger than her nearest brother, her father died when she was eight, and her mother, having witnessed the carnage of the first World War, sanctioned a somewhat unusual upbringing. She was tutored at home to the age of 14. She was encouraged to roam and explore and run free in the unspoiled countryside of County Meath. She became an experienced horsewoman. Then her further education took place in a boarding school in the south of England. It all allowed for the flowering of a personality sensitive, inquiring, rebellious in defence of her own and others' freedom, full of imagination, and wonderfully uncircumscribed by the inhibitions developed by more formal upbringing.

In 1940, family reasons bound up with the second World War caused her mother to leave the neutral Irish Republic and settle in Northern Ireland. Jane, who had lived a life of leisure until this time, was drawn into the war effort. She worked as an orderly in a hospital in London. When she moved to the north of Ireland, she ran a mobile canteen for the troops. It was here that she met Michael Villiers-Stuart. He was then in the Royal Navy, but had previously moved from the south to the north of Ireland to help develop the family nicotine insecticide business.

Jane and Michael were married in 1943. Sally was born in 1945, Virginia in 1947, Garry in 1949, and Katherine in 1951. They set up home in a house called Loughside on the shores of Belfast Lough. It was their home for the next 38 years.

Jane first read about the Bahá'í Faith in 1948, in an article in a local paper which sympathetically reviewed *The Promise of All Ages,* by George Townshend. Two years later, on a journey to London on the occasion of her great aunt's 80th birthday, she shared a cabin with Ursula Newman, who was then a pioneer in Belfast and a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles. For both the meeting was significant, and it marked a new phase in Jane's spiritual journey.

Three years later, having explored the teachings of the Faith with the aid of George Townshend, Adib Taherzadeh, and Lady Hornell, she declared on the day of the Feast of Questions. She said that she knew she had to make a decision, and had gone to the local church to pray for the right answer. As she prayed she felt as if she were being lifted up to heaven. This experience, coupled with her natural sympathy with Bahá'í principles, confirmed to her the truth of Bahá'u'lláh and His Revelation.

The rest of her life became an expression of her commitment to the truth of His Revelation. Along with Lady Hornell and Lizbeth Greaves, she became a most potent invigorator of the Irish Bahá'í community. She involved herself fully in the domestic nitty-gritty of building this still fragile community. Any soul who showed the slightest interest in the Faith would receive her total and loving attention. Nothing would be too much trouble if it helped to confirm that interest.

Jane discovered that she had a great skill for bringing people together. She began to use this skill in making connections between the many different social classes, interest groups and nationalities that inhabited her social world. Her home became almost the 20th century equivalent of an 18th century salon. The sewing lady would have tea with the Wing Commander, the poet would discuss Vietnam with an aristocratic Persian lady, the business consultant joke with an African student, the wild and uncultured "new estate" boys share cake with respectable aging lady inquirers.

The house, blessed by the Grace of Bahá'u'lláh and energised by Jane's generous hospitality, hosted innumerable morning devotions, tea and lunch parties, musical evenings, buffet suppers, and firesides. Every moment of her life, and all events organised in it were seen as occasions when the Bahá'í Revelation and its implications could be discussed and explored. Loughside became an unofficial hotel for travelling teachers going to Northern Ireland. Its visitors' book

read like an unofficial "Who's Who" of the Bahá'í world. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, George Townshend, Ḥasan Balyúzí, Ṭarázu'lláh Samandarí, Hermann Grossmann, Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir, and others, were visitors at various times. The number of grace-filled moments during these times cannot be computed.

Jane's official Bahá'í life was also ever full. For example, she set up and supported countless firesides, both in the Province and in the Irish Republic. She helped to organise the first northern Irish summer school. She helped to form the first Local Spiritual Assembly in the area in which she lived (the fourth in Northern Ireland). For many years, almost until her death, she was elected as a Northern Ireland delegate to the National Bahá'í Convention of the United Kingdom. She became the official Travel Teacher Coordinator for the Province. Rich were the many itineraries she organised, and brilliantly successful she was in gaining media coverage for both these travelling teachers in particular and the Bahá'í community in general.

When "The Troubles" (that is, violent inter-religious conflict between the Catholic and Protestant communities) flared up again in Northern Ireland in the 1970s, Jane dedicated more of her time to help the cause of peace. Her contribution was particularly effective in the area of hosting events in the community and in her house to which both Catholics and Protestants would come. It was not unknown for the "wild boys" as she affectionately called them, from both sides of the community divide, to serve tea to each other during a fireside, and to wait to ambush each other after it was over.

As a result of "The Troubles", one of her cars was hijacked and used as a car bomb, and another was turned on its side and used as a road barricade! Despite all these complications, Jane remained cheerful and full of laughter. She seemed able to absorb the pressure and tensions of such an environment and fit it into her hectic domestic life,



Jane Villiers-Stuart

although she later admitted that she found all these demands difficult to cope with at times. She became a much loved and respected local figure.

Jane served for many years on a committee that attempted to proclaim the Faith to important public figures. Her wide family connections enabled her to do this in a successful manner. In the early 1970s, through her efforts and contacts, she enabled the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh written to the Kings of Europe to be unofficially presented to Queen Elizabeth II. She also arranged for the formal presentation of the same book to Eamon de Valera, the President of Ireland. In the early 1980s, she organised a very successful meeting in the House of Lords as a way of drawing attention both to the Bahá'í Faith and to the plight of the Bahá'ís in Írán.

During the last years of her life she travelled to India to teach the Faith, and also to represent Northern Ireland at the 1978 Asian women's conference in New Delhi. Later, she was invited to represent Northern Ireland at an international women's peace conference in Dallas, Texas, U.S.A. During

the last months of her life, while battling against a creeping cancer, she involved herself in the organisation of a cross-border Irish women's peace conference. Her room in the Hospice where she stayed for some weeks became a focus for visitors near and far, and each found in her a rich source of inspiration. For the last week of her life she was cared for by her family in the prayer-filled atmosphere of her home.

When Jane passed away in August 1990, her funeral became a wonderful proclamation. The local people in the small town where she lived were amazed at the number and diversity of people who came to pay their last respects.

Jane's life was filled with love and laughter and happiness and a passionate sense of justice, all of which spilled over into and touched the lives of the many souls who were lucky enough to come into contact with her. There can be no more fitting epitaph to her life than the message sent by the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom on 24 August 1990, on the occasion of her passing, which read:

> Grieve passing stalwart promoter Faith dearly loved Jane Villiers-Stuart. Her exemplary life of service to the Cause and fellow human beings, her loving nature and passionate love for Bahá'u'lláh, her tireless unceasing efforts teaching proclamation are fondly remembered. The shining record services Cause she loved so dearly served so nobly are indelibly recorded history Faith British Isles, and will serve as befitting example for promoters Cause Bahá'u'lláh to emulate in those Islands. Praying Holy Shrines progress her radiant soul. Kindly convey loving sympathy her beloved family.

GARRY VILLIERS-STUART

HEDAYATOULLAH AHMADIYEH
(Hidáyatu'lláh Aḥmadíyyih)
1933–1990

PROFOUNDLY DEPLORE TRAGIC CIRCUMSTANCES SUDDEN PASSING DEARLY LOVED, WHOLLY DEVOTED, INDEFATIGABLE SERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH HEDAYATOULLAH AHMADIYEH. HIS CONSTANT PROMOTION SACRED CAUSE THROUGH HIS INTENSIVE IMMENSELY SUCCESSFUL INVOLVEMENT TEACHING WORK INCLUDING HIS AUTHORSHIP WIDELY USED TEACHING BOOKLET WAS AT CORE HIS DYNAMIC SERVICES AS CONTINENTAL COUNSELLOR IN AMERICAS, AS MEMBER AND CHAIRMAN FOR MANY YEARS OF NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY BELIZE AND AS PIONEER DURING HIS YOUTHFUL YEARS IRAN. OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS HIS EXTENSIVE TEACHING TRIPS THROUGH CENTRAL, NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA WILL FOREVER BE ASSOCIATED WITH BRILLIANT CHAPTERS DEVELOPMENT FAITH THESE AREAS. DEEPLY SYMPATHIZE MEMBERS HIS BELOVED FAMILY WHOSE WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT HIS ACTIVITIES WAS EXEMPLARY. PRAYING HOLY THRESHOLD THAT HIS SOUL MAY RECEIVE RICH REWARDS MAY BE IMBUED WITH ETERNAL HAPPINESS THROUGHOUT DIVINE WORLDS.

ADVISING MEMORIAL SERVICES BE HELD TEMPLES PANAMA CITY AND WILMETTE AND IN COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT AMERICAS IN HIS HONOUR.

Universal House of Justice
29 August 1990

Hidáyatu'lláh Aḥmadíyyih was born into a Persian Bahá'í family on 11 July 1933, in the village of Ṭizirján, near the city of Yazd. Both of his parents had become Bahá'ís on their own, and were the only Bahá'ís in their families.

Although his parents practised the Faith, they would not talk about it to the children, fearing that they would speak to their schoolmates and cause difficulties and persecution. As a result, Hidáyatu'lláh and his older

brother, being under the influence of their maid who was a devoted Muslim, were brought up as Muslims and practised Islamic laws.

The family moved to the small town of Bam in the province of Kirmán. When Hidáyatu'lláh was 11 years old, a pioneer family moved to Bam and encouraged the Aḥmadíyyihs to send their children to Bahá'í children's classes. The first class that Hidáyatu'lláh attended brought many questions to his heart, and it was then that his mother explained the Faith to him.

He studied the Faith for several years, and was intellectually convinced but still had doubts. Then one day, at the age of 16, he was studying *The Dawn-Breakers* when he came across the story of the seven martyrs of Ṭihrán. Among these martyrs was Ḥájí Siyyid-'Alí, the uncle of the Báb, who was His custodian from His childhood. Hidáyatu'lláh was shaken by the story of his martyrdom, and, his heart moved, he became convinced of the truth of the Cause of God. To him, the conclusion became clear; even if thousands of martyrs could have been deceived by the Báb, His uncle who was like a father to Him, could not have been.

Hidáyatu'lláh's conviction was so strong that nothing could change it. He became very active in the Faith and served on several national committees in Ṭihrán. He was in the last year of high school when the Ten Year Crusade began. He became very anxious and eager to leave everything behind and go pioneering, but the national committees and institutions of the Faith that he consulted advised him to continue his studies.

Hidáyatu'lláh wrote to Dr. Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím requesting him to ask the beloved Guardian about his obligations and the obligation of the other young students like him. The answer written by Dr. Ḥakím was brief but clear:

> Write to Mr. Aḥmadíyyih that he should now concentrate all his thoughts on pioneering because it is more important than anything else and other youth likewise should follow the same path. [Translated from the original letter in Persian.]

After receiving these instructions, he became very anxious and restless. After one year of unsuccessful efforts to arrange a pioneering post, he decided to continue his studies and also to pursue his pioneering goal on the homefront. Immediately after his acceptance at Shíráz University, he, along with a group of Bahá'í medical students, pioneered to a nearby village called Qaṣru'd-Dasht and formed a new Local Spiritual Assembly there.

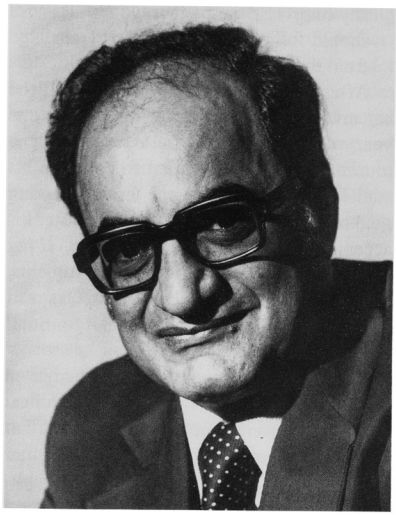
The following year their number increased to 11 students and two Bahá'í families. Since they were not all needed in that locality, they encouraged and invited other friends from Shíráz to pioneer to new localities. These efforts resulted in the formation of five new Local Spiritual Assemblies. Hidáyatu'lláh moved to a village called Pusht-i-Mulih. Among the individuals on this new Assembly was Mr. Mihdí Anvarí who, years later, gave his life heroically as a martyr.

After graduating from medical school in 1960, Dr. Aḥmadíyyih passed the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates examination and left for the United States in 1961 to further his education.

He studied for five years in the pediatric field. After passing the American Board of Pediatrics examinations with excellence, he was awarded the Diploma of the American Board of Pediatrics. While in the United States, he served on the Local Spiritual Assemblies of St. Louis, Missouri, and Nashville, Tennessee.

Upon finishing his studies in 1966, he decided to go pioneering. He wrote a letter of inquiry to British Honduras [known as Belize after June 1973], and when the friends there responded his decision was made.

He arrived in British Honduras in December 1966. He had to wait for two years before he was given permission by the government to work. Finally, he was hired as a Medical Officer in the Belize City Hospital.



Hedayatoullah Ahmadiyeh

Working with much dedication, he became known as "Angel of Mercy" by the nurses with whom he served.

At that time, the population of British Honduras was only 140,000, with 80 believers and two Local Spiritual Assemblies. Most teaching efforts had been concentrated in the areas of Belize City and Burrell Boom. Dr. Aḥmadíyyih travelled around the country taking the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the towns and villages. Soon two more Assemblies were formed, and the National Spiritual Assembly was established in April 1967.

The first National Convention of Belize was held in the presence of the Hand of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery. Dr. Aḥmadíyyih was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly and was its chairman until 1969, when he was appointed to the Auxiliary Board. As an Auxiliary Board member he was very active and made regular trips to the villages and towns in Belize and also travelled abroad.

In 1970, he made an extensive teaching trip through Central and South America, visiting Colombia, San Andrés, Providencia Island, Peru, Brazil and Guyana. Later he travelled to Paraguay and Bolivia.

In 1971, after receiving the news of the passing of his father, he made a trip to Írán, and it was there that he married Riḍván Raḥímí, who had been pioneering in India.

Dr. Aḥmadíyyih travelled again in 1974. This trip lasted for six weeks, and took him to Antigua, Barbados, Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, Nevis, Panama, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, St. Thomas, and St. Vincent.

In October 1976, he was appointed to the Continental Board of Counsellors in Central America.

Towards the end of the Five Year Plan, in 1978, he closed his medical practice for eighteen months and travelled extensively in Central America and among the Caribbean islands trying to help the friends to win their teaching goals. At the end of September of the same year, having instructions from the Universal House of Justice and an invitation from the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, he visited that country, and with the active participation of the friends and constant help and guidance from the National Assembly and the National Teaching Committee, more than 320 Local Assemblies were formed in eight weeks. Later, in December 1978 and then in February 1979, he visited Canada and helped the friends there attain all their teaching goals.

In November 1980, the Universal House of Justice appointed five Boards of Counsellors, one for each continent. Dr. Aḥmadíyyih was appointed to the Board of Counsellors for the Americas, and was reappointed in November 1985. He was also a Deputy of Ḥuqúqu'lláh for seven countries in Central America for several years.

He travelled very often to the countries assigned to him as Counsellor; especially to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. He also made occasional trips to other countries in the Americas, such as Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, and the United States. His private practice

was affected by these repeated absences and they caused financial difficulties for him and his family, but this fact was accepted by all involved.

During the last two months of his life, he travelled to Brazil, Canada, and Mexico. While he was in Canada, a permanent teaching team was formed for the first time. In Mexico, he met with the Mayan Teaching Committee in Merida and a team for teaching among the Mayan was formed.

After leaving the meeting of the friends in Merida to go back to Belize on 26 August 1990, he met his untimely death. At the border of Mexico and Belize, crossing the bridge that separates the two countries, he fell through an opening which was left unguarded and unlit and drowned in the river below. He attained his wish, which was to die while serving Bahá'u'lláh.

Among his many achievements was the creation of a teaching booklet, the result of an extensive teaching project in the Western Highway in Belize. The format is based on a quotation from a letter written by the Universal House of Justice and sent to all National Spiritual Assemblies on 13 July 1964:

> When teaching among the masses.... The prime motive should always be the response of man to God's Message, and the recognition of His Messenger.... The declarants need not know all the proofs, history, laws, and principles of the Faith, but in the process of declaring themselves they must, in addition to catching the spark of faith, become basically informed about the Central Figures of the Faith, as well as the existence of laws they must follow and an administration they must obey.

The first copies were written by hand using postcards as pictures. These were given to the graduates of a week-long teaching institute as gifts to be used by them. Soon, the National Teaching Committee of British Honduras had copies of the booklet printed for use by teachers around the country. It proved an extremely successful teaching tool, so a copy was sent to the Universal House of Justice in 1978, and the booklet was then printed in different languages and adapted for use in many countries around the world.

Dr. Aḥmadíyyih also put together a booklet based on the Bahá'í Writings for the deepening of Local Spiritual Assemblies which was tested in a few communities in Belize. He was in the process of writing a deepening course suited for home-based study which was left unfinished with his untimely death.

Another achievement was his role in establishing permanent teaching teams in several countries in the Americas. The idea had first been suggested by the Hand of the Cause Dr. Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir on one of his visits to British Honduras in March 1976, and it came into reality in October 1988 when Dr. Aḥmadíyyih offered the idea during a joint meeting of the National Assembly and the National Teaching Committee. By the end of the consultation the first permanent teaching team of Belize was formed. It immediately started functioning, with tremendous and exciting results, so he took the idea to other countries including El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and later to Canada and Mexico. These countries adopted the idea and, based on their resources and needs, established permanent teaching teams which brought thousands of souls into the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

REZVAN AHMADIYEH
(Riḍván Aḥmadíyyih)

WINNIFRED I. HARVEY
1911–1990

Winnifred Harvey was born on 24 June 1911 in Rapid City, in the Canadian province of Manitoba, the eldest daughter in a family of 12 children.

As a child, Winnifred thought and read a great deal, always searching for answers. She found small town life very confining,

and was often ill. Nevertheless, her intelligence and photographic memory were highly respected by her family. At the end of grade 11 in public school she won a scholarship, and her uncle sold some livestock to raise the money for her to go to teachers' college.

She found college especially enlightening when she met there an instructor who introduced her to the arts and to oriental thought. She then taught in rural schools for a few years. Despite the Great Depression, and the fact that she was penniless, Winnifred decided to resign her teaching position and enrol in university to pursue a bachelor of arts degree.

University opened for her the life of the mind. Although materially barely surviving on scholarships, she felt intellectually and spiritually nourished. Thoughts she had had for years, and kept to herself, she now found in the writings of the world's philosophers. She was elected president of the student body and won many medals and scholarships. Eventually, however, she realized that she had found only knowledge, and not the fountain of wisdom for which she longed.

It was during these years that she decided to enter an essay contest on how to achieve world peace, sponsored by one Aḥmad Sorāb. She wrote for information on his organization, planning to discover its point of view so she could incorporate it into her essay, giving her a better chance of winning the contest and the badly needed cash prize. Because of the correspondence and information she received, she quickly decided she did not like the organization but was attracted by one small book: The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh.

After completing her bachelor of arts degree in English, she taught at Dominion Business College in Winnipeg. There she attended a Bahá'í public meeting, but still was not drawn to the Faith. Rowland Estall, a Bahá'í pioneer and fellow member of an educators' association, invited her to a series of firesides, but she declined, deciding the Bahá'í Faith was something she could investigate herself, so why subject herself to months of weekly talks? But she was still searching for a philosophy that made sense. After some discussions with Rowland Estall, she agreed to read the Bahá'í Writings and became quite engrossed in her reading. The two often met to discuss them.

In 1940, during this time of intense search and confusion, Winnifred left Winnipeg and moved to the capital, Ottawa, to begin a position with the government as a statistician. There were no Bahá'ís in Ottawa then, so she visited Montreal to attend an afternoon tea at the home of Siegfried and Florence Evaline Schopflocher.

In June 1940, she suddenly experienced a sense of conviction, and enrolled in the Faith. Still, she believed there might be errors in its teachings so she spent every spare moment at the library trying to find inconsistencies, reading close to 100,000 pages of religious, philosophical, and historical books, including some attacks on the Faith. Despite all her efforts, no flaws were discovered.

One evening, a young woman came to Winnifred's room at the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) to ask about the Faith. When the woman left, Winnifred realized that it was selfish to keep to herself the greatest thing that had ever happened to her. She left the YWCA and moved to a room where she could hold weekly firesides, beginning in November of the same year. She continued holding regular firesides as long as she lived in Canada.

Winnifred's services to the Cause were many. In the Ottawa area she has been referred to as the mother teacher of eastern Ontario and western Quebec. Not only was she the first permanent Bahá'í resident in Ottawa, and hostess of the first firesides, she arranged the first public meeting in Ottawa, worked toward the forming of the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Kingston, Ontario, and addressed the first public meeting in Belleville, Ontario.

She taught at Quebec and Ontario summer schools, and gave talks on the Faith wherever she travelled. She is remembered

not only for her eloquent, inspired and well-researched talks, but also for her listening ear, quiet advice and comforting manner. Her home at 36 Waverly St. in Ottawa was the centre of Bahá'í activity in the region for many years. Not only did it serve as a home for many Bahá'ís, but it was also a popular stopping-off place for Bahá'í visitors from across the country.

In 1956, she was the first Ottawa area Bahá'í to go on pilgrimage and to meet the Guardian, bringing with her a gift of maps of Canada, especially of the Canadian north.

Winnifred was twice a homefront pioneer. She moved from Ottawa to nearby Eastview (now Vanier) in the early 1950s to help form the first Assembly there. Then she thought of pioneering to the maritime province of Newfoundland, but at the Guardian's request she went instead to Hull, Quebec. Having moved to this French-Canadian city, across the river from Ottawa, she, in her 50s, had to learn to speak French, an accomplishment that took enormous effort. She succeeded, however, and continued to conduct regular Friday night firesides at her Hull apartment, but now in two languages.

She served in many administrative capacities. She was an invaluable member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada from 1950 to 1961, serving also on the National Teaching Committee and the Canadian Bahá'í News Committee.

In September 1979, Winnifred took early retirement in order to serve the Faith at the Bahá'í World Centre, first as a statistician, and later in the bookstore. During her vacations, she also took time for teaching trips in Nigeria and Ireland, as well as to Canada. She maintained a large correspondence with Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís around the world, and entertained Bahá'í pilgrims, especially Canadians.

Wherever she travelled around the world she served the Cause steadfastly, not only with her eloquent talks but also by the example of her life. She never tired of reminiscing about her conversations with the Guardian,



Winnifred Harvey

and reminding all of the power of prayer and the importance of teaching minorities.

She touched the lives of those she met in many ways. A fellow servant at the World Centre noted that she would be sorely missed by the young security guards who were assigned to the "Winnie Walk," when they had a chance to speak with her alone as they accompanied her up the hill to her office in the Seat of the Universal House of Justice.

Despite being diagnosed with terminal cancer, Winnifred continued to inspire her co-workers in the Holy Land as well as family and friends around the world. She worked as long as her health permitted and continued to give talks, especially to the youth. A few months before her death, she wrote to her largely non-Bahá'í family about her situation, assuring them that as this world was the womb of the next world, she was in no way perturbed by death. She looked forward to death as a totally new experience, with the same eagerly inquiring mind that had characterized her throughout her life.

Winnifred died on the slopes of her beloved Mount Carmel on 27 September 1990,

and was buried in the Bahá'í cemetery at its foot.

The themes of spirituality, service, and devotion to truth ran through her life. Her final task, before she entered the hospital for the last time, was to arrange for the sale of her beloved books to benefit the building of the Arc on Mount Carmel. Just after her funeral, a friend at the World Centre wrote to Winnifred's family, enclosing a copy of a Japanese print of a crane soaring over high mountains. It shows a plump Japanese lady in a kimono, riding on the back of the crane and reading a book, and had inspired one of Winnifred's jokes about riding a bird in heaven and reading.

On 28 September, the Universal House of Justice sent the following cable to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada:

> Deeply grieved passing steadfast servant Faith Winnifred Harvey. Her indefatigable efforts in promoting teaching work Canada, her valued membership and services on National Spiritual Assembly of her native country, her constancy, self-abnegation in discharge her responsibilities at World Centre will undoubtedly assure her bountiful reward Abha Kingdom. Convey members her family and friends deepest loving sympathy, assurance prayers Holy Shrines progress her soul in all worlds of God.

HEATHER HARVEY

DOROTHY FRANCIS
1913–1990

Dorothy Maquabeak Francis was one of Canada's great Native teachers, meshing her love of Bahá'u'lláh with her promotion of Indian culture and identity.

A Saulteax Indian, Dorothy was born in 1913 and raised on the Waywayseecappo Indian Reserve near the town of Russell, in Manitoba. She spent her early married life with her husband, Joseph, on a Reserve just outside of Broadview, Saskatchewan. In 1953, one of her nine children died because there were not adequate hospital facilities for Native Canadians, so the family moved to Regina, Saskatchewan. But no one would rent a house to Indians with a large family, so they ended up pitching a tent on the outskirts of town.

At that time there were fewer than 50 Native Americans in the area Dorothy became involved in the Regina Native Society and then founded the first Indian Friendship Center, spending most of her evenings counselling there.

The family then moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba, where Dorothy went to work for the Indian Center, first as arts and crafts manager, then as family counsellor. She became an economic development officer and Indian culture worker, then was elected chairman of the National Arts and Crafts Advisory Committee. She also served on the Ontario Indian Arts and Crafts Advisory Board. Dorothy was an artist, and some of her work can be found in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto.

Dorothy hosted a weekly Native cultural program for Canada's national radio network, published a book on Native legends, and recorded Native lullabies.

Dorothy became a Bahá'í in 1960, taught by Arthur and Lily Ann Irwin, and invited to join the Faith by the Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts. Confused by the conflict between the Native and Christian cultures, and searching for her place and the place of her people in Canadian society, she found that the Faith not only let her keep her identity, it encouraged it.

She was a very active Bahá'í, serving on several Local Spiritual Assemblies. She was also elected a delegate to Canada's National Convention several times. She travelled to many parts of the country by small plane with Bahá'í pilot Fletcher Bennet, and in the early 1970s travelled by plane into many



Dorothy Francis

remote communities in Alaska during a one-month campaign for the Alaskan National Assembly.

Travelling to teach on the Canadian prairies was not always easy; she recalled pushing a friend's car through deep snow, and shovelling the snow to reach Native Reserves for teaching activities. Of her teaching trips Dorothy once said: "I had wonderful opportunities at all these places to speak of the Faith, and it just seemed that Bahá'u'lláh made all our plans."

Over the years, she promoted Indian culture and identity in a variety of ways. For that work, she was honoured in 1978 by being appointed a member of the Order of Canada. In her later years, despite the effects of a severe stroke, she created and organized a Native spirituality project that is still active in the British Columbia corrections institutes.

Dorothy died of a heart attack in New Westminster, British Colombia, on 16 October 1990. In response to the news, the Universal House of Justice sent the following message:

...saddened news passing Dorothy Francis. Kindly convey condolences family friends. Assure prayers Holy Shrines progress her soul.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF CANADA

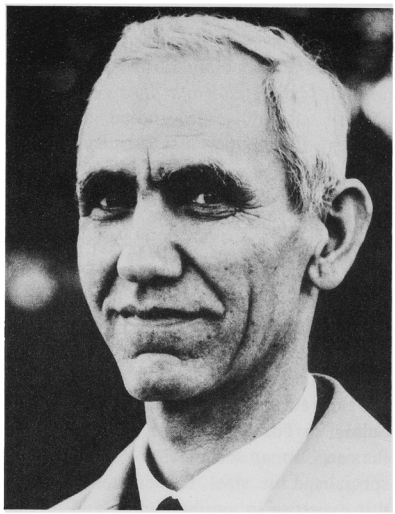
AKBAR ḤADDÁD
1912–1990

Akbar Ḥaddád was born on 12 May 1912 in Ṭihrán, Persia. He was only a child of six when his parents embraced the Bahá'í Faith. His early education was at the Tarbíyat Bahá'í School in Ṭihrán, and later he attended the Persian/German technical college where he specialised in steel fabrication. He used this expertise in various public and private projects, as well as in the service of many Bahá'í institutions.

In 1936, he married Vajíhih Muhájir and from this union two sons, Fu'ád (Foad) and Dhikru'lláh (Zekrullah), and two daughters, Ṭalí'ih (Talieh) and Najmíyyih (Najmieh), were born. From their unions there came nine grandchildren who became the source of delight and happiness in the closing years of Akbar's life.

Among Akbar's notable accomplishments in service to the Cause was his involvement in the construction, beginning in the late 1930s, of the National Bahá'í Centre in Ṭihrán. He was instrumental in the planning and design and final completion of the highly complex, beautiful, and unique dome of that building. Despite many difficulties and the stopping of construction by the authorities and enemies of the Faith, Akbar persevered and the dome was finally completed. (When the wave of persecution against the Bahá'í Faith once again swept through Persia in 1955, one of the first targets for destruction was this beautiful dome.)

At the end of the second World War, and on the advice and encouragement of the beloved Guardian, many friends left their



Akbar Ḥaddád

homelands and settled in other countries to establish the Faith. Akbar's heart was so overflowing with love for the Guardian and obedience to him, that he immediately responded and succeeded in settling in 'Iráq. His devotion to the Cause was limitless. It was immaterial to him where he resided. However, he was forced to return to his native land because of pressure on the part of government authorities.

He continued his services to the Cause in Persia until 1956, when a long-cherished hope of his dear heart was achieved: he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and visited his Beloved. Those who knew him often recognised the influence and impact that his visit to Shoghi Effendi made on his life.

Akbar's unique memory registered every word spoken by the Guardian, and he often repeated the words he had heard with profound intensity and sweetness. These remained with him all the days of his life. He had also committed to heart extensive passages from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh which he often recited. These were powerful instruments for him in teaching the Cause.

In 1959, during the Ten Year World Crusade, he was again moved to participate in the pioneering field and together with his family left his homeland to reside in Italy, in the city of Perugia. His family members were the first Bahá'ís in that city and they were able to establish a Local Spiritual Assembly during the following year.

In 1964, the Italian town of Como needed assistance. The Ḥaddád family answered this need by moving to Como, where they were instrumental in forming the Local Spiritual Assembly.

A turning point in Akbar's life was in 1968, when he moved to Haifa, Israel, upon the invitation of the Universal House of Justice, to assist with the maintenance of the Holy Shrines and Gardens. Akbar remained in the Holy Land for 14 years, until his retirement, when he and his wife moved to Australia where he spent the remaining days of his life.

One of his notable accomplishments in the Holy Land was to design and construct beautiful wrought iron gates for the Bahá'í gardens in Haifa and 'Akká. He also had the privilege of erecting the obelisk—the marble landmark that had arrived in Haifa during the life of Shoghi Effendi to mark the site of the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár on Mount Carmel.

Akbar's interest in the affairs of the Faith and its international development moved him to participate in many conferences during his lifetime. In 1953, he attended the International Teaching Conference in Kampala, Uganda. In 1958, he travelled to Kampala again for an international conference that was called by the Guardian just prior to his passing. In 1963, he attended the World Congress in London, the crowning glory of of the World Crusade of the Guardian. And in 1982, he attended the historic Inter-Continental Conference that was held in Canberra, Australia.

Akbar was a man who, from humble beginnings, became a source of inspiration to many. His open-mindedness, tolerance,

broad vision, and sense of devotion and perseverance, brought him into the international arena of service on three continents of the globe. When he passed away on 24 October 1990, he brought to a close a life of devoted and loving service to all, and in particular, to the Cause he loved and served with such exemplary devotion.

On 28 October 1990, the Universal House of Justice sent the following message to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia:

> ...deeply grieved passing staunch steadfast servant Cause Ali-Akbar Haddád. His devoted services Cradle and World Centre Faith unforgettable. Convey members family heartfelt sympathy. Assure loving prayers progress his soul Abhá Kingdom.

May the memory of his life of service and dedication be another link in the unification of the peoples of the world and the cause of peace on this planet.

SUHAYL 'ALÁ'Í

EMERIC SALA
1906–1990

Grieved passing dear Emeric Sala personal friend for over sixty years who accepted Faith Maxwell's home Montreal. Emeric was very active member our Bahá'í youth group period when Bahá'í youth were few in number throughout Canada. He was a devoted, consecrated, constantly active believer until end of his life: he served in the pioneer field in Venezuela, Africa and Mexico; he was author of a useful and thoughtful book for truth seekers; he was an excellent speaker, and a very capable member of various Bahá'í administrative bodies and committees and was a brilliant protagonist of our Faith in every field of service. May new generation Canadian believers follow his footsteps and seek equal distinction in every field of Bahá'í service. Kindly convey my loving sympathy his relatives.

RÚḤÍYYIH
[Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum]
10 September 1990

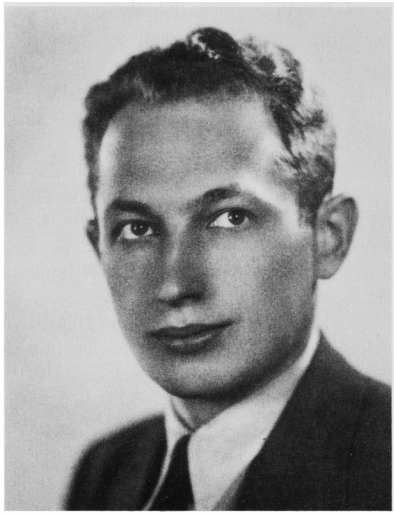
Emeric Sala came into this world on 12 November 1906, at the beginning of the "Century of Light". The timing was propitious, for by the time he reached manhood Emeric was able to play a leading role in building the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

His birthplace was an obscure Hungarian village called Havas Dombrovica, which roughly translates into "snowed-in village". He was the first of four children born to a Jewish lumber inspector, Adolf, and his wife, Charlotte. His parents later moved to Herrmannstadt in Siebenbuergen, today known as Sibiu in Romania, where Emeric spent his school years.

After the first World War, when in his teens, Emeric felt intensely alienated by the prevailing militarism and lack of personal freedom, as well as the social and religious prejudices in the strife-torn Balkan countries. He was drawn to the United States, but there was no immigration quota for him. So he made his way to the German seaport of Hamburg where he finally landed a job as a ship's helper, sailing for the west coast of Africa. The ship returned to Hamburg and then sailed for Montreal, Canada. When he arrived in 1927, not quite 21 years old, he jumped ship and went into hiding. He dug ditches and washed dishes in a small hotel, but soon got fired because he broke too much crockery.

Apart from his native Hungarian, Emeric spoke Romanian, some German, French, and Italian, but he didn't speak a word of English. Learning the language became his obsession. Rather than just reading books, he wanted to hear people talk, so he attended every free lecture.

One public meeting proclaiming a new World Order intrigued him. In Emeric's own words, taken from his autobiography:



Emeric Sala

A lovely lady sat in the speaker's chair. Then a beautiful 17-year-old girl got up and with the greatest of ease, without any self-consciousness, introduced the speaker. The speaker got up and with a radiant smile started to speak. She must have mesmerized me for I could not take my eyes from her. I was not conscious that she was speaking a language I did not understand. I witnessed a kind of beauty and radiance in a person I had not experienced before. I was also impressed by the close and harmonious relationship between the chairman and the speaker. It was only months later that I learned that the unforgettable speaker was Mrs. May Maxwell and the chairman was her daughter Mary Maxwell. They both had an indelible influence on me for the rest of my life.

In 1929, Emeric enrolled in the Faith, and soon he and two other young men, Rowland Estall and George Spendlove, began the first Canadian Bahá'í Youth Group in Montreal. They began to hold classes, and soon the attendance was about 60. It was the first organized youth class in the Western Hemisphere. From that youth group came a Hand of the Cause of God, a member of the Universal House of Justice, two members of the Continental Board of Counsellors, three members of National Spiritual Assemblies, and the authors of three Bahá'í books. One member of the Montreal youth group was a charming young woman by the name of Rosemary Gillies. In 1934, she became Emeric's wife and they spent 46 years serving the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and one another.

The English language, once his handicap, now became his strength. He owned a small import business and had occasion to travel coast-to-coast. In some cities he was the first Bahá'í to ever give a public talk about the Faith. In 1937, at the encouragement of May Maxwell, he extended a European business trip to include Haifa, where he had the privilege of spending an evening alone with Shoghi Effendi. Upon his return, Emeric teamed up with Siegfried Schopflocher, a German immigrant who had built up a large chemical business and who later was named as a Hand of the Cause of God, to purchase the first Canadian Bahá'í property at Beaulac, north of Montreal in the Laurentians, where the first Canadian summer and winter schools were held.

By 1930, Emeric's sister had married and moved to New York. Just before the second World War, he managed to bring his parents and brothers Paul and Ernest to Canada. Without his foresight, his loved ones would likely have perished in the Nazi death camps.

In 1940, Emeric and Rosemary pioneered for one year to Venezuela and served as travelling teachers throughout South America. They were the first Canadian Bahá'ís to visit the grave of May Maxwell in Buenos Aires, where May had passed away while on a teaching tour. Before leaving Montreal, she had asked Emeric always to pray for her, which he steadfastly did every day until he left this world.

In 1945, as the world emerged from the global convulsion of the war and many people

were searching for a new order in the affairs of humanity, Emeric published *This Earth One Country*, in which he wrote about such concepts as "planetary economy", "a supranational community" and "a world plan".

Emeric and Rosemary were elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of Canada in 1948, and they continued to serve with distinction until 1953. That year they responded to the Guardian's call for pioneers at the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade. Emeric handed his business to his brother, Ernest. The couple sold their charming home on the banks of the St. Lawrence River in St. Lambert, Quebec, and prepared to settle in the Comoro Islands off the east coast of Africa.

However, the French authorities refused to grant them residence status in the Comoro Islands, so the Guardian asked them to settle in Zululand instead. There they ran a trading post among the Zulus at a place called Eshowe until the South African government refused to renew their license and they moved on to Port Elizabeth. They befriended many Africans who came to their home through the back door when it was dark, calling Rosemary "Our Mother". She founded school libraries and organized the shipment of books from North America.

After returning to Canada briefly in the late 1960s, the couple pioneered again, this time to Guadalajara, Mexico, and travelled extensively in Central America. Rosemary died in Mexico on 24 January 1980. Emeric continued serving at his post and remarried on 27 September 1980. His second wife, Donya, also became a Bahá'í and together they travelled through America, China, India, and Europe. Donya passed to the Abhá Kingdom a few weeks before Emeric's own death on 5 September 1990.

Emeric, with his six foot, four inch frame, wearing size 14 shoes, always towered above any crowd. He was equally a spiritual giant. The poor Hungarian immigrant boy who knew no English became best known for his book, his lectures, and his stirring public addresses. He had overcome all handicaps, burst the boundaries of nation and conventional thought, and devoted his talents and energies to the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

When news of his passing reached the Universal House of Justice, it sent the following message on 9 September 1990:

> HEARTS GRIEVED PASSING VETERAN TEACHER PROMOTER FAITH EMERIC SALA. HIS WORLDWIDE TRAVELS, HIS HISTORIC EFFORTS IN REARING ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE CANADIAN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY, HIS SCHOLARLY WORK, HIS ENTHUSIASM, ARDOUR AND STEADFASTNESS WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL. CONVEY FAMILY FRIENDS DEEPEST LOVING SYMPATHY.

Compiled from material submitted by
HARRY LIEDTKE AND JAMESON BOND

NORANIEH PARSA MAZZONI
(Núráníyyih Pársá Mazzoni)
1943–1990

> ...grieve passing stalwart maidservant of Bahá'u'lláh Nura Parsa Mazzoni. Her noble qualities steadfastness and dedication to the Cause, her devoted services teaching pioneering, administration Faith are fondly remembered....
>
> Universal House of Justice
> 5 November 1990

Núráníyyih Pársá was born in Sangsar, Persia, in 1943, into a Bahá'í family of modest means. At that time her parents were getting ready to leave Ṭihrán for Gunbad-i-Kávús at the request of the Pioneering Committee. Born at the beginning of a pioneering phase, Núrá devoted her whole life to the service of the Faith.

Núrá spent her childhood and part of her adolescence in Gunbad-i-Kávús, studying at school there. In 1956 her parents moved to nearby Sháhpasand, but Núrá stayed behind with her young sisters, their father's mother



Noranieh Parsa Mazzoni

taking care of them so that they could continue their education. A few years later, in response to the goals of the Ten Year Crusade, the Párs̱á family decided to move to Turkey as pioneers. But in December 1959, when the family stopped in Ṭihrán on the way to their post, they were influenced by the Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Akbar Furútan to change their goal, and they went instead to Italy, to the city of Perugia.

In Italy, Núrá's presence was vital to the family, not only as the eldest daughter but also as the only member of the family who had any knowledge of the English language. During the first few years in Perugia, the financial position of the family was not good and there were many privations.

Despite the hardships, Núrá immediately became active in the Italian Bahá'í community, and in 1966 she became a member of the National Youth Committee. From this moment onwards, she took on commitments at both national and international levels. She took part in the activities of the musical group called The Dawn-Breakers in Europe, and felt encouraged to get the Italian Dawn-Breakers band together with other young people. This was fundamental in developing the Italian community and in increasing the declarations of faith.

During all of these activities for the Faith, Núrá kept up her university studies, eventually graduating in chemistry with honours. Once graduated, Núrá began a brilliant career as a teacher, and she was much appreciated by her pupils, colleagues, and superiors.

In 1972, she married Gianfranco Mazzoni, a young Italian Bahá'í, and they began their married life serving the Faith as pioneers in Scandicci, a small town near the suburbs of Florence. Then they responded to the appeals of the National Spiritual Assembly to go as pioneers to the cities of Pisa and Mantova, where their daughters, Shabnam and Sharon, were born.

At the beginning of 1977, when the Mantova community had become more stable, Gianfranco and Núrá wished to serve as pioneers in the international field. After loving consultations with the National Assembly, which advised the couple to remain in Italy at least until the end of the Five Year Plan, they eagerly accepted the idea of adventure in southern Italy. This time the challenge was to open up one of the last virgin areas, Basilicata, with its capital, Potenza. Just at this time, the Hand of the Cause of God Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir had a meeting with the members of all the National Committees at the Bahá'í Centre in Rome to encourage pioneering as an urgent matter. His words on that occasion to the new pioneers were:

> Go with confidence—there is a big house waiting for you in Potenza!

And how true this was! There, as in all the other towns, Núrá and Gianfranco settled in immediately, and there was certainly no lack of loyal friends to enrich their lives. A new Bahá'í community was born and, at Riḍván 1978, the first Local Spiritual Assembly was elected. In the meantime, Núrá's participation in teaching and administrative activities at the national level increased.

God's plans are often shown in ways which are so different from our human expectations. In 1987, Núrá discovered that she was seriously ill. Yet this did not stop her from attending, two weeks after a serious operation, the most meaningful experience of her life—the 1988 International Convention to elect the Universal House of Justice. A year later, in 1989, she was elected chairperson of the National Assembly and distinguished herself for her capacity to bring out the best in each member of that divine institution and to create a sense of unity which brought great benefit to the entire national community.

Her disease rapidly advanced until Núrá was no longer able to be completely self-sufficient, yet even in her worst moments, her service and devotion were exemplary. She continued as chairperson insofar as she was able to do so. Her love was a determining factor toward strengthening the unity of the members of that same National Assembly and the entire national community.

During the last months of her life on earth, she joyously offered her sufferings to God for the development of the Cause among her friends, colleagues, and neighbours. There were almost daily prayer meetings held on the initiative of Catholic friends, joyously attended by children, women, priests, colleagues and acquaintances in a desperate attempt to keep Núrá in this world. But on 2 November 1990, her bright soul joined those of the dear martyrs, with whom she felt so united in moments of intense suffering. A huge crowd was present at her last journey to the Potenza cemetery, which had never at any time witnessed so many friends joined together in prayer from so many distant cities.

Núrá's willingness to help friends and strangers, her calmness at school, her strong sense of service, and her sweet nature characterised her brief existence on this earth. Brief but full of intense activity—not even one ounce of energy was spared. Of slight build, Núrá possessed rare resources of strength and determination; she was capable of alternating her roles as a careful administrator, conscientious teacher, loving mother, and wonderful wife.

It will be absolutely impossible to fill the space she occupied in life, yet her presence will be felt at all times by those who loved and admired her. The whole purpose of her life was to create love and unity around her. Her conversation was always full of elevating illuminating subjects. In the heart of whoever came into contact with her, if only briefly, she left the desire to go deeper into the truths which enlivened her every action.

MARIO PIARULLI

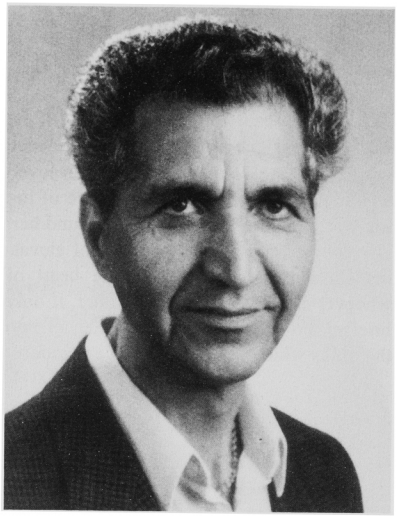
LUDWIG PAPAI
1937–1990

"He was the founder of the Roma Society for the promotion of gypsies and he was a follower of the Bahá'í Religion."

These were the opening words of an article in one of the major Austrian daily newspapers describing the funeral of Ludwig Papai who, at 54 years of age, had ascended to the Abhá Kingdom.

A member of the Roma folk and a simple man, he accepted the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in 1986 and recognized the importance of unifying the different peoples while respecting diversity. He was elected as the first President of the Roma Society in Austria and later functioned as their Honorary President. He was the first Roma to be officially received by the President of Austria and caused the existence of this gypsy minority in Austria to be publicly recognized and positively acknowledged.

Born 25 July 1937, Ludwig spent his early childhood in the concentration camp of Lackenbach under the Nazi regime. After a youth full of suffering and hardships, and upon completing his professional education, he married Renate from Felixdorf in Lower Austria in 1958. Their marriage brought forth three children.



Ludwig Papai

As a school caretaker, he provided all his children with a good formal education and it was through them that he learned about the Bahá'í Faith in 1980. Even before he declared his faith officially, he strove bravely for its proclamation. He was loved by all, especially for his warmheartedness and humble servitude. His untiring efforts in teaching the principles of Bahá'u'lláh and his own example helped his neighbours to accept the Faith. His home became a centre for many Bahá'í activities.

When he fell ill and was physically weakened by a series of operations, he strove with even greater spiritual efforts for the recognition of the Roma minority and taught the Bahá'í Faith at every opportunity.

He left this world on 2 November 1990 accompanied by the prayers and loving respects of many. Many newspapers and radio broadcasts reported that "The Founder and first President of the Roma Society for the promotion of gypsies in Austria has died...."

His funeral on 9 November 1990 was an event of the region as hundreds of people of all races and Bahá'ís from all over Austria filled the cemetery. Dr. Kurt Sypal, the Director of the Presidential Office of President Kurt Waldheim, spoke heartfelt and moving words at his graveside. Journalists reported on his ascension, causing a wave of proclamation of the Faith in Austria in various newspapers.

Many who knew him realised it was his Faith that gave him the strength and the measure with which he served his people.

THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF AUSTRIA

FRANCES GORDON HELLER
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1909–1990

Born in Avoyelles Parish in Louisiana, U.S.A., on 16 December 1909 and christened Frances Verna Gordon in the Catholic church, Frances was the eldest of eight children—six girls and two boys. Her father, Frank Gordon, was a self-taught civil engineer, related to the well-known Gallo family of Italy. He worked for the Texas and Pacific Railroad, travelling around Louisiana building levees, railroads, and bridges. Her mother, Elma Brulte Gordon, was French Acadian, related to the Couvillions and the Lady Evangeline, about whom Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote his famous narrative poem by the same name. Frances grew up exploring the bayous with her cousins and two brothers, planning to explore the rest of the world when she was old enough.

Frances was raised a devout Catholic. She constantly studied the Bible as a youth, and her keen intellect saw many discrepancies between the teachings of Christ and the practices of the priests and the Church. At 16 years old, she vowed to God and to herself that she would search for the truth until she found it, and she set out on a life-long study and quest for knowledge.

Frances investigated every religious organization she could find, from Jehovah's

Witnesses, Christian Scientists, and Seventh Day Adventists to Yogis, Rosicrucians, and Theosophists. She found truth in all of them. Still, she was not completely satisfied with any of them.

She graduated from high school and business college in Louisiana, and found a job as a medical secretary for the U.S. Army. She was transferred to Chicago, where she met and married her beloved husband, Sydney Heller, in 1948.

In 1949, just before they moved to San Francisco to open a music store, Frances went to Wilmette to visit friends. They were not home, so she decided to find out what mystery lay in the Bahá'í House of Worship.

Foundation Hall, in the basement of the Bahá'í House of Worship, held a tiny bookstore. Frances spoke with the person in charge, and then proceeded to buy two of every book. As the storekeeper tallied the books, he remarked that many people had bought one of everything, but no one had ever bought two of everything. Could she please explain? Frances said, "Certainly! If this is as good as it sounds, then someone else needs to know about this." Frances filled one of her suitcases with Bahá'í books and set out for San Francisco.

Frances attended her first Bahá'í meeting at Mamie Seto's house in San Francisco. She met Lucy Marshall, who became her first Bahá'í teacher and great friend, but she did not enrol in the Faith. Frances was in turmoil because of her Catholic upbringing. If this was the truth, why were the Catholics not responding to Bahá'u'lláh's Message? Frances was daring and courageous, fearless in searching for the truth, and she always went to the source when investigating anything. She decided to ask for an audience with the Pope.

She planned to ask the Pope three questions: "Do you know about Bahá'u'lláh and His claims? If so, do you believe they are the truth? If not, why not, and if so, why are you not a Bahá'í?" In the fall of 1951, she received an audience with Pope Pius XII.



Frances Gordon Heller

She travelled to Rome and was being robed and prepared to meet the Pope to ask her questions when, suddenly, she knew the answers. She rushed out of the preparation room into St. Peter's Cathedral and there, under the dome, declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh.

Frances returned to San Francisco, enrolled in the Faith, and in 1953 eagerly received plans for the Guardian's Ten Year Crusade. She felt compelled to respond to the call for pioneers, no matter what.

Frances went to the Asian Intercontinental Teaching Conference in New Delhi, India, from 7 to 15 October 1953. On the way to the conference, she obtained one visa for the Gilbert Islands, and one for Macau. At that time it was extremely difficult for Americans to obtain visas to Macau because of the Portuguese Catholic influence so, since Frances had that visa, she went directly there and was designated as a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh.

She arrived 20 October 1953 and settled into a large one-room apartment. She took classes in dance and Chinese brush painting, and began to teach English to children.

Frances taught the Faith to and confirmed the first Chinese woman in Macau, Mary Shia, through teaching Mary's son English. She also taught the first Portuguese Bahá'í in Macau, Manual Ferreira, by teaching him English through study of the book, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*.

Other pioneers soon came to Macau: Carl and Loretta Scherer, who also became Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, and then Mr. and Mrs. Ishmat'u'lláh 'Azízí. After a year the Guardian wrote Frances a letter saying, "You may leave your post at any time. There are too many Bahá'ís in Macau." She left for the United States on 4 November 1954.

Frances arrived in the United States on 4 December 1954 and stayed long enough to obtain a visa for a new pioneering goal in Puebla, Mexico, where she arrived in March of 1955 and directed her efforts towards meeting and teaching the Mexican Indians. Frances taught the Faith by making friends with the native people and then finding ways to serve them. They in turn were attracted to the Faith by her selfless service.

In the spring of 1956, Frances attended a teaching conference for Central America and Mexico, in Mexico. A message from Shoghi Effendi was received; he wanted a pioneer to go to the Gilbert Islands to replace the original pioneers, Elena and Roy Fernie. In October 1956, she returned to the United States to obtain a new visa for the Gilbert Islands. The only way to get one was to go to Australia or Fiji and apply there.

Frances arrived in Suva, Fiji, in late 1956. She taught English and travelled by long motor boats (Frances called them "put-puts") and outrigger canoes to visit different islands, made friends with the native peoples and taught them the Faith. When visitors arrived in the villages, they would have big parties in the long-houses, and cook, sing, and dance all night. Frances and other pioneers often spent the night in these long houses on their teaching trips.

One day Frances met three Fijian teenage girls, and spoke to them about the Faith. One was named Tinai, whose uncle later became the King of Fiji. Frances brought Tinai to the Bahá'í Centre and introduced her to the other Bahá'í teachers there, including Donald Hancock from New Zealand. Tinai and Donald eventually married, raised a family, and Tinai Hancock became a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in the Pacific.

In the spring of 1957, a freighter left Fiji with Frances aboard, bound for Abaiang in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, later named Kiribati and Tuvalu, respectively. She loved the native peoples and lived in a thatched hut close to their village, ate their food, gave them what medical care she could, and taught them English and the Bahá'í Faith. She was able to arrange with the government for a 99-year lease for two pieces of land for Bahá'í centres in the Gilbert Islands, one in Abaiang, one in Beiginibou.

Frances was joined by Mabel Snyder in September 1957. In November, Frances went to the island of Tarawa where she helped to establish the first Local Spiritual Assembly. Her health gradually deteriorated because of the weather and food, until a local doctor ordered immediate leave from the Colony for complete rest and medical care. She departed in the summer of 1958, bound for Hawaii and the United States.

Frances recuperated on the ocean liner and stayed in Hawaii for a few months, teaching the Faith. She spent as much time as possible with the Hand of the Cause of God Agnes Alexander during this period. In January 1960, she went to San Rafael, California, where she helped to form the first Local Spiritual Assembly in 1961.

Sydney and Frances adopted their Korean-American daughter, Jennifer Rhea Heller, in 1960, when Jennifer was six-and-a-half years old. Frances and Jennifer went to London in the fall of 1962, where Frances helped to prepare for the first Bahá'í World Congress, held in London at the Royal Albert Hall, from 28 April to 2 May, 1963. From London, Frances and Jennifer went on

pilgrimage and dined with Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, and then they made a teaching trip through Norway and Scotland.

They returned to the United States so that Jennifer could continue her education, and spent summers on teaching/consolidation trips: to the Mexican villages of San Francisco and Chilula near Puebla; to Chichicastenango; to the American southwest Indian reservations; and to the Gilbert Islands.

Frances and Sydney moved to Novato, California, in 1978, and in 1989 they moved to Gretna, Louisiana, where Frances passed away on 6 November 1990.

Frances had a strong intuition and spiritual connection with people. Once she was walking past a used bookstore, and on a whim decided to enter. Inside she found an original translation of the Qur'an by Robert Sale. It was very rare, but Frances said 'this is not for me'. She decided that Shoghi Effendi should have this copy, so she mailed it to the Holy Land with no return address. Later, a friend returned from pilgrimage and mentioned that Shoghi Effendi had told the pilgrims that he had always wanted a copy of Robert Sale's original translation of the Qur'an and had just received one anonymously. It had pleased him tremendously, as her life of pioneering and service must have pleased him.

Frances never wanted recognition for any of her services, but almost everyone who was ever close to her received some valuable assistance from her at a critical juncture in their lives. She taught the Faith unceasingly, and was a perpetual student, continuously taking classes in languages, art, dance, and cultures. She was also a scholar of the Faith, and had an unerring knowledge of its history, as well as its spiritual and social teachings. She read all of the published works of the Central Figures every year for more than 20 years.

Frances Heller is remembered by those who knew her as an independent woman with great courage and a quick, deep sense of justice, compassionate toward other people's suffering and ready to help in whatever way she could. She had an encompassing feeling of family and was a true friend. Above all, she was steadfastly devoted to Bahá'u'lláh, to spreading His Message and to serving His Faith to the end of her life.

JOY WIECZOREK

MONIREH REZVANI
(Munírih Riḍvání)
1906–1990

GRIEVED NEWS PASSING DEARLY LOVED CONSECRATED PIONEER CAUSE GOD MONIREH REZVANI. MOVED RECALL LONG RECORD HER VALIANT COURAGEOUS SERVICES INDIGENOUS AREA IN FACE LONELINESS MORTAL DANGERS ILLNESS AND DEPRIVATION CONSTITUTING WORTHY SOURCE INSPIRATION HER BEREAVED COWORKERS. ASSURE FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES FOR PROGRESS HER RADIANT SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. KINDLY CONVEY HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES HER DISTINGUISHED FAMILY.

Universal House of Justice
14 November 1990

Munírih Riḍvání was born into a Bahá'í family in Najafábád (Iṣfahán), Persia, in March of 1906. Her great-grandmother was a learned and courageous Bábí and then Bahá'í named Fáṭimih Bagum, who discussed the Faith with the 'ulamá of that time and held classes from behind a curtain for students of theology. Once, when her husband Mullá Qásim was put in jail by Ẓillu's-Sulṭán, she walked to Iṣfahán and addressed the governor. She asked him why her husband was being kept in jail. When one of the 'ulamá who was present answered, "Because he is a Bábí", she quoted this verse of the Qur'an, "We have obeyed our leaders and elders, but they have misguided us." The mullá left the place in a state of fury, and her husband was released. Later, she was honoured with a Tablet revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá telling how great the Day is when a



Monireh Rezvani

woman can refer to the verse of the Qur'an, "We have obeyed our leaders and elders, but they have misguided us."

When Munírih was 16 years old, she was married to her cousin, Naṣru'lláh Riḍvání, the son of 'Alí. Six years later her husband died after a long period of illness, leaving her with three sons, the youngest only three months old. She never wanted to get married again and dedicated her life to the care and education of her children. Sometimes she was criticized for working too hard and she would answer, "My duty as a Bahá'í is to give at least a primary school education to my children, and I have to fulfill it."

She said that many times she was inspired by the talks and guidance of the Hand of the Cause of God Abu'l-Qásim Fayḍí which she received while attending the weekly meetings held for women, called "the assembly of the elders". She used to look at her children while they slept thinking of the day when they would be grown up and serving the Faith. In 1953, she was very pleased when her son Ḥabíb decided to pioneer during the Guardian's Ten Year Crusade. He left Ṭihrán for Arabia, causing one of the members of the pioneering committee to write later: "Such a courageous mother deserved a pioneer son. She didn't shed a drop of tears and was very happy all the time."

A year later she also decided to participate in the Ten Year Crusade and left Írán with another son and his wife. They first lived in Dubai, tolerating the terrible conditions there. Later, she went with her son and daughter-in-law and their new-born baby to settle in Qatar. She was able to participate in forming a goal Assembly in a village near Dubai.

In 1968, Munírih went to Colombia, and after a few years staying with family she moved to the Bahá'í Institute in Riohacha in an indigenous area of the Guajira. She was very happy there and dedicated her time to serving the visitors because she believed that guests were a bounty of God. Her happiest times were when she could cook and serve the youth who went to the institute for Bahá'í courses. She also gave the neighbor's children literacy classes.

She served at the Institute with utmost love and enthusiasm until about 1985 when, because of loneliness and danger in the area, she had to leave. At one point, thieves had broken in and tied her up while they stole items; she finally managed to untie herself and get help from neighbors. However her desire always was to be buried there. When she later became ill she moved back again to this area that she so loved, and after two months, on 10 November 1990, she passed away. Providentially, she was buried in the indigenous cemetery, which greatly impressed the native friends who attended her funeral service in good number, and gave them more confidence in the Bahá'ís.

HABIB REZVANI
(Ḥabíb Riḍvání)

FLORENCE E. BAGLEY
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1914–1990

Florence Esther Johnson Bagley was born in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, U.S.A., on 3 January 1914. A few years before her passing on 3 December 1990, she wrote about her first contact with the Faith:

> I learned about the Bahá'í Faith in the spring of 1930, at age 16. I became a believer immediately. My mother was a seeker, and we had attended religious services and related groups for several years, this time attending a spiritualist meeting in a private home. Our hostess had met Mrs. Elizabeth Greenleaf at the YWCA, and had invited her to speak to us about her visit to the Holy Land. This was in Flint, Michigan... she told us Who Bahá'u'lláh was, and I believed her. From then on I called myself a Bahá'í. My mother accepted a little later, and frequently became the hostess for travel teachers.

Florence introduced her future husband, Stanley T. Bagley, to the Faith. They both signed official Bahá'í membership cards in April 1935, shortly after their marriage. They both served on the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Flint from its inception in 1935 until their departure for Sicily in 1953. Florence served as Secretary of the Flint Assembly for many years.

The Bagleys welcomed seekers to weekly firesides and deepening classes and confirmed a steady stream of new believers. They hosted regional conferences for Bahá'í youth who came from several states in the Midwest. Their home was dedicated to the service of Bahá'u'lláh.

Florence recounted to her children that she had worked with her mother, Genevieve Elizabeth Hempftling Johnson, to provide meals at Louhelen Ranch (now Louhelen Bahá'í School) during the first two summers of the school's existence. She served on the Louhelen Program Committee from 1951 to 1953, both as secretary and chairman, and was a frequent teacher there both before and after the Ten Year World Crusade.

Florence wrote in her memoirs about her response to the call for pioneers.

> We had all attended the Jubilee Celebration and the following Conference in Chicago. As soon as we returned home, I began to sort through my papers and books, deciding what to take with us... We offered to go to Africa but never received acknowledgement from the Committee... The Guardian sent a message that the Americans could fill the goals of other countries, so we searched through the booklet containing the goals, and by a process of elimination, chose Sicily. I don't remember why. I think it chose us!
>
> We left from New York on an Italian ship, the *Conte Biancamano*, on 17 October 1953. (It was Gerry's 16th birthday.) We arrived at Palermo, Sicily, on 27 October 1953.
>
> Stan couldn't find work in Sicily and we began to run out of savings. We had permission from the Beloved Guardian to change posts, and to leave Gerry in Sicily. As soon as a telegram came from Horace Holley suggesting that Stan might find work in France at the American Air Force Base in Chateau-roux, Stan took a ship to France that same evening, and got a job almost immediately. (The Beloved Guardian's cable had said, 'Permission granted—praying.')

The Bagleys remained in Chateauroux from October 1954 to August 1963, except for nine months in Charleroi, Belgium, in 1959–1960. Florence continued her life-long habit of deeply studying the Teachings, but now learned French in order to prepare study courses and public talks in that language. This enabled her to render valuable services as a teacher at firesides and summer schools, and as a teacher travelling in the Benelux countries. She produced the French *Bahá'í Bulletin* for a number of years.



Florence Bagley

Florence served on the National Spiritual Assembly of France from its formation in 1958 until August 1963, except for the period in Belgium in 1960. Stan lost his job in France, forcing their departure, but was called back nine months later. This was only one of many hardships which later proved to be providential. Not only was a strong Local Assembly formed in Charleroi, but Florence avoided the Covenant-breaking in France, a grave test for the National Assembly of that country.

Returning to France at the request of the Hands of the Cause of God in Haifa, Florence joined the Hand of the Cause Abú'l-Qásim Faydí in visiting the French believers to reinforce their steadfastness. Her daughters, Susan and Carol, pioneering in Orleans, remained faithful throughout this tense period.

Florence was tireless in her services. Her home was always busy with seekers, travelling teachers, and administrative meetings. She travelled frequently throughout Europe for meetings, conferences, and schools.

In August 1963, Florence and Stanley returned to the United States. They served with the same dedication in Alabama and Georgia, teaching and serving on Local Assemblies and committees.

In 1972, and again in 1974, Florence spent four months travelling to teach in the French Antilles. In 1976, she and her husband pioneered to Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, remaining there for four years, and in 1980, settled in Fort-de-France, Martinique, for one year. She served on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Leeward and Virgin Islands (1976–77) and on the National Assembly of the French Antilles (1977–1981), as chairman during the first two years, and as recording secretary for two years. She had a great love for the people in her pioneering posts, and left the foreign field reluctantly.

In 1981, the Bagleys returned to the United States, settling near their daughter Carol in Ozark, Alabama. Florence's services in the Deep South continued unabated. Finally, she devoted her last energies to compiling a record of the family's pioneering experiences for the archives at the request of the Universal House of Justice. She called this, "A Family Odyssey". The first volume covered the World Crusade and the second, the years after, including family members' experiences in Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, the French Antilles, and Paraguay.

Looking back on 60 years of devoted services, she believed that the years of the World Crusade were the most poignant. She responded to the beloved Guardian's call and never stopped until her strength failed. First and foremost, she loved Bahá'u'lláh. She enlightened and set an example for her family. Her beloved granddaughter, Jocelyn Baral, together with her husband Michael, pioneered to Siberia, keeping the family odyssey alive.

The Universal House of Justice sent this message upon hearing of her passing:

> DEEPLY SADDENED LOSS STALWART STEADFAST KNIGHT BAHA'U'LLAH FLORENCE BAGLEY WHOSE SIX DECADES DEVOTED SERVICE HIS CAUSE HIGHLY DISTINGUISHED BY OPENING SICILY, WITH HER HUSBAND STANLEY AND

THEIR THREE CHILDREN, DURING HISTORIC TEN YEAR WORLD CRUSADE. HER LEONINE DEFENCE COVENANT FRANCE AND HER PIONEERING ACTIVITIES VIRGIN AND LEEWARD ISLANDS AND FRENCH ANTILLES ON WHOSE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES SHE SERVED ARE UNFORGETTABLE. FERVENTLY PRAYING PROGRESS HER ILLUMINED SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. KINDLY CONVEY OUR LOVING SYMPATHY MEMBERS HER DEAR FAMILY.

She was buried in Ozark, Alabama.

GERROLD STANLEY BAGLEY

HELEN PILKINGTON BISHOP
1905–1990

After a public lecture which Helen Bishop delivered on the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh at the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in Los Angeles on 23 February 1939, she received a letter from the organization's executive secretary:

> As a novice listener-observer, I was profoundly impressed with your presentation. The rhetorical and spiritual content; magnetic warmth; all blended admirably to create a message of unlimited spiritual value. We somewhat regretted our inadequate background in the Bahá'í Faith, as we speculated for a richer one upon which to register your words.

That statement appropriately characterized what made Helen so effective as a teacher of the Faith. She possessed a marvelous intellect, was well versed in philosophy, psychology, literature and art, and had a profound interest in religion. Though she wrote articles for *World Order* and *The Bahá'í World* and a most remarkable Introduction to *The Book of Certitude* when the beloved Shoghi Effendi translated it into English, she did not cherish the challenge of writing. She once wrote to the Guardian (20 August 1946): "Francis Bacon said 'Speaking will bring forth a brilliant man, but writing an exact man.' When I confront an audience, words come and then flow from me, but when I take a pen, the words do not come easily or please me either." She was a "platform speaker" *par excellence.*

Helen was born in Mazatlan, Mexico, on 19 July 1905 Her father, Guy Pilkington, was an American who traced his ancestry to one who had fought at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. Her mother, Maria, was a Mexican who was a descendant of a Spanish Viceroy. Helen was the third of six surviving children.

She attended a convent school, but her father took her out because he feared that she would become a nun. She loved to read and "wept over Anna Karenina and Daniel Deronda" when she was eleven. She remained an avid reader throughout her life.

The family moved to the United States, and it was on the eve of the Master's ascension that Helen for the first time heard of the New Dispensation from Orcella Rexford at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco. But the "true beginning of her Valley of Search" was in 1925—her 20th year—when "in response to the Great Announcement" she made her declaration. She was taught by the George Latimer family of Portland, Oregon, and soon had the privilege of meeting in the same city other outstanding Bahá'ís such as May Maxwell, Louis Gregory, Horace Holley and Roy Wilhelm.

Louis Gregory wrote to her in Portland from Seattle, Washington, on 7 June 1926:

> My dear little sister...It has surely been my good fortune to see one so illuminated at so tender an age as is yours. God has been infinitely kind to imbue you with His knowledge, and you show your gratitude by your wish to inspire and help others to the pathway of all beauteous Light.

In July 1927 Helen married Charles Reed Bishop (born 24 October 1889), a member of one of the most distinguished Hawaiian families, and it was Charles who proposed that his bride attend Reed College in Portland.

In September 1929 Helen enrolled. Already she had begun her correspondence with the beloved Guardian, and consulted with him about her thesis on the Bahá'í Faith. When she sent her thesis to him, she received a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stating, "It is hoped that all Bahá'í students will follow the noble example you have set before them..." (Letter dated 6 August 1933)

In December 1933, Shoghi Effendi suggested that the Bishops go from Portland to Geneva, Switzerland, and that Helen assist Mrs. Emogene Hoagg in the International Bahá'í Bureau in that city. "You are just the right person who is needed now that the Bureau is acquiring an important international status in the Administration." (Letter written on behalf of the Guardian dated 23 December 1933)

Meanwhile, the Bishops were given permission for pilgrimage. In January 1934 they left for the East Coast of the United States, and on St. Valentine's Day (14 February) they sailed on the *Conti di Savoia* for Haifa. Among other passengers on board was Chaim Weizman, the future President of Israel.

The image of the Guardian and the memory of that pilgrimage never faded from Helen's mind. To Alfred Hunt, in Portland, she wrote:

> It is a great experience to go to Haifa, and one changes one's point of view on many matters. The Guardian is an example of how intellect can serve the spirit in a manner we in the West have never known... I have never heard him recite an incident in which he is the major figure... This may sound very naïve but the point is that Shoghi Effendi simply refutes all those theories with which our academies are subjected that every ego is trying merely to maximate itself... His speech is rapid and his English is stunning; when he speaks the hours pass timelessly... Again and again he seems to convey to one that the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh will reach its aim and that we have only to be superlatively faithful and to be obedient and active...

From 1934 to late 1937, Helen was in charge of the International Bahá'í Bureau in Geneva. It had been established to coordinate Bahá'í activities and establish the Cause in Geneva, but after more than nine years of continued support, the Bureau had failed to achieve its goal; no Assembly, no group of genuinely interested people was formed. By sending Helen to Geneva, the Guardian wanted to simplify the status of the Bureau; no longer was it to be an auxiliary center to Haifa. In a letter written on behalf of the Guardian dated 13 June 1934, Helen was asked to "help in making the Bureau a powerful and effective machinery for co-ordinating the activities of the Faith in Europe". She was to travel and teach outside of Geneva, visit various Bahá'í centers in Europe, particularly the Balkans, Central Europe, Germany and the Northern Countries. The Bureau was to be a center for distribution of information and literature about the Faith.

Helen began her task immediately and in earnest by visiting Bahá'ís in the Balkans and Germany. In 1934 the National Socialist Party began ruling Germany, but as yet the teaching of the Faith was not totally outlawed. She had helped the Bahá'ís of Berlin to receive permission from the city's authorities to hold local meetings, and in the spring of 1935 she and Charles attended the German Bahá'í Convention. But soon the government's policies changed radically. Police observers were accompanying Helen wherever she was to give a lecture, and in Frankfurt the police cancelled her speaking engagements when she refused to sign the article excluding "non-Aryans" from the gatherings and from all communications. By late 1935 all Bahá'í meetings were closed. A letter written on behalf of the Guardian held comforting words for Helen:

> In fact, the more obstacles develop in number and in strength, the firmer your

faith should become in the sacredness and vital importance of the mission you have been called upon to fulfil for the Cause in Germany. (29 September 1935)

In the fall of 1936, Helen visited the Scandinavian countries. In the summer of the same year, she represented the Faith at the World Congress of Faiths held in Great Britain and sent a detailed report of its proceedings to Shoghi Effendi. He responded: "I know of no one better qualified to write such an interesting report", and he asked Helen to write an article on the same subject. The report was published in *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. VII.

Helen spent much of the year 1937 in England, travelling and teaching with great success. Mark Tobey was, at the time, a resident teacher in Torquay, and with her help, soon there was an Assembly there.

Charles, however, never felt comfortable in Europe, and made repeated trips back to the United States. By the summer of 1937, he decided to return to America, and Helen followed him in the fall. She informed the Guardian of her intention, and a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi said, "deplore this quite sudden and unexpected turning point in the career of your international services to the Faith". The Guardian himself added his "deepest gratitude", and expressed his appreciation for the "sacrifices you have so patiently and courageously borne during these years..." (18 July 1937). Helen left England on 30 October 1937.

Shoghi Effendi's secretary, on his behalf, wrote to Helen:

> ...he cannot but deeply grieve over your departure from Europe where you have accomplished, during those years, services that are truly unforgettable and worthy of every admiration and praise... He is fully aware of the circumstances that have forced you to return to America... For it is not so much the place where one works that matters. The essential is the quality of work one is able to attain... In America, friends will rejoice in your return and surely will benefit immensely from the presence in their midst of such a...devoted and loyal teacher as you. (16 November 1937)



Helen Bishop

In 1939, the Bishops were at home for only four months, travelling the rest of the time to teach the Faith. It took its toll, but they never complained. "A little travel", Helen wrote to Mark Tobey (14 July 1939), "makes one reluctant to settle anywhere; and I fancy a great deal of travel makes one willing to settle anywhere".

In 1941, the Bishops went to Mexico on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada.

During World War II, they spent most of their time in Pasadena, California, where Helen visited all the surrounding Bahá'í communities and sent food and clothing packages to the friends in England.

In 1944, the new method for the election of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly—the holding of State Conventions and the sending of state delegates to the National Convention—was inaugurated. The

first State Convention of California was held at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles on 9 April, and 22 delegates were elected. Helen was one of the delegates, and she was one of the two speakers who addressed the public meeting in Wilmette during the centennial anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb. For the centenary volume of *The Bahá'í World*, she also—on a recommendation by the Guardian—wrote "The Beloved Returns".

From Wilmette, Helen wrote a long and detailed letter to Shoghi Effendi which included a fascinating report of her encounter with Sir Alexander Lindsay, Master of Balliol College, who had been the Guardian's tutor while he was at Oxford. In December 1943, Professor Lindsay gave a talk called "Democracy and Common Man" in California at the invitation of Athenaeum, an affiliation of the patrons and patronesses of California Institute of Technology. After the talk and during his reception, Helen and Sir Alexander engaged in a remarkable intellectual dialogue, for Helen a prelude to asking questions regarding the Guardian. After more than 20 years, he, indeed, remembered Shoghi Effendi very well.

Sir Alexander told Helen that his young student's "idea of education was to discover somebody whose opinions he valued and then question him. When Shoghi Effendi got his answers, he wrote them all in a small black book". Professor Lindsay then related:

> When I had posted my schedule, Shoghi Effendi came to me asking, 'What do you have between seven and half past eight?' 'Why man,' I cried, 'I dine!' 'Oh,' said Shoghi Effendi, with obvious disappointment, 'but must you have all that time?' I had not found so much eagerness for knowledge at Oxford! So I gave him another quarter-hour and went with less dinner. So it was I suffered for him.

Then the professor commented to Helen: "Quite soon after that, we lost him. He left us to become the head of a religion. What a pity!"

The Bishops continued their extensive teaching trips in the United States and Canada where there was always great demand for Helen's services as a public speaker, teacher and conductor of seminars and deepening classes. A letter written on behalf of the Guardian dated 6 January 1949 stated that it was always Shoghi Effendi's hope that "...you both will be able to continue your teaching trips which have invariably been a real and much needed assistance to the centers you visit".

Age did not slow down Helen's service to the Cause. For example, in 1966 one of her teaching trips included visits to Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. She considered that journey "one of the most rewarding" of all her teaching efforts. She was interviewed by members of the press, radio and television.

Charles passed away on 9 July 1967. He had been a caring, loving, and supportive husband. Living on his family trust income, he had devoted all of his days to the service of Bahá'u'lláh. They had no chidren, and since Helen had never learned to drive a car, by necessity she had to limit her teaching trips. Yet, even in her 60s and 70s she conducted classes in various Bahá'í schools in the West Coast and elsewhere.

When she had embraced the Faith, Louis Gregory had written to her (26 June 1927):

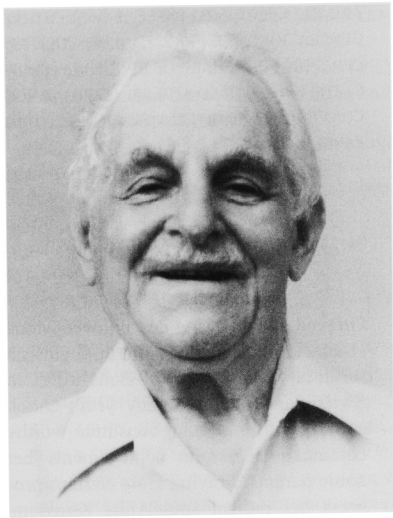
> Guide my dear child, the young and the old, the wise and foolish, the guilty and just. Transform their lives by the Elixir of Life. If you lived for thousands of years in this world you could not select a work that is fraught with more far reaching and eternally happy results.

Thus she lived her life.

Helen passed away on 23 December 1990. She left a rich legacy for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

NOSRATOLLAH RASSEKH
(Nuṣratu'lláh Rásikh)

ARTHUR ALLEN ZUCKER
1901–1991



Arthur Allen Zucker

Arthur Zucker was born into a Jewish family in New York City on 17 March 1901. He first heard of the Faith in Chicago, and studied it there for several years. In 1954, he returned to his native New York, where, together with his wife, Dorothy, and son, Bill, he attended Bahá'í meetings and study classes regularly. During this time, he went to weekly meetings at the Kinney house in New Jersey, at the Evergreen Log Cabin in Teaneck, as well as at the New York Bahá'í Center. He declared his belief in Bahá'u'lláh in 1956. In his twilight years, he often talked about how he became a Bahá'í and often mentioned with regret that it took him many years to become one, even though in his heart he had wanted to embrace the Faith when he heard of it in Chicago.

Arthur was a salesman by profession. He had studied drama and was an eloquent speaker. Thus he frequently served as a speaker in many Bahá'í communities. In New York, he and Dorothy conducted a Bahá'í study class on *The Divine Art of Living* for more than ten years. He also served as treasurer of the Local Spiritual Assembly of New York for several years.

Arthur was a steadfast and devoted Bahá'í teacher. He and Dorothy pioneered for a time to the Turks and Caicos Islands in the Caribbean, then returned to the United States where they served as homefront pioneers in North Carolina for many years. Arthur travelled to teach in the mass teaching areas of South Carolina in the 1970s. He would go to retirement and nursing homes to visit and perform Broadway musicals to cheer up the residents.

In 1980, after his wife's passing, when he was 79 years of age and in a wheelchair, he went to Fiji to pioneer with his only son and daughter-in-law. In Fiji, he taught the Faith as unrestrainedly as always. Unforeseen circumstances forced him to leave Fiji after two years. After consultation with the appropriate institutions, he went to the Mariana Islands to pioneer. He actively served and taught the Faith there to his last days on this earth.

Arthur passed away on 19 March 1991. When the news reached the Universal House of Justice, they sent the following message on 20 March:

> SADDENED PASSING DEARLY LOVED ARTHUR A. ZUCKER. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES BELOVED MAY FULLY REWARD HIM FOR ALL SERVICES HE HAS RENDERED TO THE FAITH BOTH ON HOME FRONT IN UNITED STATES AND IN PIONEER FIELD CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC REGIONS. KINDLY CONVEY OUR CONDOLENCES TO FAMILY.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the United States sent the following cable:

> WE MOURN THE LOSS OF STAUNCH SUPPORTER, FAITHFUL SERVANT OF CAUSE OF GOD ARTHUR ZUCKER. THE EXAMPLE OF STEADFASTNESS IN THE COVENANT OF BAHA'U'LLAH, UNSHAKEABLE INTEGRITY AND LOVING SPIRIT

ARE HIS LEGACY TO PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS. WE PRAY THAT HE WILL RECEIVE HIS FULL SHARE OF DIVINE BLESSINGS IN THE NEXT WORLD AND WE ASK THAT YOU CONVEY OUR HEARTFELT SYMPATHY TO HIS FAMILY.

SIEWLIAN KARYN ZUCKER

MONA HAENNI DE BONS
1904–1991

Grieved learn passing dearly loved Mona Haenni de Bons. Her stalwart, distinguished services to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh in Switzerland over so many years enrich annals Faith that land, constitute worthy continuation historic achievements her noble parents. Praying Holy Shrines progress her radiant soul Abha Kingdom. Convey sympathies bereaved family.

Universal House of Justice
5 May 1991

Mona Haenni de Bons—born on 20 April 1904 into a Bahá'i family—had the honour of being the first Bahá'í child in her community. Her parents were among the first Bahá'ís of Switzerland. Her mother, who had become a Bahá'í in Paris through her contact with May Bolles, was brought up in Paris, having a French mother and a North American father. Her father, a native of Sion in the Canton of Valais, had declared himself a Bahá'í after their marriage.

When Mona was two years old, her parents moved to Ramleh, Egypt, to live closer to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. They lived in Egypt until 1917. It was during that time that Mona met 'Abdu'l-Bahá and had the immense privilege of sitting on his lap. 'Abdu'l-Bahá autographed a photograph for her, and the friends have many copies of it.

When Mona used to speak of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, one could see her whole face become illumined and her whole being transformed as if, suddenly, another dimension were vibrating within her. Her love for 'Abdu'l-Bahá held no bounds. One could also feel it when Mona would say prayers with a particularly moving fervour. She knew how to transmit this love for 'Abdu'l-Bahá with intense feeling to everyone she met and all who were suffering.

She would also express her love through her care for animals. Friends who visited her will always remember the lost cats she gathered. In fact, she also cared for many a human "lost cat".

Her faith was, in all viewpoints, exceptional. One could feel her devotion when she gave talks or when she defended the Faith. She identified herself with the Bahá'í Faith to such a point that her whole being was wounded when the Faith was suffering. I shall never forget how she showed her solidarity with the suffering of the Bahá'í friends in Írán.

Mona had exceptional intelligence and could analyze situations that were difficult to understand. Her intuition was extreme and she could often read people's thoughts. She was gifted with sound judgment and a particularly acute sense of justice: she often defended victims. She also could become as enthusiastic as a child when the Faith was making progress. Fidelity was one of her most moving qualities. Indeed, Mona was, for all those who knew her, a deeply charming and very genuine friend.

Her love for the Canton of Valais was very keen, and she would express it in her singing and in wearing the costume of Lady of Sion with pride. We were able to proclaim the Faith through radio and television on many occasions, thanks to her, because she herself had sung many times on the radio.

However, her great sensitivity and her wish for fulfilment as a woman were not always understood in a sometimes insensitive and male chauvinistic environment. I often had the impression of a very great soul, and of an immense potential which could not readily find the necessary means of expression. There was a nobleness in Mona's



Mona Haenni de Bons

personality, together with a revolutionary side which wanted to change what she saw as the "Establishment".

Mona married Maurice Haenni, a chemist in Geneva, on 3 August 1925, and had one daughter, Ariane. One of Mona's greatest joys was Ariane's declaration of belief in Bahá'u'lláh. Together they made their first pilgrimage, in 1974.

Mona served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy and Switzerland in 1958, then on the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland in 1962–1963. While serving on the latter she had the immense privilege of attending the first International Convention in Haifa in 1963. She was among the first Auxiliary Board members of Switzerland and of part of France, and served as an Auxiliary Board member for Protection until she was in her early 70s.

She was a member of the Archives Committee as early as 1955, then of the Translation Committee, and at last of the Committee of *Pensée bahá'ie,* [Swiss Bahá'í Journal] where she served with great zeal and enthusiasm. For a few years, she was also a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Geneva.

She moved to Sion, as a pioneer, in 1972 where she remained practically until the end of her life. She died on 2 May 1991.

BIJAN GHAZNAVI
(Bízhan Ghaznaví)
Translated from the French by Marie-Therese Levoy

EDITH MCLAREN
1901–1991

GREATLY SADDENED LEARN PASSING DEARLY-LOVED DEVOTED PIONEER PROMOTER CAUSE GOD EDITH MCLAREN. RECALL WITH PRIDE HER MANY YEARS OUTSTANDING COURAGEOUS SERVICES FAITH ESPECIALLY CENTRAL AMERICA. ASSURE FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES FOR PROGRESS HER LUMINOUS SOUL WORLDS GOD. KINDLY CONVEY HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES HER DISTINGUISHED SON DEAR FAMILY AND FRIENDS THIS HOUR BEREAVEMENT.

Universal House of Justice
2 June 1991

Edith McLaren was born on 28 July 1901 in Buffalo, New York, U.S.A., the first of four daughters in a family having strong ties with the Methodist Church. A few years later her parents decided to move to the nearby town of Hamburg, where they took up vegetable and fruit farming. Although the four sisters enjoyed farm life and helped their parents with the work as much as possible, all four eventually chose careers as teachers.

From childhood, Edith showed artistic talent in drawing, painting, and music. She learned to play the piano well and won a scholarship which enabled her to continue studying piano at a well-known music school in New York City. However, her love for small children led her to study primary education in college, after which she taught kindergarten for more than 25 years. She was greatly appreciated by her students and by their parents as well.

Although an active member of her family's church, Edith became disillusioned in her early 30s by problems of disunity within the congregation. An unhappy marriage was also a great disappointment and eventually ended in separation. She turned for inspiration to serious study of the Bible, which awakened her desire for a much deeper understanding of spiritual realities.

Edith's search brought her into contact with several religious groups, but none satisfied her longing for the truth until she met a Bahá'í who shared with her the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. After a period of intensive study, she accepted Bahá'u'lláh with all her heart. From that moment she dedicated her life to the promotion of her newly-found Faith.

Over the years, Edith's home in Hamburg, New York, became the scene of frequent firesides, children's classes, study meetings, and talks by numerous Bahá'í speakers—including the Hands of the Cause of God Dorothy Baker, Louis Gregory, Horace Holley, and John Robarts. Initially, many of her friends showed interest in the Faith, but their lack of willingness to accept Bahá'u'lláh as the Manifestation of God for this Day was truly disappointing.

However, Edith's faith and perseverance were finally rewarded. After years of patient work, a small nucleus of dedicated believers, including two of her sisters, began to grow until an active Bahá'í community emerged with a strong Local Spiritual Assembly. Although her aging father remained a church member, he was greatly attracted to the spirit of the Faith and often attended Bahá'í firesides organized by his daughters.

With an active Local Assembly established in Hamburg, the Faith soon spread to several surrounding villages. In later years, the seeds planted in Hamburg also bore fruit in far-flung regions of the world, when Bahá'ís from that community took up pioneering posts in other parts of the United States and in more than ten countries of Central and South America, the Caribbean islands, and Europe.

In 1954, Edith made a pilgrimage to the Bahá'í World Centre where she had the inestimable bounty of meeting the beloved Guardian. This experience and subsequent correspondence with the Guardian affected her profoundly and generated an intense desire to reach higher levels of service to the Cause she loved so ardently.

In 1958, she qualified for an early retirement from her teaching position and, to the surprise of her many friends among the school teachers, she left Hamburg and the United States to settle in a pioneering post in Guatemala. Thus, at the age of 57, Edith entered a new field of service which continued for the rest of her life. While learning a new language and culture, she became enthusiastically involved in the teaching work and development of local Bahá'í communities in Guatemala, gradually extending the sphere of her activities to neighboring countries.

In 1966, Edith was appointed to the Auxiliary Board and, while continuing to focus her energies primarily on Guatemala, she was also called upon to assist with the work in several other Central American countries. Great was the mutual feeling of love and appreciation between Edith and her numerous friends in Central America; in all those countries she was affectionately referred to as "Doña Edith".

Visiting cities and towns, even very remote villages, unconcerned about her own safety and ignoring the remonstrances of her close friends, she travelled by bus, boat, on muleback and on foot, often alone, in the cold of the mountains and the heat of the coastal regions, meeting with the believers of all backgrounds, encouraging them in their efforts to study and serve the Faith, and giving an understanding ear to those facing difficulties or suffering. The youth were especially attracted to her, and eager to receive her visits and guidance.

Edith had unshakable faith in the power of prayer. Many Bahá'ís and other friends frequently asked her for prayers on their behalf—to assist them to solve a problem, to

find employment, to be cured of an illness, to train their children well, to achieve victories in teaching.... All felt that Edith's prayers had a great effect. She always carried a long list of friends for whom she prayed regularly, and from personal experience she could recount wonderful stories about the power of prayer.

In 1973, at the request of the Continental Board of Counsellors, Edith moved to Nicaragua, where she was warmly welcomed and continued her services on the Auxiliary Board. She also continued to visit throughout Central America for many years. During the civil war in Nicaragua, she was obliged to leave the country for several weeks, although this was contrary to her desire, but she returned to Nicaragua as soon as it was possible, eager and happy to be back serving the friends she loved so dearly!

In 1984, while travelling in Costa Rica, Edith suffered a hip fracture as the result of a fall. She had two operations, but her health gradually deteriorated, which obliged her to discontinue her services as an Auxiliary Board member. Unable to visit the friends as she had done for so many years, she now dedicated more time to prayer and study of the Sacred Writings, and her prayer list grew longer. At this time of need, when her independent spirit had to submit to the realities of physical weakness, several dear friends responded with loving care and hospitality.

In 1986, after staying for some time with two sisters in Binghamton, New York, Edith returned to the pioneering field in Latin America, settling in Maracaibo, Venezuela, with her son and his family. In spite of advanced age and failing health, her enthusiasm and steadfastness in the Cause of God was undiminished. However, by the time she had entered her 90th year, her soul was longing to fly to the spiritual world, and on several occasions she expressed this desire.

On 26 May 1991, after more than half a century of devoted service to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, Edith passed on to the Abhá Kingdom. Upon learning of her passing, the



Edith McLaren

National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, in its message of condolence, stated:

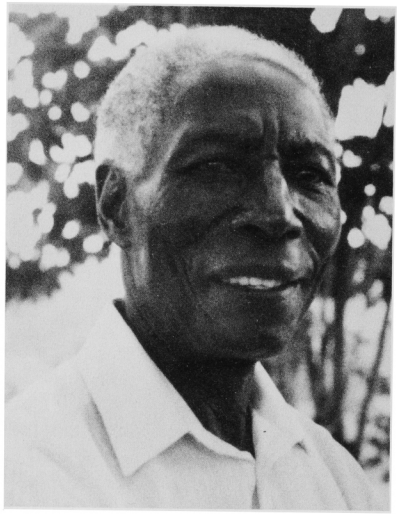
> THE WORK WITH WHICH HER NAME HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WILL CONFER UPON HER IMPERISHABLE GLORY AND HER DEEDS WILL REMAIN AN EVERLASTING EXAMPLE AND INSPIRATION.

PETER MCLAREN

MAX KANYEREZI
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1918–1991

When Max Kanyerezi was 16 years old and a student at Kings College in Budo, Uganda, he had a striking dream which repeated itself twice in the same night:

> A large figure stretches up and starts to roll up the earth, as one would roll up a newspaper. People are running in panic. Three officials sit on a hill where people are to register in the Book of Life. Young Max approaches the table where they are



Max Kanyerezi

inscribing the names. The eldest tells him, 'Go and learn to register your friends, thereafter you will also be registered'.

Max had that dream in 1934, and he saw in it a divine calling. At first he thought that perhaps he should become a Christian minister like his father, who was one of the first seven ordained Christian clergy in Uganda. When that did not work out he went to the Farmers Institute at Namutamba for two years to become a trained farmer. He had difficulties as a farmer and went to Kampala, where he found a job as a clerk in the Uganda Company. Though happy with his work, the vividness of his dream had not worn off and he remained puzzled as to its true meaning.

One morning in 1952, a junior staff member in the office told him about a new Faith which accepted the teachings of all other religions. Eventually he learned that one of his distant relatives, C. Kajubi, knew this Faith and, by chance, he came across Kajubi who introduced him to a man who was to become "his spiritual guide and father", Mr. 'Alí Nakhjáváni.

In his diary account of this meeting, Max wrote:

> There [he was] standing with his penetrating eyes together with a wonderful smile and overflowing warm kindness toward a stranger, a welcome and friendly way of treatment very rare to find.... 'Alí greeted me in that way which remained in my mind and will remain forever.

Max was enthralled with the love and the character of the Nakhjavánís, the Banánís, and the small group of other devoted pioneers. So great was his joy among them that the days between the weekly meetings "seemed like eternity", and he earnestly wished that he "had the powers to shorten the days". During one particular meeting which lasted from 9:00 one morning until 3:00 of the next morning, Max had all of his questions answered to his satisfaction. When writing to the British Bahá'í Teaching Committee for Africa to become Africa's seventh believer, Max only had one secret worry—how his father would accept the fact that he had become a Bahá'í. But Max left that problem to Bahá'u'lláh. This reliance and acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh's unfailing support and love was to become like a flourishing tree within Max's heart.

One day not long after he embraced the Faith, Max's father sent word to him to come. Upon arrival, his worry about his father soon turned into joy as his father described to Max a vivid dream which he felt only Max could understand. In this dream the Lord Christ had announced to him that He had "returned" in Uganda and that all the tribes should be informed. This gave Max the opportunity to explain the meaning of this dream to his father who then immediately accepted Bahá'u'lláh. Although he never formally joined the Bahá'í community, he was a Bahá'í at heart.

In February 1953, soon after Max and his wife Florence became Bahá'ís, the first International Bahá'í Teaching Conference in Africa was held under a tent erected on

the grounds of the Kampala Bahá'í Centre. The spirit and enthusiasm prevailing at this conference, which sounded the call to pioneer, was indescribable for Max. He found himself "overcoming the mountains within him" and taking up the divine call to bring the Faith to Brazzaville, the capital of French Equatorial Africa (later to become the capital of the Congo). This step was to confer upon Max the title of Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, but equally important to him was to see the fulfilment of his cherished dream.

On 30 August 1953, Max joined 'Alí and Violette Nakhjavání, Enoch Olinga, and Samson Mungono as they set off on their historic journey to West Africa. The results of their efforts went beyond anything they could have imagined. Max, without any knowledge of French or the local languages, touched the hearts of the people there through his unfailing prayers and reliance on Bahá'u'lláh. A Local Assembly was established in Brazzaville.

Time passed, and in 1955 Max returned to Uganda. He began teaching the Faith throughout East Africa, often travelling for months and enduring many hardships. His service deepened him and prepared him to become one of the first members of the new National Spiritual Assembly for Central and East Africa. Soon thereafter, he also became one of the first Auxiliary Board members.

Max Kanyerezi passed away on 16 June 1991. His love, his steadfastness and his humbleness bore rich testimony to his deep attachment to his Lord throughout many years of service, and the sweetness of his presence still lingers in the hearts of all those who were touched by his life. His love for teaching never diminished. He remained true to his dream; that divine call to "go and learn to register your friends".

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF UGANDA

CHARLES ROBERTSON MACDONALD
1916–1991

At the British National Convention in May 1991, Charles Macdonald and his devoted wife Yvonne were invited to the platform by the newly elected National Spiritual Assembly and were each presented with nine red roses. Charles had asked to be relieved of his membership in the outgoing National Assembly because of severe ill-health. Neither the Convention nor his wife knew that he was terminally ill (Charles himself knew), and so the nature of the friends' farewell tribute was far more poignant than they realised. Charles spoke from the platform and, impassioned as ever with his love for Bahá'u'lláh, exhorted the friends to teach with unflagging vigour. In his own last months he seized every opportunity to speak of Bahá'u'lláh, and in a last letter he wrote:

> Separation will be painful but inevitable and a necessary part of the great cycle of existence for each one of us in the approach to the brilliant new vistas which lie ahead. Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá.

The Hand of the Cause of God George Townshend, in his essay "The Genius of Ireland", described the "power of vision (as) an Irish gift. It marked the Irish long ago and it marks them now." Charles was sustained by an unshakeable and certain vision, a vision expressed by the Romantic poet Tennyson for whose writings Charles had a particular respect: "One God, one Law, one element/ And one far-off divine event/To which the whole creation moves..."

Charles was born in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, on 31 December 1916. His father, Charles Robertson Macdonald, had only recently come from Ireland to South Africa to work as a journalist, but tragically died of tuberculosis before his son's birth. His mother, Maude (née Beattie), returned with her infant son to Belfast, Northern Ireland, where she later married Samuel Beckett and bore five more children.

Charles received one of the very few City of Belfast Scholarships to the prestigious Royal Belfast Academical Institution. On leaving school he entered the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The threat of war made Charles decide to join the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, and he was directly called up to the Royal Air Force in September 1939. Charles qualified for his wings in July 1940, the same month he married Yvonne, and went on to serve in Bomber Command with exemplary courage, leadership and skill. He achieved the rank of Squadron Leader and at the end of the war was awarded the D.S.O. (Distinguished Service Order) and D.F.C. (Distinguished Flying Cross) by King George VI.

He was hailed in one contemporary magazine as one of the most outstanding bomber aces of the war: "To every generation belong men whose deeds merit the highest praise their comrades can bestow on them." Charles' photograph appeared beside that of the legendary Leonard Chesire V.C. (Victoria Cross), D.S.O. and Bar, D.F.C. Such heroism was the stuff of others' awe and respect and one of his crew once confided to Yvonne that "They would follow Mac to hell and back." After his passing many letters and tributes magnified this quality to inspire devotion. Charles never ceased to be someone who made others feel secure, worthwhile and significant.

After the War, Charles was seconded to the fledgling British Overseas Airways Corporation (later British Airways) as an airline captain to assist in opening up new world airline routes. However, he decided to abandon this career for a more settled existence with his family, and he once again entered the Northern Ireland Civil Service. His clear intelligence and administrative abilities were rewarded with swift promotion.

It was Yvonne's parents, William and Dora Kirkwood, who introduced Charles to the Bahá'í Faith in 1956. They had been constant seekers throughout their lives and Charles' reaction to their latest discovery was to say, "What on earth have you found now?" The Kirkwoods introduced him to the dedicated English pioneer to Belfast—Lady Kathleen Hornell.

After several months, both Charles and Yvonne accepted the Cause of God with a love and commitment that was to absorb and dominate the rest of their lives. Within months of declaring, they sold their comfortable and attractive suburban home to pioneer to Belfast to secure its Local Assembly. It was the first of many sacrifices they were to make for Bahá'u'lláh. Charles accepted much bemused derision from friends and colleagues, but his faith was absolute and he had always been his own man, never cowed or impressed by orthodoxy or convention.

He threw himself into teaching and serving the Faith with characteristic courage and vigour, reading the Writings extensively and opening his home for regular teaching and discussions. He soon brought his talents to a variety of Bahá'í committees including the Regional Teaching Committee and the British *Bahá'í Journal* committee.

In the early days of his newfound Faith, he received a short letter from the Guardian concerning the teaching work in Northern Ireland. It was a deeply treasured letter, and when Shoghi Effendi passed away in November 1957, Charles was overcome with grief for one whom he had never met. He acted as one of the stewards at the Guardian's funeral.

In July 1961, Charles was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles in a by-election to replace Mr. Ian Semple, who had been appointed to the International Bahá'í Council. His subsequent service to the National Assembly was distinguished and remarkable. He was elected the Assembly's treasurer for several years before becoming its secretary in April 1970. He relinquished his senior Civil Service post and career, and he and Yvonne sold their home in Ireland to go and live in the top flat of the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds at 27 Rutland Gate—an experience akin to moving into Piccadilly

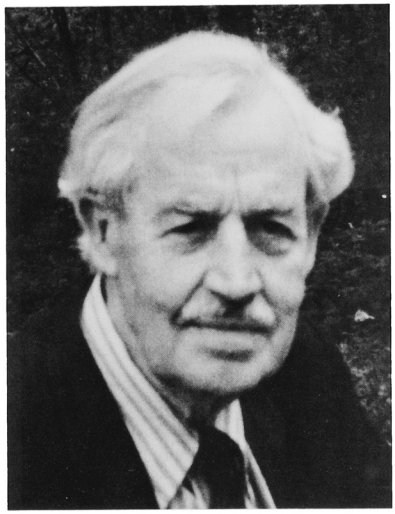
tube station! He served the British friends with great skill and love as an administrator, counsellor and teacher. He was an inspired communicator.

In 1974, Charles and Yvonne offered themselves as pioneers to the Universal House of Justice, which suggested they go to India. Charles was appointed as Manager of the Indian Bahá'í Publishing Trust and Secretary of the National Teaching Committee for India. He and Yvonne travelled extensively to both teach and consolidate, enduring the inevitable privations and difficulties with great spirit. For the latter part of their stay in India, Charles was appointed an Auxiliary Board member, and he finally worked briefly with Faríburz Ṣahbá, the architect of the Indian Temple, on the temple site in New Delhi. Charles contributed an article to the special section of *Bahá'í News India* in December 1985 entitled "The Jewel in the Lotus."

Upon his return to England in 1981, after six to seven years in India, he was once again elected to the National Assembly of the United Kingdom. Again he served as its treasurer and then again as its secretary between 1985 and 1987. He and Yvonne also undertook a short pioneer move to Cyprus in 1990.

For most of his life Charles had been dogged by recurring illness and pain, a fact easily missed by those who seemed to always see a man who said he was "Fine!" It was cancer that finally forced him to ask to be relieved of his Assembly duties in 1991, and he passed away on 12 September of that year.

In its response to Charles' passing the Universal House of Justice referred to his life as "noble". It was an apt word. He was both physically and spiritually noble, his character springing from the most unpretentious of natures and selfless service to others. He had great personal charm, crystal integrity, an outstanding sense of humour, and compassionate warmth. He had a wonderful smile and a bear-hug of an embrace.



Charles Macdonald

He was a man of absolute love: for Bahá'u'lláh, his wife, his family and his friends. After his passing the myriad letters Yvonne received testified to countless acts of kindness and of love; Charles was diplomatic, supportive and caring. Shakespeare provides the most appropriate quotation:

> His life was gentle, and the elements so mixed in him that nature might stand up and say to all the world 'This was a man!'

Soon after Charles' passing the Universal House of Justice sent the following message:

> Deeply grieved passing dearly loved stalwart servant of Bahá'u'lláh Charles Macdonald. His long record distinguished services teaching, administration fields over three decades notably enriched annals faith British Isles, India. His loving nature, sterling qualities, radiant spirit animated by his intense love for the Blessed Beauty endeared him to his fellow believers. Confident members United Kingdom community will be inspired by his noble life.

Praying Holy Shrines progress his radiant soul Abhá Kingdom. Convey loving sympathy his dear wife and family. Assure prayers for their consolation.

IAIN MACDONALD

LOTUS NIELSEN
1925–1991

The Cause of Bahá'u'lláh owes its world-encompassing spread to the valiant and courageous pioneers who, in many cases, sacrificed everything to take Bahá'u'lláh's healing Message to people in the most remote areas of the planet. One such pioneer was Lotus Grace Nielsen.

Lotus was born on 25 March 1925, the eldest of three children born to Grace and Oscar Petersen, a young Bahá'í couple in Duluth, Minnesota, U.S.A. Grace, her brother Eldrid Bauers, and their mother Caroline Grace Bauers had all become Bahá'ís around 1916, Grace being the first in the family to accept the new Message.

Lotus grew up on a dairy farm on the outskirts of Duluth. She loved the farm animals and as a little girl would try to dress and bed the farm cats like dolls. Bahá'ís in the United States at that time were few in number, so travelling Bahá'ís would often visit the friends living in fairly remote areas. Thus among the visitors to Lotus's childhood home were Martha Root, Louis Gregory, Roy C. Wilhelm, and Victoria Bedikian.

The yearning to pioneer came at a very early age for Lotus. She first pioneered at the age of 17, moving with her mother to Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. When she was 21, she set out alone for Venezuela. However, the cultural shock proved too great for the young farm girl from Minnesota with an American/Swedish/German background, and Lotus returned home shortly after her arrival. She was heartbroken and felt like a failure as a pioneer.

Back in Duluth, Lotus became known as an eloquent speaker and a talented writer. She was so active as a Bahá'í that a local newspaper referred to her as "leader of the Bahá'í Movement in Duluth". She was frequently a delegate to the National Conventions, but pioneering was always first in her mind. She longed to heed the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and to serve the beloved Guardian to her fullest.

Lotus soon moved to Fargo, North Dakota, as a home-front pioneer, then in 1952 she went to work at the National Bahá'í Office in Wilmette, Illinois, as a secretary. She was well-liked and efficient, but the yearning to pioneer could not be stilled. In 1954 she packed her bags and left for a pioneering post in Finland.

Lotus loved Finland. At first she rented a room in the house of an elderly non-Bahá'í couple who were very kind to her. Then, during a Bahá'í conference in Finland, Lotus met a young Bahá'í from Denmark, John Nielsen. They were married in 1955 and moved into the newly-acquired Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds in Helsinki as caretakers. Lotus served on the Local Assembly of Helsinki and was later appointed to the Nordic Bahá'í Council (the forerunner of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Scandinavia and Finland).

In August 1956, the Nielsens' first child, Grace, was born, and in December of that year the family moved to Sweden. The social conditions and job opportunities in Sweden were better than in Finland, and Sweden needed pioneers as badly as its neighbour. In Sweden, John and Lotus served on the Regional National Assembly for Scandinavia and Finland and on the Local Assembly of Stockholm. During their years in Sweden, the family grew from three to five, with the addition of Lisbeth and Patricia.

As in Finland, Lotus and John lived in Sweden's National Bahá'í Centre. This was a very small house on the outskirts of Stockholm with one room set aside for meetings.

In effect, however, the whole house was in use during any Bahá'í function and the Bahá'í Centre always seemed full of people. Many stayed overnight leaving the Nielsen family with little privacy, but each guest was welcomed. The children often found themselves sharing one bed because their parents had given their beds to some tired visitors for the night.

In 1962, the Scandinavian countries elected their own National Spiritual Assemblies and Lotus and John were elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of Sweden. Once activities in Sweden were well underway, Lotus' restless pioneering soul started to stir again. John liked the idea of moving to Greenland because it belonged to the Kingdom of Denmark, of which John was a native, and one of the two official languages spoken was Danish. Lotus liked the idea of an unfulfilled goal! Thus it came about that in early April 1966, after having bidden farewell to everyone, the family set out on its greatest adventure.



Lotus Nielsen

The goal for Greenland for the Nine Year Plan, which ended at Riḍván 1966, was to have one group in the capital, Nuuk (Godthåb), and a Bahá'í in one other locality. When the Nielsens left Sweden, Bill Carr, a Canadian Bahá'í, was on the American Air Force Base in Thule as a civilian, and the first Greenlandic Bahá'í, Hendrik Olsen, was living in Sisimiut approximately 600 kilometres from Nuuk. Therefore, the Nielsens tried to get to Nuuk.

Travelling in Greenland at any time can be difficult as the weather is unpredictable, and in the mid-1960s Greenland Air only had three 20-seater Sikorsky S-61N helicopters for passenger transport. Lotus and her family were held up for three weeks in Kangerlussuaq (Søndre Strømfjord) before being able to travel on to Nuuk; they arrived just in time to fill the goal of the Nine Year Plan. They spent their first night in the home of John's new boss and his family.

A 36-square-metre house was waiting for them the next day, consisting of one larger room, a very tiny bedroom, and a small kitchen with an electric stove and cold running water. There was no hot water, no bathroom (only a chemical toilet in the hallway), and no central heating (a kerosene stove in the larger room provided the only heat). The house was very poorly insulated and ice would collect on one wall in the tiny room where the children slept. A water truck came once a week to fill the house's tank; the tank was made of iron and so the water always had a rust-red colour. The family often ran out of water before the truck came, so water had to be fetched from the nearest pumping house. The year spent in this house taxed Lotus' health, and she developed migraine headaches from which she suffered for the rest of her life.

John worked as a truck and taxi driver until starting a small newspaper and working as its editor, writer, and printer with the help of the whole family. After several years, the paper was sold. Meanwhile, Lotus noticed that there was no furniture store in Nuuk so the Nielsens opened one in 1967. This was an instant success and grew to become the

largest furniture store in the country, with a branch in another town. Persian carpets were sold too, imported through a Persian Bahá'í friend in Denmark.

The Lutheran church was very strong, and introducing a new religion turned out to be quite difficult. Much time and effort was spent on preparing the soil: praying and making friends. Because of the expense and difficulty of travelling to Greenland, Lotus and John did not see another adult Bahá'í for over two years, until Else Fynbo of Copenhagen went to visit her sister who was married to the Viceroy of Greenland. Eventually, after 1968, more Bahá'ís came to visit from Denmark, the United States, and Canada. The first believer of Nuuk declared in 1970: Else Boesen, a Danish nurse.

During the 1970s, serious problems surfaced in the Nielsens' marriage, and the couple divorced in 1975. Lotus, who had been a home-maker during all her married years, had to find a way to support herself and her one child still living at home. She took over the furniture store, but eventually gave it up and purchased a small gift shop in Nuuk called the Arctic Gallery. Every year she closed the store for Naw-Rúz and had an ad printed in the newspaper to publicize this event. The gift shop became a meeting point for the Bahá'ís and many on-the-spot firesides were held there. In order to make ends meet, Lotus also taught English at the local schools.

The first Local Spiritual Assembly in Greenland was formed in 1979. This was a major victory for Lotus and the first goal on a very long road. In the early 1980s, she became the first Bahá'í in Greenland to be appointed an assistant to the Auxiliary Board, and a few years later became the first member of the Auxiliary Board for Propagation.

Around 1986, Lotus felt that the community in Nuuk was firmly established and her pioneering spirit again started to stir. She knew that pioneers were needed to strengthen the Assembly in Sisimiut and to form one in Aasiaat if Greenland were to have its own National Assembly. It took courage and soul-searching to make the move. She was in her sixties, her children and grandchildren were all in Nuuk, she was living in a comfortable three-room apartment with all the amenities, and she had a well-paying job. Yet the establishment of the National Assembly for Greenland became the most important thing for Lotus during the last years of her life, so in 1988 she sold or gave away many of her belongings, packed the rest in a container for sending, and went 600 kilometres north to an uncertain future.

She first settled in Sisimiut where she rented a room in the home of Wendy and Carsten Lind, a pioneer couple. In Sisimiut she assisted the friends in many ways, from arranging meetings to babysitting. By 1990 Lotus felt the Sisimiut community was doing fine and that her services were more in demand in Aasiaat. She again packed all her things and headed north.

In Aasiaat she rented a couple of small rooms in the home of a Bahá'í couple, Marie and Ravi Butalia, until she managed to get a nice apartment which belonged to the hospital. The only problem was that the hospital needed the apartment during the summer months for temporary staff. Thus, when summer came, Lotus packed up most of her belongings but left Bahá'í books standing, and found on her return that the books had been opened and presumably read. In both Sisimiut and Aasiaat, Lotus supplemented her meagre pension by teaching English, babysitting, cleaning house, and doing other odd jobs.

Lotus' health began to deteriorate and in the summer of 1991 she went into the hospital in Nuuk for an operation. The doctors suspected cancer and performed another operation but after it Lotus slipped into a coma. During her last days her family and friends took turns sitting by her bedside and caring for her. Their steadfastness and gentle acceptance of the inevitable impressed the hospital staff, and quite a bit of teaching

took place. Some of Lotus' last words to one of her daughters, upon hearing of new teaching victories in Aasiaat, were: "Now we will get our National Assembly!"

Lotus passed away peacefully on 25 October 1991, and had the honour of being the first person to have a Bahá'í funeral in Greenland. Prayers were said in Greenlandic, English, and Danish, and the message of the Universal House of Justice was read in all three languages. More than 100 people attended the funeral, and her passing was mentioned on the national radio. She was laid to rest in the cemetery in the old part of town, a very beautiful spot overlooking the hills and the fjord.

The following spring, Lotus' dream of an independent National Assembly for Greenland became a reality. This first convention was a major event for the Bahá'í community and was blessed with the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá. Dr. Varqá honoured Lotus and her family by visiting her resting place.

A happy, energetic person with a distinct sense of humour, Lotus was always looking for ways to promote the Cause. Her hospitality was legendary, her home always immaculate and ready to receive any number of guests willing to hear about Bahá'u'lláh. Honesty, truthfulness, and loyalty were some of her strongest characteristics. She had courage, determination, patience, and complete faith in Bahá'u'lláh.

The Universal House of Justice sent the following message on 27 October 1991, upon hearing of her passing:

> We are deeply grieved by the news of the passing of the dearly loved maidservant of Bahá'u'lláh and valiant promoter of His Faith, Lotus Nielsen. Her persevering, highly valued services to the Cause of God over so many years in North America and Scandinavia have been crowned by her vital contribution to the raising up of the Bahá'í community of Greenland as pioneer and member of the Auxiliary Board, and have earned her an undying place in the annals of that greatly promising community. We extend our loving sympathy to the members of her family and to the entire Greenlandic Bahá'í community, and shall pray at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of her radiant soul in all the worlds of God.

GRACE J. NIELSEN

MAGDALENE MARGARET CARNEY
1929–1991

Upon the passing of Magdalene Carney on 10 October 1991, in Haifa, Israel, the Universal House of Justice sent the following cable to all National Spiritual Assemblies:

> DEEPLY GRIEVED SUDDEN PASSING STALWART MAIDSERVANT BAHA'U'LLAH MEMBER INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE MAGDALENE M. CARNEY. HER WELL NIGH THREE DECADES UNBROKEN SERVICE CAUSE GOD EXERTED IMMENSE INFLUENCE TEACHING WORK SOUTHERN REGION UNITED STATES, INVOLVED THIRTEEN YEARS MEMBERSHIP NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY THAT COUNTRY UNTIL HER APPOINTMENT IN 1983 TO INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE. INDOMITABLE FAITH, UNSWERVING DEVOTION COVENANT, SELFLESS SPIRIT, OPEN CANDOUR, WHOLEHEARTED COMMITMENT EDUCATION CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE AMONG QUALITIES THAT WILL EVER BE ASSOCIATED WITH GOLDEN MEMORIES HER HIGHLY ACTIVE LIFE. ARDENTLY PRAYING HOLY THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER STERLING SOUL THROUGHOUT DIVINE WORLDS. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL SERVICES HER HONOUR ALL HOUSES WORSHIP AND IN BAHA'I COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT WORLD.

Magdalene Margaret Carney, affectionately known as "Mag", was born on 19 October 1929 in Ringold, Tennessee. Her parents were Herbert and Sallie Lisenby Carney, and all eight of their children were delivered



Magdalene Carney

at home by a family physician with the assistance of a mid-wife or close relatives. As the eldest of the children, Mag was pressed into service at an early age to help raise her brothers and sisters and assist her parents with every aspect of running their farm. She wrote:

> My parents placed a weighty responsibility on me early on. They expected me to set the proper example for my brothers and sisters in all matters pertaining to moral and wholesome living.

While she was still quite young Mag displayed determination to obtain an education. She wrote: "I privately vowed to educate myself so that I would be able to increase our resources and thereby give our family a little relief from dire poverty." One time, she was determined to go to school despite a blizzard so her father lifted her up onto a farm horse, wrapped her feet and legs in burlap bags to protect her against frostbite, and off she rode into the snow storm. She made it.

She excelled in her studies, graduating from Burt High School in Clarksville, Tennessee, with highest honors. In 1953, she graduated *magna cum laude* from Tennessee Agricultural & Industrial State University in Nashville, with majors in English and Spanish and minors in Speech and Drama. She taught in elementary and high schools in Nashville for 15 years, and served as chairman of the English Department of Cameron High School. In 1967, she completed a master of arts degree at George Peabody College in Nashville, majoring in Education and English.

Mag became a member of the American Bahá'í community during the summer of 1962 after meeting Dr. Sarah Martin Pereira, then Professor of Romance Languages at Tennessee State University in Nashville. Dr. Pereira gave Mag a pamphlet, *Modern Religion for Modern Man*, that summarized the purpose of religion, outlined the essential features of a new religious system being established in the world, and invited the reader to investigate its tenets. Mag said, "By the time I finished reading, I believed in the new system: the Bahá'í Faith. Unimaginable joy flooded my heart!" That flood of joy was extensively spread throughout the southern United States as Mag became an indefatigable teacher of the Cause that she embraced wholeheartedly and unreservedly.

Over the next three decades, she served the Bahá'í Faith in many capacities on local, national, and international levels. She served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Nashville for several years, and in 1968 she was appointed to the National Teaching Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States. In 1969, she was appointed to the Deep South Committee and was elected to serve as its secretary, and in 1970, when the Southern Office of the National Teaching Committee was opened, she became its administrative assistant.

During this time, from 1969 to 1971, she served as Chairman of the Rogers High School English Department in Canton, Mississippi, and in 1969 she coordinated a successful desegregation program in the

Canton Public School system at the high school level. Her excellence in education was recognized with a Ford Fellowship in Educational Leadership which enabled her to work towards a doctorate in education from 1972 to 1977, and she received her Doctor of Education degree from the University of Massachusetts in 1977. Mag's professional interests included the role of ideals in human development, emotional development, the education of children, and the education of competent and compassionate teachers.

On 13 November 1970, Dr. Carney was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, in a by-election. She served continuously on the National Spiritual Assembly for 13 consecutive years, and from 1978 to 1983 she served as full-time Assistant Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly in Wilmette, Illinois. In 1983, she was appointed to serve as one of the Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre at the Bahá'í World Centre, and moved to Haifa, Israel.

Throughout her many years of service to the Faith, Magdalene Carney travelled extensively in the United States, especially the southern states. Once she was appointed to the International Teaching Centre, she was called upon to travel worldwide and visited the Bahamas, Canada, Finland, the Gambia, Ghana, Iceland, Jamaica, Kenya, Nigeria, Norway, Papua New Guinea, and Samoa.

Mag radiated such warmth and friendliness that everyone who met her immediately felt at home and at ease with her. Her abundant love brought out the best in people, especially young people. She adored children and youth and showed great affection for them. Her marvelous sense of humor brightened many a gathering. Her deep knowledge of the Bahá'í Writings and of education enriched every consultation. She maintained a voluminous correspondence with Bahá'ís all over the world. For nearly three decades, she was a leader in race unity. She was a true friend. Above all, she encouraged the friends to arise to teach the Faith.

DR. BETH BOWEN

SHIRLEY A. WARDE
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1901–1991

Shirley Warde was born in Albany, New York, U.S.A., on 23 January 1901, and was brought up in New York City. She was raised in the Christian Science Church, but by the age of 12 she was asking questions to which the church offered no acceptable answers, and she soon embarked on a quest for rational truth.

At the age of 14 she persuaded her mother that acting would have to be her career, and with that declaration she ended her formal schooling and studied with excellent tutors to pursue her goal. From small walk-on parts in big New York productions she climbed the theatrical ladder to attain leads, then co-starring parts on Broadway. Meanwhile she had started writing short stories for top magazines and, with a friend, wrote three plays, two produced on Broadway and one sold to Hollywood for a film.

Shirley was married in 1921 and had one child, Charmian. Throughout her brief marriage and during the establishment of her acting and writing career, she never neglected her search for truth. In her own words:

> ...we (Shirley, her grandmother, her mother, her aunt, and her daughter) investigated everything we could find or hear about in the way of esoteric and religious teachings, but it was not until 1932 that we encountered the Bahá'í Faith in Teaneck, New Jersey, where we were then living. The Great Depression was on and it was through feeding a hungry man that we were led to the Hand of the Cause Roy Wilhelm, the Log Cabin Centre and adjoining pine grove where 'Abdu'l-Bahá had given His historic Unity Feast. The



Shirley Warde

man had secured work painting the Wilhelm home and told us of 'some Eastern Cult that believed in all religions,' to which Roy and his mother belonged. We finally found the Cabin, attended a meeting, borrowed books and soon knew we had 'come home', and four generations became Bahá'í in one night—my mother, my nine-year-old daughter, my grandmother and I, plus an aunt then living in Teaneck.

It was a great bounty to become a Bahá'í in Teaneck because Shirley was exposed to many great Bahá'í teachers, some of whom were to be later named as Hands of the Cause of God, as well as other early believers, many of whom had known 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

In 1932, the Depression was in full swing and the theatre badly hurt, so Shirley accepted an offer from the Columbia Broadcasting System and became its first woman writer-producer. She later shifted to advertising, and in 1936 she was sent to Hollywood to write and produce radio programmes for J. Walter Thompson.

In California, Shirley and her mother were deeply involved in Bahá'í work—holding classes, giving talks, strengthening weak Assemblies, and forming the Burbank Local Spiritual Assembly.

Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, she accepted a post with the Office of War Information in San Francisco and became active with the Bahá'ís in the San Francisco area. With Marion Holley, she wrote and produced radio programs each week for three years, and participated in activities with William and Marguerite Sears, the Leroy Ioas family, Marzieh Gail, Arthur and Joyce Dahl, and many others. They proclaimed the Faith through newspaper advertising as well as the radio shows, and their public meetings often had up to 1,000 people attending. When San Francisco played host to the nascent United Nations in 1945, the Bahá'ís were well represented in various associated activities.

During the celebrations in Chicago in 1944 of the Centenary of the Declaration of the Báb, Shirley volunteered to pioneer, and when the war ended she went to South America. Her main destination was Argentina, but she also spent time in Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. In spite of some trouble from secret service organizations because of her work with the State Department during the war (which led to an attempt on her life), she was able to make a living in Buenos Aires in advertising and publishing, and she also served as chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly.

She returned to the United States shortly after her mother died in 1949, but her goal was to pioneer, and, with the opening of the Ten Year Plan, she went to British Honduras in October 1953, in time to be named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh by the Guardian. She served her beloved Cause in this country until her death.

Simply to summarize Shirley's contribution to the culture and the Faith in British Honduras [known as Belize after June 1973] would require many pages. From her first

week in the country she was active in theatre by offering her services in producing a variety program for the Federation of Women to raise funds to build a day nursery. This led to many productions of plays and variety shows. She coached the drama group of the Extramural Department of the University of the West Indies. It was from her contacts with this group that many of the early Belizean believers emerged.

Shirley trekked literally from one end of the country to the other to teach the Faith. Her "passport" to the villages was a small tape recorder on which she collected the folk songs and stories of Belize. Some of these tapes are on file at Goshen College in Indiana, U.S.A., and also at the Folklore Museum of the University of Indiana. She combined these collections from the various ethnic groups—Creole, Garifuna, Maya, Spanish—into a folklore fantasy called "Boss King" in 1965. It was an immediate success and ran for 19 performances, a record that was not broken for many years.

She continued her active teaching work throughout the country into her 70s. After that she "limited" her work to writing and producing weekly radio programs, serving on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Belize City (1964–1983), the National Spiritual Assembly (1968–1983), and various local and national committees. She wrote and personally addressed and mailed a Bahá'í newsletter for several years.

She was a well-known figure on her bicycle in the crowded Belize City streets as she took care of her daily needs and pursued her other, more important, work. On her 76th birthday she produced and directed a play she had written many years earlier entitled "Paradise Postponed", and several years later she produced and directed "Boss King" for the last time.

She was in her 80s when she attended a National Spiritual Assembly meeting during which she experienced the first of a series of strokes. For several years she lingered on the threshold between this world and the next, very aware of the Bahá'í victories taking place in Belize and throughout the world, victories which owed their origins to those who, like Shirley, dedicated their whole beings to planting the seeds and watering them with the sacrifice of their very life's blood.

She passed to the Abhá Kingdom on 10 October 1991. Her dedication and ferocious energy will be an inspiration to Bahá'ís for many years to come.

ERIC AND VICKIE WILSON

EBERHARD K. FRIEDLAND
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1902–1991

O Son of Being! Make mention of Me on My earth, that in My heaven I may remember thee, thus shall Mine eyes and thine be solaced.

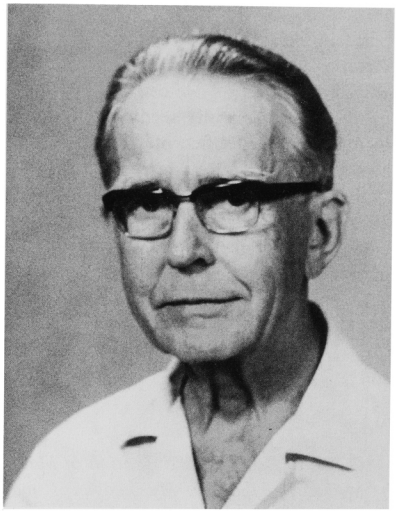
—Bahá'u'lláh[1]

Many Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís will remember Eberhard Friedland as a man with a smile for everyone and whose passionate aim was to share his knowledge with others. He was a man who continuously encouraged children and youth by saying "enlarge your horizon". He took this advice to heart himself, as the many books he left behind as an inheritance to his friends and admirers testify.

Eberhard was born in Germany on 23 June 1902. With the outbreak of the first World War he immigrated to the United States where he became a citizen after some years. There he learned about the Bahá'í Faith and for the rest of his life he chose to be guided by its principles.

During an animated conference in the United States, he was inspired to help establish his beloved Faith in French Guiana, an act which earned him the title of Knight of Bahá'u'lláh. After some time of service in French Guiana, he went to Suriname in

[1] The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh, Arabic No. 43.



Eberhard Friedland

1954, where he spent the remaining years of his life.

In the beginning he rented a room in the capital city, Paramaribo, and held firesides regularly. Bahá'ís of those early times still remember the warmth, cordiality and serenity of those evenings, which sometimes caused participants to remark that they did not feel like going home. The spiritual atmosphere which prevailed during those meetings worked like a strong magnet.

Assisted by Eberhard Friedland's devoted and tireless efforts, the first local Bahá'í institution was established in 1966. Afterwards the Faith grew rapidly, and within a few years became a community with a few thousand believers and sympathizers. As a result the first Spiritual Assembly of Suriname and French Guiana was established in 1977.

Eberhard was not only active directly on behalf of the Faith. Many non-Bahá'ís will gratefully remember the hours during which he tried to teach them the English language. He assisted many medical doctors, booksellers, teachers, and students in keeping abreast of the latest editions and developments in their respective fields of study.

Eberhard was blessed with a long life, and frequently remarked that he "was living on credit". Finally, at the age of 89, his soul winged its flight to the Abhá Kingdom.

> *O my God, Thy Trust hath been returned unto Thee. It behooveth Thy grace and Thy bounty that have compassed Thy dominions on earth and in heaven, to vouchsafe unto Thy newly welcomed one Thy gifts and Thy bestowals, and the fruits of the tree of Thy grace! Powerful art Thou to do as Thou willest...*
>
> —Bahá'u'lláh

Eberhard, we will always think of you with warmth in our hearts.

LYGIA VASILDA

KAZUTOMO UMEGAE
1924–1992

Kazutomo Umegae was among the first members of the Ainu race to accept the Faith. He had heard of it in 1957 from two travelling teachers who had gone to Japan's northern island of Hokkaidō, where most of the Ainu live, after the Guardian had encouraged Bahá'ís to take the Faith there.

Various Bahá'ís visited the Ainu villages through the years, and in December 1961 six Japanese of Ainu ancestry declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh. Kazutomo and his wife, Taeko, were among them, as were his mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Takeichi Moritake. Mr. Moritake was a headman in the village. A number of their other relatives eventually became Bahá'ís. Mr. Moritake later said that many tourists had come to the village to see the Ainu but that the Bahá'ís had been different—they had brought something new.

A letter written on behalf of the Guardian said,

> He [the Guardian] was greatly pleased to learn of the contacts which have been



Kazutomo Umegae

made by the Friends with the original natives of Japan, namely the Ainu people. He hopes that...they may teach the call of God to the remainder of their people. There is no doubt that great results will be achieved if this can be done.
(20 October 1957)

Kazutomo said he was initially attracted to the Faith because he saw a lack of prejudice among the Bahá'ís. He said that when he was growing up there was considerable prejudice against the Ainu people. In the Meiji Era of Japanese history (1868–1911) the government enforced a policy to try to absorb the Ainu into the Japanese mainstream so that the race would die out. At that time the government forbade the Ainu to use their language and made them take Japanese names and attend Japanese schools.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the prejudice considerably lessened or disappeared and people became interested in the Ainu lifestyle and culture. Kazutomo, with his open and warm personality, was featured on television and in exhibitions of Ainu culture. He was a wood carver of some skill, and as a businessman he was instrumental in selling Ainu handicrafts. He also trained handicapped people in those arts.

Kazutoma travelled to many Ainu villages teaching the Faith. In 1965, he was appointed by the Hands of the Cause as an Auxiliary Board member in Asia. He served in that capacity for 21 years, longer than any other Auxiliary Board member in Japan. In the later years he travelled and taught all over Japan, including to the remote Japanese island of Ogasawara.

The Universal House of Justice sent the following message 13 February 1992 after being informed of Kazutoma's passing:

> GRIEVED PASSING DISTINGUISHED BELIEVER KAZUTOMO UMEGAE WHO WILL BE REMEMBERED IN THE ANNALS OF THE FAITH AS ONE OF THE FIRST AMONG THE AINU PEOPLE TO RECOGNIZE BAHA'U'LLAH AND SERVE UNDER HIS BANNER OF UNITY IN VARIOUS CAPACITIES. ASSURE HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS LOVING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES FOR THE PROGRESS OF HIS SOUL IN THE REALMS OF ETERNITY.

BARBARA R. SIMS

SHIRIN FOZDAR
1905–1992

Born in Bombay, India, on 1 March 1905 of Persian Zoroastrian parents who had converted to the Bahá'í Faith, Shirin Behjat Fozdar was by any measure a remarkable person and a truly great woman. She was taken on her first pilgrimage to the Holy Land when she was 11 months old, and took her first steps while holding onto the cloak of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. She was taken on her second pilgrimage when she was six years old, and remembers meeting Shoghi Effendi, who impressed her immensely.

By the age of 17, Shirin Behjat had emerged as a strong and outspoken defender of women's rights. The year 1922 saw her

become one of the first Eastern women to speak in public in the East when she addressed a meeting in the town hall of the city of Karachi, the centre of Muslim influence in what was then British India. Karachi's mayor presided at that historic talk.

In 1925, at the age of 20, she married Dr. Khodadad M. Fozdar, a medical doctor for the Indian Railways who was of Parsi-Zoroastrian background. He became a Bahá'í and served the Faith with great distinction; he was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Andaman Islands. (See *The Bahá'í World* vol. XIII, p. 892). He passed away in 1958 and is buried in Choa Chu Kang, Singapore. Five children—three sons and two daughters—were born of that marriage: Jamshed, John, Minoo, Mona, and Zena.

In 1931, Shirin was elected to the Executive Committee of the All-Asian Women's Conference, and by 1934 she was representing the Asian Women's Conference at the League of Nations, pleading with representatives of the great powers at the League to proclaim a Universal Declaration of Women's Rights.

Returning to India in 1935, she accompanied her husband to his many postings in north and central India, while at the same time bringing up five children, as well as proclaiming the principles of the Faith at every opportunity through personal talks and public addresses. Her fame as the foremost champion of women's rights in India spread to other lands adjoining the sub-continent, and she travelled to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and Burma, fêted by members of the nascent women's rights movements in those lands which owed their formations to their awareness of her pioneer achievements in India.

While the second World War confined Shirin's activities to India, in 1941 she was urged by Mahatma Gandhi (later to become the Father of Indian independence) to go on his behalf to the city of Ahmedabad, a hotbed of communal strife, and there to speak publicly on the unifying principles of the Bahá'í Faith to the dissenting communities of Hindus and Muslims. He also suggested that she establish institutions in Ahmedabad for the upliftment of the "untouchable" social caste in that whole province. Despite considerable personal danger, Shirin was singularly successful in fulfilling the behest of Mahatma Gandhi, who later was reported to have said that "the Bahá'í Faith is the solace of Mankind".

During the 1940s, by her tireless work for one of the cardinal principles of the Faith—women's rights—Mrs. Fozdar won the respect of not only Mahatma Gandhi, but also of Muḥammad Ali Jinnah, the Founder of Pakistan.

By 1950, the Fozdars' children had all completed their college education and entered careers of their own. Then, Dr. Fozdar resigned from his job in order to answer the call for pioneers, and he and Mrs. Fozdar settled in Singapore. There, in early 1950 he began his medical practice while Mrs. Fozdar continued to work for women's rights.

On 2 April 1952, the Singapore Council of Women was born with 2,000 members. Shirin Fozdar was acknowledged as its founder and appointed as its Secretary-General, with the mandate to contact leaders in all walks of life as well as government officials, politicians, and members of the media. Her quest was not without considerable personal physical danger since Singapore in the early 1950s was beset with social unrest caused by lack of proper housing, employment and schools.

In 1954, Shirin spent four months in Saigon, Vietnam, on behalf of the Bahá'í Faith and became the first Bahá'í to step foot in what was then French Indochina. In March of that same year, during a short visit to Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh, she was decorated by Prince Norodom Sihanouk with a gold medal accompanied by the first certificate of *Satrei Vatthana* (Champion of Women's Rights). She returned to Singapore from Vietnam and continued work on her chosen goal of women's emancipation. In 1958 she led a delegation from Singapore to

the Afro-Asian Women's Conference held in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

In 1959, she was invited by the All China Federation of Women to visit China, where she was received by some of the top leaders of the Chinese state and allowed to travel extensively around the country. Upon her return from China, she was invited by the U.S. State Department to travel extensively in the United States lecturing on her favourite ideals.

Back in Singapore, she strenuously canvassed for a Women's Charter and met with Mr. Lee Kuan Yew to explain the necessity of granting such a Charter and encouraged the adoption of "one man one woman" on the platform of the People's Action Party. Upon its victory in the general elections, the Party enacted the "Women's Charter" on 6 April 1960, and monogamous marriage thus became law. Following on its heels the Government of Singapore passed other acts such as the Inheritance Act in 1966, the Family Provision, and acts completing ordinances giving more consideration to women.

Others may have been content to rest on those laurels. Not so Shirin, who, with a number of volunteers, initiated the formation of the first girls' club in the Joo Chiat Welfare Centre in Singapore and also became the first woman to address an audience at Changi Prison on the subject of reformation and becoming useful members of society.

In 1961, at the age of 56, Shirin left for Bangkok, Thailand, to proclaim the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith. There she received an audience with His Majesty Bhumibol Adulyadej, Rama IX of Thailand. Besides obtaining wide recognition for the Faith, Mrs. Fozdar also founded the Santitham Vittayakom School at Yasothon in the Ubol Province of northeast Thailand. This school became the largest co-educational institution in the province, providing secretarial and home-economic education to help youth from straying into crime in the cities.

Shirin returned to her beloved Singapore after a decade of activity in Thailand and



Shirin Fozdar

continued her work with the Women's Council and the expanding institutions of the Bahá'í Faith there. Many accolades came her way from the humble and the high, not only in Asia, but also from the world at large. Singapore's own Sinathamby Rajaratnam, the Foreign Minister for nearly a quarter century wrote:

> I have known Mrs. Fozdar and the single-minded way in which she struggled to promote and safeguard the rights of women and to enhance the status of women in our country. She did this without regard to race or creed and I would like to join with the others in recognition of her services to promote justice for women in Asia". And the famous author Han Suyin adds, "All her life has been a dedication to justice, to humanity and I can never forget it. She is an example to womankind. I am happy to have been her humble friend.

Those of us who knew her remember that one of her favourite anecdotes was, "If Eve ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge first

and then induced Adam to also taste of it, did that not prove it was the woman who attained to knowledge first and that the first act of obedience was by man to woman and not the other way around?!"

Rare is the individual whose acts inspire others to dedicate their own lives to improving the human condition, especially the lot of women, the world over. To those who knew her, and from whose life they and others to follow shall continue to draw heroic inspiration, Shirin Fozdar was one such person.

Shirin spent the last year of her life in hospitals in India and Singapore, during which time she also suffered a massive heart attack in Bombay. However, her indomitable spirit enabled her to return to spend her last days in her beloved Singapore.

When she died, she left behind five children, seventeen grandchildren, and twenty great-grandchildren. There is no doubt in their minds that, however bright their stars may shine—however eminent they become in their professions or in their service to the Bahá'í Faith—they will be but pale reflections of that brilliant orb from which it is their honour to have been born.

Written by her children:
JAMSHED, JOHN, MINOO, MONA, AND ZENA

PART SIX

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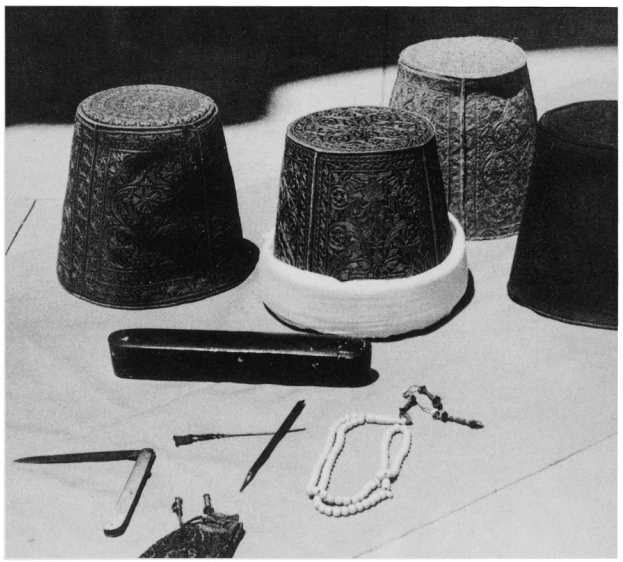

Relics of Bahá'u'lláh, including His pen and pencase.

"Think not that We
have revealed unto
you a mere code of
laws. Nay, rather,
We have unsealed the
choice Wine with
the fingers of might
and power."
—Bahá'u'lláh

I
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Risáliy-i-Dhahabíyyih.
Risáliy-i-Fiqhíyyih.
Risáliy-i-Furú'-i-'Adlíyyih.
Ṣaḥífatu'l-Ḥaramayn.
Ṣaḥífiy-i-Ja'faríyyih.
Ṣaḥífiy-i-Makhzúnih.
Ṣaḥífiy-i-Raḍavíyyih.
Súriy-i-Tawḥíd.
Tafsír-i-Nubuvvat-i-Khássih.
Tafsír-i-Súríy-i-Kawthar.
Tafsír-i-Súríy-i-Va'l-'Aṣr.
Zíyárat-i-Sháh-'Abdu'l-'Aẓím.

COMPILATIONS IN ENGLISH

Selections from the Writings of the Báb.
World Centre Publications, 1976.

(*Note:* The Báb Himself states in one passage of the Persian Bayán that His writings *comprise no less than 500,000 verses.*)

3. 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S BEST-KNOWN WORKS

IN PERSIAN AND ARABIC

Ad'íyih va Munáját.
Alváh-i-Tablíghíy-i-Imríká.
Alváh-i-Vaṣáyá.
Khiṭábát dar Urúpá va Imríká.
Lawḥ-i-Aflákíyyih.
Lawḥ-i-'Ahd va Míthág (Imríká).
Lawḥ-i-'Ammih.
Lawḥ-i-Áyát.
Lawḥ-i-Du-Nidáy-i-Faláḥ va Najáḥ.
Lawḥ-i-Dr. Forel.
Lawḥ-i-Haft Sham'.
Lawḥ-i-Hizár-Baytí.
Lawḥ-i-Khurásán.
Lawḥ-i-Láhih.
Lawḥ-i-Maḥil-i-Shawr.
Lawḥ-i-Muḥabbat.
Lawḥ-i-Tanzíh va Taqdís.
Lawḥ-i-Tarbíyat.
Madaníyyih.
Maqáliy-i-Sayyáḥ.
Mufáviḍát.
Sharḥ-i-Faṣṣ-i-Nigín-i-Ism-i-A'ẓam.
Sharḥ-i-Shuhadáy-i-Yazd va Iṣfahán.
Síyásíyyih.
Tadhkiratu'l-Vafá.
Tafsír-i-Bismi'lláhi'r-Raḥmáni'r-Rahím.
Tafsír-i-Kuntu Kanzan Mákhfíyyan.
Zíyárat-Námih.

(*Note:* The majority of the works listed above have been collected in the eight-volume series *Makátíb-i-'Abdu'l-Bahá*, the first three volumes of which were initially published under Bahá'í auspices in Cairo, and the subsequent volumes in Írán by the National Spiritual Assembly which also reprinted the first three. Developments since 1979 in Írán have intervened to halt further progress of the intended project of collecting and publishing under this title all of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's important Tablets.)

IN ENGLISH, TRANSLATED BY SHOGHI EFFENDI

Tablet to the Central Organization for a Durable Peace, the Hague. Bahá'í Publishing Committee, New York, 1930.

Tablet to Dr. Forel. Bahá'í Publishing Committee, New York, 1930.

Will and Testament. Bahá'í Publishing Committee, New York, 1925, 1935. Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois, 1944, 1968, and other Bahá'í Publishing Trusts.

IN ENGLISH, OTHER TRANSLATIONS

The Secret of Divine Civilization. Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette Illinois, 1957. Originally published by Cope & Fenwick, London, 1910, under the title *The Mysterious Forces of Civilization.* Subsequently published by Bahá'í Publishing Society, Chicago, 1918.

Some Answered Questions. First printed by Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Ltd., London, 1908. Subsequently published by Bahá'í Publishing Society, Chicago, 1918, and other Publishing Trusts.

Tablets of the Divine Plan. Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois, 1959.

A Traveller's Narrative. Translated into English by Edward Granville Browne under the title *A Traveller's Narrative written to illustrate The Episode of the Báb.* Cambridge University Press, 1891. Bahá'í Publishing Committee, New York, 1930.

Memorials of the Faithful. Translated from the original Persian and annotated by Marzieh Gail. Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois, 1971.

COMPILATIONS IN ENGLISH

Foundations of World Unity; a selection of letters and public addresses. Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois, 1945.

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The Promulgation of Universal Peace, vols. I, II; a compilation of His addresses in Canada and the United States in 1912. Bahá'í Publishing Society, Chicago, 1922 and 1925.

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá; compiled from His correspondence with individual believers, groups and Assemblies of the East and the West. World Centre Publications, 1978.

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The Bahá'í Revelation. Bahá'í Publishing Trust, London, 1955.

Bahá'í World Faith. Bahá'í Publishing Committee, Wilmette, Illinois, 1943, 1956.

The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'í Publishing Trust, London, 1950; revised, 1963.

The Divine Art of Living. Bahá'í Publishing Committee, Wilmette, Illinois, 1944; revised, 1960.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'í Publishing Committee, Wilmette, Illinois, 1939, 1952, and other Bahá'í Publishing Trusts.

Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'í Publishing Committee, Wilmette, Illinois, 1938, 1954, and other Bahá'í Publishing Trusts.

The Reality of Man. Bahá'í Publishing Committee, Wilmette, Illinois, 1931; revised, 1962.

(*Note:* A large number of Prayer Books compiled of prayers revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb and 'Abdu'l-Bahá has been published by Bahá'í Publishing Trusts and National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the world.)

5. SHOGHI EFFENDI'S BEST-KNOWN WORKS

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. February 1929.

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The Goal of a New World Order. November, 1931.

The Golden Age of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. March, 1932.

America and the Most Great Peace. April, 1933.

The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh. February 1934.

The Unfoldment of World Civilization. March, 1936.

(*Note:* The above seven essays have been published in one volume entitled *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.* Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois, 1938. Revised edition, 1955; second printing, 1965.)

The Advent of Divine Justice. Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois, 1939.

The Promised Day is Come. Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois, 1941.

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TRANSLATIONS (see also p.1039, p.1040)

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SOME COMPILATIONS FROM HIS WRITINGS

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Messages to America (1932–1946). Bahá'í Publishing Committee, Wilmette, Illinois, 1947.

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Principles of Bahá'í Administration. Bahá'í Publishing Trust, England, 1950.

Guidance for Today and Tomorrow. Bahá'í Publishing Trust, London, 1953.

Citadel of Faith (Messages to America 1947–1957). Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois, 1965.

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Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand (1923–1957). National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, 1970.

Dawn of a New Day—Messages to India (1923–1957). Bahá'í Publishing Trust, New Delhi, 1970.

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High Endeavours: Messages to Alaska. National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Alaska, 1976.

Call to the Nations. World Centre Publications, 1977.

The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá'í Community: The Messages from the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith to the Bahá'ís of the British Isles. Bahá'í Publishing Trust, London, 1981.

The Light of Divine Guidance: The Messages from the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith to the Bahá'ís of Germany and Austria. Bahá'í Verlag, 1982.

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6. Language and Literature Achievements

ONE of the goals of the Six Year Plan was "Increasing the Worldwide Availability and Use of Bahá'í Literature" (see pp.157–159). The promotion of translation has been an important objective of the international plans conducted by the Bahá'í world community over the years, so that Bahá'í Scriptures and other works may be read by the peoples of the world in their own tongue.

Previous volumes of *The Bahá'í World* list more than 780 languages, major dialects and scripts into which the Sacred Writings and other literature of the Bahá'í Faith have been translated; the number has now reached over 800. These achievements include translations, publications and recordings on tape.

Information about the languages in which the Bahá'í literature is currently available may be obtained from the Bahá'í World Centre, P.O. Box 155, 31001 Haifa, Israel.

7. A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THESES RELATING TO THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

THIS bibliography is an attempt to bring together all theses and dissertations relating to the Bahá'í Faith which have been required for obtaining university degrees, whether Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral. Entries are arranged alphabetically by author's family name. Each thesis is assigned a number in sequence which begins with TH. This volume of *The Bahá'í World* continues the first two installments included in *The Bahá'í World* Vol. XVIII (1978–1983) and Vol. XIX (1983–1986).

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TH205. Smith, L. Douglas. (1987) *Evaluation de la couverture vaccinale dans le district rural d'Alplahoue en Republique Populaire du Benin.*—Mémoire, Université Nationale du Benin, Cotonou.

TH206 Snyder, Channing Z. (1991) *Dawn of the solar energy revolution.*—M.S., Pacific Western University, Los Angeles.

TH207. Soave, Fernando. (1988) *Het Baha'i beleid als model voor een nieuwe beschaving.*—Diploma in Marketing, Limburgs Hoger Handelsinstituut Hasselt, Belgium.

TH208. Stephens, K. Dean. (1990) *Village radio: the development of communication and the communication of development.*—Ph.D., The Union Institute, Cincinnati, Ohio.

TH209. Stockman, Robert H., (1990) *The Baha'i Faith and American Protestantism.*—Ph.D., Harvard Univeristy.

TH210. Tapon, Francis Andrew. (1992) *The End is at hand: the eschatology of the Bahá'í Faith and the worldwide church of God.*—B.A. with Honors, Amherst College (Amherst, Mass.).

TH211. Taylor, Mahdokht Martha Tebyani. (1988) *The Baha'i educational philosophy: its implications to values education in the Philippines.*—Ph.D., University of the Philippines System.

TH212. Toluie, Koorosh. (1989) *The Establishment of a permanent and universal peace as the supreme goal of mankind.*—Ph.D., City University of Los Angeles.

TH213. Towfigh, Nicola. (1987) *Schöpfung und Offenbarung aus der Sicht der Bahá'í-Religion : anhand ausgewählter Texte.*— Inaugural -Dissertation/Ph.D., Ruhr Universität.

TH214. Ubben, Lori L. (1992) *Development of the Baha'i Faith in Central Illinois, 1898–1957.*—M.A., Illinois State University.

TH215. Vargha, Ruhi. (1986) *The Architectural and symbolic significance of the Baha'i House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois.*—M.S., Brooks Institute of Photographic Art and Sciences (Santa Barbara, Calif.).

TH216. Walline, David L. (1974) *A History of the Baha'i National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada from its origins to 1937.*—B.A., Yale University (New Haven, Conn.).

TH217. Weinberg, Robert M., (1986) *Meetings with remarkable men: a special study.*—B.A., Brighton Polytechnic.

TH218. Williams, Pontheolla Taylor. (1977) *A Critical analysis of the poetry of Robert Hayden through his middle years.*—Ed.D., Columbia University Teachers College.

TH219. Wise, Anny. (1985) *Joseph and his multi-coloured story: the story of Joseph and his brothers.*—Faculty of Comparative Religions, Antwerp.

TH220. Woodbury, Sarah. (1990) *Unity in diversity: a study of belief and practice in a Bahá'í Community.*—B.A., Bryn Mawr College (Pa.).

TH221. Wright, Campbell Robert. (1987) *Bahá'ís and education in New Zealand.*—M.A., University of Auckland.

TH222. Wyman, June R. (1988) *Becoming a Baha'i: discourse and social networks in an American religious movement.*—Ph.D., The Catholic University of America (Washington, D.C.).

8. A Partial Listing of Current General Bahá'í Periodicals

A. Produced under the Auspices of Bahá'í Institutions

1. *'Andalíb.* v. 1, no. 1 (138, 1981–1982)–. Thornhill Ont.: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada. Persian language general Bahá'í journal.
2. *Bahá'í Digest.* (Apr. 1988)–. Kuala Lumpur: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Malaysia. Digest of articles from Bahá'í periodicals around the world.
3. *Bahá'í Studies Bulletin.* v. 1. (June 1982)–. Newcastle upon Tyne. Eng.: Stephen Lambden. Unofficial journal of Bahá'í studies.
4. *Brilliant Star.* v. 15, no. 1 (Mar.–Apr. 1983)–. Hixson, Tenn.: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. Children's journal which succeeds *Child's Way.*
5. *Glory: Bahá'í Youth Magazine.* v. 1, no. 1 (Dec. 1966)–. Panchgani: National Bahá'í Youth Committee of India.
6. *Herald of the South [New series].* v. 1 (Oct. 1984)–. Canberra, A.C.T.: National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of Australia and New Zealand.
7. *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies = La Revue des études Bahá'ies = La Revista de estudios Bahá'ís.* v. 1, no. 1 (1988)–. Ottawa, Ont.: Association for Bahá'í Studies. A multi-lingual journal of Bahá'í scholarship.
8. *One Country: newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community.* v. 1, no. 1 (Winter 1988)–. New York: Bahá'i International Community, Office of Public Information.
9. *One Country: revue de la Communautée International Bahá'íe.* no. 1 (Jan./Mar.1989)–. Ed. Francaise. New York: Communautée Internationale Bahá'íe.
10. *Opinioni Bahá'í.* no. 1 (1973) - no. 16 (luglio 1976); v. 1, no. 1 (inverno 1977)–. Roma: Assemblea Spirituale Nazionale dei Bahá'í d'Italia. Italian language general Bahá'í journal.
11. *La Pensée Bahá'í.* no. 1 (Jan. 1962)–. Berne: Assemblée Spirituelle Nationales des Bahá'ís de la Suisse. French language general Bahá'í journal.
12. *Tia¯n xià yi¯ jià.* [*One Country.* Chinese, simplified script]. no. 6 (Nov. 1991)–. New York: Bahá'i International Community, Office of Public Information.
13. *Tia¯n xià yi¯ jià* [*One Country* Chinese, traditional script]. no. 1 (Sept. 1991)–. New York: Bahá'i International Community, Office of Public Information.
14. *World Order.* v. 1, no. 1 (Fall 1966)–. Wilmette, Ill.: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. General Bahá'í journal.

B. Produced under Non-Institutional Auspices

1. *From the Hearts of the Handmaidens.* v. 1, no. 1 (March 1989)–. Lynnwood, Wash.: Women's Consultative Group.
2. *Spiritual Mothering Journal.* v. 1, no. 1 (Jan.–Feb. 1981)–. Dover, N.H.: Melinda Armstrong.

9. A PARTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF COMMERCIALLY PRODUCED SLIDE SHOWS ON THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH 1971–1992

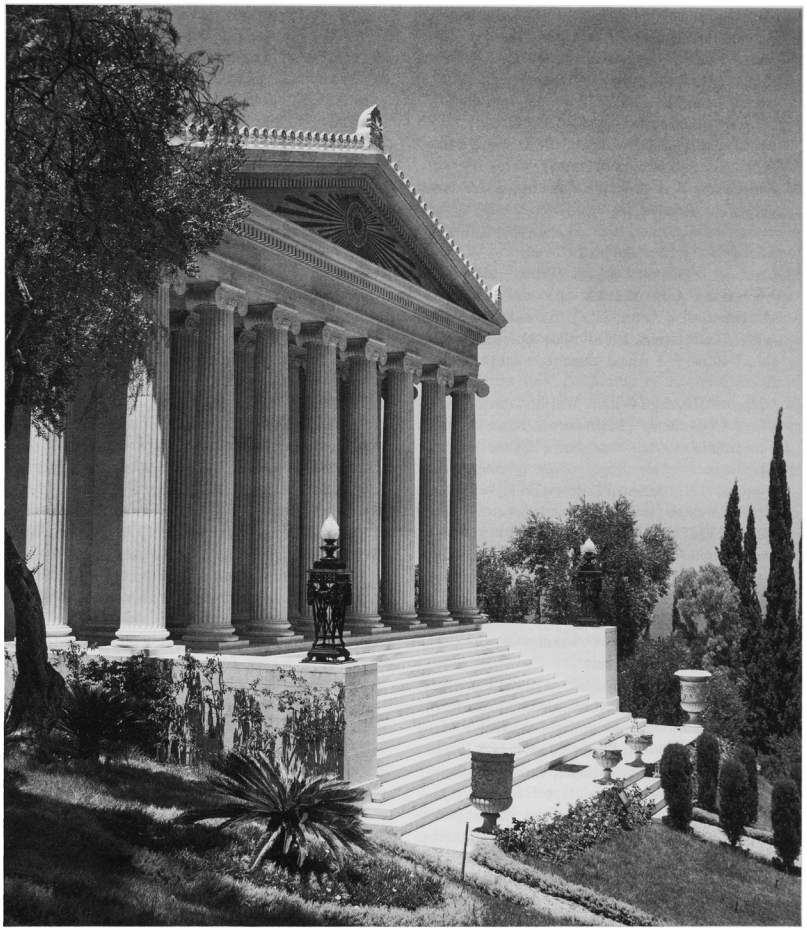
1. *6-slide sets.* [Wilmette, Ill.]: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States; [Victor, N.Y.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center [distributor], 1976. 54 slides: col.
2. *24 deepening slides.* [New Delhi]: National Bahá'í Audio-Visual Committee of India, ca. 1980. 24 slides: col. + 1 sound cassette + 24 leaves: ill.; 8 x 22 cm.
3. *1963 International Bahá'í Convention and World Congress.* [Wilmette, Ill.]: Published for the Universal House of Justice by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, 1964. 1 slide show (82 slides): col. + script (22 p.: ill.; 18 x 18 cm.).
4. *'Abdu'l-Bahá, Lichtblicke der Vollkommenheit.* [Hofheim-Langenhain]: Bahá'í Audio-Visual Committee Germany = Referat Bild & Ton des Nationalen Geistigen Rates der Bahá'í in Deutschland, 197–. 6 leaves; 30 cm. + 1 sound cassette (25 min.) + 78 slides: col., b & w.
5. *Arc and terraces project.* [Haifa]: Bahá'í World Centre Audio-Visual Department. [Belchertown, Mass.]: Images International, 1991. 1 slide show (20 slides): col.
6. *Der Báb.* [Hofheim-Langenhain]: Bahá'í Audio-Visual Committee Germany = Referat Bild & Ton des Nationalen Geistigen Rates der Bahá'í in Deutschland, 197–. 8 leaves; 30 cm. + 1 sound cassette (27 min.) + 85 slides: col., b & w.
7. *Bahá'í Faith / a slide lecture by Juliette Soderberg.* [New York]: Sheikh Productions, 1975. 1 slide show (32 slides): col. + script (19 p.; 28 cm.) in 3-hole binder. (Religions—East and West).
8. *Bahá'í holy places, 'Akká.* [Victor, N.Y.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center, 197–?. 1 slide show (6 slides): col.
9. *Bahá'í holy places, Bahjí-Mazra'ih.* [Victor, N.Y.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center, 197–?. 1 slide show (6 slides): col.
10. *Bahá'í holy places, Haifa.* [Victor, N.Y.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center, 197–?. 1 slide show (12 slides): col.
11. *Bahá'í house of worship, India.* [Haifa]: Office of Public Information. A series of color slides of the Bahá'i house of worship in New Delhi, India, December 23 to 26, 1986. Photographer, Paul Slaughter, 1986. 1 slide show (30 slides): col. + script (1 leaf; 30 cm.).
12. *The Bahá'í house of worship, Sydney, Australia.* [Mona Vale, N.S.W.]: Bahá'í House of Worship, 1982?. 6 p. folder: ill.; 21 cm. + 6 slides: col.
13. *Bahá'í house of worship, Wilmette, Illinois: Bahá'í house of worship is open to all people.* [Wilmette, Ill.]: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1978?. 1 slide show in 2 pts. (12 slides): col.
14. *Bahá'í house of worship, Wilmette, Illinois.* [Wilmette, Ill.]: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, ca.1970. 1 slide show (18 slides): col.
15. *Die Baha'i im Iran.* [Hofheim-Langenhain]: Bahá'í Audio-Visual Committee Germany = Referat Bild & Ton des Nationalen Geistigen Rates der Bahá'í in Deutschland, 1983. 1 slide show (94 slides): color, b&w + 1 sound cassette + script (11 leaves; 30 cm.).
16. *Bahá'í International Conference, Canberra, 1982.* [Mona Vale, N.S.W.]: National Bahá'í Audio-Visual Committee, 1982. 33 slides in box: col. + 1 sound cassette + script, (7 leaves; 30 cm.).
17. *Bahá'í principles.* [Victor, N.Y.?]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center?, ca.1970. 1 slide show (8 slides): col.
18. *Bahá'í social and economic development.* [Haifa]: Bahá'í World Centre; [Thornhill, Ont.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center [distributor], Riḍván 1987. 1 slide show (80 slides): col., + script (13, [5] leaves).
19. *Bahá'í social and economic development.* [Haifa]: Bahá'í World Centre; [Thornhill, Ont.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center [distributor], Riḍván 1987. 1 slide show (80 slides): col., + 1 sound cassette + script (13, [5] leaves).
20. *Bahá'í World Congress 1963.* [Victor, N.Y.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center, 1968?. 1 slide show (82 slides): col. + script (5 p.; 28 cm.).
21. *The Bahá'ís and the holy land.* Narrated by William Sears, Hand of the Cause. [Wilmette, Ill.]: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971. 1 slide show (8 slides): col. + 1 sound cassette + 1 script (4 p.; 28 cm.).
22. *The Bahá'ís and the holy land* [Haifa]: Bahá'í World Centre—a slide program prepared by the Audio-Visual Department. Rev. , 1985. 1 slide show (76 slides): col.; + 1 script (8 p.).
23. *Bahá'í holy place, Haifa.* [Düsseldorf, Ger.]: Spank, 197–?. 1 slide show (6 slides): col.
24. *Bahá'u'lláh.* [Hofheim-Langenhain]: Bahá'í Audio-Visual Committee Germany=Referat Bild & Ton des Nationalen Geistigen Rates der Bahá'í in Deutschland, 197–. 9 leaves; 30 cm. + 1 sound cassette (31 min.) + 96 slides: col., b & w.
25. *Birds of diverse feathers consult together.* Written by Daniel C. Jordan; English narration by Carol and Jim Allen; artwork by Douglas Honaker. [Wilmette]

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States; [Victor, N.Y].: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center [distributor], 1972. 1 slide show (94 slides): col. + 1 sound cassette + script (5 p.; 28 cm.).

26. *Bonds of unity.* [Wilmette, Ill.]: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, 1977. 1 slide show (140 slides): col. + script (18 leaves).
27. *Call to action: revision 2.* [Wilmette, Ill.?]: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States?, ca. 1960?. 1 slide show (104 slides): col., b & w.
28. *Call to action: revision 3.* [Wilmette, Ill.?:] National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States?, ca. 1960?. 1 slide show (87 slides): col., b&w.
29. *Canada's six year plan.* [Thornhill, Ont.]: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, Dec. 1986. 1 slide show (54 slides): col. + "slide guide" (4 p.; 28 cm.).
30. *Carmel...the mountain of God*: the relationship of Mount Carmel to the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith. [Victor, N. Y.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center, 1969. 1 slide show (59 slides): col. + script (18 p.: ill.; 18 x 18 cm.).
31. *The Century of light: an introduction to the Bahá'í Faith.* [New Delhi]: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India, 1988. 1 slide show (159 slides): col.
32. *Challenge to victory.* [Victor, N.Y.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center, 1969. 1 slide show (123 slides): col.
33. *Color slides of the Bahá'í International Convention, April 1988.* [Haifa]: Office of Public Information; [Thornhill, Ont.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center [distributor], 1988. 1 slide show (20 slides): col. 1 p. script.
34. *Convención Internacional Bahá'í y Congreso Mundial, 1963.* [Wilmette, Ill.]: Publicado para la Casa Universal de Justicia por la Asamblea Espiritual Nacional de los Bahá'ís de los Estados Unidas de América, 1964. 1 slide show (82 slides): col. + script (22 p.: ill.; 18 x 18 cm.).
35. *The Dawning place of the mention of God.* [Wilmette, Ill.]: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1972. 1 slide show (80 slides): col. + script (20, [4] p.: ill.; 18 x 18 cm.).
36. *The Dawning place of the mention of God = El Punto de amanecer de la mención de Dios.* [Wilmette, Ill.]: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States; [Victor, N.Y.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center [distributor], 1972. 1 slide show (80 slides): col. + 1 sound cassette + English & Spanish scripts (4 p.; 28 cm. [each]).
37. *Each one teach one.* [Wilmette, Ill.]: National Teaching Committee, National Education Committee, 1975. 1 slide show (44 slides): col. + 1 sound cassette.
38. *Election de l'Assemblée Spirituelle Locale = The Election of the Local Spiritual Assembly.* [Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire]: Centre d'Audio-Visuel Bahá'í de l'Afrique, 1984?. 8 p.: ill.; 21 cm. + 1 sound cassette + 54 slides: col.
39. *Die Erde ist eine Heimat*: Tonbildschau, D-4, 98 Dias, 28 min. [Hofheim]: Bahá'í Audio-Visual Committee Germany, 197–?. 8 leaves; 30 cm. + 1 sound cassette (28 min.) + 98 slides: col.
40. *Die Erzieher der Menschheit.* [Hofheim]: Bahá'í Audio-Visual Committee Germany, 1980. 1 slide show in 2 parts (79, 97 slides) + 2 sound cassettes + Textmanuskript (8 leaves; 30 cm.).
41. *La Foi Bahá'ie.* [Paris]: Comité National Audio Visuel des Bahá'ís de France, 1985. 1 slide show (78 slides): col. + script (8 leaves).
42. *Das Geheimnis des Gartens*—von Winnifried Barnum Newman (frei übersetzt). [Hofheim-Langenhain]: Ausschuss für Bild & Ton, 1988. 1 slide show (36 slides): col.
43. *The Green light expedition of Rúḥíyyih Rabbani.* [Wilmette, Ill.]: Bahá'í Publishing Trust; [Victor, N.Y.]: International Bahá'í Audio Visual Center [distributor], 1976. 4 pts. slide show (160, 112, 160, 160 slides): col. 4 sound cassettes + scripts ([24], [20], [24], [24] p.: ill.; 18 x 18 cm.).
44. *The Green light expedition of Rúḥíyyih Rabbani.* [Wilmette, Ill]: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976. 4 pts. slide show (160, 112 160, 160, slides): col. + 4 sound cassettes + scripts ([24], [20], [24], [24] p.: ill.; 18 x 18 cm.).
45. *Growth and development of the Bahá'i World community = Crecimiento y desarrollo de la comunidad mundial Bahá'í = Croissance et développment de la communaute mondiale bahá'ie.* [Haifa]: Bahá'í World Centre Department of Statistics. [Thornhill, Ont.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center, 1986. 65 slides: col. & English script (18 leaves; 28 cm.), Spanish script (9 leaves; 28 cm.), French script (11 leaves; 28 cm.).
46. *Da guerra à paz*—para ilustrar a mensagem da Casa Universal de Justiça aos povos do mundo "A Promessa da paz"; craição e roteiro, Luis Hennique Beust. [Mogi Mirim, S.P., Brasil]: Centre Bahá'í de Produção Áudio Visual, 1986. 1 slide show (116 slides): col. + 1 sound cassette + script (10 leaves, 33 cm.).
47. *The Heritage of the martyrs.* [Thornhill, Ont.]: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, 1981. 1 slide show (140 slides): col., b & w + 1 sound cassette + script (5 p.).
48. *Holy places.* [Haifa]: Bahá'í World Centre Audio-Visual Department. [Belchertown, Mass.]: Images International, [1991]. 1 slide show (20 slides): col.
49. *The Hundredth year*: the 1967 inter-continental Bahá'í conferences commemorating the centenary of the proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh. [Victor, N.Y.]: Bahá'í International Audio-Visual Center, 1971.

1 slide show (114 slides): col. + script (25 p.: 8 x 18 cm.).

50. *Ḥuqúqu'lláh compilation.* A Codification of the law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh. History of the trustees of Ḥuqúqu'lláh. [Rocky River, Ohio]: Board of Trustees of Bahá'í Ḥuqúqu'lláh in the United States, 1988. 2 pt. slide show (95, 37 slides): col., b & w + guide (3 leaves).
51. *Le Jour promis.* [Paris]: Comité National Audio Visuel des Bahá'í de France, 1984. 1 slide show (72 slides): col. + script (8 leaves).
52. *Kings and rulers to whom Bahá'u'lláh addressed messages.* [Victor, N.Y.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center, 1968?. 1 slide show (8 slides): b & w + script (2 p.; 21 cm.).
53. *Land of resplendent glory.* Written and photographed by Guy Murchie; cassette narrated by Marzieh Gail. [Victor, N.Y]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center, 1971. 1 slide show (258 slides): col., b & w + 1 sound cassette + script (10 p.; 28 cm.).
54. *Literacy.* [Haifa]: Bahá'í World Centre Audio-Visual Department. [Belchertown, Mass.]: Images International, 1991. 1 slide show (19 slides): col.
55. *The Majesty of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.* [Nashua, N.H.]: Amecap Corporation, c1989. 1 slide show (54 slides): col. + 1 sound cassette + script ([2], ii, 13 [1] leaves; 28 cm.).
56. *Mediterranean Bahá'í Conference, Palermo, Sicily, August 1968 and Centenary Commemoration of Arrival of Bahá'u'lláh in 'Akká, Palestine, 31 August 1968.* [Victor, N.Y]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center, 1968?. 1 slide show (36 slides): col. + slide labels (2 leaves).
57. *Out of God's eternal ocean.* Written and photographed by David Walker; narrated by Joan Bulkin. [Wilmette, Ill.]: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States; [Victor, N.Y.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center [distributor], 1974. 1 slide show (149 slides): col. script (6 p.).
58. *Le Pays de la gloire resplendissante.* Ecrit et photographié par Guy Murchie. [Victor, N.Y.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center, 1971. (258 slides): col., b & w + 1 sound cassette + script (11 p.; 28 cm.). [Land of resplendent glory. French].
59. *Peace.* [Haifa]: Bahá'í World Centre Audio-Visual Department. [Belchertown, Mass.]: Images International, 1991. 1 slide show (20 slides): col.
60. *La Promesa de la paz mundial.* [Bogotá]: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Colombia, 1987?. 1 slide show (54 slides): col. + 1 sound cassette + script (10 leaves).
61. *Radio Bahá'í Equateur.* [Paris]: Comité National Audio Visuel des Bahá'ís de France, ca. 1985. 1 slide show (36 slides): col. + 1 sound cassette script (3 leaves).
62. *The Red velvet story.* [Wilmette, Ill.]: National Spiritual Assembly of the United States; [Victor, N.Y.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center [distributor], 1973. 1 slide show (112 slides): col. 1 sound cassette (19 min.) + script (5 p.; 28 cm.).
63. *Second International Bahá'í Convention, Haifa, April 1968.* [Victor, N.Y.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center, 1968?. 1 slide show (36 slides): col. + script (5 p.).
64. *Si nous n'enseignons pas, qui le fera?* [Paris]: Comité National Audio Visuel des Bahá'ís de France, ca. 1985. 1 slide show (35 slides): col. + 1 sound cassette + script (4 leaves).
65. *Social and economic development.* [Haifa]: Bahá'í World Centre Audio-Visual Department. [Belchertown, Mass.]: Images International, 1991. 1 slide show (20 slides): col.
66. *Temples.* [Haifa]: Bahá'í World Centre Audio-Visual Department. [Belchertown, Mass.]: Images International, 1991. 1 slide show (20 slides): col.
67. *The Trusted ones of God.* [Wilmette, Ill.]: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States; [Victor, N.Y.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center [distributor], 1972. 1 slide show (50 slides): col. + 1 sound cassette + script (4 p.).
68. *Unity in diversity*: a report on the eight oceanic and continental conferences. [Wilmette, Ill.]: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1972. 1 slide show (130 slides): col. + 1 sound cassette + script (32 p.: ill.; 18 x 18 cm.).
69. *Das Vermächtnis der Märtyrer.* [Hofheim-Langenhain]: Bahá'í Audio-Visual Committee Germany, ca.1980. 1 slide show (140 slides): col., b & w. + script (12 leaves; 30 cm.) [The Heritage of the martyrs. German].
70. *La Vie familiale Bahí'ie*: diapositives et cassette / photos, Joseph Tsaka; voix Delphine Biteghe; texte Susan Allen. [Port Gentil]: Comité National Audio-Visuel du Gabon, 1990?. 1 slide show (35 slides): col. 1 sound cassette.
71. *Women.* [Haifa]: Bahá'í World Centre Audio-Visual Department. Belchertown, Mass.: Images International, 1991. 1 slide show (20 slides): col.
72. *The World Centre.* [Victor, N.Y.]: International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center, 1968. 1 slide show (75 slides): col. + script (18 p.; 18 x 18 cm.).
73. *Youth and children.* [Haifa]: Bahá'í World Centre Audio-Visual Department. [Belchertown, Mass.]: Images International, 1991. (20 slides): col.



International Bahá'í Archives Building, on Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel.

III
ORIENTAL TERMS

1. TRANSLITERATION OF ORIENTAL WORDS FREQUENTLY USED IN BAHÁ'Í LITERATURE

'Abá
Ábádih
'Abbás
'Abdu'l-Bahá
'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd
'Abdu'l-Ḥusayn
'Abdu'llah
Abhá
Abu'l-Faḍl
'Adasíyyih
Adhán
Ádhirbáyján
Afnán
Aghṣán
'Ahd
Aḥmad
Aḥsá'í
Ahváz
Akbar
'Akká
'Alá'
'Alí
'Alí-Muḥammad
Alláh-u-Abhá
Alváḥ
Alva.. ..-Saláṭín
Amatu'l-Bahá
Amín
Amír
Amír-Niẓám
Amru'lláh
Ámul
Anzalí
Áqá
Aqdas
'Arabistán
Asmá'
Astarábád
'Aváshiq
Ayádí
Azal
'Aẓamat
'Azíz

Báb
Bábí
Bábu'l-Báb
Baghdád
Bahá
Bahá'í
Bahá'u'lláh
Bahíyyih
Bahjí
Balúchistán
Bandar-'Abbás
Báqir
Baqíyyatu'lláh
Bárfurúsh
Baṣrih
Báṭúm
Bayán
Bayt
Big
Bírjand
Bishárát
Bismi'lláh
Bukhárá
Burújird
Búshihr
Bushrú'í
Bushrúyih

Chihríq

Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih
Dárúghih
Dawlat-Ábád
Dhabíḥ
Duzdáb

Fará'id
Fárán
Farmán
Farrásh-Báshí
Fárs
Farsakh
Fatḥ-'Alí
Firdaws
Firdawsí

Ganjíh
Gílán
Gul
Gulistán
Gurgín

Ḥabíb
Ḥadíth
Ḥaḍrat
Ḥájí
Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí
Ḥájj
Hamadán
Ḥaram
Ḥasan
Hawdaj
Ḥaydar-'Alí
Haykal
Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds
Ḥijáz
Hijrat
Ḥimmat-Ábád
Ḥujjat
Ḥusayn

Ibráhím
Íl
'Ilm
Imám
Imám-Jum'ih
Imám-Zádih
Íqán
Írán
'Iráq
'Iráqí
'Iraq-i-'Ajam
Iṣfahán
'Ishqábád
Ishráqát
Ishtihárd
Islám
Ismá-'ílíyyih
'Izzat

Jalál
Jamádíyu'l-Avval
Jamál
Jamál-i-Mubárak
Jamál-i-Qidam
Jásb

Jubbih

Ka'bih
Kad-Khudá
Kalántar
Kalimát
Kamál
Karand
Karbilá
Káshán
Kashkúl
Kawmu's-Ṣa'áyidih
Kawthar
Kázim
Kázimayn
Khalkhál
Khán
Khániqayn
Khaylí Khúb
Khurásán
Khuy
Kirmán
Kirmánsháh
Kitáb-i-'Ahd
Kitáb-i-Aqdas
Kitáb-i-Asmá'
Kitáb-i-Badí'
Kitáb-i-Íqán
Kuláh
Kurdistán

Láhíján
Lár
Lawḥ
Luristán

Madrisih
Maḥbúbu'sh-Shuhadá
Mahdi-'Ulyá
Máh-Kú
Maḥmúd
Maláyir
Man-Yuẓhiruhu'lláh
Maqám
Marághih
Marḥabá
Marv
Masá'il
Mashhad
Mashíyyat
Mashriqu'l-Adhkár
Masjid
Maydán
Mázindarán
Mihdí
Miḥráb
Mílán
Mi'ráj
Mírzá
Mishkín-Qalam
Mu'adhdhuin
Muftí
Muḥammad
Muḥammd-'Alí
Muḥammarih
Muḥarram
Mujtahid
Mulk
Mullá
Munírih
Muṣṭafá
Mustagháth
Muẓaffri'd-Dín

Nabíl
Nabíl-i-A'ẓam
Najaf
Najaf-Ábád
Náqiḍín
Naṣír
Náṣiri'd-Dín
Navváb
Naw-Rúz
Nayríz
Naysháp úr
Nuqṭih
Núr

Pahlaví
Párán

Qáḍí
Qádíyán
Qahqahih
Qá'im
Qájár
Qalyán
Qamṣar
Qaṣr-i-Shírín
Qasvín
Qawl
Qayyúm
Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'
Qiblih
Qúchán
Quddús
Qudrat
Qum
Qur'án
Qurbán
Qurratu'l-'Ayn

Rafsanján
Raḥím
Rahmán
Raḥmat
Ra'ís
Ramaḍán
Rasht
Rawḥání
Riḍván
Rúḥu'lláh

Sabzivár
Sadratu'l-Muntahá
Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán
Ṣaḥífatu'l-Ḥaramayn
Sa'íd
Salsabíl
Samarqand
Sangsar
Sárí
Saysán
Sha'bán
Sháh
Shahíd
Shahmírzád
Sháhrúd
Sharaf
Shari'ah
Shaykh
Shaykh-Ṭabarsí
Shaykhu'l-Islám
Shí'ah (Shí'ih)
Shíráz
Shúshtar
Simnán
Sístán
Síyáh-Chál
Siyyid
Ṣúfí
Sulaymán
Sulṭán
Sulṭán-Ábád
Sulṭánu'sh-Shuhadá'
Sunní
Súratu'l-Haykal
Súrih
Súriy-i-Damm
Súriy-i-Ghuṣn
Súriy-i-Ra'ís
Súriy-i-Ṣabr

Ṭabarsí
Tabríz
Ṭáhirih
Tajallíyát
Tákur
Taqí
Ṭarázát
Tarbíyat
Táshkand
Tawḥíd
Thurayyá
Ṭihrán
Túmán
Turkistán

'Ulamá
Urúmíyyih
'Uthmán

Vaḥíd
Valí
Valí-'Ahd
Varqá
Vazír (also Vizír)

Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá
Yaḥyá
Yazd

Zanján
Zarand
Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín

2. Guide to Transliteration and Pronunciation of the Persian Alphabet

THE system outlined below was approved by the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith for use by Bahá'ís throughout the world in transcribing the Persian and Arabic terms and names which occur frequently in Bahá'í literature, thus ensuring uniformity in the practice of Bahá'í communities which use the Roman alphabet. Research by Bahá'í scholars has concluded that the system is based on the one adopted by the Tenth International Congress of Orientalists which was held in Geneva 1894, and was also adopted by the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society in October 1896.

Character	TS	IPA	Character	TS	IPA	Character	TS	IPA
ا ء	'	[ʔ]	ر	r	[r]	ف	f	[f]
ب	b	[b]	ز	z	[z]	ق	q	[q]
پ	p	[p]	ژ	zh	[ʒ]	ک	k	[k]
ت	t	[t]	س	s	[s]	گ	g	[g]
ث	th	[s]	ش	sh	[ʃ]	ل	l	[l]
ج	j	[ʤ]	ص	ṣ	[s]	م	m	[m]
چ	ch	[tʃ]	ض	ḍ	[z]	ن	n	[n]
ح	ḥ	[h]	ط	ṭ	[t]	و	v	[v]
خ	kh	[x]	ظ	ẓ	[z]	ه	h	[h]
د	d	[d]	ع	‘	[ʔ]	ی	y	[j]
ذ	dh	[z]	غ	gh	[ɣ]			

TS	IPA	Approximate pronunciation in English
a	[æ]	As in 'bat'
á	[ɑ:]	Between the sound in 'sharp' (British) or 'shop' (American), and that in 'hall'
i	[ɛ]	As in 'best'
í	[i:]	As in 'meet'
u	[ɔ]	As in 'shot' (British) or 'short' (American)
ú	[u:]	As in 'moon'
aw	[oʊ]	As in 'know'
ay	[ɛi]	As in 'hay'

The first of the above tables shows the letters in the Persian alphabet, the equivalent in the transliteration system (TS) and the sound as shown by the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

Vowels can be indicated in Persian and Arabic by signs written above or below the preceding consonant, followed, if they are long, by another consonantal letter. These vowel signs, however, are seldom written. Therefore, for simplicity's sake, the second table shows only their transliterated form and their equivalents in the International Phonetic Alphabet.

3. Notes on the Pronunciation of Persian Words

The emphasis in Persian words is more or less evenly distributed, each syllable being equally stressed as in French. For example, do not say 'Tabríz' or 'Ṭabarsí'; stay as long on one syllable as on the next; 'Tabríz', 'Ṭabarsí'. (While there are many exceptions to this rule, it is the most generally correct method of treating the question of stress.)

A frequent mistake is the failure to distinguish between broad and flat 'a's. This differentiation makes the language especially musical and should be observed: in the word 'Afnán', for example, pronounce the first 'a' as in 'at' and the second syllable to rhyme with 'on' (American) or 'barn' (British). English-speakers are apt to pronounce a short 'a' plus 'r' like the word 'are'; this is a mistake; 'ar', as in 'Tarbíyat' for example, should be pronounced as in the name 'Harry'.

The same differentiation should be observed in the case of long and short 'i' and long and short 'u'. As the guide to the transliteration indicates, short 'i' is like the 'e' in 'best', and long 'i' like 'ee' in 'meet'; for example, 'Ibráhím' is pronounced 'Ebráheem', 'Islám' is 'Esslahm'. Short 'u' being like 'o' in 'short' (American) or 'shot' (British), and long 'u' like 'oo' in 'moon', the following would be pronounced: 'Quddús' –'Qod-doos'; 'Bárfurúsh'–'Barforoosh'.

Pronouce 'aw' to rhyme with 'low', or 'mown'; 'Naw-Rúz' is 'No-Rooz'.

The following letters have different sounds in Arabic, but in Persian are all pronounced like 'z': 'dh, z, ẓ, ḍ'.

Similarly, the following consonants may all be pronounced 'ss': 'th, s, ṣ'.

'Zh' is pronounced like the 's' in 'pleasure'. 'Kh' is pronounced like 'ch' in Scottish 'loch' or German 'Nacht'; do not pronounce it as 'k'. English-speakers often experience difficulty pronouncing 'gh' and 'q'; a guttural French 'r' will serve here; otherwise use a hard 'g' as in 'good'.

'H' and 'ḥ', although having different sounds in Arabic are pronounced in Persian approximately as is the English aspirate 'h'. This sound should never be dropped, even when it comes at the end of a word, nor does it lengthen a preceding short vowel.

In the case of double letters, pronounce both as in the case of the 'nn' in the English word 'unneeded', eg. ''Abbás'.

The characters transliterated (') represent a pause; it is not unlike the initial sound made in pronouncing such a word as 'every'. The word 'Bahá'í' has a short 'a' in the first syllable, then a long 'á' in the second, followed by a brief pause and then a long 'í'.

The character transliterated (') may also be treated as a pause.

As Persian writing usually indicates no short vowel sounds and as its pronunciation differs in different localities throughout Írán and the Near East as well as among individuals in any given locality, a uniform system of transliteration such as the above, which is in use by Bahá'í communities all over the world, is indispensable to the student.

4. Definitions of Some of the Oriental Terms Used in Bahá'í Literature

Ab *Father*

Abá (See **Abú**)

'Abá A loose, sleeveless cloak or mantle, open in front.

'Abd *Servant, bondsman, worshipper (of God).*

'Abdu'l-Bahá *Servant of Bahá:* title of the eldest son of Bahá'u'lláh, and Centre of His Covenant.

Abhá *Most Glorious.* (See **Alláh-u-Abhá; Bahá'u'l-Abhá.**)

Abí (See **Abú.**)

Abjad notation System whereby each letter of the Arabic alphabet is assigned a specific numerical value.

Abú, Abá, Abí *Father of.*

Adhán Muslim call to prayer.

Adíb *Refined, cultured, learned; writer, scholar, man of letters:* title of one of the early Hands of the Cause.

'Adl *Justice.* (See **Baytu'l-'Adl-i-A'ẓam.**)

Afnán Literally *Twigs:* the Báb's kindred; specifically, descendants of His three maternal uncles and His wife's two brothers.

Ághá Originally *Lord, nobleman; officer, commander:* placed after a woman's name Ághá is a courtesy title comparable with **Áqá**; may also form part of a compound proper name.

Aghṣán Literally *Branches:* denotes sons and male descendants of Bahá'u'lláh.

A.H. *Anno Hegirae (in the year of the Emigration):* denotes the Muslim Era, reckoned from the year of Muḥammad's flight from Mecca to Medina in A.D. 622. (See **Hijrat.**)

'Ahd *Covenant, bond, treaty; the Covenant (of God).*

Aḥsanu'l-Qiṣaṣ Literally *The Best of Stories:* a name for the Súrih of Joseph. *Tafsír-i-Aḥsanu'l-Qiṣaṣ*; the Báb's *Commentary on the Súrih of Joseph*, the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'.*

Akbar *Greater, greatest.* (See **Alláh-u-Akbar; Kabír.**)

Al- The definite article in Arabic.

A'lá *Most Exalted.* (See **Ḥaḍrat-i-A'lá; Qalam-i-A'lá.**)

'Alá' *Loftiness:* nineteenth month of the Badí' calendar. (See **Há.**)

Al-Abhá *The Most Glorious.* (See **Bahá'u'l-Abhá.**)

'Alí The first Imám and rightful successor of Muḥammad; also the fourth Caliph according to the **Sunnah**.

Alláh *God.*

Alláh-u-Abhá *God is Most Glorious:* The Greatest Name, adopted during the period of Bahá'u'lláh's exile in Adrianople as a greeting among the Bahá'ís.

Alláh-u-Akbar *God is Most Great:* Muslim salutation, and opening words of the call to prayer, superseded by **Alláh-u-Abhá** as a greeting among the Bahá'ís during the Adrianople period.

Al-Madínah Literally *The City (of the Prophet).* (See **Mecca.**)

Amih *Maid(servant), handmaid(en).* **Amatu'l-Bahá**: *Maidservant of* **Bahá. Amatu'lláh**: *Handmaiden of God.*

Amín *Faithful, trustworthy, honest; trustee:* title bestowed by Bahá'u'lláh on Ḥájí Sháh-Muḥammad-i-Manshádí and Ḥájí Abu'l-Ḥasan-i-Ardikání, first trustees of the **Ḥuqúqu'lláh.**

Amír *Prince, ruler; commander, governor.*

Anís Literally *companion, friend, associate:* appellation given by the Báb to Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Zunúzí, the youthful disciple who shared His martyrdom.

Áqá *Master; The Master:* title given by Bahá'u'lláh to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Also used, preceding a name, in an honorific sense: *Mister, Sir.* (See **Sarkár-Áqá.**)

Aqdas *Most Holy.* (See **Kitáb-i-Aqdas.**)

Arḍ *Earth, land, territory.* (See **Ṣád; Shín; Sirr; Ṭá.**)

'Áshúrá Tenth day of the month of **Muḥarram,** anniversary of the martyrdom of the Imám Ḥusayn.

Asmá' *Names:* ninth month of the Badí' calendar.

Ayádí Literally *hands; Hand(s) of the Cause.*

Ayyám *Days.* (See **Há.**)

A'ẓam *Greatest.* (See **Baytu'l-'Adl-i-A'ẓam; Ism-i-A'ẓam; Ṣadr-i-A'ẓam.**)

'Aẓamat *Grandeur:* fourth month of the Badí' calendar.

'Aẓím Literally *mighty, great, glorious:* title given by the Báb to Mullá Shaykh 'Alí of Khurásán.

Báb *Gate:* title assumed by Mírzá 'Alí-Muḥammad after the declaration of His Mission in Shíráz on 23 May 1844.

Bábí Follower of the Báb.

Bábu'l-Báb *The Gate of the Gate:* title of Mullá Ḥusayn, the first Letter of the Living.

Badí' *Wonderful:* (1) title of Áqá Buzurg of Khurásán, the seventeen-year-old bearer of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh; (2) style of the new nineteen-month calendar of the Bahá'í Era. (See **B.E.**)

Bagum *Lady (of rank), dame, begum:* placed after a woman's given name *Bagum* is a courtesy title comparable with **Big**.

Bahá *Glory, splendour, light:* (1) the Greatest Name (See **Bahá'u'lláh.**); (2) first month of the Badí' calendar.

Bahá'í Follower of Bahá'u'lláh.

Bahá'u'l-Abhá *The Glory of the Most Glorious.* **Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá!** *O Thou the Glory of the Most Glorious!*

Bahá'u'lláh *The Glory of God:* title of Mírzá Ḥusayn-'Alí: born in Ṭihrán on 12 November 1817; ascended in Bahjí, near 'Akká, on 29 May 1892.

Bahjí Literally *delight, gladness, joy:* denotes that part of the Plain of 'Akká where the Shrine and Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh are situated.

Baní-Háshim Literally *Sons of Háshim (great grandfather of Muḥammad):* clan of Quraysh from which Muḥammad was descended.

Baqíyyatu'lláh *Remnant of God:* traditional appelation of the Qá'im, derived from the Qur'án; designation of the Báb as the Promised One of Islám, and applied by Him to Bahá'u'lláh.

Bayán Literally *exposition, explanation, lucidity, eloquence, utterance:* title given by the Báb to His Revelation, and to two of His Writings, one in Persian, the other in Arabic.

Bayt *House.*

Baytu'l-'Adl-i-A'ẓam *The Supreme House of Justice:* a title of the Universal House of Justice.

B.E. *Bahá'í Era:* denotes the Badí' calendar, reckoned from the year of the Báb's declaration of His Mission in 1844.

Big Literally *lord, prince; governor, bey:* placed after given name, *Big* was used as a courtesy title for middle-ranking officials. (See **Khán.**)

Bishárát *Glad Tidings:* title of one of the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

Bismilláhi'r-Raḥmáni'r-Raḥím *In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful:* invocation prefixed to all but the ninth **súrih** of the Qur'án, and composed (in Arabic) of nineteen letters.

Caliph *Vicar, deputy:* successor of the Prophet Muḥammad, supreme civil and spiritual head of the Islamic world, a title claimed by successive dynasties.

Caravanserai, -sera, -sary (See **Khán.**)

Dárúghih *High constable.*

Darvísh *(Religious) mendicant, dervish, Muslim mystic.* (See **Súfí.**)

Dawlih *State, government.*

Dayyán Literally *conqueror, ruler; Judge* (an epithet of the Godhead): title conferred by the Báb on Mírzá Asadu'lláh, learned divine of Khuy.

Dhabíḥ Literally *slain, sacrificed, offered up:* (1) designation of Áqá Siyyid Ismá'íl-i-Zavári'í, enraptured follower of Bahá'u'lláh; (2) title given by Bahá'u'lláh to Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ismá'íl-i-Káshání, ardent early teacher of the Cause.

Dhi'b *The Wolf:* appellation applied by Bahá'u'lláh to Shaykh Muḥammad-Báqir who, together with Mír Muḥammad-Ḥusyan (the **Raqshá**), precipitated the deaths of the King and Beloved of Martyrs, and instigated the martyrdom of many other Bahá'ís, particularly in Iṣfahán and Yazd. (See **Mahbúbu'sh-Shuhadá; Sulṭánu'sh-Shuhadá**.)

Dhikr *Mention, remembering; rememberance of God; praise and thanksgiving; recital of the Names of God, religious exercise or ceremony; the Qur'án, the Word of God.* (Plural: **Adhkár;** see **Mashriqu'l-Adhkár**.)

Dhi'l-Ḥijjih Twelfth month of the Muslim lunar calendar.

Dhi'l-Qa'dih Eleventh month of the Muslim lunar calendar.

El-Abhá (See **Al-Abhá**.)

Farmán *Order, command, edict, royal decree.*

Farrásh *Footman, lictor, attendant.* **Farrásh-Báshí** The head-farrásh.

Farsakh Unit of measurement, approximately 3–4 miles or nearly 5.5 kilometres.

Fáṭimih Daughter of the Prophet, wife of the Imám **'Alí** and mother of the Imám **Ḥusayn**.

Fatvá A legal pronouncement or decree by a Muslim **muftí**.

Firdaws *Garden; paradise.*

Firmán (See **Farmán**.)

Ghuṣn Literally *Branch:* son or male descendant of Bahá'u'lláh. (Plural: **Aghṣán**.)

Ghuṣn-i-Aṭhar *The Purest Branch:* title conferred by Bahá'u'lláh on Mírzá Mihdí, brother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá who died in the Most Great Prison in 'Akká.

Ghuṣn-i-A'ẓam *The Most Great Branch:* title conferred by Bahá'u'lláh on **'Abdu'l-Bahá**.

Há The thirty-first letter of the Persian alphabet, with a numerical value of five. **Ayyám-i-Há** Literally *The days of Há:* the Intercalary Days, so named by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, where He also ordained that they should immediately precede the month of 'Alá, the month of fasting which closes the Bahá'í year. Every fourth year the number of the Intercalary Days is raised from four to five to accommodate the extra day of the leap year.

Ḥadíth Literally *report, account; prophetic tradition:* the whole body of sacred tradition of the Muslims is called the Ḥadíth.

Ḥaḍrat Literally *presence:* placed before a name, in the form of *Ḥaḍrat-i—* the word is a courtesy title signifying 'His Majesty', 'His Holiness'.

Ḥaḍrat-i-A'lá *His Holiness, The Most Exalted One:* a title of the Báb.

Ḥájí, Ḥájj A Muslim who has performed the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Ḥaram *Sanctuary, sacred precinct or court.* (See **Ḥill**.)

Ḥaram-i-Aqdas *The Most Holy Court:* a designation given by the Guardian to the north-western quadrant of the garden surrounding the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh.

Hawdaj *Howdah:* a litter carried by a camel, mule, horse or elephant for travelling purposes.

Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds *The Sacred Fold:* official title designating headquarters of Bahá'í administrative activity in a particular country or region.

Hijrat, Hijra(h) Literally *Emigration; Hegira:* the date of Muḥammad's flight from Mecca to Medina in A.D. 622; the basis of Islamic chronology.

Ḥill Non-sacred ground, an antonym of **Ḥaram**.

Howdah (See **Hawdaj**.)

Ḥujjat Literally *proof, argument, reason:* title of Mullá Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Zanjání, hero of the Zanján upheaval.

Ḥuqúqu'lláh *Right of God:* payment by the believers, instituted in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

Ḥusayn The third Imám, second son of 'Alí and Fáṭimih, martyred on the plains of Karbilá on 10 Muḥarram A.H.61 (A.D.680).

Ḥusayníyyih A place where the martyrdom of the Imám Ḥusayn is mourned, or where Muslim passion-plays may be presented. The term is the designation that was given to Bahá'u'lláh's Most Great House in Baghdád after its forcible occupation by the Shí'ah community.

-i- Sound inserted in pronunciation (though not represented in Persian script) at the end of a word to indicate that the following word stands in a possessive or adjectival relation to it.

Ibn *Son.*

Íl *Clan, tribe.*

'Ilm *Knowledge:* twelfth month of the Badí' calendar.

Imám *Head, chief, leader.* (1) Muslim cleric who leads the congregation in prayer (See **Imám-Jum'ih.**); (2) title applied by the Shí'ahs to each of the twelve successors of Muḥammad in the line of 'Alí. (See **'Alí; Ḥusayn.**)

Imám-Jum'ih Muslim clergyman who performs the Friday prayers, the leading imám in a town or city; chief of the mullás, who recites the Friday prayers for the sovereign.

Imám-Zádih Descendant of an Imám or his shrine.

In-shá'a'lláh *If God wills.*

Íqán Literally *Certitude:* title of Bahá'u'lláh's Epistle to Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid Muḥammad, a maternal uncle of the Báb.

Ishráqát *Splendours:* title of one of the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

Ism *Name.* (Plural: **Asmá'.**)

Ism-i-A'ẓam *The Greatest Name.*

Ismu'lláh Literally *The Name of God:* title bestowed by Bahá'u'lláh on a number of believers.

Isráfíl Angel who sounds the trumpet on the Day of Judgement.

'Izzat *Might:* tenth month of the Badí' calendar.

Jabal *Mountain.* **Jabal-i-Básiṭ** *The Open Mountain,* **Jabal-i-Shadíd** *The Grievous Mountain:* the Báb's allusions to the fortress of Máh-Kú and the castle of Chihríq respectively.

Jáhilíyyih *The Age of Ignorance:* denotes the state of paganism prevailing in Arabia before the advent of Muḥammad.

Jalál *Glory:* second month of the Badí' calendar.

Jamádíyu'l-Avval Fifth month of the Muslim lunar calendar.

Jamádíyu'th-Thání Sixth month of the Muslim lunar calendar.

Jamál *Beauty:* third month of the Badí' calendar.

Jamál-i-Mubárak Literally *The Blessed Beauty:* a title of Bahá'u'lláh.

Jihád Literally *striving, endeavour; crusade; holy war:* enjoined in the Qur'án, abrogated by Bahá'u'lláh.

Jináb Literally *threshold:* placed before a name, in the form *Jináb-i—* the word is courtesy title signifying 'His Excellency', 'His Honour'.

Jubbih An outer coat or cloak.

Ka'bih *The Kaaba:* ancient shrine at **Mecca,** chosen by Muḥammad to be the centre of pilgrimage for Muslims; the most holy shrine in Islám and **Qiblih** of the Muslim world.

Kabír Literally *great, big, old.* (See **Akbar.**)

Kad-Khudá Chief of a ward or parish in a town; headman of a village.

Kalántar *Mayor.*

Kalím *Speaker, interlocuter:* title given by Bahá'u'lláh to His faithful brother, Mírzá Músá. (See **Kalímu'lláh.**)

Kalimát *Words:* seventh month of the Badí' calendar.

Kalímu'lláh *He Who Conversed With God:* title of Moses, given to Him in the Islamic Dispensation.

Kamál *Perfection:* eighth month of the Badí' calendar.

Karbilá'í Style of a Muslim who has performed the pilgrimage to Karbilá; as a title it is placed before the given name.

Kawthar Literally *plentiful, abundant, sweet (potion):* a river in Paradise, whence all other rivers derive their source.

Khádimu'lláh *Servant of God:* title of Mírzá Áqá Ján, amanuensis of Bahá'u'lláh.

Khalífih (See **Caliph.**)

Khalíl *Friend:* (1) (See **Khalí'u'lláh.**) (2) title of Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ibráhím-i-Qazvíní, conferred on him by the Báb.

Khalílu'lláh *Friend of God:* title given to Abraham in the Qur'án.

Khán (1) *Prince, lord, nobleman, chieftain:* originally used as a courtesy title for officers and high-ranking officials, *Khán* came to denote—placed after a given name—simply 'gentleman' (See **Big.**); (2) *exchange, market; inn, caravanserai:* an inn constructed around a central court where caravans (trains of pack animals) may rest for the night.

Khánum *Lady; wife:* placed after a woman's given name, *Khánum* is a courtesy title meaning 'gentlewoman' comparable with **Khán**.

Khiḍr *The Green One:* a prophet, companion of Moses according to Islamic tradition, associated with the unnamed personage mentioned in Qur'án 18:60–82; believed to have drunk from the fountain of life and to be its custodian, he symbolizes the true guide.

Khuṭbih Sermon delivered in the mosques on Fridays at noon by the **imám**.

Kiblah (See **Qiblih**.)

Kitáb *Book.*

Kitáb-i-Aqdas *The Most Holy Book:* title of Bahá'u'lláh's Book of Laws and Ordinances.

Kitáb-i-Íqán (See **Íqán**.)

Koran (See **Qur'án**.)

Kuláh The Persian lambskin hat worn by government employees and civilians.

Kull-i-Shay' Literally *all things:* the term, whose numerical value is 361, signifies 19 cycles of 19 years in the Badí' calendar.

Lawḥ Literally *slate, sheet, table; Tablet.*

Madínih (See **Medina**.)

Madrisih *Seminary, school, religious college.*

Maḥbúbu'sh-Shuhadá *Beloved of Martyrs:* title conferred by Bahá'u'lláh on Mírzá Muḥammad-Ḥusayn, martyred in Iṣfahán together with his brother, the **Sulṭánu'sh-Shuhadá**. (See Dhi'b.)

Mahdí (See **Mihdí**.)

Makkih (See **Mecca**.)

Man-Yuẓhiruhu'lláh *He Whom God Will Make Manifest:* title given by the Báb to the Promised One.

Marḥabá *Welcome! Brave! Well done!*

Masá'il *Questions:* fifteenth month of the Badí' calendar.

Mashhadí Style of a Muslim who has performed the pilgrimage to Mashad; as a title it is placed before the given name.

Mashíyyat *Will:* eleventh month of the Badí' calendar.

Mashriqu'l-Adhkár Literally *The Dawning-place of the Praise of God:* title designating a Bahá'í House of Worship.

Masjid *Mosque:* a Muslim place of worship.

Maydán A square or open place.

Mecca Birthplace of the Prophet Muḥammad and scene of the early, difficult years of His ministry before His emigration to **Medina**. (See **Hijrat**; **Ka'bih**.)

Medina The 'City of the Prophet', Muḥammad's adoptive home after His flight from **Mecca**, and scene of the latter years of His ministry, during which His Faith spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula, and its social teachings were promulgated. (See **Hijrat**.)

Mihdí Literally *directed, guided; one who is rightly guided; The Mahdi:* a designation of the Twelfth **Imám**; title of the Manifestation expected by Islám.

Miḥráb A niche in the wall of a mosque indicating the direction of Mecca, before which the **imám** stands when leading the congregation in prayer; the most important part of a mosque.

Mír A contraction of **amír**, used, when prefixed to a name, to denote descent from the House of the Prophet. (See **Siyyid**.)

Mi'ráj *The Ascent:* Muhammad's mystic vision of the 'night journey' in which He ascended into heaven.

Mírzá A contraction of *amír-zádih*, meaning 'son of an **amír**'. When affixed to a name it signifies '**Prince**'; when prefixed, it either denotes a clerk, secretary, scribe or scholar, or conveys a merely honorific sense: *Mister.*

Mishkín-Qalam Literally *the musk-scented pen:* title applied to Mírzá Ḥusayn-i-Iṣfahání, a distinguished Bahá'í calligraphist.

Mu'adhdhin *Muezzin:* the one who sounds the **adhán**, the Muslim call to prayer.

Mubárak *Blessed.* (See **Jamál-i-Mubárak**.)

Muftí Expounder of Muslim law; gives a **fatvá** or sentence on a point of religious jurisprudence.

Muḥarram First month of the Muslim lunar calendar, the first ten days of which are obvserved by the Shí'ahs as part of their mourning period for the Imám **Ḥusayn**, whose martyrdom occurred on the tenth day, Áshúrá.

Mujtahid Muslim doctor-of-law. Most of the mujtahids of Írán have received their diplomas from the most eminent jurists of Karbilá and Najaf.

Mulk *Dominion:* eighteenth month of the Badí' calendar.

Mullá Muslim trained in theology and Islamic jurisprudence; theologian, priest.

Mustagháth *He Who Is Invoked (for Help), God:* term used by the Báb in reference to the advent of Bahá'u'lláh on the Day of the Latter Resurrection.

Mutaṣarrif *Governor:* lower in rank than a **válí**.

Nabíl *Learned, noble:* title bestowed by Bahá'u'lláh on a number of the believers, most prominent among whom were Mullá Muḥammad-i-Zarandí, author of *The Dawn-Breakers* (Nabíl-i-A'ẓam), and Mullá Muḥammad-i-Qá'iní (Nabíl-i-Akbar).

Navváb An honorific implying *Grace, Highness:* title of Ásíyih Khánum, wife of Bahá'u'lláh and mother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Naw-Rúz Literally *New Day:* Bahá'í New Year's Day, date of the vernal equinox; according to the Persian calendar, the day on which the sun enters Aries.

Nuqṭih *Point.*

Nuqṭiy-i-Úlá *The Primal Point:* a title of the Báb.

Núr *Light:* fifth month of the Badí' calendar.

Pahlaván *Athlete, champion:* term applied to brave and muscular men.

Páshá Honorary title formerly given to a Turkish officer of high rank such as military commander or provincial governor.

Písh-Kish *Present, tip, douceur.*

Qáḍí Muslim judge—civil, criminal or ecclesiastic.

Qá'im *He Who Shall Arise:* title designating the Promised One of Islám.

Qalam *Pen.*

Qalam-i-A'lá *The Pen of the Most High:* a designation of Bahá'u'lláh.

Qalyán *Narghile, hookah, hubble-bubble pipe:* Oriental pipe in which the smoke is drawn through water in a vase by means of a long tube.

Qawl *Speech:* fourteenth month of the Badí' calendar.

Qayyúmu'l-Asmá' (See **Aḥsanu'l-Qiṣaṣ**.)

Qiblih Literally *that which faces one; prayer-direction; point of adoration:* the focus to which the faithful turn in prayer. The Qiblih for Muslims is the **Ka'bih** in Mecca; for Bahá'ís, the Most Holy Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí: 'the Heart and Qiblih of the Bahá'í world'.

Quddús Literally *Pure, Holy, Blessed;* title conferred by Bahá'u'lláh on Mullá Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Bárfurúshí, last of the eighteen Letters of the Living at the Conference of Badasht.

Qudrat *Power:* thirteenth month of the Badí' calendar.

Qur'án *The Reading; The Recitation; That Which Ought To Be Read:* the Book revealed to Muḥammad; The Koran, Holy Book of the Muslims.

Qurbán *Sacrifice.*

Qurratu'l-'Ayn Literally *Solace of the Eyes:* a term applied to an object of affection. (1) title conferred upon **Ṭáhirih** by Siyyid Káẓim of Rasht; (2) term used by the Báb in the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'* to refer both to Bahá'u'lláh and to Himself.

Rabb-i-A'lá *Exalted Lord:* one of the designations of the Báb.

Rabí'u'l-Avval Third month of the Muslim lunar calendar.

Rabí'u'th-Thání Fourth month of the Muslim lunar calendar.

Raḥmat *Mercy:* sixth month of the Badí' calendar.

Ra'ís *President, head, leader.* **Lawḥ-i-Ra'ís**: Tablet addressed by Bahá'u'lláh to 'Álí Páshá, the Ottoman Grand Vizier.

Rajab Seventh month of the Muslim lunar calendar.

Ramaḍán Ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar in which the Fast is observed.

Raqshá *The She-Serpent:* appellation applied by Bahá'u'lláh to Mír Muḥammad-Ḥusayn, the **Imám-Jum'ih** of Iṣfahán, accomplice of Shaykh Muḥammad-Báqir. (See **Dhi'b.**)

Riḍván Literally *good-pleasure, favour, acceptance; garden, paradise:* name of the custodian of Paradise. The holiest and most significant of all Bahá'í festivals, commemorating Bahá'u'lláh's Declaration of His Mission to His companions in 1863, a twelve-day period extending from 21 April to 2 May, and celebrated annually.

Ṣád The seventeenth letter of the Persian alphabet. **Arḍ-i-Ṣád** Literally *Land of Ṣád:* Iṣfahán.

Sadratu'l-Muntahá *The Divine Lote Tree, The Tree beyond which there is no passing:* symbolic of the Manifestation of God. (See **Sidrih.**)

Ṣadr-i-A'ẓam *Grand Vizier, Prime Minister.*

Ṣafar Second month of the Muslim lunar calendar.

Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán *Lord of the Age:* one of the titles of the promised **Qá'im. Yá Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán!** Rallying cry of the early Bábís.

Salám *Peace, salutation.* **Salámun 'Alaykum** *Peace be with you!* a greeting among Muslims. **Va's-Salám** *And peace (be with you):* formula used to conclude an epistle or dissertation, indicating that the author has nothing further to say.

Salsabíl *Pure, limpid water:* a fountain in Paradise.

Samandar Literally *salamander; phoenix:* a mythical creature indestructible by fire. Title bestowed by Bahá'u'lláh on Shaykh Kázim-i-Samandar of Qazvín.

Sarkár-Áqá Literally *The Honourable Master:* a designation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Sha'bán Eighth month of the Muslim lunar calendar.

Sháh *King,* especially of Írán.

Sháh-Bahrám World Saviour and Promised One of the Zoroastrians, identified by Bahá'ís with Bahá'u'lláh.

Shahíd *Martyr.* (Plural: **Shuhadá**; see **Maḥbúbu'sh-Shuhadá**; **Siyyidu'sh-Shuhadá**; **Sulṭánu'sh-Shuhadá.**)

Sharaf *Honour:* sixteenth month of the Badí' calendar.

Sharí'at, Sharí'ah Literally *path, way; custom, law:* Muslim canonical law.

Shavvál Tenth month of the Muslim lunar calendar.

Shaykh *Venerable old man; tribal or village chief, patriarch, sheik; learned man, elder, professor; clerical dignitary, superior of dervish order.* (See **Shaykhu'l-Islám.**)

Shaykhí (Follower) of the school founded by Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá'í. Among his doctrines, in addition to the imminent dual Advent, was that the Prophet Muḥammad's material body did not ascend to heaven on the night of the **Mí'ráj.**

Shaykhu'l-Islám *High Priest, Grand Muftí:* highest rank in the Muslim religious hierarchy; also, title of the head of a religious court, appointed to every large city by the Sháh.

Shí'ah, Shí'ih Literally *fraction, party, sect:* partisans of 'Alí and of his descendants as the sole lawful 'Vicars of the Prophet'. The Shí'ahs reject the first three Caliphs, believing that the successorship in Islám belonged by divine right to 'Alí (first Imám and fourth Caliph) and to his descendants. Originally, the successorship was the vital point of difference, and Islám was divided because Muḥammad's (albeit verbal) appointment of 'Alí was disregarded. (See **Sunnah**; **Imám.**)

Shí'í, Shiite Member of the Shí'ah (or Party) of 'Alí; Muslim of the Shí'ah branch of Islám.

Shín The sixteenth letter of the Persian alphabet. **Arḍ-i-Shín** Literally *Land of Shín:* Shíráz.

Sidrih *Lote tree.* (See **Sadratu'l-Muntahá.**)

Ṣirát Literally *path, way; the Way of God; the Religion of God; 'The Bridge'* leading to heaven. Denotes the True Faith of God.

Sirr *Secret, mystery.* **Arḍ-i-Sirr** Literally *the Land of Mystery:* Adrianople.

Sirru'lláh *The Mystery of God:* a designation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, conferred on Him by Bahá'u'lláh.

Síyáh-Chál *Black Pit:* the subterranean dungeon in Ṭihrán to which Bahá'u'lláh was consigned in August 1852. Here, chained in darkness three flights of stairs underground, in the company of some 150 thieves and assassins, He received the first intimations of His world Mission; regarded by Bahá'ís as the holiest place in Írán's capital.

Siyyid Literally *chief, lord, prince:* descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad.

Siyyidu'sh-Shuhadá *Prince of Martyrs:* title of Imám Ḥusayn.

Ṣufí An exponent of Sufism, a Muslim mystic or **darvísh**.

Sulṭán *Sovereignty:* (1) seventeenth month of the Badí' calendar; (2) *king, sovereign, monarch, sultan.*

Sulṭánu'sh-Shuhadá *King of Martyrs:* title conferred by Bahá'u'lláh on Mírzá Muḥammad-Ḥasan, martyred brother of the **Maḥbúbu'sh-Shuhadá**.

Sunnah Literally *way, custom, practice; The Way of the Prophet* as reported in the **Ḥadíth**. Designates by far the largest sect of Islám, which includes the four so-called orthodox sects: Hanbalites, Hanafites, Malikites and Shafiites. Sunnis accept the Caliphs as legitimate, believing that the position of Caliph is elective. (See **Shí'ah**; **Caliph**.)

Sunní, Sunnite Muslim of the Sunnah branch of Islám.

Súrih Name of a chapter of the Qur'án; used by the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh in the titles of some of Their Own Writings.

Súrih-i-Mulúk *Súrih of the Kings:* Tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh while in Adrianople.

Ṭá The nineteenth letter of the Persian alphabet, with a numerical value of nine. **Arḍ-i-Ṭá** Literally *Land of Ṭá*: Ṭihrán.

Ṭáhirih Literally *the Pure One:* title conferred on **Zarrín-Táj** by Bahá'u'lláh at the Conference of Badasht.

Táj Literally *crown*: tall felt head-dress adopted by Bahá'u'lláh in 1863, on the day of His departure from His Most Holy House in Baghdád.

Tajallíyát *Effulgences:* title of one of the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

Takyih *Religious house, monastery; hostel for pilgrims; religious theatre* for presenting Muslim passion-plays; place at which the martyrdom of Ḥusayn is commemorated. (See **Ḥusayníyyih**.)

Ṭárázát *Ornaments:* title of one of the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

Túmán Discontinued unit of Iranian currency.

'Ulamá Literally *learned men, scholars; clerical authorities, theologians, divines:* the Muslim religious hierarchy.

Umm *Mother.*

'Urvatu'l-Vuthqá *The Sure Handle, Firm Cord:* a Qur'anic term, used in the Bahá'í Writings to symbolize the Covenant and Testament.

Ustád *Teacher, professor; mechanic, artisan, craftsman.*

Vaḥíd *Single, unique, peerless:* title of Siyyid Yaḥyáy-i-Dárábí, hero of the Nayríz upheaval.

Váḥid Literally *unity; one, single, unique; the One, Indivisible God:* the word, whose numerical value is nineteen, denotes: (1) a 'unity' or section of the *Bayán*. The Persian *Bayán* consists of nine Váḥids of nineteen chapters each, except the last, which has only ten chapters; (2) the eighteen Letters of the Living (the Báb's first disciples) and the Báb Himself, who together constitute the first Váḥid of the Bábí Dispensation; (3) each cycle of nineteen years in the Badí' calendar. (See **Kull-i-Shay'**.)

Valí *Guardian.*

Válí *Governor* (of a province).

Valí-'Ahd *Crown prince, heir to the throne.*

Varaqih *Leaf:* often used metaphorically in the Bahá'í Writings to refer to a woman.

Varaqiy-i-'Ulyá Literally *The Most Exalted Leaf; the Greatest Holy Leaf:* title of Bahá'íyyih (or Bahíyyih) Khánum, saintly daughter of Bahá'u'lláh and 'the outstanding heroine of the Bahá'í Dispensation'.

Varqá *Bird, nightingale; the Heavenly Dove.*

Va's-Salám (See **Salám.**)

Vazír *Vizír, minister (of state), vizier.* **Vazír-i-A'ẓam:** *Grand Vizier, Prime Minister.*

Viláyat *Guardianship.*

Waqf Literally *bequeathing (for charitable uses); pious bequest, religious endowment, estate held in mortmain:* denotes landed property endowed to the Muslim community; in Írán, the estate of the expected Imám.

Yá Vocative particle meaning 'O'. (See **Bahá'u'l-Abhá**; **Ṣaḥibu'z-Zamán.**)

Zádih *Born; offspring, son:* used as a suffix after a proper name it means 'Son of —'. (See **Imám-Zádih**; **Mírzá.**)

Zarrín-Táj Literally *Crown of Gold:* title by which Fáṭimih, daughter of Mullá Ṣáliḥ-i-Baraqání of Qazvín—better known as **Ṭáhirih**—was designated by her family and kindred.

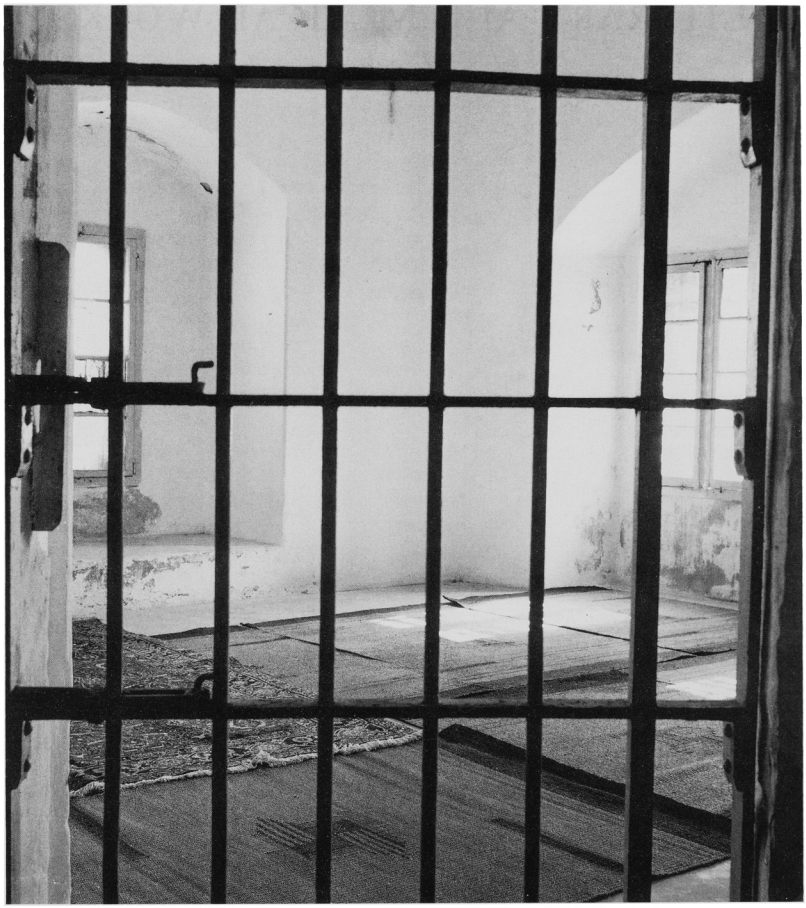
Zawrá' A term signifying Baghdád.

Zamzam Literally *copious (water):* sacred well within the precincts of the Great Mosque in Mecca. Though salty, its water is much esteemed for pious uses, such as ablutions, and drinking after a fast.

Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín Literally *Ornament of the Near (or Favoured) Ones:* title bestowed by Bahá'u'lláh on Mullá Zaynu'l-'Ábidín of Najaf-Ábád, faithful apostle and trusted scribe.

PART SEVEN

LITERARY AND MUSICAL WORKS



The Prison Cell in the Most Great Prison of 'Akká, where Bahá'u'lláh and His family were incarcerated for two years, two months and five days.

I
ESSAYS AND REVIEWS

1. THE SUFFERING, TRIBULATION, EXILE, CAPTIVITY AND CONFINEMENT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

COMPILED BY DONALD R. WITZEL

INTRODUCTION

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH tells us: *The understanding of His words and the comprehension of the utterances of the Birds of Heaven are in no wise dependent upon human learning. They depend solely upon purity of heart, chastity of soul, and freedom of spirit.*[1] The memorization of quotations from Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá is not only important but vitally necessary for the deepening of the believers and their teaching the Faith.

> *The sanctified souls should ponder and meditate in their hearts regarding the methods of teaching. From the texts of the wondrous, heavenly Scriptures they should memorize phrases and passages bearing on various instances, so that in the course of their speech they may recite divine verses whenever the occasion demandeth it, inasmuch as these holy verses are the most potent elixir, the greatest and mightiest talisman. So potent is their influence that the hearer will have no cause for vacillation. I swear by My life! This Revelation is endowed with such a power that it will act as the lodestone for all nations and kindreds of the earth.*[2]

> To deepen in the Cause means to read the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and the Master so thoroughly as to be able to give it to others in its pure form. There are many who have some superficial idea of what the Cause stands for. They, therefore, present it together with all sorts of ideas that are their own. As the Cause is still in its early days we must be most careful lest we fall into this error and injure the Movement we so much adore. There is no limit to the study of the Cause. The more we read the Writings, the more truths we can find in them, the more we will see that our previous notions were erroneous.[3]

Spiritualization can be a step towards spiritual transformation which the Universal House of Justice mentioned in its Riḍván message:

[1] Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Íqán (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 211.

[2] Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978), p. 200.

[3] Shoghi Effendi, quoted by the Universal House of Justice, *Wellspring of Guidance—Messages from the Universal House of Justice 1963–1968* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1970), pp. 88–89.

> Souls must be transformed, communities thereby consolidated, new models of life thus attained. Transformation is the essential purpose of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, but it lies in the will and effort of the individual to achieve it in obedience to the Covenant. Necessary to the progress of this life-fulfilling transformation is knowledge of the will and purpose of God through regular reading and study of the Holy Word.[1]

The act of kindling the light of love in every heart "through being ... set aglow with the fire of the love of God", of maintaining this "fire of love" and of increasing it daily, can be achieved by reading or listening to the scriptures about the suffering, persecutions and sacrifices of Bahá'u'lláh on a daily basis. If we understand what He did for us and we keep it always before our eyes, this will increase our love for Him. The purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's forty years of sacrifice and tribulation was to redeem mankind. We have to fall in love with the Blessed Perfection. This love has to grow daily in our hearts. Then we have to become lovers of Bahá'u'lláh. All the things in this life grow; our love for Bahá'u'lláh also has to grow. Gradually this love has to convert itself into a great fire as we arise to serve the Cause of God with pure hearts full of a new spirit. This is the transforming power of Bahá'u'lláh! We live the Bahá'í life and follow the laws of God for the love of Bahá'u'lláh. For this reason we are firm and constant in God's Covenant.

> The new believers must be deepened in the Covenant. This is really the only source of the fire of the love of God.[2]

A. The Day of God and Advent of the Promised One

The announcement

Behold, how the divers peoples and kindreds of the earth have been waiting for the coming of the Promised One. No sooner had He, Who is the Sun of Truth, been made manifest, than, lo, all turned away from Him, except them whom God was pleased to guide. We dare not, in this Day, lift the veil that concealeth the exalted station which every true believer can attain, for the joy which such a revelation must provoke might well cause a few to faint away and die.[3]

Verily I say, this is the Day in which mankind can behold the Face, and hear the Voice, of the Promised One. The Call of God hath been raised, and the light of His countenance hath been lifted up upon men. It behoveth every man to blot out the trace of every idle word from the tablet of his heart, and to gaze, with an open and unbiased mind, on the signs of His Revelation, the proofs of His Mission, and the tokens of His glory.[4]

Great indeed is this Day! The allusions made to it in all the sacred Scriptures as the Day of God attest its greatness. The soul of every Prophet of God, of every Divine Messenger, hath thirsted for this wondrous Day. All the divers kindreds of the earth have, likewise,

1 Universal House of Justice, "To the Bahá'ís of the World", Riḍván, 1989.

2 Shoghi Effendi, quoted in *The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh (A compilation)*, (Manchester: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1950), p. viii.

3 Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976), pp. 9–10.

4 ibid., pp. 10–11.

yearned to attain it. No sooner, however, had the Day Star of His Revelation manifested itself in the heaven of God's Will, than all, except those whom the Almighty was pleased to guide, were found dumbfounded and heedless.[1]

O thou that hast remembered Me! The most grievous veil hath shut out the peoples of the earth from His glory, and hindered them from hearkening to His call. God grant that the light of unity may envelop the whole earth, and that the seal, "the Kingdom is God's", may be stamped upon the brow of all its peoples.[2]

B. En Route to the Síyáh-Chál of Ṭihrán

An old woman with a stone

As He was approaching that dungeon, an old and decrepit woman was seen to emerge from the midst of the crowd, with a stone in her hand, eager to cast it at the face of Bahá'u'lláh. Her eyes glowed with a determination and fanaticism of which few women of her age were capable. Her whole frame shook with rage as she stepped forward and raised her hand to hurl her missile at Him.... *"I adjure you,"* she pleaded, as she ran to overtake those into whose hands Bahá'u'lláh had been delivered, *"give me a chance to fling my stone in his face!" "Suffer not this woman to be disappointed,"* were Bahá'u'lláh's words to His guards, as He saw her hastening behind Him. *"Deny her not what she regards as a meritorious act in the sight of God."*[3]

C. The Síyáh-Chál, The Black Pit

God alone knoweth what befell Bahá'u'lláh

We were consigned for four months to a place foul beyond comparison. As to the dungeon in which this Wronged One and others similarly wronged were confined, a dark and narrow pit were preferable.... The dungeon was wrapped in thick darkness, and Our fellow-prisoners numbered nearly a hundred and fifty souls: thieves, assassins, and highwaymen. Though crowded, it had no other outlet than the passage by which We entered. No pen can depict that place, nor any tongue describe its loathsome smell. Most of these men had neither clothes nor bedding to lie on. God alone knoweth what befell Us in that most foul-smelling and gloomy place![4]

The prison into which my father had been cast was a terrible place, seven steps below the ground; it was ankle-deep in filth, infested with horrible vermin, and of an indescribable loathsomeness. Added to this, there was no glimmer of light in that noisome place. Within its walls forty Bábís were crowded; murderers and highway robbers were also imprisoned there. My noble father was hurled into this black hole, loaded with heavy chains; five other Bábís were chained to him night and day, and here He remained for four months. Picture to yourself the horror of these conditions.

1 ibid., p. 11.
2 ibid.
3 Nabíl-i-A'ẓam, *The Dawnbreakers* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), pp. 607–608.
4 Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979), pp. 20–21.

Any movement caused the chains to cut deeper and deeper not only into the flesh of one, but of all who were chained together; whilst sleep or rest of any kind was not possible. No food was provided, and it was with the utmost difficulty that my mother was able to arrange to get any food or drink taken into that ghastly prison.[1]

Jamál-i-Mubárak (a name given to my father, i.e., literally the Blessed Beauty) spoke very little of the terrible sufferings of that time! We, who saw the marks of what he had endured, where the chains had cut into the delicate skin, especially that of his neck, his wounded feet so long untended, evidence of the torture of the bastinado, how we wept with my dear mother.
He, on his part, told of the steadfast faith of the friends, who had gone forth to meet their death at the hands of their torturers, with joy and gladness, to attain the crown of martyrdom.[2]

'Abdu'l-Bahá tells how one day He was allowed to enter the prison yard to see His beloved Father when He came out for His daily exercise. Bahá'u'lláh was terribly altered, so ill He could hardly walk. His hair and beard unkempt, His neck galled and swollen from the pressure of a heavy steel collar, His body bent by the weight of His chains. ...[3]

Describing His confinement in the Síyáh-Chál, the Blessed Beauty recalled: *The weight of the chain placed about Our neck was difficult to bear (the heaviest chain used weighed over fifty kilos), but having the thumbs of both hands bound together behind the back was even more aggravating. The royal guards were unyielding, but the executioners would show us kindness. One even offered Me tea and some grapes, but as I was freighted with chains and My hands were bound, I was unable to accept them.*[4]

For three days and three nights, no manner of food or drink was given to Bahá'u'lláh. Rest and sleep were both impossible to Him. The place was infested with vermin, and the stench of that gloomy abode was enough to crush the very spirits of those who were condemned to suffer its horrors.[5]

Descent of the Holy Spirit—the "Most Great Spirit"

One night in a dream these exalted words were heard on every side: "Verily, We shall render Thee victorious by Thyself and by Thy pen. Grieve Thou not for that which hath befallen Thee, neither be Thou afraid, for Thou art in safety. Ere long will God raise up the treasures of the earth—men who will aid Thee through Thyself and through Thy Name, wherewith God hath revived the hearts of such as have recognized Him."[6]

During the days I lay in the prison of Ṭihrán, though the galling weight of the chains and the stench-filled air allowed Me but little sleep, still in those infrequent moments of slumber I felt as if something flowed from the crown of My head over My breast, even as

1 Bahíyyih Khánum, quoted in Lady Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1967), pp. 41–42.
2 ibid., pp. 44–45.
3 Esslemont, John E., *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980), p. 51.
4 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, *Stories of Bahá'u'lláh* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1986), p. 108.
5 *Dawnbreakers*, p. 608.
6 Bahá'u'lláh, quoted in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987), p. 101.

a mighty torrent that precipitateth itself upon the earth from the summit of a lofty mountain. Every limb of My body would, as a result, be set afire. At such moments My tongue recited what no man could bear to hear.[1]

This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is Almighty and All-Knowing. And He bade Me lift up My voice between earth and heaven, and for this there befell Me what hath caused the tears of every man of understanding to flow.... This is but a leaf which the winds of the will of Thy Lord, the Almighty, the All-Praised, have stirred...[2]

D. The Horrible Journey from Ṭihrán to Baghdád

The first exile

My God, My Master, My Desire!... Thou has created this atom of dust through the consummate power of Thy might, and nurtured Him with Thine hands which none can chain up.... Thou hast destined for Him trials and tribulations which no tongue can describe, nor any of Thy Tablets adequately recount. The throat Thou didst accustom to the touch of silk Thou hast, in the end, clasped with strong chains, and the body Thou didst ease with brocades and velvets Thou hast at last subjected to the abasement of a dungeon. Thy decree hath shackled Me with unnumbered fetters, and cast about My neck chains that none can sunder. A number of years have passed during which afflictions have, like showers of mercy, rained upon Me....[3]

How many the nights during which the weight of chains and fetters allowed Me no rest, and how numerous the days during which peace and tranquillity were denied Me, by reason of that wherewith the hands and tongues of men have afflicted Me! Both bread and water which Thou hast, through Thy all-embracing mercy, allowed unto the beasts of the field, they have, for a time, forbidden unto this servant, and the things they refused to inflict upon such as have seceded from Thy Cause, the same have they suffered to be inflicted upon Me, until, finally, Thy decree was irrevocably fixed, and Thy behest summoned this servant to depart out of Persia, accompanied by a number of frail-bodied men and children of tender age, at this time when the cold is so intense that one cannot even speak, and ice and snow so abundant that it is impossible to move.[4]

E. Baghdád: The Sorrows and Black Woes

Malice and jealousy were constant

The wrongs which I suffer, have blotted out the wrongs suffered by My First Name (the Báb) from the Tablet of creation.... O Maryam! From the Land of Ṭá (Ṭihrán), after countless afflictions, We reached 'Iráq, at the bidding of the Tyrant of Persia, where, after the fetters of Our foes, We were afflicted with the perfidy of Our friends. God knoweth what befell Me thereafter!... I have borne what no man, be he of the past or the future, hath borne or will bear.[5]

1 ibid.
2 ibid., p. 102.
3 ibid., p. 109.
4 ibid.
5 Bahá'u'lláh quoted in *God Passes By*, p. 118.

Oceans of sadness, have surged over Me, a drop of which no soul could bear to drink. Such is My grief that My soul hath well nigh departed from My body.... Give ear, O Kamál! to the voice of this lowly, this forsaken ant, that hath hid itself in its hole, and whose desire is to depart from your midst, and vanish from your sight, by reason of that which the hands of men have wrought. God verily, hath been witness between Me and His servants.[1]

Noah's flood is but the measure of the tears I have shed, and Abraham's fire an ebullition of My soul. Jacob's grief is but a reflection of My sorrows, and Job's afflictions a fraction of my calamity.... Pour out patience upon Me, O My Lord! and render Me victorious over the transgressors.[2]

In these days, such odors of jealousy are diffused, that... from the beginning of the foundation of the world... until the present day, such malice, envy and hate have in no wise appeared, nor will they ever be witnessed in the future.[3]

Woe is Me, woe is Me!... All that I have seen from the day on which I first drank the pure milk from the breast of My mother until this moment hath been effaced from My memory, in consequence of that which the hands of the people have committed.[4]

These creatures are the same creatures who for three thousand years have worshipped idols, and bowed down before the Golden Calf. Now, too, they are fit for nothing better. What relation can there be between this people and Him Who is the Countenance of Glory? What ties can bind them to the One Who is the supreme embodiment of all that is lovable?[5]

F. Kurdistán Through the Desert Mountain and Sulaymáníyyih

Two years in the wilderness

The one object of Our retirement was to avoid becoming a subject of discord among the faithful, a source of disturbance unto Our companions, the means of injury to any soul, or the cause of sorrow to any heart.... Our withdrawal contemplated no return, and Our separation hoped for no reunion.[6]

I roamed the wilderness of resignation traveling in such wise that in My exile every eye wept sore over Me, and all created things shed tears of blood because of My anguish. The birds of the air were My companions and the beasts of the field My associates.[7]

G. Baghdád Once Again

"Be patient, be patient"

There was a time in 'Iráq, when the Ancient Beauty... had no change of linen. The one shirt He possessed would be washed, dried and worn again.[8]

1 ibid.
2 ibid.
3 ibid., pp. 118–119.
4 ibid., p. 118.
5 ibid., p. 119.
6 ibid., pp. 119–120.
7 ibid., p. 120.
8 ibid., p. 137.

I saw the Prophets and the Messengers gather and seat themselves around Me, moaning, weeping and loudly lamenting. Amazed, I inquired of them the reason, whereupon their lamentation and weeping waxed greater, and they said unto me: "We weep for Thee, O Most Great Mystery, O Tabernacle of Immortality!" They wept with such a weeping that I too wept with them. Thereupon the Concourse on high addressed Me saying: "...Erelong shalt Thou behold with Thine own eyes what no Prophet hath beheld.... Be patient, be patient." ... They continued addressing Me the whole night until the approach of dawn.[1]

H. THE DECLARATION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Riḍván: "The Most Great Festival", "The King of Festivals" and "The Festival of God"

Rejoice, with exceeding gladness, O people of Bahá! as ye call to remembrance the Day of supreme felicity, the Day whereon the Tongue of the Ancient of Days hath spoken, as He departed from His House proceeding to the Spot from which He shed upon the whole of creation the splendors of His Name, the All-Merciful... Were We to reveal the hidden secrets of that Day, all that dwell on earth and in the heavens would swoon away and die, except such as will be preserved by God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. Such is the inebriating effect of the words of God upon the Revealer of His undoubted proofs that His pen can move no longer.[2]

The Divine Springtime is come, O Most Exalted Pen, for the Festival of the All-Merciful is fast approaching.... The Day-Star of Blissfulness shineth above the horizon of Our Name, the Blissful, inasmuch as the Kingdom of the Name of God hath been adorned with the ornament of the Name of Thy Lord, the Creator of the heavens.... Take heed lest anything deter Thee from extolling the greatness of this Day—the Day whereon the Finger of Majesty and Power hath opened the seal of the Wine of Reunion, and called all who are in the heavens and all who are on earth.... This is the Day whereon the unseen world crieth out: "Great is thy blessedness, O earth, for thou hast been made the footstool of thy God, and been chosen as the seat of His mighty throne."[3]

I. THE EXILE FROM BAGHDÁD TO CONSTANTINOPLE

"Mounted on His steed, a red roan stallion of the finest breed, the best His lovers could purchase for Him..."

He (God) it was Who enabled Me to depart out of the city (Baghdád), clothed with such majesty as none, except the denier and the malicious, can fail to acknowledge.[4]

1 ibid., p. 147.
2 ibid., p. 154.
3 ibid.
4 ibid., p. 155.

J. The Exile from Constantinople to Adrianople

Expelled during freezing weather

...the place which none entereth except such as have rebelled against the authority of the sovereign.... They expelled Us from thy city (Constantinople) with an abasement with which no abasement on earth can compare.... Neither My family, nor those who accompanied Me, had the necessary raiment to protect them from the cold in that freezing weather.... The eyes of Our enemies wept over Us, and beyond them those of every discerning person.[1]

Whatever action the ministers of the Sulṭán took against Us, after having become acquainted with its contents, cannot be regarded as unjustifiable. The acts they committed before its perusal, however, can have no justification.[2]

K. Adrianople: The Proclamation of His Mission to the Kings of the Earth

Bahá'u'lláh's Anguish due to the Machinations of Mírzá Yaḥyá and Siyyid Muḥammad: "The Most Great Separation", Expulsion of the "Most Great Idol"

He who for months and years I reared with the hand of loving-kindness hath risen to take My life.... The cruelties inflicted by My oppressors have bowed Me down, and turned My hair white. Shouldst thou present thyself before My throne, thou wouldst fail to recognize the Ancient Beauty, for the freshness of His countenance is altered, and its brightness hath faded, by reason of the oppression of the infidels.... By God! No spot is left on My body that hath not been touched by the spears of thy machinations.[3]

Thou hast perpetrated against thy Brother what no man hath perpetrated against another.... What hast proceeded from thy pen hath caused the Countenances of Glory to be prostrated upon the dust, hath rent in twain the Veil of Grandeur in the Sublime Paradise, and lacerated the hearts of the favored ones established upon the loftiest seats.[4]

Call to the Kings and Rulers of the World (Súriy-i-Mulúk—Tablet to the Kings—addressed collectively to all the monarchs of the East and the West disclosing the character of His Mission)

O Kings of the earth! He Who is the sovereign Lord of all is come. The Kingdom is God's, the omnipotent Protector, the Self-Subsisting. Worship none but God, and, with radiant hearts, lift up your faces unto your Lord, the Lord of all names. This is a Revelation to which whatever ye possess can never be compared, could ye but know it.[5]

O Kings of the earth! The Most Great Law hath been revealed in this Spot, this Scene of transcendent splendour. Every hidden thing hath been brought to light, by virtue of the

1 ibid., p. 161.
2 ibid., p. 160.
3 ibid., p. 169.
4 ibid., pp. 169–170.
5 Bahá'u'lláh, *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh to the Kings and Leaders of the World* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1972), p. 5.

Will of the Supreme Ordainer, He Who hath ushered in the Last Hour, through Whom the Moon hath been cleft, and every irrevocable decree expounded.[1]

Ye are but vassals, O kings of the earth! He Who is the King of kings hath appeared, arrayed in His most wondrous glory, and is summoning you unto Himself, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Take heed lest pride deter you from recognizing the Source of Revelation; lest the things of this world shut you out as by a veil from Him Who is the Creator of heaven. Arise, and serve Him Who is the Desire of all nations, Who hath created you through a word from Him, and ordained you to be, for all time, the emblems of His sovereignty.[2]

The one true God, exalted be His glory, hath ever regarded, and will continue to regard, the hearts of men as His own, His exclusive possession. All else, whether pertaining to land or sea, whether riches or glory, He hath bequeathed unto the kings and rulers of the earth. From the beginning that hath no beginning the ensign proclaiming the words 'He doeth whatsoever He willeth' hath been unfurled in all its splendour before His Manifestation. What mankind needeth in this day is obedience unto them that are in authority, and a faithful adherence to the cord of wisdom. The instruments which are essential to the immediate protection, the security and assurance of the human race have been entrusted to the hands, and lie in the grasp, of the governors of human society. This is the wish of God and His decree.... We cherish the hope that one of the kings of the earth will, for the sake of God, arise for the triumph of this wronged, this oppressed people. Such a king will be eternally extolled and glorified. God hath prescribed unto this people the duty of aiding whosoever will aid them, of serving his best interests, and of demonstrating to him their abiding loyalty. They who follow Me must strive, under all circumstances, to promote the welfare of whosoever will arise for the triumph of My Cause, and must at all times prove their devotion and fidelity unto him. Happy is the man that hearkeneth and observeth My counsel. Woe unto him that faileth to fulfil My wish.[3]

L. The Prison City of 'Akká—The Most Great Prison

Arrival at 'Akká

"Know thou," Bahá'u'lláh, wishing to emphasize the criticalness of the first nine years of His banishment to that prison-city, has written, *"that upon Our arrival at this Spot, We chose to designate it as the 'Most Great Prison.' Though previously subjected in another land (Ṭihrán) to chains and fetters, We yet refused to call it by that name. Say: Ponder thereon, O ye endued with understanding!"*[4]

... we had reached 'Akká, the end of our journey. The landing at this place was achieved with much difficulty;... All the townspeople had assembled to see the arrival of the prisoners. Having been told that we were infidels, criminals, and sowers of sedition, the attitude of the crowd was threatening. Their yelling of curses and execrations filled us with fresh misery. We were terrified of the unknown! We knew not what the fate of our

1 ibid.
2 ibid., pp. 5–6.
3 ibid., pp. 13–14.
4 *God Passes By*, p. 185.

party, the friends and ourselves would be. We were taken to the old fortress of 'Akká, where we were crowded together.[1]

Having, after a miserable voyage, disembarked at 'Akká, all the exiles, men, women and children, were under the eyes of a curious and callous population that had assembled at the port to behold the "God of the Persians," conducted to the army barracks, where they were locked in, and sentinels detailed to guard them. *"The first night,"* Bahá'u'lláh testifies in the Lawḥ-i-Ra'ís, *"all were deprived of either food or drink ... They even begged for water, and were refused."* So filthy and brackish was the water in the pool of the courtyard that no one could drink it. Three loaves of black and salty bread were assigned to each, which they were later permitted to exchange, when escorted by guards to the market, for two of better quality. Subsequently they were allowed a mere pittance as substitute for the allotted dole of bread. All fell sick, except two, shortly after their arrival. Malaria, dysentery, combined with the sultry heat, added to their miseries. Three succumbed, among them two brothers, who died the same night, *"locked,"* as testified by Bahá'u'lláh, *"in each other's arms."* The carpet used by Him He gave to be sold in order to provide for their winding-sheets and burial. The paltry sum obtained after it had been auctioned was delivered to the guards, who had refused to bury them without first being paid the necessary expenses. Later, it was learned that, unwashed and unshrouded, they had buried them, without coffins, in the clothes they wore, though, as affirmed by Bahá'u'lláh, they were given twice the amount required for their burial. *"None,"* He Himself has written, *"knoweth what befell Us, except God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing ... From the foundation of the world until the present day a cruelty such as this hath neither been seen nor heard of."*[2]

The Prison

"He hath, during the greater part of His life," He, referring to Himself, has, moreover, recorded, *"been sore-tried in the clutches of His enemies. His sufferings have now reached their culmination in this afflictive Prison, into which His oppressors have so unjustly thrown Him."*[3]

Behold how this wronged One is now, whilst surrounded by a "generation of vipers," calling aloud and summoning all men to Him Who is the world's Ultimate Desire, the Summit and Day-Spring of Glory.[4]

Tragic Loss of Mírzá Mihdí, the Purest Branch

I have, O my Lord, offered up that which Thou hast given Me, that Thy servants may be quickened, and all that dwell on earth be united.[5]

Thou art the Trust of God and His Treasure in this Land. Erelong will God reveal through thee that which He hath desired.[6]

1 Bahíyyih Khánum, quoted in Lady Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway*, p. 66.
2 *God Passes By*, pp. 186–187.
3 ibid., p. 187.
4 *Gleanings*, p. 345.
5 Bahá'u'lláh, quoted in *God Passes By*, p. 188.
6 ibid.

The Proclamation of His Mission to the Kings, Rulers and World's Religious Leaders (continuation)

Upon Our arrival at this Prison We purposed to transmit to the kings the messages of their Lord, the Mighty, the All-Praised. Though We have transmitted to them, in several Tablets, that which We were commanded, yet We do it once again, as a token of God's grace.[1]

[Bahá'u'lláh] ... proclaimed Himself to be *"the King of Kings"* and *"the Desire of all Nations"*, declared them [the kings and rulers] to be His *"vassals"* and *"emblems of His sovereignty"*;...[2]

TABLET TO QUEEN VICTORIA

We have been informed that thou hast forbidden the trading in slaves, both men and women. This, verily, is what God hath enjoined in this wondrous Revelation.... We have also heard that thou has entrusted the reins of counsel into the hands of the representatives of the people. Thou, indeed, hast done well, for thereby the foundations of the edifice of thine affairs will be strengthened, and the hearts of all that are beneath thy shadow, whether high or low, will be tranquilized.[3]

In His Tablet to Queen Victoria He, moreover, invites these kings to hold fast to *"the Lesser Peace,"* since they had refused *"the Most Great Peace"*; exhorts them to be reconciled among themselves, to unite and to reduce their armaments; bids them refrain from laying excessive burdens on their subjects, who, He informs them, are their *"wards"* and *"treasures"*; enunciates the principle that should any one among them take up arms against another, all should rise against him; and warns them not to deal with Him as the *"King of Islám"* and his ministers had dealt.[4]

SECOND TABLET TO THE EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH, NAPOLEON III

For what thou hast done, thy kingdom shall be thrown into confusion, and thine empire shall pass from thine hands, as a punishment for that which thou hast wrought. Then wilt thou know how thou hast plainly erred. Commotions shall seize all the people in that land, unless thou arisest to help this Cause, and followest Him Who is the Spirit of God (Jesus Christ) in this, the Straight Path. Hath thy pomp made thee proud? By My Life! It shall not endure; nay, it shall soon pass away, unless thou holdest fast by this firm Cord. We see abasement hastening after thee, whilst thou art of the heedless. It behoveth thee when thou hearest His Voice calling from the seat of glory to cast away all that thou possessest, and cry out: "Here am I, O Lord of all that is in heaven and all that is on earth!"[5]

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH PREDICTED THE FALL OF THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED IN HIS BANISHMENT...

...such as Fu'ád Páshá—Minister of Foreign Relations for Turkey. He was expelled from his post and died in France from a heart attack. His colleague, the Prime Minister—'Alí

1 ibid., p. 206.
2 *God Passes By*, p. 206.
3 *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 33–34.
4 *God Passes By*, pp. 206–207.
5 *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 20–21.

Páshá—was fired soon after the prediction of Bahá'u'lláh. Then came the overthrow and the death of Sulṭán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz and the loss of the Turkish territories in Europe.

THE FALL OF NAPOLEON III...

...came in less than a year due to the disastrous Franco-Prussian War. The invasion of the papal estates and the annexation of Rome by the forces of the new Italian Kingdom came only a few months after a statement of Bahá'u'lláh addressed to the Pontiff Pope Pius IX.

Abandon thy kingdom unto the kings, and emerge from thy habitation, with thy face set towards the Kingdom,... Be as thy Lord hath been... Verily, the day of ingathering is come, and all things have been separated from each other. He hath stored away that which He chose in the vessels of justice, and cast into the fire that which befitteth it.[1]

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH STRONGLY WARNED THE GERMAN KING—WILLIAM I...

...whose government provoked the war with France and established the new "German Empire".

O banks of the Rhine! We have seen you covered with gore, inasmuch as the swords of retribution were drawn against you; and you shall have another turn. And We hear the lamentations of Berlin, though she be today in conspicuous glory.[2]

IN THE TABLET TO THE RULERS OF AMERICA AND THE PRESIDENTS OF ITS REPUBLICS...

He announced the arrival of the Day of God and closed with a call that is unparalleled with His other messages. Truly it is a mandate.

Bind ye the broken with the hands of justice, and crush the oppressor who flourisheth with the rod of the commandments of your Lord, the Ordainer, the All-Wise.[3]

Revelation and Promulgation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

In Bahá'u'lláh's words, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is the "Most Sacred Book", the "new heaven", the "new earth", "the Tabernacle of God", the "Holy City", the "Bride", "New Jerusalem coming down from God", the "Holy City", this "Most Holy Book", the "Most Great Law", and the "Unerring Balance"; and in the words of Shoghi Effendi: "Charter of the future world civilization."

Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice Wine with the fingers of might and power. To this beareth witness that which the Pen of Revelation hath revealed. Meditate upon this, O men of insight![4]

Blessed those who meditate upon it! Blessed those who ponder its meaning! So vast is its range that it hath encompassed all men ere their recognition of it. Erelong will its sovereign power, its pervasive influence and the greatness of its might be manifested on earth.[5]

1 ibid., pp. 85–86.
2 ibid., p. 39.
3 ibid., p. 63.
4 Bahá'u'lláh, *Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas the Most Holy Book of Bahá'u'lláh* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1973), frontispiece.
5 Bahá'u'lláh, quoted in *God Passes By*, p. 216.

... the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, revealed from first to last by the Author of the Dispensation Himself, not only preserves for posterity the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest, but ordains, in addition to the function of interpretation which it confers upon His Successor, the necessary institutions through which the integrity and unity of His Faith can alone be safeguarded.[1]

"We, verily," wrote Bahá'u'lláh, surveying, in the evening of His life, from His Most Great Prison, the entire range of this vast and weighty Revelation, *"have not fallen short of Our duty to exhort men, and to deliver that whereunto I was bidden by God, the Almighty, the All-Praised." "Is there any excuse,"* He further has stated, *"left for any one in this Revelation? No, by God, the Lord of the Mighty Throne! My signs have encompassed the earth, and My power enveloped all mankind."*[2]

M. Bahá'u'lláh's Captivity: The Purpose for His Suffering

What Could Possibly Cause Him Shame?

My captivity can bring on Me no shame. Nay, by My life, it conferreth on Me glory. That which can make Me ashamed is the conduct of such of My followers as profess to love Me, yet in fact follow the Evil One. They, indeed, are of the lost.[3]

The Ancient Beauty hath consented to be bound with chains that mankind may be released from its bondage, and hath accepted to be made a prisoner within this most mighty Stronghold that the whole world may attain unto true liberty. He hath drained to its dregs the cup of sorrow, that all the peoples of the earth may attain unto abiding joy, and be filled with gladness. This is of the mercy of your Lord, the Compassionate, the Most Merciful. We have accepted to be abased, O believers in the Unity of God, that ye may be exalted, and have suffered manifold afflictions, that ye might prosper and flourish. He Who hath come to build anew the whole world, behold, how they that have joined partners with God have forced Him to dwell within the most desolate of cities! [4]

Why did He suffer so much?

The Love of God

As My tribulations multiplied, so did My love for God and for His Cause increase, in such wise that all that befell Me from the hosts of the wayward was powerless to deter Me from My purpose. Should they hide Me away in the depths of the earth, yet would they find Me riding aloft on the clouds, and calling out unto God, the Lord of strength and of might. I have offered Myself up in the way of God, and I yearn after tribulations in My love for Him, and for the sake of His good-pleasure. Unto this bear witness the woes which now afflict Me, the like of which no other man hath suffered. Every single hair of Mine head calleth out that which the Burning Bush uttered on Sinai, and each vein of My body invoketh God and saith: "O would I had been severed in Thy path, so that the

1 *God Passes By*, pp. 213–214.
2 ibid., p. 220.
3 *Gleanings*, pp. 117–118.
4 ibid., pp. 99–100.

world might be quickened, and all its peoples be united!" Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed.[1]

THE LOVE OF GOD FOR HUMANITY

Consider to what extent the love of God makes itself manifest. Among the signs of His love which appear in the world are the dawning-points of His Manifestations. What an infinite degree of love is reflected by the divine Manifestations toward mankind! For the sake of guiding the people they have willingly forfeited their lives to resuscitate human hearts. They have accepted the cross. To enable human souls to attain the supreme degree of advancement, they have suffered during their limited years extreme ordeals and difficulties.[2]

Observe how rarely human souls sacrifice their pleasure or comfort for others; how improbable that a man would offer his eye or suffer himself to be dismembered for the benefit of another. Yet all the divine Manifestations suffered, offered their lives and blood, sacrificed their existence, comfort and all they possessed for the sake of mankind. Therefore consider how much They love. Were it not for Their love for humanity, spiritual love would be mere nomenclature. Were it not for Their illumination, human souls would not be radiant. How effective is Their love! This is a sign of the love of God; a ray of the Sun of Reality.[3]

THE LOVE OF THE MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD

Nine days before His passing, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk in His home in Haifa to some Bahá'ís who had gathered there for a meeting with Him. These notes of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's address were taken down in Persian at that meeting and later translated:

His Holiness the Christ loved both His disciples and believers to such an extent that He sacrificed His life for them. His Holiness the Supreme (the Báb), loved the friends to such an extent that He gave His life for them. The Blessed Beauty (Bahá'u'lláh) loved the friends so much that for their sakes He accepted a thousand difficulties and afflictions. Four times He was exiled. He was banished from one place to another. His properties were confiscated. He gave all—His family, His relatives, His possessions. He accepted imprisonment, chains and fetters. His Holy Person was imprisoned in the fortress of 'Akká.... He was made to suffer more calamities, afflictions and difficulties than could be enumerated. He had not a moment's rest. He had not an hour's comfort. He was continually under the greatest hardships and ordeals. What great persecutions He endured from his enemies! What great afflictions He bore from His own relatives! He accepted all these trials for our sakes so that He might educate us, so that He might make us illumined, so that He might make us heavenly, so that He might change our character, change our lives, so that He might illumine our inmost self. All these troubles He accepted for our sakes. He did indeed sacrifice His life for us. This love is the real love. This is the inner attachment and the genuine friendship. This is the love which sacrifices one's all, one's life. This is the reality of love...[4]

1 Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 52–53.
2 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Foundations of World Unity* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979), p. 89.
3 ibid., p. 90.
4 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "The Universal Language of the Spirit", *Star of the West*, vol. VIII, no.7, October 1922, pp. 163–164.

N. The Purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's Suffering

To sanctify people from all earthly defilements

Say: We have accepted to be tried by ills and troubles, that ye may sanctify yourselves from all earthly defilements. Why, then, refuse ye to ponder Our purpose in your hearts? By the righteousness of God! Whoso will reflect upon the tribulations We have suffered, his soul will assuredly melt away with sorrow. The Lord Himself beareth witness to the truth of My words. We have sustained the weight of all calamities to sanctify you from all earthly corruption, and ye are yet indifferent.[1]

His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh endured ordeals and hardships sixty years. There was no persecution, vicissitude or suffering He did not experience at the hand of His enemies and oppressors. All the days of His life were passed in difficulty and tribulation; at one time in prison, another in exile, sometimes in chains. He willingly endured these difficulties for the unity of mankind, praying that the world of humanity might realize the radiance of God, the oneness of humankind become a reality, strife and warfare cease and peace and tranquillity be realized by all. In prison He hoisted the banner of human solidarity, proclaiming Universal Peace, writing to the kings and rulers of nations summoning them to international unity and counselling arbitration...

Therefore we also must strive in this pathway of love and service, sacrificing life and possessions, passing our days in devotion, consecrating our efforts wholly to the cause of God, so that, God willing, the ensign of universal religion may be uplifted in the world of mankind and the oneness of the world of humanity be established.[2]

Briefly, this Wronged One hath, in the face of all that hath befallen Him at their hands, and all that hath been said of Him, endured patiently, and held His peace, inasmuch as it is Our purpose, through the loving providence of God—exalted be His glory—and His surpassing mercy, to abolish, through the force of Our utterance, all disputes, war, and bloodshed, from the face of the earth. Under all conditions We have, in spite of what they have said, endured with seemly patience, and have left them to God.[3]

Who can ever believe that this Servant of God hath at any time cherished in His heart a desire for any earthly honor or benefit? The Cause associated with His Name is far above the transitory things of this world. Behold Him, an exile, a victim of tyranny, in this Most Great Prison. His enemies have assailed Him on every side, and will continue to do so till the end of His life. Whatever, therefore, He saith unto you is wholly for the sake of God, that haply the peoples of the earth may cleanse their hearts from the stain of evil desire, may rend its veil asunder, and attain unto the knowledge of the one true God—the most exalted station to which any man can aspire. Their belief or disbelief in My Cause can neither profit nor harm Me. We summon them wholly for the sake of God. He, verily, can afford to dispense with all creatures.[4]

Thou hast known how grievously the Prophets of God, His Messengers and Chosen Ones, have been afflicted. Meditate a while on the motive and reason which have been responsible for such a persecution. At no time, in no Dispensation, have the Prophets of God

1 *Gleanings*, p. 307.

2 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith—Selected Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976), pp. 230–231.

3 Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 34.

4 *Gleanings*, p. 85.

escaped the blasphemy of their enemies, the cruelty of their oppressors, the denunciation of the learned of their age, who appeared in the guise of uprightness and piety. Day and night they passed through such agonies as none can ever measure, except the knowledge of the one true God, exalted be His glory.[1]

Ponder a while on the woes and afflictions which this Prisoner hath sustained. I have, all the days of My life, been at the mercy of Mine enemies, and have suffered each day, in the path of the love of God, a fresh tribulation. I have patiently endured until the fame of the Cause of God was spread abroad on the earth...
It beseemeth all men, in this Day, to take firm hold on the Most Great Name, and to establish the unity of all mankind. There is no place to flee to, no refuge that any one can seek, except Him.[2]

O. Summary of the Purpose of All His Suffering

The Abhá Beauty Himself—may the spirit of all existence be offered up for His loved ones—bore all manner of ordeals, and willingly accepted for Himself intense afflictions. No torment was there left that His sacred form was not subjected to, no suffering that did not descend upon Him. How many a night, when He was chained, did He go sleepless because of the weight of His iron collar; how many a day the burning pain of the stocks and fetters gave Him no moment's peace. From Níyávarán to Ṭihrán they made Him run—He, that embodied spirit, He Who had been accustomed to repose against cushions of ornamented silk—chained, shoeless, His head bared; and down under the earth, in the thick darkness of that narrow dungeon, they shut Him up with murderers, rebels and thieves. Ever and again they assailed Him with a new torment, and all were certain that from one moment to the next He would suffer a martyr's death. After some time they banished Him from His native land, and sent Him to countries alien and far away. During many a year in 'Iráq, no moment passed but the arrow of a new anguish struck His holy heart; with every breath a sword came down upon that sacred body, and He could hope for no moment of security and rest. From every side His enemies mounted their attack with unrelenting hate; and singly and alone He withstood them all. After all these tribulations, these body blows, they flung Him out of 'Iráq in the continent of Asia, to the continent of Europe, and in that place of bitter exile, of wretched hardships, to the wrongs that were heaped upon Him by the people of the Qur'án were now added the virulent persecutions, the powerful attacks, the plottings, the slanders, the continual hostilities, the hate and malice, of the people of the Bayán. My pen is powerless to tell it all; but ye have surely been informed of it. Then, after twenty-four years in this, the Most Great Prison, in agony and sore affliction, His days drew to a close.
To sum it up, the Ancient Beauty was ever, during His sojourn in this transitory world, either a captive bound with chains, or living under a sword, or subjected to extreme suffering and torment, or held in the Most Great Prison. Because of His physical weakness, brought on by His afflictions, His blessed body was worn away to a breath; it was light as a cobweb from long grieving. And His reason for shouldering this heavy load and enduring all this anguish, which was even as an ocean that hurleth its waves to high

[1] ibid., pp. 57–58.

[2] ibid., p. 203.

heaven—His reason for putting on the heavy iron chains and for becoming the very embodiment of utter resignation and meekness, was to lead every soul on earth to concord, to fellow-feeling, to oneness; to make known amongst all peoples the sign of the singleness of God, so that at last the primal oneness deposited at the heart of all created things would bear its destined fruit, and the splendour of 'No difference canst thou see in the creation of the God of Mercy,'[1] *would cast abroad its rays.*[2]

[1] Qur'án 67:3

[2] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978), pp. 262–263.

2. THE CONCEPT OF LAW IN THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH AND THE LAW OF ḤUQÚQU'LLÁH

DR. AMÍN BANÁNÍ

THE approaching confluence of two momentous events at the beginning of the Bahá'í Holy Year in Riḍván of 1992—publication of the translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, and the universal implementation of the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh—is an opportune time to reflect on the concept of law in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and to view the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh in the light of that concept. It is understood that the purpose of Divine Laws is to aid humans to realize the goodness that is within them and to curb the potential for lapses from that goodness which may also tempt them. The laws of Bahá'u'lláh are aimed at nothing short of a transformation of our nature.

Where would be a better place to begin our reflections on the concept of law in Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation than the very opening passage in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas where Bahá'u'lláh makes use of a beautiful poetic metaphor to describe the nature of His Laws. He says:

> *Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice Wine with the fingers of might and power.*[1]

We may often pass over this passage simply moved by the beauty of the image or perhaps even perplexed by the intent of the metaphor, but it is, in fact, the key that Bahá'u'lláh has provided us for understanding the nature of His Laws.

What, we may ask, is the mere code of laws that Bahá'u'lláh disassociates Himself from? This is the concept of law in human societies from the beginning until now. We are obliged to use words that are familiar, words which have had certain connotations in the past; but Bahá'u'lláh intends to infuse them with new meanings; and it is for us to think and reflect on the nature of these new meanings and the key that He has given us.

All the words that we use in all languages to describe laws—in Arabic, for instance, we speak of hudúd (limits) or aḥkám (commandments)—immediately bring to mind the image of those who live under those laws as people bound by them. The notion of laws as limits or commandments carries with it the corollary of those who are limited, commanded and forced to obey. Bahá'u'lláh tells us that His Laws are not like that at all. They are, rather, like the choice Wine.

That is indeed an interesting metaphor. It is not merely a poetic phrase. At the outset we may ask ourselves what is the function of choice Wine? and what is the relevance of this metaphor in the context of laws? On a very superficial level we may note that both in Islam and in the Bahá'í Faith ordinary wine is a substance forbidden by law. Obviously the metaphor is not to be understood on that superficial level. It is the impact produced by the choice Wine, the spiritual analogy of good strong wine, on the individual which is just the opposite of binding him with limits. It is true liberation. When you have imbibed of this choice Wine you are freed from inhibitions. Bahá'u'lláh tells us that His Laws are not intended to bind but to liberate us. That is the purpose of the key that He provides us in the opening of His Book of Laws.

[1] Bahá'u'lláh, *A Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1973), frontispiece.

From a talk given by Dr. Amín Banání at the Arabic Session of Landegg Academy, August 1991.

When we think of it in that way we realize that we are witnessing the dawn of a new phase of the spiritual evolution of the human race, a spiritual evolution that results in the transformation of human nature. It is within this evolutionary process that law ceases to be an external limit imposed upon us and begins to be a liberating energy arising from within us.

Bahá'u'lláh intends for us that His Laws become a self-generated part of our conscience to protect us from lapses. By freeing us from our baser motives it bestows true liberty upon us. This is not to say that human nature, which has the potential of achieving perfection, is necessarily perfect at all times. For this reason the Kitáb-i-Aqdas delineates categories of wrongdoing and specifies punishments for them. But when it comes to motivations for avoiding these lapses, it is always based on the spiritual strength and moral stamina of the individual. Protection is built from within, not by erecting walls without. Should we fail to grasp this novel concept of law as an instrument of liberation rather than limitation, Bahá'u'lláh states in that same opening passage of the Most Holy Book that the primary agent for the enforcement of His Laws is not fear of the consequences, but the love of His beauty: "Observe My commandments, for the love of My beauty."

Those of us who by accident of birth and mother tongue or acquired second language have had access to the Kitáb-i-Aqdas for nearly a century, have been trying to live up to its commandments, not so much out of a deep and full understanding of their purpose and implications but for the love of His Beauty. And now the Universal House of Justice is on the verge of promulgating one of these laws which some of us have been observing for the love of His beauty, as the universal and loving obligation of the entire Bahá'í world. Noting the desire of the entire Bahá'í community to share in the blessing of the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, the House of Justice has asked us to educate and prepare ourselves for the universal observance of this Sacred Law. This education is not just for the western friends who did not observe it before. It is for all of us, eastern and western, to acquire a deeper and more mature understanding of this Law.

While looking at the implications of this Law as a liberating force, we should also keep in mind that none of the Laws of Bahá'u'lláh stand in a vacuum in isolation from the others. They are all part of an integrated fabric, the ultimate purpose of which is building the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. All of His Laws—and the Law of Ḥuqúq-'u'lláh is no exception—are building materials for raising the edifice of His World Order.

Also, as in many of the other Laws of Bahá'u'lláh, there is more than one aspect to the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh. There is the purely personal aspect which has to do with purification of our motives and the spiritualization of our mundane cares and concerns. The other aspect has to do with binding the body of humanity in a fair and equitable way. In a beautiful phrase in the Riḍván 1991 message of the Universal House of Justice, the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh is referred to as "a profoundly private act of conscience that promotes the common good." The two aspects are, of course, integral and inseparable. Because our attention is usually drawn to the personal blessings with not much attention given to the public benefits of this Law, here we may reflect more on the "common good".

In a beautiful and profound Tablet,[1] 'Abdu'l-Bahá likens the whole of human society to the human body. The cooperation, collaboration and balance among the limbs and organs of the human body that are necessary for its health and well-being, He asserts, are the same as interdependence and equitable relationships within the entire human family, and Ḥuqúqu'lláh is a means of achieving that balance.

[1] *Ḥuqúqu'lláh*, Compilation by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1985), pp. 14–15.

Ḥuqúqu'lláh is a major instrument that Bahá'u'lláh has given us for achievement of economic justice and a more equitable distribution of wealth. Narrowing the tragic and dangerous gap that exists between the few rich and many poor of this world is an urgent need of our time. If not out of altruism, then out of enlightened self-interest even the rich nations of the world are groping for ways to reduce this gap. But the obsolete barriers of the old world order have so far made all such efforts futile.

In contrast, at this embryonic stage of emergence of the Bahá'í world community the channel for a meaningful beginning of redistribution of wealth is already in place in the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh. To have but one example of this fact it is enough to reflect that out of more than one hundred and fifty national Bahá'í communities in the world today, perhaps fewer than ten percent are financially self-supporting. The rest—and those are communities with the largest Bahá'í populations, the most dynamic teaching activities, and most important of all, the most active projects for social and economic development—depend on generous, well-coordinated and sustained financial support from the Universal House of Justice.

In the same Riḍván 1991 message of the Universal House of Justice we come across another profound phrase describing Ḥuqúqu'lláh as the Law "...which directly connects the individual believer with the Central Institution of the Faith...."

In describing the structure of the Administrative Order of our Faith we often make use of the form of a pyramid, with the Local Spiritual Assemblies at the base, the National Spiritual Assemblies in the intermediate place and the Universal House of Justice at the apex of the pyramid. Now if we try to think of the connection of the individual Bahá'í to this pyramid of authority we realize that some of us are elected to various Local Spiritual Assemblies and thus connected to that structure of authority. Far fewer are elected to the National Spiritual Assemblies, and only an infinitesimal number ever have the honor of serving on the Universal House of Justice. And as the Bahá'í population of the world grows, the percentage of those who are elected to serve on the different levels of that pyramid will become smaller and smaller. So the direct connection of the individual to the source of authority in the Faith becomes more and more occasional and infinitesimal except in observance of the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, where every individual has the continuous privilege of sustaining the very apex of the pyramid.

Bahá'u'lláh has given us the charter for His new World Order, created the institutions for governance of the Bahá'í world, and in the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, He has legislated a regular and continuous source of revenue for the worldwide operation of the supreme authority of His Faith. We may think of it, therefore, as a global tax for the benefit of the global authority in the Faith.

This limited analogy to taxation is both instructive and eye-opening. We know a good deal about the history of taxation in human societies and, sad to say, much of it is indistinguishable from extortion. Even in the more democratic societies where taxes are approved by the elected representatives of the people, and where the generality of the public recognizes the need for taxation for its own protection, no tax system can be upheld without the strong arm of the law to enforce it.

Where does the power of enforcement of Ḥuqúqu'lláh reside? Only in the innermost depth of our own conscience. As we contemplate the enormity of this fact we begin to realize the concrete reality behind that otherwise platitudinous sounding phrase which we often pass over: "spiritual solutions for economic problems." What kind of tax system is this that requires a "profoundly private act of conscience" for its enforcement? It places a premium upon spiritual growth and maturation and not upon raising of revenue.

The impetus for spiritual growth does not end with the private assumption of responsibility for upholding the law. Bahá'u'lláh

adds a further condition to that act of private conscience, and that has to do with a certain spiritual attitude. That is the attitude of joyful and radiant acquiescence. If we do not have it, He tells us, we are not ready to observe the Law. Here is another important difference between Ḥuqúqu'lláh and other systems of taxation: if in calculation of our Ḥuqúqu'lláh obligation we look for loopholes, we have not yet achieved that degree of spiritual maturity that Bahá'u'lláh wishes for us, and in a sense we are not yet qualified to observe the Law. This is another demonstration of "spiritual solutions for economic problems."

Bahá'u'lláh is asking of us nothing less than a complete reversal of habitual human behavior when it comes to payment of Ḥuqúqu'lláh. Payment of taxes has often been accompanied by coercion, reluctance and avoidance. Bahá'u'lláh makes Ḥuqúqu'lláh voluntary, joyful and radiant. It was Benjamin Franklin who spoke of two unavoidable calamities by saying you cannot escape death and taxes. We are already familiar with Bahá'u'lláh's utterance in The Hidden Words that, *"I have made death a messenger of joy to thee..."*[1] Now we learn that taxes too are to be paid with joy.

The transforming power and the liberating influence of the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh is as yet dimly experienced by us. It is a Law that is a test of firmness in the Covenant, and a joyful way of building the strong fabric of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

As we approach the universal implementation of the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, often the question is asked by the friends about the relationship of Ḥuqúqu'lláh to other Funds in the Faith. The answers are, of course, fully given in the Compilation from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice, and the priority of Ḥuqúqu'lláh is clearly established. Ḥuqúqu'lláh is a portion of our wealth which by God's Law is His Right. We simply return it to Him. What is required of us in discharge of our Ḥuqúqu'lláh obligation is accountability and trustworthiness. What we give to the other Funds is out of our own substance, summoned by our sense of generosity and sacrifice.

The difference between Ḥuqúqu'lláh and the other Funds can best be illustrated by the difference between the Daily Obligatory Prayer and the wealth of all the other prayers and meditations that we have available to us. We are free, indeed strongly urged, to enrich and sanctify our lives with frequent recourse to those prayers; but they do not take the place of the Daily Obligatory Prayer. One is a legal obligation, the other a moral obligation, if we remember the nature of Bahá'u'lláh's Laws in the first place.

If in calculation of our Ḥuqúqu'lláh obligation we wish to count our contributions to the other Funds as part of our 'needful' expenses, the House of Justice has told us that we may do so. But it should be inconceivable that those contributions should rule out the discharge of our Ḥuqúqu'lláh obligation in the same sense that it is inconceivable that saying of constant prayers should leave us no time to perform our Daily Obligatory Prayer.

Another question that often comes up in our educational gatherings and must be on the minds of many friends has to do with the timing of the universal implementation of the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh in Riḍván 1992. Is it because of the unusual need for financial resources at this time when the Arc on Mount Carmel is being completed? The answer is both yes and no without any equivocation and contradiction. It is yes in the sense that already for the last hundred years the preponderant share of the funds needed for all the development and expansion of our World Centre has been provided by Ḥuqúqu'lláh, and the completion of the Arc will be no exception. But if we think that the universal implementation of the Law of

[1] Bahá'u'lláh, The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979), Arabic, #32: p. 11.

Ḥuqúqu'lláh is merely another exigent fund-raising device to meet the current needs at the World Centre, then we are completely missing the point, and the answer is emphatically no. This Arc will be built and completed in a short time, but the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh will continue to build and invigorate and reinforce the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh for centuries and centuries to come, and will be an integrated part of the power and authority of the Universal House of Justice.

3. Interdependence of Bahá'í Communities—Services of North American Bahá'í Women to Írán

BY BAHARIEH ROUHANI MA'ANI

Introduction

"All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization."[1] At the heart of such a civilization is the spiritual, economic and social well-being of humanity. Religion has no claim to validity and cannot make progress if it is without concern for spiritual health, economic development, and improvement in social conditions.

The amount of time needed to make meaningful change depends on several factors. The power of the creative Word, the generating influence of the spiritual forces released, the receptivity of the people, the commitment of the followers of the new creed to champion the cause of change, the availability of means, and the nature and timeliness of activities undertaken all play a crucial role. This article presents the findings of a study of North American women's espousal of the Bahá'í Faith and their response to the social needs of their Iranian coreligionists.

The Spread of the Bahá'í Faith in America

The Name of Bahá'u'lláh was first mentioned publicly in North America in 1893.[2] This was one year after Bahá'u'lláh had passed away in what was then Palestine, and His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, had been appointed as Bahá'u'lláh's successor and the Centre of the Covenant. The first American follower of Bahá'u'lláh, Thornton Chase, embraced the Bahá'í Faith in Chicago in 1894.

The swift spread of the Bahá'í Faith to the West was due not only to the applicability of its message, but also to the needs of the time and the availability of means of communication and travel. The need for a fresh spiritual stimulus was strongly felt in the nineteenth century. Bahá'u'lláh's enunciation, in the latter half of that century, of teachings and laws to unite humankind in a common cause, provided the focus. His advent renewed hopes of salvation and released spiritual forces needed to prepare the way for establishing universal peace.

After Thornton Chase, many receptive souls entered the Faith, including a number of prominent women. Some of them sought 'Abdu'l-Bahá's permission and embarked upon a historical voyage to 'Akká, His place of exile in Palestine. Their intention was twofold: first, to make a pilgrimage to the land where the Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith spent the last twenty-five years

[1] Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1983), p. 215.

[2] A missionary based in Syria, in a session of the World's Parliament of Religions held in Chicago on 23 Sept. 1893, quoted in his speech words that Bahá'u'lláh had spoken to Edward G. Browne in 1891. E.G. Browne was the only orientalist granted an interview with Bahá'u'lláh. The interview took place in Bahá'u'lláh's place of exile in 'Akká.

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of His life and where He is buried; and, second, to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá and partake of His divine wisdom. Their arrival in the Holy Land in 1898 signalled the dawn of the process of integration of the East and the West—a process which evolved and entailed many significant developments and undertakings.

EARLY AMERICAN BAHÁ'Í WOMEN WHO RENDERED OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO ÍRÁN

Louisa A. Moore (Lua Getsinger)

Among the first group of pilgrims was Lua Getsinger. She was in love with the Faith she had espoused and wished to devote her life to its service. 'Abdu'l-Bahá saw in her the potential to undertake and accomplish great tasks. He nurtured her zeal and enthusiasm, and provided her with spiritual guidance and momentum. Her intense love for Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation and her selfless way of conveying Bahá'í teachings to others made her a remarkable teacher of the Faith. 'Abdu'l-Bahá surnamed her *Livá* (Banner) and *Ummu'l-Mu'minín* (Mother of the Believers). Shoghi Effendi called her "the mother teacher of the West", and designated her as one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Disciples.[1]



Lua Getsinger, whom 'Abdu'l-Bahá named "Livá" *(Banner), and* "Ummu'l-Mu'minín" *(Mother of the Believers).*

Through her efforts other women in the West, such as Phoebe Hearst and May Ellis Bolles, "the mother teacher of Europe," embraced the Faith and rendered outstanding service.

Lua Getsinger was chosen by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to undertake an important mission on behalf of her co-religionists in Írán—the first service of its kind undertaken by a Western believer. In 1902 she was sent to meet Muẓaffari'd-Dín Sháh, the Sháh of Írán, during his second visit to Paris,[2] to acquaint him and his Prime Minister, Mírzá 'Alí Aṣghar Khán-i-Atábak, with the situation of the oppressed Bahá'í community in Írán, to seek restitution of Bahá'í rights, and to appeal for justice on their behalf. The Iranian Bahá'í community had been persecuted since its inception. The Muslim clerical class had used every opportunity to incite the population against the Bahá'ís, and the government had often condoned the maltreatment of the Bahá'ís by the fanatics. 'Abdu'l-Bahá saw the time as propitious, the place favourable, and the personality of Lua fit for the task He wanted undertaken.

[1] A title of distinction given to specific believers who rendered outstanding services to the Bahá'í Faith during the ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

[2] A meeting with a sovereign who enjoyed absolute power over the inhabitants of the country he ruled by a member of the female sex, regarded as inferior and unworthy in Muslims' eyes—especially one who had espoused a religion unrecognized and persecuted in Írán—was a unprecedented event. The envoy previously sent by Bahá'u'lláh to present His Epistle to Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh, the grandfather and predecessor of Muẓaffari'd-Dín Sháh, had been brutally tortured and put to death. He was a seventeen-year-old youth, entitled Badí' (Wonderful).



Muṣṭafá Khán (left) looking at (from left to right): Miss Lillian Kappes, Dr. Sarah Clock, and Dr. Susan Moody, with a woman named Ṭáhirih Khánum in Ṭihrán, Írán, circa 1912.

Lua received the necessary instructions and set out to accomplish the mission. She secured an appointment through the Persian Embassy in Paris, then wrote a petition in English and had it translated into French by a notable French Bahá'í, Hippolyte Dreyfus. Accompanied by Dreyfus, she met with the Sháh in the grand reception hall of the Élysées Palace Hotel, where the King and his entourage were staying in September 1902. She was greeted with kindness and courtesy, and received favorable responses to her petitions.[1] However, subsequent events in Írán show that very little practical improvement was made in the treatment of Bahá'ís for a number of reasons. Islám was, as now, the state religion; the clerical class was in ascendancy; and the government's interests dictated its compliance with the desires of the clergy. The requirements of social justice were, therefore, overshadowed by the self-seeking interests of the authorities and ecclesiastics. But Lua's mission served one important purpose: the truth of the situation of the Bahá'ís in Írán was laid before the King and his Prime Minister. They could no longer use ignorance of facts as an excuse for their inaction to redress the injustices inflicted upon the Bahá'ís. Hence, a task inconceivable in Írán was accomplished. An official petition on behalf of the Iranian Bahá'í community was made to its temporal ruler by an ardent American female Bahá'í.

Lua Getsinger submitted a second petition to the Sháh, through official channels in 1903, when disturbances in Írán claimed the lives of several Bahá'ís in Yazd, Iṣfahán, and other places. In that petition she said: "And be assured that this Light will never be extinguished, even should you permit the blood of the Bahá'ís to run in rivers throughout your land, for it is evident that the blood of the Persian Bahá'ís is but the oil which has fed and will feed the flame in the Lamp of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh...."[2] This petition produced some relief, and for several years the persecutions ceased.

[1] *Star of the West*, vol.XV, no.8 (Nov. 1921), p. 231.

[2] ibid., p. 233.

Dr. Susan Moody—*Amatu'l-A'lá* (Handmaid of the Most High)

The initiation of development projects in Írán goes back to the early years of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry. The Bahá'í community in Ṭihrán established a boys' school in 1900; later a group of doctors came together to set up a hospital. A female doctor was needed to treat the female patients, who could not be examined by male physicians. When a group of Bahá'ís from the United States visited Írán in 1908:

> ...some Iranian doctors asked if it would be possible to induce an American woman doctor to come to Ṭihrán, Írán, to live, for the purpose of caring for the women of Írán who at that time were so deprived of skilled medical care. Stopping in 'Akká, Palestine, on their return, the Americans communicated this wish to 'Abdu'l-Bahá who asked them if they knew of such a doctor. The name of Dr. Moody was presented, and she received word without delay from 'Abdu'l-Bahá telling her she had been chosen for this great medical work in Írán. "I knew then," Dr. Moody often remarked, "why I had felt the urge so strongly to study medicine; I was obliged to study medicine in order to come to Írán." When the call came from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, she proceeded immediately on her journey.[1]

Susan Moody was born on 20 November 1851 in Amsterdam, New York. She became a Bahá'í in 1903 after making an in-depth study of the tenets of the Faith with Isabella Brittingham, one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Disciples in the West. She had first studied music, painting and sculpture, but had later switched to medicine. She had graduated from a medical college in Chicago.

The same spirit of willing obedience which characterized Lua Getsinger's unqualified response to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's instruction prompted Susan Moody to respond to His appeal without hesitation. She arranged her affairs and left for Írán in November 1909. In Ṭihrán, she joined the team of Bahá'í doctors who had established a hospital called Ṣiḥat.

The vital services Dr. Moody provided to the community of Írán were acknowledged in the following notice and editorial, published in a newspaper in Ṭihrán. It reads:

> Doctor Moody—American lady—Not only does she know medicine, but also gynecology, obstetrics and women's diseases. Her good qualities and kind attributes, her love for her Persian oriental sisters, are all equal. Every day from morning till noon she is in her office, No. 10 Avenue Aladauleh, receiving her patients for consultation, examination and treatment, excepting Friday and Sunday afternoons, when she goes to the Hospital Sehat (Hospital of Health), where she meets the patients of the higher and wealthier class.[2]

The editorial reads:

> We give the utmost thanks and gratitude to such a noble woman, to such a respected person, whose presence here is a great privilege to the country of Persia. On account of the great care of this blessed person, the sick of all nationalities, moslems, et al., become healthy and well. We beg of God to keep this blessed and respected person with us.[3]

Dr. Moody's services in Ṭihrán were not confined to the medical field. She worked closely with Bahá'í women who were eager to improve their lot, encouraging them in their quest for emancipation and equality, and lending them effective help to achieve their objectives. She recognized the need to educate women if change of a permanent nature was to be realized, and did all she could to bring about the establishment of a formal Bahá'í girls' school, similar to the Tarbíyat Boys' School that had been established in 1900.

[1] *The Bahá'í World*, vol.VI (1934–1936) (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980), p. 483.

[2] *Star*, vol. I, no.15 (20 August 1910), p. 9.

[3] ibid.

Those genuinely concerned with the education of Iranian Bahá'í children had tried for some time to raise money to establish a formal girls' school in the capital, but the needs of the boys' school and the lack of sufficient means had delayed its realization. Their efforts were augmented by the endeavors of the American Bahá'ís, particularly the women, who met the challenge of providing financial assistance and qualified personnel.

In January 1910 the Persian-American Educational Society was established in the United States, with its headquarters in Washington, D.C. Approved by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, it was an attempt to streamline cooperative enterprises between the two countries. One of the services it provided was financial assistance to ensure the continued functioning of the Tarbíyat Boys' School, which was experiencing financial difficulty. The secretary of the Society wrote in his first report:

> On account of the political conditions and general demoralization of internal affairs, the founders of this school, before that time men of means, found themselves unable to continue its activities because of lack of funds.... As an outcome of the interest manifested, and considering the greater needs of the East, as well as the opportunity for a Bahá'í demonstration from the West to the Orient, this Society was formed.[1]

As the Persian-American Educational Society evolved, 'Abdu'l-Bahá encouraged its basic aims and gave the members insights to see things in a different light. The Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, dated 3 April 1910, addressed to Officers of the Society, reads in part:

> According to the reports...in these days the Persian-American Educational Society is organized in America and the friends of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful with the utmost zeal and enthusiasm are engaged in the solidarity of this Society. If possible, change the name of this Society to Persian-American Interdependence Society so that in the future it may include all points, such as commerce, industry and education so that spiritual and material results and benefits might be produced.[2]



Dr. Susan Moody in Ṭihrán, Írán, with two young children, circa 1912.

And in another Tablet 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote:

> The believers of God must give great importance to this Society and arise to perform its fundamental principles and essential duties with heart and soul....
>
> Persia and America are in great need of such a Society, even to matters pertaining to material relations between these two countries, especially America....[3]

Later in his address to the Orient-Occident Unity Conference held in Washington, D.C., 'Abdu'l-Bahá said:

> May the material civilization of America find complete efficacy and establishment in Persia, and the spiritual civilization of Persia find acceptance and response in

[1] *Star*, vol. I, no.5 (5 June 1910), p. 2.

[2] ibid., p. 4.

[3] ibid.

America.... May they become one race endowed with the same susceptibilities. May these bonds of amity and accord be firmly established.... I have traveled this long distance, crossed the Atlantic Ocean to this western continent in the desire and hope that the strongest bond of unity may be established between America and Persia.... May this American democracy be the first nation to establish the foundation of international agreement. May it be the first nation to proclaim the universality of mankind. May it be the first to upraise the standard of the "Most Great Peace," and through this nation of democracy may these philanthropic intentions and institutions be spread broadcast throughout the world.[1]

A new era of cooperation, based on spiritual principles, had begun. Development projects and cooperative ventures between the Bahá'í communities of North America and Írán translated the principle of unity of the Bahá'í world into practice. The interdependence of the East and the West in both spiritual and material matters grew steadily and yielded remarkable results. In February 1910 Dr. Moody wrote to the American Bahá'ís and conveyed the joyous news:

The girls' school is assured. They will start with accommodations for fifty pupils.... Please tell any who want to help that it will take only $1.50 per month to educate a girl. There are many here too poor to pay and this is the way to help lift Persia from her otherwise hopeless condition....[2]

As soon as the establishment of a girls' school became a reality, Dr. Moody helped the Iranian friends to secure the services of a qualified American Bahá'í teacher to take charge of the school and ensure its proper functioning and development. At her suggestion Lilian Kappes took up the challenge. We will later learn of Miss Kappes's services in Írán. The development of the girls' school was initially very slow.

The 1913 report of the Executive Secretary of the Persian-American Educational Society, based on Dr. Moody's submission, offers an interesting analysis regarding subsidized education. First of all, it shows that the friends and institutions in Írán, despite economic difficulties, were providing some financial help. Second, it shows that the girls' school was still held in a rented place. Third, it indicates that Dr. Moody herself offered generous financial assistance not only towards the education of Bahá'í children in Ṭihrán, but also to non-Bahá'í educational institutions. Finally, the report provided a list of the children sponsored by the friends and Assemblies in the United States. Of the 77 names listed, 18 were girls and 59 boys. The sponsors consisted of 18 Assemblies, 3 couples, and 67 individuals: 45 women and 22 men.[3]

In July 1915, Dr. Moody informed the Society in the United States of the creation of a building fund. The plan was to set aside "any margin which may accrue after deducting from the scholarship fund of $18.00 per annum, the actual expenses of tuition, books, etc. To this will be added such special amounts as the American friends may contribute from time to time."[4] Her letter stated "This year nine of the American boy pupils received sixth grade certificates from the university. In all forty-three boys passed. From the Girls' Tarbiet, twelve girls received the same certificate. We are very proud of them, as they have had so few years of preparation."[5]

Other American Bahá'í women went to Írán and served in different capacities. These women joined with Dr. Moody and other interested people in the country to ensure that the young girls received Bahá'í education, similar to that provided to the boys.

[1] *Star*, vol. XV, no. 8 (November 1924), p. 235–236.
[2] *Star*, vol. I, no. 2 (9 April 1910), p. 11.
[3] *Star*, vol. IV, no.13 (9 November 1913), p. 221–223.
[4] *Star*, vol. VI, no.7 (13 July 1915), p. 54.
[5] ibid.



Women sitting, from left: Lillian Kappes, Muchul Khánum, Dr. Susan Moody, Dr. Sarah Clock and Elizabeth Steward; with four children and a maidservant, Ṭihrán, Írán, c.1912.

In May 1914, Dr. Moody reported:

> We have established twelve centres for teaching girls the foundation principles of the Bahá'í Revelation—the teachers met on Saturday last.... In about a month we will hold a large meeting for examining the various centers. The boys have had similar classes for three years and their examination this year was a great success.[1]

The presence of American Bahá'ís in a country where women had no voice in the decision-making process served another valuable purpose. They provided the examples of how women could become assertive and claim their God-given rights. The Iranian Bahá'í women gradually began to ask questions. When their petitions for equal treatment remained unanswered, they wrote to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and complained. It is unfortunate that the texts of such petitioning letters are not available, but from the contents of the responses they received one can gain insight into the women's appeals:

> The establishment of a women's assemblage for the promotion of knowledge is entirely acceptable, but discussions must be confined to educational matters. It should be done in such a way that differences will, day by day, be entirely wiped out, not that, God forbid, it will end in argumentation between men and women. ... Now the world of women should be a spiritual world, not a political one, so that it will be radiant... I am endeavoring, with Bahá'u'lláh's confirmations and assistance so to improve the world of the handmaidens that all will be astonished.... Ye need to be calm and composed, so that the work will proceed with wisdom, otherwise there will be such chaos that ye will leave everything and run away. "This newly born babe is traversing in one night the path that needeth a hundred years to tread." In brief, ye should now engage in matters of pure spirituality and not contend with men. 'Abdu'l-Bahá will tactfully take appropriate steps. Be assured. In the end thou wilt thyself exclaim, "This was indeed supreme

[1] *Star*, vol. V, no. 5 (5 June 1914), p. 74.

> wisdom!" I appeal to you to obliterate this contention between men and women. ... No one can on his own achieve anything. 'Abdu'l-Bahá must be well pleased and assist.[1]

Two points in the above Tablet attract attention. First is the emphasis on the word now. 'Abdu'l-Bahá says: "Now the world of women should be a spiritual world, not a political one..." and "ye should now engage in matters of pure spirituality and not contend with men." 'Abdu'l-Bahá knew—had in fact said in other contexts—that in time women would have to enter the "political world" if they were to attain their equality with men, but the time was not propitious then. The second point is the need for "wisdom" which prompted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's appeal to the women.

Parallel with His appeals to the women, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent Tablets to the community in general promoting the principle of the equality of the sexes, emphasizing the importance of educating the women and explaining the benefits thereof. Here one can discern 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wisdom in neither overruling the men abruptly, nor immediately granting the women's petitions, even though these actions were within the scope of His authority and in line with the principle of equality prescribed by Bahá'u'lláh. In one Tablet 'Abdu'l-Bahá appealed to the women not to press for equality at a time when the Faith was making progress, saying that pressing for equality at that time would hamper the advancement of the Cause and paralyze its institutions. He was fully aware of the men's fierce resistance to equality at that early stage in the development of the Cause. He had sent them living examples of what educated women could do and intended to continue the practice until the goal was realized.

Dr. Moody served in Írán for more than twenty-five years, broken by one nearly four-year visit to the United States. She ended her visit and left to return to Írán late in 1928, in response to the expressed wish of Shoghi Effendi:

> I pray that you may soon in the company of a capable and devoted American co-worker, resume your historic labors for our beloved Cause in Ṭihrán.[2]

Susan Moody was 77 years old when she went back to Írán. She traveled in the company of Adelaide Sharp, visiting Haifa, Palestine, on the way, and conferring with Shoghi Effendi. She spent the remaining years of her life in Írán, dying in Ṭihrán on 23 October 1934. Her funeral, attended by several hundred Bahá'ís, was a testimony to the inestimable esteem in which her highly prized services were held by the friends; it was a magnificent mark of honor for a person to whom the Bahá'í community felt eternally indebted. Shoghi Effendi's cable to the friends in the United States reveals the worth of her services:

> Passing dearly beloved Susan Moody deprives Bahá'í world (of the) far-famed pioneer who, through her indomitable spirit, ceaseless services, earned unique distinction. (She) forged first link in (the) chain uniting (the) spiritual destinies (of the) cradle of our faith (i.e., Persia) and (the) community (of its) stalwart defenders in (the) great American Republic. (I am) instructing Persia rear monument perpetuating memory (of) her noble mission. (I) am gladly defraying whatever expense incurred as token (of) my admiration for community (i.e., America) to which she originally belonged and on which her sacred life shed imperishable lustre. Advise holding befitting Memorial gathering (in) Temple Foundation Hall.[3]

In a message to the National Spiritual Assembly of Írán dated 12 November 1934, Shoghi Effendi said Susan Moody excelled those of her kind in faith and certitude. He referred to the projects she had initiated as

[1] *Women, a Compilation*. Compiled by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1990), p. 5.

[2] *The Bahá'í World,* vol. VI (1934–36), p. 486.

[3] ibid.

examples worthy of emulation by others and gave the glad-tidings that the Bahá'ís in America would follow in her footsteps and would hasten to the sacred land of Írán, would continue her undertakings, and would engage in the praise and commendation of her luminous and extensive services.[1]

Lillian F. Kappes

One of the receptive souls in the West who enlisted under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh before the turn of the century was Lillian F. Kappes. She was a teacher by profession, and became a Bahá'í in New York in 1898–99. She met 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Thonon-les-Bains on Lake Geneva in October 1911, when she was on her way to Írán in response to a request for a competent female Bahá'í to serve as the principal as well as teacher of the first Bahá'í girls' school in Ṭihrán.

In early 1911, the Bahá'ís in Ṭihrán had appealed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá for assistance from the West in the form of educators. The request had been approved, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá had revealed a Tablet asking the Bahá'ís in the United States to:

> ...select a woman teacher who may fill the position of principal as well as teacher, and send her without delay. The woman must have a share of the knowledge of sciences and be proficient in woman's work, such as sewing, housekeeping, hygiene and household economics, etc.[2]

This passage of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablet reflects the nature of the petition in response to which the Tablet was revealed, and indicates the perceived needs of the Persian women at the time, society's expectations of them, and the influence of tradition on the Bahá'í community's list of priorities when women's secular education was first addressed. It also shows the high expectations that people had of women teachers. In the same Tablet 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked for a male teacher for the Tarbíyat Boys' School. The nature of the request reveals the vast difference between the curriculum of the boys' school and the one for girls:

> They have written from Ṭihrán that there is need of a scientific teacher for the School of Tarbiat. He must be efficient in science as well as the English language; for at present there is no man in the School of Tarbiat who is a scientist or linguist. They are in need of both, science and the English language....[3]

Before the arrival of Miss Kappes, some Bahá'í women in Ṭihrán had responded to the educational needs of girls by initiating private projects on a small scale. With 'Abdu'l-Bahá's constant encouragement and guidance, and Dr. Moody's perseverance and assistance, the education of girls was finally institutionalized. The Bahá'í girls' school, although operating under the auspices of an existing all-male Education Committee, was run competently by Lillian F. Kappes. She became the women's spokesperson with regard to their educational needs and served as liaison between them and the Committee.

It is apparent from the following that, after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's approval was sought, the friends in Írán specifically requested Miss Kappes's services:

> Word has come from Dr. Moody that the Ṭihrán Board of Consultation has supplicated 'Abdu'l-Bahá that Miss Lillian Kappes might be permitted to come to that city to teach in the Girls' Bahá'í School....[4]

Lillian Kappes arrived in Írán in October 1911. Her first report, dated 19 December stated:

> After the first week of almost incessant calling or meeting of friends at special gatherings, I began my work in the main boys' school and took charge of the girls' school... I give the highest class in the

[1] Shoghi Effendi, *Tawqí'át-i-Mubárakih 1922–1948* (Ṭihrán: Bahá'í Publishing Committee of the National Assembly of Írán, 130 B.E.), pp. 126–127.

[2] *Star*, vol. II, no.1 (21 March 1911), p. 6.

[3] ibid.

[4] *Star*, vol. I, no. 7 (13 July 1910), p. 14.



Miss Lillian Kappes with boys in a class that she was teaching at the Tarbíyat School in Ṭihrán, Írán, circa 1912.

boys' school. The boys have had several years of English, so my work there is easier, but the girls' school was only started last spring and of the three classes of girls I teach only the highest has had instruction in English... The native teachers here are lovely women but have never been educated themselves, except the directress who learned or studied fifteen years ago in the mission school here. So the work is seriously handicapped and my hands are full, indeed. But during the three months, or, rather ten weeks, I have been here, we are slowly evolving into some show of system.[1]

She went to Írán intellectually aware of the plight of women in that country, of the domination of men over all affairs including that of women's education, and of the derogatory manner in which women were treated even within the nascent Bahá'í community. Her meeting with 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Thonon had to some degree prepared her, but despite her readiness to meet the challenge, the seemingly insurmountable obstacles and the resultant stress she experienced threatened her health. Initially, the school had been established as a department of the boys' school and the Education Committee was principally concerned with the needs of the boys. A letter sent by Dr. Sarah Clock in 1916 to some of the Bahá'í women in the United States described the situation:

> Yesterday Miss K.(Kappes) was simply abused by the meeting of 5 men, came home in perfect nervous collapse & was awake all night from sheer nervousness & worry... Not long ago a Tablet came to a Persian here praising Miss K & her work in the school... she has the moral support of many of the best men, all the women who in an excited meeting all stood by her.
>
> ...if Miss Kappes were not a Bahai or not less than a saint she would not have put up with all she has, for five years her hands have been tied, that is they have not allowed her to use her own advanced ideas as to a school... some of the good men are entirely with her. They offer to

[1] *Star*, vol. II, no. 18 (7 February 1912), pp. 12–13.

> open another school for her & several of the nicest of the girls will teach for nothing.[1]

'Abdu'l-Bahá's loving advice and encouragement, conveyed through his Tablets revealed in honor of those who were concerned with the situation, and Lillian Kappes's own perseverance finally reaped results. A society was formed in Ṭihrán to oversee the education of both the girls and the boys. Although the society's membership was all male, the men worked with Miss Kappes and followed her suggestions "even in the working of the boys school where she taught English until last year when they permitted her to devote all her time to the girls...."[2]

Lillian Kappes' devotion and conscientious services to the cause of women's education were decisive factors in the success of the girls' school. The project had started on a very modest scale, initially with only between thirty and fifty pupils, but by the time it was closed by the government[3] it had seven hundred and fifty Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í students, and it was considered the best girls' school in Írán.

Lillian Kappes' struggles in Írán lasted for nine years. In 1920 she contracted typhoid, which claimed her life. She died in Ṭihrán and became the first Western believer to die in active Bahá'í service in Írán. Shoghi Effendi later designated her as one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Disciples. In the report of her visit with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Lillian Kappes said "He iterated and reiterated: 'I am sending you to Persia that you may serve in Persia, so that all the friends and all the people will praise you.'"[4] The educational fund that she had established for the school continued after her death as the "Lillian Kappes Memorial Fund" and helped in the expansion of the school.

Sarah Clock and Elizabeth Stewart

Dr. Moody had the good fortune of having two other American Bahá'í women helping her in the discharge of her duties. They were Dr. Sarah Clock and Miss Elizabeth Stewart.

Sarah Clock left the United States for Haifa and Persia in September 1910. Her first letter dated 20 March 1911, written from Írán, contains some salient points:

> All Americans will certainly love Persia if they feel as I do. I am very happy here... No one can over-estimate the joy of the Persians in anticipation of the coming of Americans. Everything having any connection with America is attractive to them... The eagerness for education makes the young people and children very apt and only those who are with them are able to realize it... if one wants to be convinced of a very practical side of the Revelation, they should see the improvement in the way of living here. It is more apparent here than anywhere.[5]

Dr. Clock, although not a teacher by profession, taught English in Ṭihrán for a while. Her aforementioned letter makes this point clear:

> A young man had been kind to us when we first came here and I offered to do something for him in return. His sister wanted to study English and although I had never taught anyone, I felt I must try, and before the end of a week I had a room full and finally was invited to a little school and take my class with me... Two hours a week is very little to give to such bright, eager people, and I want to do more. The opportunity will soon be mine, for another school is to be opened this

[1] Quoted in Smith, Peter, *In Írán, Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í History*, vol. 3 (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1986), p. 190.

[2] *Studies*, vol. III, pp. 190–191.

[3] Bahá'í schools in Írán were closed on all Bahá'í holy days. The government refused to recognize the Bahá'í Faith and would not tolerate the observance of Bahá'í holy days. The authorities used this as an excuse to order the closure of all Bahá'í schools in 1934.

[4] *Star*, vol. II, no. 18 (7 February 1912), p. 2.

[5] *Star*, vol. II, no. 3 (28 April 1911), pp. 6–7.



Standing: Dr. Sarah Clock (left) and Dr. Susan Moody (right). Sitting, Lillian Kappes (left) and Elizabeth Stewart (right) in Ṭihrán. 1913.

week. Some of the pupils know English but want experience in talking and I will give them at least two hours each week.[1]

The Executive Secretary of the Persian-American Educational Society reported on 13 July 1915: "Dr. Clock and Miss Kappes are interested in establishing centers to teach married women to read and write, and working with the advanced girl students as teachers."[2]

Sarah Clock died in Ṭihrán on 24 January 1922. Very little is known about her background and the nature of her services in Írán.

Elizabeth Stewart was introduced to the Faith in 1899 by her renowned aunt Isabella Brittingham, herself an early convert to the Bahá'í Faith in the United States. Miss Stewart immediately recognized the truth of the Cause and paid allegiance to it. When Dr. Moody settled in Írán, she "personally supplicated ('Abdu'l-Bahá) that Miss Elizabeth H. Stewart might be permitted to come to Teheran as professional nurse to assist the doctor in her medical work."[3]

Elizabeth Stewart travelled to Írán in the company of Lillian Kappes, visited 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Thonon, and arrived in Írán in October 1911. She worked with Dr. Moody as a team and "working under the most difficult circumstances, not only saved hundreds of lives, but helped to bring the Bahá'í Communities of Persia and America more closely together."[4]

Before leaving the United States, Elizabeth Stewart had been appointed to the Unity Band, a Bahá'í Committee established in the United States in 1910 for the purpose of corresponding "every month with one of the twelve Women's Assemblies of the Orient."[5]

In 1925, Elizabeth Stewart, in the company of Dr. Susan Moody, returned to the United States for health reasons. She died in the United States in October 1926.

Genevieve Coy

Lillian Kappes's untimely death deprived the Tarbíyat Girls' School of its valiant patron and created a vacuum. 'Abdu'l-Bahá encouraged the Bahá'ís in the United States to send another person to Írán to serve in a similar capacity. In the interim, Qudsíyyih Ashraf,[6] the first American-educated Persian Bahá'í woman, took charge of the school. During the North American Bahá'í

[1] ibid., p. 6.

[2] *Star*, vol. VI, no. 7 (13 July 1915), pp. 54–55.

[3] *Star*, vol. I, no. 7 (13 July 1910), p. 14.

[4] Whitehead, Zebbie. *Some Early Bahá'ís of the West* (Oxford: George Ronald, Publisher, 1977), p. 131.

[5] ibid.

[6] Qudsíyyih Ashraf was one of the few Bahá'í women who attended the American missionary school in Ṭihrán. Through Dr. Moody's instrumentality and with the help of some American women believers, she continued her education in the United States. After nine years she returned to Írán with a master's degree in education. The Ministry of Education refused her employment on the ground that she was a Bahá'í. She later went to Beirut and studied public health.



Dr. Genevieve Coy during her visit to Haifa in April 1922 on her way to take up her post at the Tarbíyat Girls' School in Ṭihrán.

Convention of 1921, Dr. Genevieve Coy, who held a doctorate in psychology, was chosen to replace Lillian Kappes. Dr. Coy, born in 1886, had accepted the Faith in 1911. 'Abdu'l-Bahá approved her appointment. By the time she visited Haifa on her way to Írán to take up her post in early 1922, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had died and Shoghi Effendi had succeeded Him. Genevieve Coy served as the Director of Tarbíyat Girls' School in Ṭihrán for nearly two years. She returned to the United States in 1924.[1]

Adelaide Sharp

After the departure of Genevieve Coy, the fortunes of Tarbíyat Schools in Ṭihrán suffered a setback. Shoghi Effendi referred to this in his message of 14 November 1926: "the prolonged absence of competent teachers and organizers that can revive the declining influence of a hitherto renowned Bahá'í educational institution... are today subjects of gravest concern to the elected representatives of our suffering brethren and sisters in Persia." He began his message thus:

> The situation as I see it calls for the devoted efforts of one or two capable workers who, untrammelled and with independent means, can quietly, tenaciously and tactfully, pursue over a considerable length of time the meritorious work of fostering the cause of Bahá'í education, for both boys and girls, in the swiftly changing capital of a promising country.[2]

In the same message he made the following appeal:

> I would strongly urge the friends to consult most earnestly with that devoted, experienced and indefatigable handmaid of Bahá'u'lláh, Dr. Moody, whose past services have ennobled the record of collaboration of East and West for the furtherance of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. It would be highly satisfactory and immensely helpful if our beloved sister could find it possible and convenient to accompany such a carefully-chosen person on the way to Ṭihrán, and, by her unrivaled experience and loving-kindness, assist personally in the fulfillment of this pressing need.[3]

Speaking of the ordeals awaiting the chosen person and of the rich spiritual rewards that such service would attract, Shoghi Effendi wrote:

> Whoever steps into this field will find, as he settles down to his work, that the environment is extremely disheartening, that restrictions are oppressive, that the amenities of social life are lacking, that the forces of opposition are determined and organized. But let him realize also that, however tedious and exacting his labors, however precarious and thankless

[1] Genevieve Coy continued her services in the United States until 1958 when she pioneered to Salisbury, Rhodesia (later Harare, Zimbabwe). She died there on 31 July 1963.

[2] Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1968), pp. 119–120.

[3] ibid.



Miss Adelaide Sharp with the Bahá'í Youth Group in Ṭihrán, Írán. circa 1937.

> his task, the pioneer services it is his unique privilege to render in this time of stress will forever live in the annals of God's living Faith, and will prove a source of inspiration to the countless workers who, in happier times and with better means at their disposal, will consummate the spiritual regeneration and material rehabilitation of Bahá'u'lláh's native land.[1]

The person who responded to this earnest appeal was another female Bahá'í from the United States—Adelaide Sharp. Her enthusiasm and spirit of devotion matched those of her predecessors. She arrived in Írán in 1929, accompanied by Susan Moody, who was returning to Írán from the United States. They visited Haifa on their way and spent twelve days, receiving spiritual sustenance and guidance from Shoghi Effendi.

Two years after her arrival in Írán, Adelaide Sharp requested and received permission from the Guardian for her mother, Clara Sharp, to join her. Upon arrival in Ṭihrán, Adelaide Sharp took charge of the affairs of the Tarbíyat Girls' School and worked hard to restore its prestige. She continued her work as Director of the school until 1934, when the government closed the school. At that time the National Spiritual Assembly of Írán sought Shoghi Effendi's guidance regarding the services of Miss Sharp. He informed the Assembly that it was necessary for her to reside in the capital and participate in different Bahá'í activities. He also advised both the National Assembly of Írán and the Local Assembly of Ṭihrán to be very considerate of her and to provide the necessary encouragement and guidance to enable her to be of service.[2]

Adelaide Sharp served on several important committees, including the Unity of the East and the West Committee. She also organized study classes for Bahá'í youth on the Bahá'í Writings in English.

[1] ibid.

[2] Shoghi Effendi, *Tawqí'át-i-Mubárakih 1927–1939* (Ṭihrán: Bahá'í Publishing Institute. vol. III), p. 147.

In 1954, when the Guardian announced that women in Írán could serve as elected members of Bahá'í administrative bodies, Adelaide Sharp became the first woman elected to the National Spiritual Assembly. Her services on that institution spread over a period of fourteen years. She served as the foreign correspondent secretary of the Assembly for many years.

Miss Sharp died in Ṭihrán in October 1976 and was buried there. The cable sent by the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Írán after her passing, summarizes the manifold services she rendered to the Bahá'í community in Írán:

> Deeply grieved passing dedicated steadfast promoter Cause dearly loved Adelaide Sharp whose selfless labour nearly five decades community Cradle Faith in educating its children inspiring enriching spiritual life its youth researching translating writings consolidating its administrative institutions and as first woman member its National Spiritual Assembly will always be lovingly remembered stop Her devoted services won her praise beloved Guardian reinforced ties binding American Bahá'í Community to friends Bahá'u'lláh's native land stop Fervently praying Holy Shrines continuous progress her soul Abhá Kingdom stop Advise hold befitting memorial gatherings honour her name stop NSA US holding memorial gathering Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.[1]

Women's Services In Írán Assume A New Dimension

Shoghi Effendi continued 'Abdu'l-Bahá's method of using the force of example to familiarize the Iranian believers with the potential contributions of women believers. He was well aware of the deep gap that existed between the component parts of the Iranian Bahá'í community, a gap that tradition had created by affording the men every opportunity to render effective service to the Cause and depriving the women of attaining their potential.

In addition to supporting in Ṭihrán one or two female Bahá'ís from abroad, Shoghi Effendi nurtured the enthusiasm of capable and brilliant international Bahá'í travelling teachers, such as Keith Ransom-Kehler and Martha Root. He sent them to the land of Bahá'u'lláh's birth and instructed the National Assembly of the country to arrange a befitting welcome, to receive them lovingly and with pride, to lend them whatever assistance they required, to ensure their safety and protection by using wisdom and tact, and to make arrangements for them to visit other parts of Írán.[2]

Keith Ransom-Kehler—The First American Martyr

Keith Ransom-Kehler embraced the Bahá'í Faith in the United States in 1921. She was a university lecturer and a writer. Before she undertook her historic trip to Írán in 1931, she visited Australia and India, where she rendered memorable services. She then traveled to Haifa, visited the Bahá'í sacred shrines, met Shoghi Effendi, and received guidance and direction regarding the mission he encouraged her to undertake. Thereafter, she proceeded to Írán carrying a letter dated 10 June 1932 addressed by the American National Spiritual Assembly to Riḍá Sháh Pahlaví. The letter introduced her as the National Assembly's chosen representative to present in person the renewed appeal of removing the ban on entry of Bahá'í literature to Írán. The letter read in part:

> Mrs. Keith Ransom-Kehler, an American citizen, a member of the Bahá'í community of this country, and a distinguished student of the teachings and history of the Bahá'í Faith, can, with your Majesty's

[1] *The Bahá'í World.*, vol. XVII (1976–1979), p. 420.

[2] *Tawqí'át*, vol. III, pp. 128–129.

> gracious permission, amplify and supplement the statements made by this Assembly in the written petition addressed to your Majesty under date of January 12, 1932. ... The appointment of a representative to journey to Ṭihrán for the purpose of presenting in person the petition of this Assembly will make it evident to your Majesty how profoundly the American Bahá'ís are moved by their inability to communicate fully with their fellow-religionists in Persia by reason of the Postal regulations still prohibiting the entry of Bahá'í books and magazines published in the United States and Canada.[1]

Upon arrival, Keith Ransom-Kehler received a loving welcome from the friends in Tabríz, Mílán, Saysán, Mianej, and Qazvín. "Her entrance in Ṭihrán was like the visit of a queen, amid the acclamations of thousands of rejoicing Bahá'ís. Never had Ṭihrán so welcomed any guest from the West."[2]

On 20 August 1932 Keith Ransom-Kehler cabled: "Mission successful." The cable was followed by a report to the National Spiritual Assembly of the same date. It confirmed what the cable had conveyed:

> On August 15 I saw His Highness Taymur Tash and received from him the direct, unqualified assurance that Bahá'í literature would be admitted freely into Persia and permitted to circulate.[3]

Keith Ransom-Kehler acted on the assurance of the Court Minister and had her Bahá'í books shipped from Beirut. Soon she discovered the betrayal of the promise and the imposition of further restrictions. Her books were confiscated. The Governor-General of Adharbáyján refused to receive her during her visit to that province, and police orders forced the local Bahá'ís to abandon the meetings arranged in her honor. She apprised the Court Minister of these incidents.

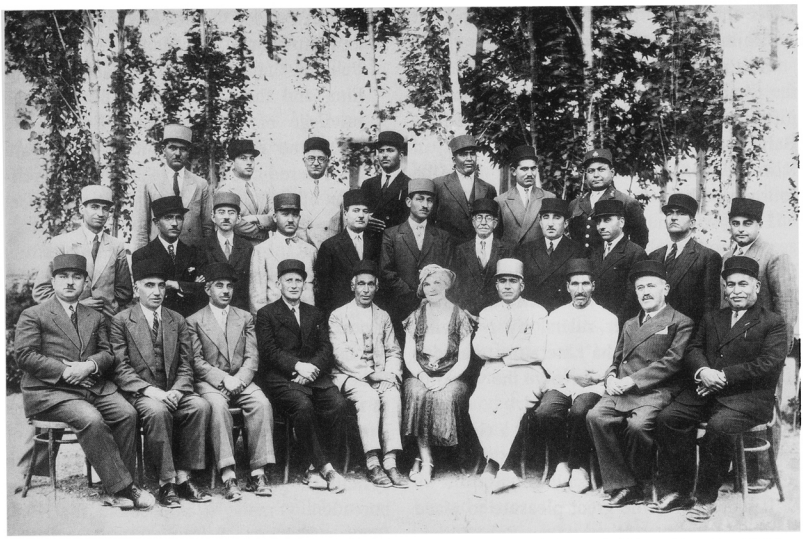
She also met with the secretary charged with American affairs at the Foreign Office and sent a report of the meeting to the National Assembly. The secretary had confirmed that Bahá'í literature could not circulate in Persia at that time for three reasons:

> First, that it is contrary to the constitution of Persia to recognize any religion founded after Islam and, since the Bahá'í religion cannot legally receive recognition, it follows that our literature must remain unrecognized. Second, that it is contrary to the constitution of Persia to permit the circulation of any literature [which the government considers] opposed to Islam. Third, that the circulation of Bahá'í literature at this time might cause grave internal disorders that would bring much suffering to the Bahá'ís themselves.[4]

Keith Ransom-Kehler addressed a communication to the Sháh on 25 February 1933, refuting the above reasons for not granting permission:

> In my report to America I shall be constrained to admit that I must have misunderstood completely the purpose and intent of the interpreter, for exhaustive investigation reveals no reference in the Constitution of Persia to the status of religions founded later than Islam.
>
> Since every Bahá'í before he can so designate himself must accept the validity of the Prophet Muḥammad and display toward the Qur'án the same reverence as that shown by the most orthodox Muslim, and since this attitude is inculcated through Bahá'í literature, the point of excluding it because it is opposed to Islam will, I fear, be incomprehensible... I shall await your Majesty's authority to submit the result of my conversation with the Foreign Office, herein set forth, to the proper Bahá'í centers throughout the

[1] Quoted in *The Bahá'í World*, vol. V (1932–1934), p. 391.
[2] ibid., p. 392.
[3] ibid., p. 393.
[4] ibid.



Keith Ransom-Kehler at the seventh National Convention of the Bahá'ís in Persia, 1933.

world; for I have no desire, a second time, to find myself mistaken as to your Majesty's intention.[1]

Her appeals to the Sháh received no response. The National Assembly addressed another letter to the Ruler of Írán through its representative. A part of this letter reads:

> Information has been received which leads us to believe that the permission granted in your Majesty's name by your Majesty's Minister of Court some months ago removing the ban on the entrance of Bahá'í literature into Persia has now been withdrawn... The responsibility seems now resting upon us to inform the press that our previous communication, made in perfect good faith, must now be withdrawn.[2]

One year after her stay in Írán, on 8 June 1933, Keith Ransom-Kehler sent a detailed letter to the Sháh, voicing her deep concerns at the maltreatment of the Bahá'ís of Írán and seeking justice on their behalf. In the same letter she made the following bold statement:

> The Bahá'ís of Persia are not a weak and helpless minority; we stand in numbers next to the State religion; but as the League report further says, 'The Bahá'ís are by their religion, tenets and character of an extremely conciliatory disposition'.[3]
>
> For that reason they patiently endure whatever hardships are imposed upon them by their governments, and for that same reason they are worthy of the utmost trust and confidence from those in authority.... The numerous communications... which I have had the honor of addressing to the Crown since my interview at the Foreign Office have had but one purpose: that of ascertaining in definite and dependable form whether or not the amazing and feeble statements given

[1] ibid.
[2] ibid.
[3] Minutes of the Twenty-Second Session of the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations.

me there were really in accord with your Majesty's intent and desire.[1]

Keith Ransom-Kehler sent a final letter to the Sháh on 3 July 1933, the day she was informed that the photographs of 'Abdu'l-Bahá had been burned by officials in Kirmánsháh. She closed the letter with the following plea:

> I now with the most intense fervor supplicate and implore your Majesty to put a final stop to these fanatical persecutions that disgrace in the eyes of men the annals of Persia's former rulers, by removing this ban against Bahá'í literature, that bids fair if it continues to involve the world in contempt for this sacred land.[2]

On the same day she also sent a challenging letter to every cabinet minister and to the President of Parliament, saying:

> It would give me great pleasure to place in your hands portions of our Bahá'í literature in order to prove the great contribution that it has made to the advancement of Islam in countries unfriendly to its reception; but although Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian literature, all opposed to Islam is permitted to circulate, our Bahá'í literature that upholds and converts to Islam is denied this privilege. Therefore I have nothing available to present to you. In the Post Offices and Customs of Persia, however, are thousands of volumes that have been confiscated. Even a brief survey of any one of these will prove that Bahá'u'lláh lays down as fundamental, loyalty to one's government, and the sanctity and verity of Islam.[3]

This challenge could not be ignored. The Minister of Education responded in a letter dated 28-4-1312 [19 July 1933]:

> I would inform you that today all individuals and inhabitants of the country, whether Muḥammadan or people of other nations, are resting in the cradle of tranquility and security under the shadow of the power and grandeur of His Majesty Shahanshah Pahlaví, may our souls be sacrificed for him, and they benefit equally from the privilege of existing laws. But in the meantime new publications which are considered contrary to the official religion of the country or its political aspect can not be agreed to.[4]

Keith Ransom-Kehler's strenuous efforts in Írán to accomplish the specific mission with which she had been entrusted, although appearing initially successful, did not achieve the desired result for several reasons. First, although her mission was purely religious in nature, she was dealing with politicians whose honesty of purpose and integrity of character could not be trusted. Second, the system of government and the prevailing bureaucracy made it impossible for Keith Ransom-Kehler to have direct access to the Sháh. Her meeting with the Minister of the Court brought about the confusion that cost his eventual dismissal. For this reason, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada sent a delegation of three to present to the Persian Minister in Washington its letter of 10 July 1933, addressed to the Sháh. The letter summarized the outcome of efforts made by Keith Ransom-Kehler and expressed optimism for a favorable result. It remained unanswered.

The third reason Keith Ransom-Kehler was not able to fulfill her mission was her sudden and untimely death on 27 October 1933. While on a visit to Iṣfahán, she contracted smallpox, which claimed her life. Before she died she wrote:

> ... I have fallen, though I never faltered. Months of effort with nothing accomplished is the record that confronts me. If anyone in future should be interested in this thwarted adventure of mine, he alone can say whether near or far from the seemingly impregnable heights of complaisance and indifference, my tired old

[1] *The Bahá'í World*, vol. V, pp. 394–395.
[2] ibid., p. 396.
[3] ibid., p. 395.
[4] ibid., p. 396.

body fell. The smoke and din of battle are to-day too dense for me to ascertain whether I moved forward or was slain in my tracks.[1]

Shoghi Effendi's message of 30 October 1933 described Mrs. Ransom-Kehler's station and the worth of her services:

> Keith's precious life offered up in sacrifice to beloved Cause in Bahá'u'lláh's native land. On Persian soil, for Persia's sake, she encountered, challenged and fought the forces of darkness with high distinction, indomitable will, unswerving, exemplary loyalty. The mass of her helpless Persian brethren mourns the sudden loss of their valiant emancipator. American believers grateful and proud of the memory of their first and distinguished martyr. Sorrow stricken, I lament my earthly separation from an invaluable collaborator, an unfailing counsellor, an esteemed and faithful friend. I urge the Local Assemblies befittingly to organize memorial gathering services entitled her to an eminent rank among the Hands of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.[2]

Shoghi Effendi's designation of Keith Ransom-Kehler simultaneously as the first American Bahá'í martyr and a Hand of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh was a unique honor. Furthermore, he referred to her as his "unfailing counsellor", "invaluable collaborator", "esteemed and faithful friend" and the "valiant emancipator" of "her helpless Persian brethren." Such attributes used to eulogize a female believer caused the Iranian Bahá'ís to pause in reflection. They saw that in the Bahá'í Faith women are not only capable of scaling the same heights claimed by men but are able to surpass them. They also saw that the contribution of such women was recognized and rewarded by the head of the Faith. Thus, psychological barriers to the emancipation of Bahá'í women in Írán were removed one by one and preparations made for their full participation in all Bahá'í services.

Shoghi Effendi took further steps to show the high station of Keith Ransom-Kehler. In his message of 1 November 1933, he instructed the Ṭihrán Assembly, together with representatives from Shíráz, Kirmán, Ábádih, Yazd, and the southern ports of Írán, to visit her resting place on his behalf. In that message he referred to Keith Ransom-Kehler as the standard bearer of the rights of the persecuted community, the true and peerless helper of the believers in Írán, the object of envy of her Bahá'í brothers and sisters in the Western countries, the one who strengthened spiritual links between the friends in the East and the West and the one who, both in life and death, was the cause of glory, elevation, and victory of the Cause of God and the exaltation of His Word.[3] On 3 November, he informed the National Assembly of the United States:

> Instructed Iṣfahán Assembly to inter Keith in the vicinity of the grave of Sultanushushuada,[4] surnamed by Bahá'u'lláh "King of Martyrs."[5]

He also advised the Assembly to disseminate his cabled messages among the Bahá'ís of provinces, that all may learn of and know about the lofty station of Keith Ransom-Kehler.

Martha Root

Another outstanding person who consecrated her life to the service of the Cause was Martha Root. She used her professional training as a journalist to travel extensively, taking the message of the oneness of humankind to people of all ranks and met with remarkable success.

Martha Root was born on 10 August 1872 at Richwood, Ohio. She finished her university education in Chicago, heard of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh in 1909, and began

[1] ibid., p. 409.
[2] ibid., p. 398.
[3] *Tawqí'át*, vol. III, p. 128.
[4] Siyyid Ḥasan, entitled *Sulṭánu'sh-Shuhadá* (King of Martyrs), was condemned to death for his belief and publicly executed in Iṣfahán in 1883. He was designated as an Apostle of Bahá'u'lláh.
[5] *The Bahá'í World*, vol. V, p. 398.



Martha Root with some Bahá'í women in Tihran, Írán. c. 1937

her life of service a decade later, in 1919, when she embarked on her extensive travels for the Faith. When *Tablets of the Divine Plan*[1] were unveiled in the United States, she was the first to arise in response to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's summons. Her world journeys took her to South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia.

In December 1929, when Martha Root was on her way to Írán, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to the Trustees of the Central Assembly (precursor of the National Spiritual Assembly of Írán) and the members of Local Spiritual Assemblies throughout Írán, introducing her thus:

> Miss Martha Root... foremost among the male and female Bahá'í teachers, is proceeding to Írán. It is incumbent upon all the friends of God and the handmaids of the Merciful to receive, with heart and soul, this precious personage. They should offer hospitality with utmost respect and loving kindness; convene gatherings and meetings with the wisdom and dignity that is in keeping with the Cause of God, celebrate, and prove in words and deeds their pride in being related to a person chosen by God to elevate the name of Bahá'u'lláh's Faith. For this peerless believer has, with astonishing might, unsurpassed bravery and amazing steadfastness, raised the cry of Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá in the highest places; she has brought the sacred name of the Faith of God to the attention of the potentates of the earth, be they rulers, ministers, learned, or sovereigns; and has glorified and endeared the oppressed and struggling community of that land in the eyes of the prominent people of the world.[2]

[1] These Tablets, fourteen in all, were revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1916 and 1917. The Tablets, addressed to the Bahá'ís in North America, were received by them in 1919. Shoghi Effendi has called the Tablets "the supreme charter for teaching."

[2] *Tawqí'át*, vol. II, pp. 150–151, freely translated by the writer.

Despite the inadequacy of the means of travel, Martha Root visited many provinces in Írán. Wherever she went, she was met with a tumultuous welcome by Bahá'ís, large numbers of whom would await, with reverence and pride, her arrival several kilometers outside the city limits. In Qazvin her adventurous spirit guided her to the family of Ṭáhirih, from whom she gathered information for her book entitled *Ṭáhirih—The Pure*.

Martha Root was a prodigy of her time. She had served the Faith in ways that no other had dared. She had introduced a crowned head, Queen Marie of Romania, and her daughter, Princess Ileana, to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. She had met with King Faisal of 'Iráq, and with many other renowned personalities of the world. The Guardian of the Faith has summarized her services in the following tribute contained in his message of 12 February 1929:

> ...I wish, in a few words, to pay a tribute, however, inadequate, to the magnificent services rendered by that exemplary and indefatigable teacher of the Cause, our dearly-beloved sister, Miss Martha Root. Her international travels on behalf of the Bahá'í Faith, so wide in their range, so extensive in their duration, so inspiring in their results, will adorn and enrich the annals of God's immortal Faith. Her earliest journeys to the southernmost limits of the American continent, to India and to South Africa, to the eastern confines of Asia, to the islands of the southern Seas and the Scandinavian countries of the North; her more recent contact with the rulers and crowned heads of Europe and the impression which her undaunted spirit created in royal circles in the Balkan countries; her close affiliation with international organizations, peace societies, humanitarian movements and Esperantist circles; and her latest victories in the university circles of Germany—all constitute a compelling evidence of what the power of Bahá'u'lláh can achieve. These historic labours, pursued single-handed and in circumstances of financial stringency and ill-health, have been characterized throughout by a spirit of fidelity, of self-effacement, of thoroughness and vigor that none has excelled.

He ended his message with the following extraordinary appeal:

> I appeal to individual believers and Bahá'í Assemblies alike to... respond speedily and entirely to every request that from time to time she feels moved to address to her fellow-workers in every land, to strive to attain the high standard of stewardship that she has set, and to pray from the very depths of their hearts for the uninterrupted continuance of her noble endeavors.[1]

When Martha Root died, Shoghi Effendi sent a cable to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada on 3 October 1939 and referred to her as "foremost Hand which 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will has raised up in first Bahá'í century", "the first, finest fruit which the Formative Age of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh has as yet produced" and "one whose acts shed imperishable lustre on American Bahá'í community." In the same message the beloved Guardian advised the National Assembly about sharing the expenses of "erection of monument in symbolic spot,[2] the meeting-place of East and West, to both of which she unsparingly dedicated the full force of her mighty energies."[3]

In his review of the history of the first Bahá'í century, Shoghi Effendi singled out,

> ...for special reference her who... through her prodigious and indeed unique exertions in the international teaching field, has covered herself with a glory that has not only eclipsed the achievements of the teachers of the Faith among her contemporaries the globe around, but has

[1] *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 174.

[2] In Honolulu, Hawaii, which links the two continents of Asia and America.

[3] *The Bahá'í World*, vol. VIII (1938–1940), p. 646.

> outshone the feats accomplished by any of its propagators in the course of an entire century. To Martha Root, that archetype of Bahá'í itinerant teachers and the foremost Hand raised by Bahá'u'lláh since 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, must be awarded ... the title of Leading Ambassadress of His Faith and Pride of Bahá'í teachers, whether men or women, in both the East and the West.[1]

Brilliant and celebrated Bahá'ís like Martha Root and Keith Ransom-Kehler, who had achieved outstanding successes in the teaching field, were sent by Shoghi Effendi to Írán, where they could neither speak the language nor teach the inhabitants. One may ask: Why? Could it not be for the need to remind the Bahá'ís in that land of the immense potential latent in the world of women?

In 1954, when Shoghi Effendi gave the "glad-tidings" to the Bahá'í women of Írán that during Riḍván of that year they would share with the men the right of membership on the Local as well National Spiritual Assemblies, he counselled them to not be satisfied with administrative equality. He encouraged them to surpass the men in the fields of teaching and pioneering, to outdo them in the arena of service, to become more courageous, more audacious and more detached. He persuaded the women to emulate the example of their spiritual sisters in America who, he said, had excelled the men in opening up countries to the Faith. Martha Root was mentioned by name.[2]

The Impact of the Services of the American Women on the Iranian Bahá'í Community

The Bahá'í community of Írán which had, from the inception of the Faith, nurtured the tree of the Cause with the blood of unnumbered martyrs and had helped spread the new Faith to the Western hemisphere, had a basic problem at home. Unwarranted conservatism was preventing the women from recognizing their potential and attaining their rights. Role models were needed to prove the falsity of the culture's perception of women.

The calibre of the American women who went to Írán was of great significance. They were well educated, independent, audacious, inflexibly devoted to the Cause of God, highly motivated, and firmly committed to the work they had set out to do. These were qualities Iranians had believed belonged exclusively to men, and the Western Bahá'í women proved that notion wrong. Several decades of constant and courageous service provided the Iranian Bahá'í community with proof that women were capable of shouldering administrative and decision-making responsibilities, and that the time had arrived for the Iranian women to try their hand in such works.

It is noteworthy that when the time for the election of women to the national and local Bahá'í institutions arrived, the only woman elected to the National Assembly was Adelaide Sharp, an American resident in Ṭihrán. It took the Bahá'í community longer to realize that the Iranian women believers were capable for the job. Bahíyyih Nádirí was the first Persian woman to be elected to the National Assembly.[3] Thereafter, until the

1 Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1970), p. 386.

2 *Tawqí'át 1952–1957*, pp. 190–191.

3 In 1955, widespread persecutions spearheaded by Muḥammad Falsafí circumscribed the administrative activities of the Bahá'í Faith in Írán. During that time the publication of *Akhbár-i-Amrí (Bahá'í News)* was suspended. The first issue (four in one), which reported the names of members of the new National Assembly, came out in June 1960. Mrs. Nádirí was also on the National Assembly in 1980 when the Islamic Revolutionary Guards abducted the nine members. They have not been heard from since.

time of the Assembly's disbandment by the Islamic Revolutionary Government in 1984, the number of women on the National Assembly fluctuated between zero and two.

Tracing the process that culminated in the election of a woman or two to the National Assembly of Írán sheds light on the wisdom which necessitated the gradual implementation of women's rights to equality with men. The Báb had appointed a woman as one of His Letters of the Living.[1] Ṭáhirih removed the veil, championed the cause of change and refused to honor traditions which kept women backward. The Báb supported her views and actions which gave hope and courage to other Bábí women. In Nayríz and Zanján Bábí women fought side by side with men to defend themselves against the assault of their enemies.

Bahá'u'lláh did not follow the Báb's revolutionary way of introducing sudden change in the fabric of society, but used a gradual process to prepare His followers for spiritual transformation. His Mission was to save the moribund body of humanity; He diagnosed the illness and prescribed the remedy. The world in general, and the Muslim world in particular, was not ready for the application of the principle of equality during His Ministry. Men and women alike would have suffered the adverse consequences of a drastic change. He enunciated the principle of equality, emphasized the tenets of unity and equity, acknowledged the women's contribution to the development of His cause, and praised their achievements. But the scope for the implementation of practical change in the status of women remained, of necessity, limited to inconspicuous improvements during His Ministry.

'Abdu'l-Bahá continued the practice of gradual implementation of change. He spoke most forcefully about the need for women's emancipation and progress, and took practical steps to convince members of the community, especially in the East, of women's potential to undertake responsible tasks. However, in His lifetime, 'Abdu'l-Bahá did not pronounce the women in Írán eligible for membership on elective Bahá'í institutions and did not appoint them as Hands of the Cause of God. Also, no Iranian woman was designated as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Disciple. But in the West the story was very different. Of the nineteen Bahá'ís the Guardian designated as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Disciples, six were women. Some were also designated as Hands of the Cause posthumously. This welcomed change was so gradual that its repercussions were not felt in the East, where the men would not hear of the prospect of women serving with them on the institutions of the Faith.

A letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi in July 1936 included the statement that, according to a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "the membership of the Universal House is confined to men... [but that] In the local as well as the national Houses of Justice... women have the full right of membership."[2] This instruction notwithstanding, women in Írán were not given the right to be elected to an Assembly until 1954, at the end of the first year of the Ten Year Global Plan. And this despite the fact that women in India and Burma (non-Islamic Eastern countries) had been made eligible for election since 1923. Shoghi Effendi likewise did not name any Persian Bahá'í woman as a Hand of the Cause, although several of his appointees to the rank in the West were women.

When the Boards of Counsellors were appointed by the Universal House of Justice in 1968, no Bahá'í woman in Írán was appointed a Counsellor. However, in the western Asia zone Shirin Boman, a woman of Persian background living in India, was appointed to the position in 1970. Later, more women of Iranian origin were appointed Counsellors in India, and by the

[1] The first eighteen believers in the Báb. They independently searched for and found Him. They were designated as *Ḥurúf-i-Ḥayy* (Letters of the Living). The numerical value of '*Ḥayy*' is eighteen.

[2] *Women: a Compilation*, p. 12.

Six Year Plan Persian Bahá'í women had been designated Counsellors in Africa, Australasia, and Europe.

The paucity of female leaders points to the tremendous difficulty associated with change in the status of Iranian women; yet, the change had to be made for the community to conform to the Teachings of the Blessed Beauty. Change required sacrifice, which the American Bahá'í women made through their selfless service. Their anguish, self-abnegation, loving labors, long years of suffering in acquiescence, steadfastness, perseverance, and hard work won them success.

Bahá'í women in Írán, who had received enlightenment through their belief in Bahá'u'lláh but had generally remained backward because of their lack of secular education, learned, through long years of association with the American Bahá'í women, the value of education which gave them insights into surmounting the barriers erected in their way. They gradually began to scale the heights of glory destined for members of the human race, and have been fulfilling a giant share in the execution of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan. They have produced at home and abroad exemplary pioneers, teachers, administrators, and even martyrs, some of whom have been in their teens.

The argument that the implementation of the principle of equality should take longer than it already has involves a danger. The problem with too slow a process of change is that slowness itself becomes a practice and creates a pretext under which the natural and timely consummation of the desired change is indefinitely delayed. This stifling process was detected by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who wisely reversed its course with the dispatch of audacious Bahá'í women to Írán. Their services will be remembered for the essential changes they introduced in the Bahá'í community, especially in the area of implementing the principle of the equality of men and women. Their sacrifices will have borne fruit when the women in Írán and Iranian women abroad attain full equality with men.

CONCLUSION

The heroic and sacrificial services of the American Bahá'í women between 1909 to 1976 achieved two basic purposes. First, as skilled and professional Bahá'ís, they bore eloquent testimony that, given equal opportunity, women were fully capable of ascending to the heights claimed by men in the field of service to humanity. This was an important lesson for the Bahá'í women of Persia, whose confidence in their ability to succeed in what they thought was men's domain had been shattered over long centuries of deprivation and denial of their rights in a Muslim country. The lesson was equally valuable to male Bahá'ís, who had held onto the traditional belief in their "divine right" to assume superiority over women.

Second, American Bahá'í women provided the means by which women in Írán could claim their rights. They offered girls education similar to that which the boys enjoyed, not only providing the requirements of a secular curriculum, but also offering enlightenment with regard to what equality meant and how it could be implemented. The services of the American women believers in Írán were maintained until the women's equal right to education and to service on local and national Bahá'í institutions was attained.

4. JAMÁL EFFENDI

ELHAM AFNAN
(ILHÁM AFNÁN)

THE Indian sub-continent has come to be one of the strongholds of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. India boasts the largest Bahá'í national community, one of the first National Spiritual Assemblies in the Bahá'í world, established in 1923, and one of the most beautiful edifices ever raised to the glory of God, the Bahá'í Temple in Bahapur outside New Delhi, dedicated in December 1986. Now, at a time when we are witnessing the entry of tens of thousands of souls into the Cause of God in India, it is befitting to remember the origins of the Faith in that land.

One of the Letters of the Living was Sa'íd-i-Hindí, an Indian, who met the Báb in Shíráz. Another Indian, a dervish, whom He named Qahru'lláh attained His presence in Chihríq. Yet another, Siyyid Baṣír, accepted the Báb and had the bounty of meeting Bahá'u'lláh in Núr. But none of these men left a permanent trace of his work in his native land. Later, several of the Afnáns established a trading company and a printing press in Bombay. Bombay thus became a centre for the Bahá'ís, especially those travelling to the Holy Land. However, no effort had yet been made to teach the native people the Faith. The distinction of first bringing the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh to a large number of Indians was to belong to Sulaymán Khán-i-Tunukábuní, surnamed Jamáli'd-Dín by Bahá'u'lláh, and known as Jamál Effendi.

Sulaymán Khán was the son of 'Ísá Khán, a wealthy and influential man. He was born in Tunukábán, in the province of Mázindarán. 'Abdu'l-Bahá says that from childhood, "*he had high ambitions and noble aims, and he was honor and aspiration personified.*"[1] He moved to Ṭihrán hoping to achieve an important position in government circles. There he found the Faith and became a devoted and enthusiastic believer. Thenceforward, he dedicated his life to the service of the Cause. He was never married and spent the remainder of his days travelling and teaching.

Jamál Effendi put on the garments of a dervish and travelled to the Holy Land, where "*for a time he rested under the protection of the Ancient Beauty;... gained the honor of entering the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, and listened to momentous teachings from His holy lips.*"[2] Following his pilgrimage, he travelled extensively throughout the Ottoman Empire, hoping to teach the Faith. He was in Istanbul in 1874 (1291 A.H.), where he met Shaykh Káẓim-i-Samandar. Realizing that the people there were not yet ready to embrace the Faith, he finally returned to 'Akká.

At about this time, the Afnáns in India, realizing the Indians' receptivity to the Faith, sent a petition to Bahá'u'lláh, asking that a knowledgeable and experienced teacher be sent to India. Bahá'u'lláh sent Jamál Effendi, who arrived in Bombay in 1878 (1295 A.H.), accompanied by Mírzá Ḥusayn, one of his kinsmen. He travelled widely throughout India and adjacent countries for eleven years, until 1888.

He was sustained in his labors by numerous Tablets he received from Bahá'u'lláh. He sowed the seeds of knowledge and love for the Faith through his great spiritual power, his vast experience and deep understanding, his beautiful words and upright character. He talked to people of every class and

[1] 'Abdu'l-Bahá. *Memorials of the Faithful* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), p. 134.
[2] ibid., p. 135.

visited dignitaries in every land. Many were informed of and attracted to the Faith and many embraced it through him. He delivered the Tablets revealed for these believers and was himself the recipient of many Tablets from the Most Exalted Pen. Later he also published and disseminated Bahá'u'lláh's The Seven Valleys, in Persian.

In Madras, he met Siyyid Muṣṭafáy-i-Rúmí, a young and deeply religious man, who was soon attracted by Jamál Effendi's charm and radiance. He embraced the Cause of God and was set aflame with the fire of the love of Bahá'u'lláh. He served the Faith with great distinction, in both the teaching and administrative fields in Burma. The most illustrious of Jamál Effendi's converts, he was posthumously named a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi in 1942.

Jamál Effendi and Mírzá Ḥusayn visited Ceylon and its capital, Colombo, which was a centre of Buddhism. There they faced severe opposition from the religious leaders and suffered greatly. Mírzá Ḥusayn became ill and passed away there, thereby becoming the first Bahá'í to be buried on that island.

In 1888, Jamál Effendi set out for 'Akká with two new believers, one a hatter and the other an engraver, and a child named Bashír who served him. However, he had been in Bahá'u'lláh's presence but a short time when the Blessed Beauty dispatched him once again back to India. Thus in that same year, on 20 March, Jamál Effendi sailed to India, this time attended by Ḥájí Faraju'lláh-i-Tafrishí. He resumed his travels there, going to places he had not visited previously, such as Java, Siam, Singapore, Kashmir, Tibet, Yarkand, Kokand and Russian Turkistan. He taught souls everywhere and in Java particularly was able to attract several of the rulers and dignitaries.

These travels took a year and six months during which he suffered much hardship. His feet were frozen and wounded from travelling in the snowy mountains between Kashmir and Tibet. At one point, he lost all his belongings, books and Tablets when they fell into a river from the top of a steep mountain. Also, he met some savage and warlike tribes of the Ismá'ílí sect who treated him cruelly. Much grieved, he decided to return via Kabul and wrote to 'Abdu'r-Raḥmán Khán, the governor, for permission. In reply to the letter, in which he had mentioned the wounds afflicting his feet, the governor wrote "that should he come to Kabul, his hands would go the way of his feet".[1] Disappointed, Jamál Effendi proceeded to Balkh and Badakhshan, thence to Laddakh and Srinagar in Kashmir, and to other parts of India. Ḥájí Faraju'lláh passed away in Bombay in 1894.

Jamál Effendi's travels were filled with numerous incidents and anecdotes, only a few of which have so far been recorded by historians. One concerns the Navváb of Rampur, who knew and greatly respected Jamál Effendi. One of the Navváb's relatives, a young man, had turned away from his religion and become an agnostic. The religious leaders to whom the Navváb had turned to guide the young man had failed. He therefore wrote to Jamál Effendi and invited him to his seat, sending some dignitaries to welcome and escort him to Rampur. At a meeting arranged for the purpose and attended by the young man's friends and companions, Jamál Effendi entered into discussion with him, using the Socratic method of question and answer. He proved his point so convincingly that the man's friends all confessed the truth of Jamál Effendi's position. The young man, however, felt humiliated and enraged and wrote a letter to Jamál Effendi saying, "In retaliation for what you have done, I shall spread far and wide your reputation as a Bábí so that all may arise to oppose and persecute you." Jamál Effendi replied: "My friend, should you keep your word and make me known as a Bábí, I shall be deeply grateful to you and reward you with a costly Kashmir shawl."

[1] Balyuzi, H.M. *Eminent Bahá'ís in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1985), p. 124.



Jamál Effendi, standing in back row fourth from left (with white beard), with friends in Egypt including the Hand of the Cause Mírzá Muḥammad Taqí (seated seventh from right).

Another story tells how Jamál Effendi taught the Faith to 6,000 people in Mandalay, Burma. Because they were not yet ready for it, he did not disclose to them that Bahá'u'lláh had established a new Dispensation. Thus, although they acknowledged the truth of Bahá'u'lláh's Message, they continued to practice Islamic laws and rituals. After Jamál Effendi had left India, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent Mírzá Maḥram, another great teacher, to Mandalay, where he announced to the people the independent character of the Faith and told them of its laws. Nearly two-thirds of the believers were so agitated that they rejected the Faith entirely and even tried to put Mírzá Maḥram to death. Had it not been for the interference of a British police officer, the mob would have succeeded in killing him. The policeman, a Christian, asked Mírzá Maḥram what he had said so to inflame the crowd. He replied, "I said the same thing that Christ said in His day."[1] Nevertheless, the remaining 2,000 embraced the Cause and were deepened in it by Mírzá Maḥram.

Jamál Effendi, after twenty years of continually teaching the Faith in India and its neighboring countries, returned to the Holy Land, about five years after Bahá'u'lláh's ascension. Some time later, 'Abdu'l-Bahá entrusted him with another important mission. Shortly before the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, two outstanding believers, Hand of the Cause Ḥájí Ákẖúnd and the Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh Ḥájí Amín, were imprisoned in Qazvín. The Prime Minister at the time, Amínu's-Sulṭán, was sympathetic to their plight, realized the injustice of their imprisonment and made kind remarks about them. Bahá'u'lláh was pleased at this and, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, said,

> *Should someone go to Persia, and manage to convey it, this message must be delivered to Amínu's-Sulṭán: you took steps to help the prisoners; you freely rendered them a befitting service; this service will not be forgotten. Rest assured that it will bring you honor and call down a blessing upon all your affairs. O*

[1] Taherzadeh, Adib. *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, Mazra'ih and Bahjí: 1877–92* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1987), p.184.

Amínu's-Sulṭán! Every house that is raised up will one day fall to ruin, except the house of God; that will grow more massive and be better guarded day by day. Then serve the Court of God with all your might, that you may discover the way to a home in Heaven, and found an edifice that will endure forever."[1]

Some years later, Amínu's-Sulṭán once again was able to aid one of the Bahá'í teachers, Siyyid Asadu'lláh-i-Qumí, and gave him sanctuary at a time of severe persecution. Shortly thereafter he lost favor with the Sháh and was exiled to another town. 'Abdu'l-Bahá took the opportunity to fulfill His Father's wishes by sending Jamál Effendi to deliver a "prayer and missive" to Amínu's-Sulṭán.

The prayer besought God's aid and bounty and succor for the fallen Minister, so that he might, from that corner of oblivion, be recalled to favor. In the letter we clearly stated: "Prepare to return to Ṭihrán. Soon will God's help arrive; the light of grace will shine on you again; with full authority again, you will find yourself free, and Prime Minister. This is your reward for the efforts you exerted on behalf of a man who was oppressed."...

From Ṭihrán, Sulaymán Khán journeyed to Qum, and according to his instructions went to live in a cell in the shrine of the Immaculate.... Sulaymán Khán inquired after the fallen Minister and expressed the wish to meet him.

When the Minister learned of this, he sent for Sulaymán Khán. Placing all his trust in God, Sulaymán Khán hastened to the Minister's house and, meeting him in private, presented the letter from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Minister rose, and received the letter with extreme respect. Then addressing the Khán he said: "I had given up hope. If this longing is fulfilled, I will arise to serve; I will preserve and uphold the friends of God."...

In brief, the Minister pledged himself to serve the friends, and Sulaymán Khán took his leave. The Minister then desired to give him a sum of money to defray the expenses of his journey, but Sulaymán Khán refused, and despite the Minister's insistence, would accept nothing. The Khán had not yet reached the Holy Land on his return journey when Amínu's-Sulṭán was recalled from exile and immediately summoned to the Premiership again. He assumed the position and functioned with full authority; and at first he did indeed support the believers, but toward the end, in the case of the Yazd martyrdoms, he was neglectful. He neither helped nor protected the sufferers in any way, nor would he listen to their repeated pleas, until all of them were put to death. Accordingly he too was dismissed, a ruined man.[2]

Jamál Effendi returned to 'Akká, where before long he passed away on 9 November 1898 (24 Jamádíyu'th-Thání 1316 A.H.). He is buried in 'Akká and the inscription on his gravestone, revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, reads:

Jamáli'd-Dín, the renowned traveller in every region, the disseminator of the fragrance of the love of God, has become a traveller in God's domains which are hidden from the eyes of those who are shut out as by a veil. D. 1316 A.H.

Other Sources:

- Sulaymánií, 'Azízu'lláh. *Maṣábíḥ-i-Hidáyat*, vol. 8 (Ṭihrán: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, BE 130, [AD 1973]).

[1] 'Abdu'l-Bahá. *Memorials*, p.136.

[2] ibid., pp. 137–38.

5. THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE: AGRICULTURE AND THE PROMISE OF PEACE

PAUL HANLEY

THE vision of a "peaceable Kingdom" has long been an impelling human aspiration generating rich literary and artistic expression, fueling secular ideologies and pervading faith and scripture. Often, descriptions of an ideal future are replete with bucolic imagery of agricultural bounty. This agrarian conception of God's Kingdom was eloquently voiced by Isaiah,[1] whose prophecy anticipates the conflux of a future peace and an effective, just and sustainable agriculture.

This prophetic theme is continued and developed in the Bahá'í Writings. In the Tablet of the World, Bahá'u'lláh clearly established the importance of agriculture in His World Order: *Whilst in the Prison of 'Akká, We revealed in the Crimson Book that which is conducive to the advancement of mankind and the reconstruction of the world. The utterances set forth therein by the Pen of the Lord of Creation include the following which constitute the fundamental principles for the administration of the affairs of men....* The first four principles given were the promotion of the lesser peace, the adoption of a universal auxiliary language, adherence to that which will promote fellowship, kindliness and unity, and universal education. Continuing with the fifth principle, Bahá'u'lláh stated: *Special regard must be paid to agriculture. Although it hath been mentioned in the fifth place, unquestionably it precedeth the others.*[2]

That agriculture should be placed "unquestionably" first among these "fundamental principles for the administration of affairs of men," which are "conducive to the advancement of mankind and to the reconstruction of the world," is remarkable. In it is grounded the quest for peace, no longer a pious dream but intrinsically linked with the concrete task of human development.

Bahá'u'lláh's statement demands a broad definition of the term agriculture; not farming alone, but agri*culture* in the fullest sense with economic, social, and spiritual connotations referring to the food and agricultural system as a whole. He leads us to conclude that the development of sustainable agriculture will play a leading role in the process of peacemaking itself, and that the outcome of this process will be an economic, social and administrative order guided to a great extent by its agricultural priorities.

Aside from Bahá'u'lláh's emphatic statement in the Tablet of the World, there are few specific references to agriculture in the Writings. Nevertheless, a survey of the Writings yields much that is relevant to a study of agriculture and related concerns. Furthermore, the agriculturalist sees in the basic tenets of the Faith the preconditions for successful agricultural development.

A reflection, then, on the general principles of the Faith as they apply to agriculture is presented prior to consideration of ideas specifically related to agricultural concerns.

[1] Isaiah, 2:4; 11:1–9.

[2] Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978), pp. 89–90.

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A. THE PRECONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Bahá'í approach to any major question—whether related to the economic, political, or social order, to health, education or social services, to the arts or to agriculture—is by definition wholistic, recognising not only the integrity of the human species but also the coherence of the physical and spiritual dimensions of creation. For a Bahá'í, no problem can be solved in isolation as none is isolated. The agricultural question is a prime example.

Successful development requires a world view and institutions which reflect a profound understanding of who we are and why we are living here and now. Humans have been placed by the Creator at a point between the material and spiritual dimensions of His Creation. Our role on the planet is to be its consciousness, to bring the Kingdom of God to earth and to establish its good order. The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh defines the requirements, establishes the processes, and illuminates the qualities and values required in the shaping of a new order which is at once the goal and the means of transforming its constituent systems.

The animating, pivotal principle of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh is unity. Three facets of the principle—unity embraces all of creation, the material and spiritual requirements for life are interconnected, and personal and social responsibility must be balanced—greatly influence the development process as we work to build a new order with a renewed agriculture sector.

Unity embraces all of creation

The principle of unity has far-reaching implications. It causes us to widen our perception of ourselves, our human relationships and our relationships with nature. "The essential oneness of all the myriad forms and grades of life" wrote Esslemont "is one of the fundamental teachings of Bahá'u'lláh."[1] The Bahá'í view of unity, embracing the whole of creation, is the paradigm for our age. The acceptance of the paradigm in the collective consciousness is the key to development both in peace and in man/nature co-evolution.

The first and most important stage in the unity paradigm is acknowledgment of the unity of the human race. *...until the minds of men become united,* 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated, *no important matter can be accomplished.*[2] In fact, Bahá'u'lláh wrote, *...the well-being of mankind, its peace and security are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established.*[3]

Disunity explains most of our modern failures in agriculture—our failure to ensure universal nourishment or to adequately husband natural resources such as soil and forests. Unbridled nationalism, racism, sexism, and religious animosity allow small groups of people to wantonly devour the lion's share of the earth's bounty. Greed for power and profit bear a large measure of responsibility for the misappropriation of resources. Poverty and hunger intensify as a powerful elite grows fat yet remains unfulfilled. This desire to control and profit from others is reflected in our attitude towards nature.

The light of unity can eclipse divisive prejudices and nurture the human solidarity that alone can support a foundation for peace and development. An acceptance of the oneness of

1 Esslemont, John E, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980), p. 101.

2 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978), p. 297.

3 Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976), p. 286.

mankind makes not only right social relationships possible but also our relationship to the earth, whose resources, Shoghi Effendi wrote, "...dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human inventions and technical development, to the increase of the productivity of mankind..."[1]

The material and spiritual requirements for life are interconnected

The struggle of humanity toward the Kingdom of God on earth necessitates the infusion of spirit into every facet of our being. "From the beginning of His stupendous mission," stated the Universal House of Justice, "Bahá'u'lláh urged upon the attention of nations the necessity of ordering human affairs in such a way as to bring into being a world unified in all aspects of its life. In unnumbered verses and tablets He repeatedly and variously declared the 'progress of the world' and the 'development of nations' as being among the ordinances of God for this day. The oneness of mankind, which is at once the operating principle and the ultimate goal of His Revelation, implies the dynamic coherence between the spiritual and practical requirements of life on earth."[2]

Recognition of the spiritual dimension of life is a condition of continued material existence, just as the material requirements of living are conditions for the manifestation of the human spirit. Our civilization as a whole, however, is increasingly preoccupied with the material; the gods of wealth and power have seduced society and left it deadened. The possibility of there being spiritual remedies for social ills is not part of peoples' world view.

Commenting on this malaise, Bahá'u'lláh described the current state of humanity: *Witness how the world is being afflicted with a fresh calamity every day, its tribulation is continually deepening... Its sickness is approaching the stage of utter hopelessness, inasmuch as the true Physician is debarred from administering the remedy, whilst unskilled practitioners are regarded with favor, and are accorded full freedom to act.*[3] But this tribulation is a signal, an antecedent to awakening spirituality. "Adversity, prolonged, worldwide, afflictive, allied to chaos and universal destruction, must needs convulse the nations, stir the conscience of the world, disillusion the masses." And, wrote the Guardian, "precipitate a radical change in the very conception of society..."[4]

The new World Order which will arise will feature the broad acceptance of the coherence of material and spiritual requirements of life, acceptance of which is a prerequisite for successful agricultural development.

Personal and social responsibilities must be balanced

The development process succeeds to the extent that it resounds within the individual; the Kingdom must be found within and brought out into the world. Thus personal and societal transformation are an harmonic pair; progress results from a new way of living individually and collectively. The Bahá'í Faith, the Universal House of Justice wrote, "does not comprise a series of specific answers to current problems, but rather the illumination of an entirely new way of life. Without this way of life the problems are insoluble; with it they will either

[1] Shoghi Effendi, *Call to the Nations: Extracts from the writings of Shoghi Effendi* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1977), p. 56.

[2] Universal House of Justice in a letter to the Bahá'ís of the World dated 20 October 1983. Published in *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIX (1983–1986), (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1994). p. 346.

[3] *Gleanings*, pp. 39–40.

[4] Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1961), p. 127.

not arise, or if they arise, can be resolved..."[1] The new way of life aims to educe individual potential and ensure that our contribution—through our skills and labor, our organizational abilities, our efforts for education or science, or in whatever field of expertise—will render service to society.

"...as the Bahá'í community grows it will acquire experts in numerous fields," the Universal House of Justice wrote. "... As these experts bring their knowledge and skill to the service of the community, and even more, as they transform their various disciplines by bringing to bear upon them the light of the Divine Teachings, problem after problem now disrupting society will be answered."[2] For this reason a Bahá'í approach to development assigns great importance to the expansion of awareness and the cultivation of virtues, and to the design and implementation of systems supportive of the attainment of spiritual maturity.

It is clear, then, that a spiritual orientation is necessarily the starting point in the development process in general and within each field of human endeavor specifically. It is particularly pertinent to the study of agriculture because sustainable agriculture is fundamental to solidarity and world order. A spiritual focus includes the recognition of a new unity paradigm, of the confluence of material and spiritual requirements for life, and of the need for a balance of individual and social responsibility for change. With these preconditions in mind we can begin to consider specific aspects of Bahá'í approach to agriculture.

B. PRINCIPLES FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT: A SURVEY OF THE WRITINGS

Bahá'u'lláh's remarkable statement that agriculture precedes even the promotion of the Lesser Peace as a priority in establishing world order reinforces the essential connection of development and peace. This is further emphasised by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who said in His public talks concerning universal peace and order that *...the fundamental basis of community is agriculture*,[3] and that *...the peasant class and the agricultural class exceed other classes in the importance of their service.*[4]

There are at least three reasons for the emphasis on agriculture as the foundation of social order. The first is obvious: although we don't live by bread alone, each of us needs food first and foremost—before clothing, shelter, or television! Religion calls us to pay attention to what is essential as opposed to what is not. Special regard should be given to assure that all have a diet sufficient to nourish full physical and mental well-being—in preference to current economic imperatives, such as the production of armaments or frivolous consumer items.

Second, the agricultural sector plays a significant role in any economy. Although as few as two percent of populations are engaged in farming as an occupation in industrial nations,[5] as many as twenty-five percent work in the agricultural sector in production and distribution of food, of farm supplies and machinery, marketing, transportation, food sales and handling, advertising, finance, and so on—many more if food handling at home is included. (Economists speculate that one in four devoted themselves to food gathering as far back as the Stone Age—it seems that some things never change.) In most Third World countries a

[1] Universal House of Justice, letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States dated 21 July 1968.

[2] Universal House of Justice, Letter to an individual dated 21 August 1977.

[3] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Foundations of World Unity: compiled from Addresses and Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979), p. 37.

[4] ibid., p. 39.

[5] *Production Yearbook*. vol. 35. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization.



Students in the New Era Development Institute's Community Development Facilitator Course help Chikali women in Maharashtra, India, plant rice in the fields. The purpose was to have the students experience rural life with their fellow Bahá'ís. August 1991.



Members of the Bahá'í community of Caserta, Italy, planting acorn seedlings on a hill as an environmental project to enhance their city. 15 March 1987.

majority are directly employed in farm work. The figure is forty-four percent world-wide.[1] Those not directly employed in the food industry, of course, allocate a sizable portion of their income to food. The point is that everyone, not only the producer, has a high stake in the success of the agricultural system.

Third, food has tremendous cultural significance. Our most basic human relationships—mother to babe, parent/child, gatherings of family or friends, national, religious, or ethnic feasts and festivals—all have nurturing through food at their center. Also, because of the driving need to eat we can all understand and empathise with hunger. Food and agriculture, then, have a profound symbolic power which can be a unifying force.

Despite these factors, which should establish food production at the centre of social concern, our perception of its importance has decreased as our capacity to produce it has grown. One farmer with modern technology can now produce enough food for fifty people. This increases the population of non-producers, who migrate to towns and cities where they lose touch with the land and become alienated from production. They perceive cheap food to be a right but feel little responsibility for farm viability, farm prices, or resource conservation. Because of their majority and their administrative and economic influence, their concerns override others and agriculture is impoverished.

The Bahá'í approach resolves the modern rural/urban split by emphasising the centrality of agriculture for all of society. The perceived division between urban and rural is repaired as the two become mutually supportive, an advocatory rather than antagonistic relationship: the rural nurtures the city which in turn provides full support for a vital rural community.

This strong support for agriculture, rural life, and respect for the producing class suggests that a new order would act to halt rural-to-urban migration and to maintain a large and healthy rural population.

Justice, equity, and world order

Our civilization's problems, including agricultural problems, arise from defects in its prevailing order. *The winds of despair are, alas, blowing from every direction,* wrote Bahá'u'lláh, *and the strife that divides and afflicts the human race is daily increasing. The signs of impending convulsions and chaos can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing order appears to be lamentably defective.*[2] The major defect in the present world order is its inherent injustice and inequity on the personal, local, national, and international fronts: *Justice is, in this day, bewailing its plight, and Equity groaneth beneath the yoke of oppression.*[3]

Food is a material need, and Bahá'u'lláh stated clearly that justice is the key to satisfying material needs: *The purpose of justice is the appearance of unity among men.... Were mankind to be adorned with this raiment, they would behold the day-star of the utterance, 'On that day God will satisfy everyone out of His abundance,' shining resplendent above the horizon of the world.*[4]

'Abdu'l-Bahá identifies tyranny—which might be defined in this context as the inequitable allocation of land and other food producing resources in order to benefit a minority (individual, state, or corporate) at the expense of the majority—as responsible for much

[1] ibid.

[2] *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. Selected Letters by Shoghi Effendi* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 32.

[3] *Gleanings*, p. 92.

[4] *Tablets of Baha'u'lláh*, pp.66–67.

human misery: *When we see poverty allowed to reach a condition of starvation,* He said, *it is a sure sign that somewhere we shall find tyranny.*[1]

Equity is parallel with justice. It is *...the most fundamental among human virtues,* Bahá'u'lláh wrote. *The evaluation of all things must needs depend upon it.*[2] Equity as applied to agriculture might be defined as a fair sharing of production and, more importantly, of food producing resources. The objective of an equitable agricultural policy must be to increase not production but the inclusiveness of productivity and the sharing of production.

Globalism and decentralization

The Writings call for the establishment of a just world community. At present, the connections that exist in the world are material connections—transnational systems of commerce, trade, communication, et cetera. These connections are shaped by the ethics of power, profiteering, colonialism, and production based on exploitation of people and resources. The role of spiritually informed people at this time is to contribute to a planet united in justice, equity, and real co-operation as expressed by the Guardian:

> The unity of the human race, as envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth.... This commonwealth must, as far as we can visualise it, consist of a world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all the component nations, and will enact such laws as shall be required to regulate life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples.... The economic resources of the world will be organised, its sources of raw materials will be tapped and fully utilised, its markets will be coördinated and developed, and the distribution of its products will be equitably regulated.... Destitution on the one hand, and gross accumulation of ownership on the other, will disappear....[3]

The implications of this paragraph are so far-reaching that a few of its phrases bear repeating: "...a world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of the component nations...." That is, use of the air, land and sea will all fall under an international system of law. And these law-makers, "...the trustees of the whole of mankind... will enact such laws as shall... satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples...." This is a very new and exciting concept of the sharing of natural resources.

This idea of globalism, "...repudiates excessive centralization on one hand, and disclaims all attempts at uniformity on the other. Its watchword is unity in diversity...."[4]

A global approach is required for a healthy food and agriculture system, unlike the current system which is subject to practices which undercut national and local self-reliance. The foundation of a Bahá'í commonwealth will be mature, self-reliant localities with a solid agrarian base.

Interdependence and self-reliance

Globalism and decentralization correspond to interdependence and self-reliance, qualities required to build good order. The Writings suggest an economy based first on individual and

[1] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks: Addresses given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Paris in 1911–1912* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979), p.153.

[2] *Gleanings*, p. 203.

[3] *World Order*, pp. 203–204.

[4] ibid., p. 42.

and family, local and national self-reliance, paired with a sophisticated interdependence on the global, national and local levels. To help us visualize a Bahá'í social order, 'Abdu'l-Bahá used a number of organic (purposely non-mechanistic?) analogies—the family, the human body, a garden.[1] His analogy of the household corresponds to the concept of *oikos* (literally household), the root of the words ecology and economy.[2] Ecology deals with the relationships between organisms and their environment, while economy in this context can refer to regulation and management of relationships in order to assure the well-being of both part and whole. Using this analogy we can view economics then as management of resources for the benefit of whole communities, rather than competition in a struggle to capture wealth for individuals, a ruling class, or a state monopoly.

The Writings outline a new economic order in skeletal form, which will be fleshed out under the guidance of the Universal House of Justice.

1. Economic conditions are reflections of spiritual conditions; thus the ultimate economic solutions to problems lie in spiritual transformation.

> We ask God to endow human souls with justice so that they may be fair, and may strive to provide for the comfort of all, that each member of humanity may pass his life in the utmost comfort and welfare. Then this material world will become the very paradise of the Kingdom, this elemental earth will be in a heavenly state and all the servants of God will live in the utmost joy, happiness and gladness. We must all strive and concentrate all our thoughts in order that such happiness may accrue to the world of humanity.[3]

2. Ownership of the means of production and tenure of land will take a variety of forms. Entirely new systems, or those little used or known, may be employed. Private ownership is safeguarded, but state ownership or control will also have a role to play. That *Certain trustees will be elected by the people in a given village to look after these* [economic] *transactions*[4] suggests one new path the future will follow.

> In reality, so far great injustice has befallen the common people. Laws must be made because it is impossible for the laborers to be satisfied with the present system. They will strike every month and every year. Finally, the capitalists will lose. ... In the Bolshevistic principles equality is effected through force. The masses who are opposed to the people of rank and to the wealthy class desire to partake of their advantages. But in the divine teachings equality is brought about through a ready willingness to share. ...This equality is the result of the lofty characteristics and noble attributes of mankind.[5]

3. Although our vision must be world-embracing, the initial stage of economic reconstruction is at the local level, beginning with agricultural reform.

> First and foremost is the principle that to all the members of the body politic shall be given the greatest achievements of the world of humanity. Each one shall have the utmost welfare and well-being. To solve the problem we must begin with the farmer; there we will lay a foundation for system and order because the peasant class and the agricultural class exceed other classes in the importance of their service.[6]

1 ibid.
2 *Foundations*, pp. 38–43.
3 ibid., p. 43.
4 ibid., p. 40.
5 ibid., p. 44.
6 ibid., p. 39.

4. Village reconstruction will involve the establishment of a central community institution, termed the "general storehouse" or "House of Finance," directed by a democratically elected council of trustees responsible for the allocation of resources and services.

In every village there must be established a general storehouse which will have a number of revenues.
The first revenue will be that of the tenth or tithes.
The second revenue (will be derived) from the animals.
The third revenue, from the minerals, that is to say, every mine prospected or discovered, a third thereof will go to this vast storehouse.
The fourth is this: whosoever dies without leaving any heirs all his heritage will go to the general storehouse.
Fifth, if any treasures shall be found on the land they should be devoted to this storehouse.
All these revenues will be assembled in this storehouse.
As to the first, the tenths or tithes: we will consider a farmer, one of the peasants. We will look into his income. We will find out, for instance, what is his annual revenue and also what are his expenditures. Now, if his income be equal to his expenditures, from such a farmer nothing whatever will be taken. That is, he will not be subjected to taxation of any sort, needing as he does all his income. Another farmer may have expenses running up to one thousand dollars we will say, and his income is two thousand dollars. From such an one a tenth will be required, because he has a surplus....
Then there must be considered such emergencies as follows: a certain farmer whose expenses run up to ten thousand dollars and whose income is only five thousand, he will receive necessary expenses from the storehouse. Five thousand dollars will be allotted to him so he will not be in need.
Then the orphans will be looked after, all of whose expenses will be taken care of. The cripples in the village—all their expenses will be looked after. The poor in the village—their necessary expenses will be defrayed. And other members who for valid reasons are incapacitated—the blind, the old, the deaf—their comfort must be looked after. In the village no one will remain in need or in want...
Certain trustees will be elected by the people in a given village to look after these transactions. The farmers will be taken care of and if after all these expenses are defrayed any surplus is found in the storehouse it must be transferred to the national treasury.
For larger cities, naturally, there will be a system on a larger scale. Were I to go into that solution the details thereof would be very lengthy.[1]

5. Farmer workers, indeed all workers, should receive a fair share of profits accrued as a result of their labor.

...the owners of properties, mines and factories should share their incomes with their employees and give a fairly certain percentage of their products to their workingmen in order that the employees may receive, beside their wages, some of the general income of the factory so that the employee may strive with his soul in the work.[2]

[1] ibid., pp. 39–41.

[2] ibid., p. 43.

6. Bahá'u'lláh allows the charge of a reasonable rate of interest:

> *...it is lawful and proper to charge interest on money... However, this is a matter that should be practiced with moderation and fairness. Our Pen of Glory hath, as a token of wisdom and for the convenience of the people, desisted from laying down its limit. Nevertheless We exhort the loved ones of God to observe justice and fairness, and to do that which would prompt the friends of God to evince tender mercy and compassion toward each other...*[1]

This provision eases the tremendous burden of high interest on debts which now faces farmers world-wide, and also encourages a more inclusive system of credit.

7. Instructions on inheritance recommend a wide dispersal of property within and also outside of the family of the deceased; this will also aid in limiting concentration of land ownership.

> *We have divided inheritance into seven categories: to the children, We have allotted nine parts comprising five hundred and forty shares; to the wife, eight parts comprising four hundred and eighty shares; to the father...; to the mother...; to the brothers...; to the sisters...; and to the teachers....*[2]

8. Redistribution of wealth will be carried forward in international relations. As quoted before,

> The economic resources of the world will be organised, its sources of raw materials will be tapped and fully utilised, its markets will be coördinated and developed, and the distribution of its products will be equitably regulated.[3]

Equitable patterns of trade, finance, and production will mean major change for food and agriculture systems that now bear colonial patterns which virtually assure poverty in the underdeveloped countries and the accumulation of wealth in the industrial world.

Science, technology, and moderation

Perhaps the most obvious trend in agriculture today is its growing mechanization. Farming increasingly copies the industrial model. The Bahá'í approach promotes modernization to the extent that the application of technology actually aids in the task of nourishing people while conserving resources for future generations. The adoption of modern technology, however, usually outpaces the development of the social structures required to cope with the consequences of mechanization which cause dislocation of the farm population and an ever-intensified stress on the resource base. These problems are addressed in the Writings.

Achieving a sustainable society is central to life's purpose: *All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization.*[4] The implications for agriculture of this ethic are far-reaching; poor husbandry is without parallel in its destructiveness of soil and forests and an ethic which prioritizes conservation will drastically alter farm practice. Bahá'u'lláh states that one purpose of His laws is to protect the earth: *Each one of the ordinances We have revealed is a mighty stronghold for the preservation of the world of being.*[5] The

[1] *Tablets of Baha'u'lláh*, pp. 133–134.
[2] Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1992), p. 26.
[3] *World Order*, p. 204.
[4] *Gleanings*, p. 214.
[5] *Tablets*, p. 69.

Guardian, himself a supporter of conservation efforts, states that the tasks of "protection physical world and heritage future generations... constitute yet another force working for peace and brotherhood."[1]

Foreseeing the potential consequences of the technical/scientific revolution, Bahá'u'lláh warned of its dangers and presented a principle of moderation to guide modernization:

> *The civilization, so often vaunted by the learned exponents of arts and sciences, will, if allowed to overleap the bounds of moderation, bring great evil upon men. Thus warneth you He Who is the All-Knowing. If carried to excess, civilization will prove as prolific a source of evil as it had been of goodness when kept within the restraints of moderation... All other things are subject to the same principle of moderation.*[2]

Negative aspects of growth and modernization occur when science is divorced from the moderating influence of true religious values. *(Humanity) cannot fly with one wing alone. If it tries with the wing of religion alone it will land in the slough of superstition, and if it tries to fly with the wing of science alone it will end in the dreary bog of materialism*,[3] in the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

> *With the love of God all sciences are accepted and beloved, but without it, are fruitless; nay, rather the cause of insanity. Every science is like unto a tree; if the fruit of it is the love of God, that is a blessed tree. Otherwise it is dried wood and finally a food for fire.*[4]

A Bahá'í approach will see agricultural science redirected to goals of nourishment, fulfilment, and permanence from those of profit, power, and production at any cost.

A right relationship to the earth

As has been stated, the Bahá'í approach suggests a paradigm of unity embracing all of creation. The separateness of man from nature which is seen in modern agriculture must be reconsidered in this light. The Writings provide valuable insights on this complex problem, suggesting that a right relationship is threefold, involving attitudes of humility, unity, and detachment.

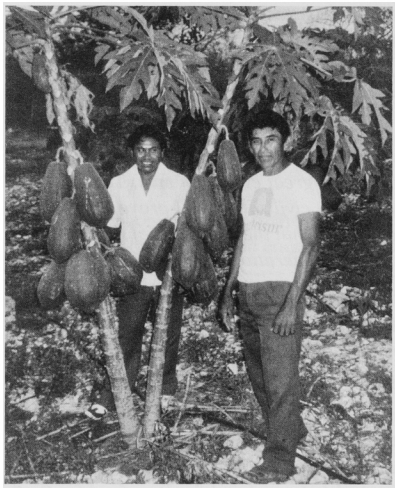
First, we are called upon to honor creation and to humble ourselves before it. The earth is itself a revealer of God.

> *Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is a direct evidence of the revelation within it of the attributes and the names of God, inasmuch as within every atom are enshrined the signs that bear eloquent testimony to the revelation of the Most Great Light.*[5]

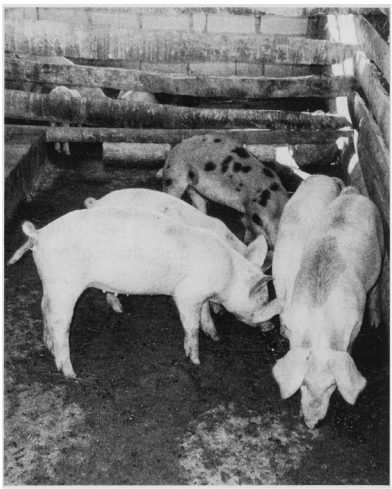
Again and again this theme of revelation through creation crops up in the Writings: "*No thing have I perceived, except that I perceive God within it, God before it, or God after it.*"[6]

> *Every man of discernment, while walking upon the earth feeleth indeed abashed, inasmuch as he is fully aware that the thing which is the source of his prosperity, his wealth, his might, his exaltation, his advancement and power is, as ordained by God, the very earth which is trodden beneath the feet of all men. There can be no doubt that whoever*

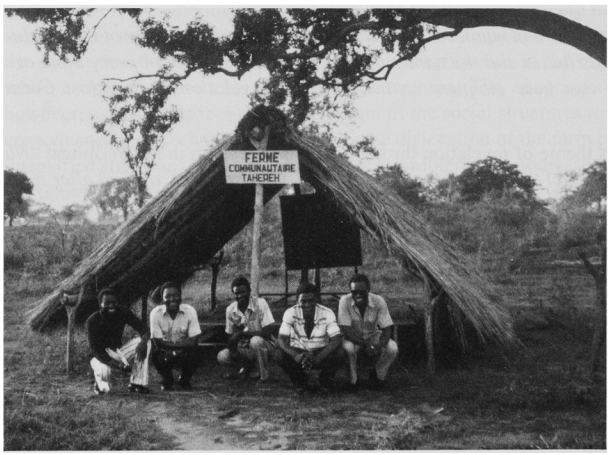
[1] Shoghi Effendi, Cable to the New Earth Luncheon, London, England, dated May 23, 1951.
[2] *Gleanings*, pp. 341–342.
[3] *New Era*, p. 214.
[4] *Bahá'í World Faith* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976), p. 366.
[5] *Gleanings*, p. 177.
[6] Bahá'u'lláh quoting Imám 'Alí, ibid., p. 178.



A papaya farm in Dzitya, Yucatan, Mexico, which Bahá'ís are working as a rural development project; 1986.



A piggery project in Liancourt, Haiti, conducted by the local Bahá'í community; 1987.



The Tahirih Farm in Moissala, Chad, initiated by the local Bahá'í community as a social and economic development project; 1989.

is cognisant of this truth, is cleansed and sanctified from all pride, arrogance, and vain glory.[1]

This attitude of humility is not only important to our spiritual development but underscores the requirement to conserve nature in its wholeness.

Second, the essential unity of man and nature is both implied in the unity principle and stated in several passages:

You are well aware, praise be the Lord, that both interaction and cooperation are evident and proven amongst all beings, whether large or small. In the case of large bodies interaction is as manifest as the sun, whilst in the case of small bodies, though interaction be unknown, yet the part is an indication of the whole. All these interactions therefore are connected with that all-embracing power which is their pivot, their centre, their source and their motive power.[2]

In *Some Answered Questions*, 'Abdu'l-Bahá described the mineral, plant, and animal as possessing a spirit.[3] A mechanistic understanding of nature is therefore inadequate; more correct is a view of the earth as a whole, living organism. While this concept resembles animism, it is more a balance of ancient wisdom and contemporary science. The picture is completed as the world of the Manifestation is drawn into the image: *...all parts of the creational world are of one whole.... All the parts are subordinate and obedient to the whole. The contingent beings are the branches of the tree of life while the Messenger of God is the root of that tree.*[4]

Third, although we are taught to honor and live harmoniously with the earth, we are also instructed to become detached from the physical world.

Observe how darkness has overspread the world. In every corner of the earth there is strife, discord and warfare of some kind. Mankind is submerged in the sea of materialism... They have no thought beyond earthly possessions and manifest no desire save the passions of this fleeting, mortal existence. Their utmost purpose is the attainment of material livelihood, physical comforts and worldly enjoyments such as constitute the happiness of the animal world rather than the world of man.

The honor of man is through the attainment of the knowledge of God; his happiness is from the love of God; his joy is in the glad tidings of God; his greatness is dependent upon his servitude to God.... Although it is necessary for man to strive for material needs and comforts, his real need is the acquisition of the bounties of God.... While possessing physical life, he should lay hold of the life spiritual, and together with bodily comforts and happiness, he should enjoy divine pleasures and content. Then is man worthy of the title man; then will he be after the image and likeness of God, for the image of the Merciful consists of the attributes of the heavenly Kingdom.[5]

Bahá'u'lláh bids us to meditate upon freedom from this narrow world: *Were ye to discover the hidden, the shoreless oceans of My Incorruptible Wealth, ye would, of a*

1 Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988), p. 44.
2 *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 345.
3 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1981), p. 78; pp. 143–144.
4 *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 364.
5 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Promulgation of Universal Peace* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 335.

certainty, esteem as nothing the world, nay the entire creation.[1] However, "the world" is clarified by Bahá'u'lláh: *Know ye that by 'the world' is meant your unawareness of Him Who is your Maker, and your absorption in aught else but Him.*[2] This clarification is important—we are not to despise the physical world, but to avoid a shallow perception of our station.

The Bahá'í Writings harmonize elements of ancient and modern views of creation, overcoming unbalanced unity with or detachment from the world. The three-fold relationship of man to nature spelled out in the Writings gives our work on the land a quality of worship.

Agriculture and worship

The relationship between agriculture and worship is ancient. "Agriculture" means literally the cultivation of fields, but behind the word "culture" is the Latin *cultus* and the Sanscrit *kwel*, which means to dwell, to care, and to worship. From the word agriculture, then, we are led to a deeply religious concept imbedded in language.

In this Day, Bahá'u'lláh has designated every kind of work as worship: *It is enjoined on every one of you to engage in some occupation, such as crafts, trades, and the like. We have graciously exalted your engagement in such work to the rank of worship unto God, the True One.*[3] 'Abdu'l-Bahá expanded the theme in a letter to a young friend:

> *Thy letter was received. Praise be to God it imparted the good news of thy health and safety and indicated that thou art ready to enter into an agricultural school. This is highly suitable. Strive as much as possible to become proficient in the science of agriculture for in accordance with the Divine Teachings, the acquisition of sciences and the perfection of arts are considered as acts of worship. If a man engages with all his power in the acquisition of a science or in the perfection of an art, it is as if he has been worshipping God in the churches and temples. Thus as thou enterest a school of agriculture and strivest in the acquisition of that science thou art day and night engaged in acts of worship—acts that are accepted at the threshold of the Almighty. What bounty greater than this that science should be considered as an act of worship and art as service to the Kingdom of God.*[4]

The acceptance of our work as worship depends on the quality, motivation, and direction of our efforts. 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated: *...strive that your actions day by day may be beautiful prayers.*[5] And, *...all effort and exertion put forth by man from the fullness of his heart is worship, if it is promoted by the highest motives and the will to do service to humanity. This is worship: to serve mankind and to minister to the needs of the people.*[6] Our work/worship becomes worthy to the extent that we assume our responsibility for the land and to each other by implementing sound husbandry in a just and sustainable food system.

The role of women

The important role that women play in agriculture was stressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Woman must especially devote her energies and abilities toward the industrial and agricultural sciences, seeking to assist mankind in that which is most needful. By this means she will demonstrate capability and ensure recognition of equality in the social and economic equation.*[7]

1 *Gleanings*, p. 323.
2 ibid., p. 276.
3 *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 26.
4 *Bahá'í World Faith*, pp. 377–378.
5 *Paris Talks*, p. 81.
6 ibid., p. 176.
7 *Promulgation*, p. 283.

Emphasis on women's involvement in agriculture can be understood from at least three points. First, women are in fact the primary agricultural producers in much of the world. In Africa, for example, women are responsible for eighty percent of agricultural production.[1] One implication of this statistic is that agricultural development projects should focus on women, rather than men and machines as is often the case now.

A second point is that equal opportunity and responsibility in the agricultural sector contributes to the sexual equality which is a precondition for the appearance of the Kingdom of God on earth. Education is an important avenue for advancing women in agriculture and 'Abdu'l-Bahá encouraged women to attend agricultural college. In the following quotation He stressed again the importance of equality in educational opportunity and relates it to development and peace:

> *[Bahá'u'lláh] promulgated the adoption of the same course of education for man and woman. Daughters and sons must follow the same curriculum of study, thereby promoting unity of the sexes. When all mankind shall receive the same opportunity of education and the equality of men and women will be realized, the foundations of war will be utterly destroyed. Without equality this will be impossible because all differences and distinctions are conducive to discord and strife....*[2]

Third, there is a need to stress qualities associated with "the feminine" in our relationships to the land and with each other. Qualities of nurturance, intuition, empathy, caring, and identification with forces of productivity and fruition are needed in our agricultural work. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, *...it is well established in history that where woman has not participated in human affairs the outcomes have never attained a state of completion and perfection. On the other hand, every influential undertaking of the human world wherein woman has been a participant has attained importance. This is historically true and beyond disproof even in religion.*[3]

Exhortations and prohibitions

A number of the exhortations and prohibitions found in the Bahá'í Writings will have an effect on the agricultural sector.

1. Kindness to animals is one principle which will have wide repercussions in the field of animal husbandry.

> *O ye friends of God! Ye must not only have kind and merciful feelings for mankind, but ye should also exercise the utmost kindness towards every living creature.... Educate the children in their infancy in such a way that they may become exceedingly kind and merciful to animals. If an animal is sick they should endeavor to cure it; if it is hungry, they should feed it; if it is thirsty, they should satisfy its thirst; if it is tired, they should give it rest...*
> *This sympathy and kindness is one of the fundamental principles of the divine kingdom.*[4]

His warnings in other places about the need for kindness even to the lower creatures will have further repercussions on all aspects of our interaction with ecosystems. May Maxwell's observations in this regard are interesting: "'Abdu'l-Bahá said that we should always be kind

[1] Karl, Marilee, *Women in Development*, 1983.
[2] *Promulgation*, p. 175.
[3] ibid., p. 134.
[4] *Bahá'í World Faith*, pp. 373–374.

and merciful to every creature; that cruelty was sin and that the human race should never injure any of God's creatures, but ought to be always careful to do nothing to diminish or exterminate any order of living thing...."[1]

In this light we will have to redesign farm practice to avoid destruction of habitat and to reduce or eliminate practices which are destructive to animal organisms. This thinking is in keeping with ecological science which recognises the important role played by all levels of creatures in the functioning of whole systems.

2. The change in human diet away from eating meat will have a deep impact on resource allocation. Now, about one half of all grain protein is fed to livestock—a very inefficient use of protein. In the future that grain will be available for human consumption.

> *As humanity progresses, meat will be used less and less, for the teeth of man are not carnivorous. For example, the lion is endowed with carnivorous teeth, which are intended for meat, and if meat be not found, the lion starves... The human teeth, the molars, are formed to grind grain. The front teeth, the incisors, are for fruits, etc. It is, therefore, quite apparent according to the implements for eating that man's food is intended to be grain and not meat. When mankind is more fully developed, the eating of meat will gradually cease.*[2]

3. Adherence to just one paragraph from The Kitáb-i-Aqdas will dramatically change agricultural resource allocation:

> *Gambling and the use of opium have been forbidden unto you. Eschew them both, O people, and be not of those who transgress. Beware of using any substance that induceth sluggishness and torpor in the human temple and inflicteth harm upon the body. We, verily, desire for you naught save what shall profit you, and to this bear witness all created things, had ye but ears to hear.*[3]

a. Speculation on land and agricultural commodities will be either moderated or eliminated in view of this injunction against gambling.

b. The prohibition on opium, marijuana, and other narcotics will release tremendous resources for food production. (Now, marijuana is surpassed only by corn as a cash crop in the United States.)

c. Similarly, the terrible waste of food for alcohol production will be eliminated. In the future the fruit, grains and vegetables used in this industry will be available to feed humanity.

4. The tobacco industry will be phased out as more and more people read this Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

> *Among these latter is smoking tobacco, which is dirty, smelly, offensive—an evil habit, and one the harmfulness of which gradually becometh apparent to all. Every qualified physician hath ruled—and this hath also been proven by tests—that one of the components of tobacco is a deadly poison, and that the smoker is vulnerable to many and various diseases. This is why smoking hath been plainly set forth as repugnant....*[4]

[1] Maxwell, May, *An Early Pilgrimage*. (Oxford: George Ronald, 1974) p. 29.

[2] *Promulgation*, p. 170–171.

[3] The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 75.

[4] *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 147–148.

C. CONCLUSION

In summary, agricultural development is a "fundamental principle" for the advancement of mankind, linked to the establishment of the Most Great Peace. For this reason we are instructed to give "special regard" to agricultural development—development shaped by and serving the spiritual causes of unity, justice and equity. The agricultural system must be redesigned to ensure economic viability for producers in self-reliant communities. These communities must then be seen as vital cells in a global organism founded on co-operative interdependence.

We are asked to bring a spiritual sense to our agricultural work, to elevate it to a form of worship, and in the process to transform our inner lives to correspond to God's Will revealed in Word and nature. We are asked to conduct our lives individually and collectively in such fashion as to ensure a sustainable society by balancing technical and spiritual development. We are given a vision of our relatedness to the earth but are called upon to take full responsibility for carrying forward an ever-advancing civilization.

How can we aid in this transformation? We can make every effort to allow the creative influence of the Spirit to inform our thought, feeling, and action. We can pay full attention to the consequences of what we do as we share in the bounty of the earth and the work of producers—when we pursue education and research, or as we work on the land. The task of agricultural development cannot be carried out in isolation from the process of spiritual development, recognising, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá says, *When the love of God is established, everything else will be realized.*[1]

As we witness in our time the failure of agriculture to meet even the basic need of the people for nourishment and watch the continued decline of soil and other resources for production, we can avoid despair and paralysis by remembering that the destiny that we have been promised is approaching, and that while it may seem impossible in any significant way to alleviate the growing suffering of humanity *...thanks to the unfailing grace of God, the loving kindness of His favoured ones, the unrivalled endeavours of wise and capable souls, and the thoughts and ideas of the peerless leaders of this age, nothing whatsoever can be regarded as unattainable.*[2]

[1] *Promulgation*, p. 239.

[2] 'Abdu'l-Bahá quoted in *World Order*, p. 38.

6. THE SPIRITUAL ROLE OF ART

LUDWIG TUMAN

THE Bahá'í Writings make numerous references to the arts, and from these references we can attempt to glean a conception of the nature and ideal role of art. In this discussion, the term "art" will be used broadly to refer to practices such as painting, poetry, dance, and music, as well as to the design arts such as architecture, industrial design, and fashion design. In addition, art is considered to encompass crafts such as pottery, stained-glass setting, and rug-weaving. The following passages from the Writings refer to all kinds of art and indeed apply to all skills and sciences as well. Regarding the nature of the arts and sciences, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote:

> *What bounty greater than this that science should be considered as an act of worship and art as service to the Kingdom of God.*[1]
>
> *In this great dispensation, art (or a profession) is identical with an act of worship and this is a clear text of the Blessed Perfection.*[2]

In one of his talks, 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated:

> *... In the Bahá'í Cause arts, sciences and all crafts are (counted as) worship.... Briefly, all effort and exertion put forth by man from the fullness of his heart is worship, if it is prompted by the highest motives and the will to do service to humanity.*[3]

That the arts and sciences must be of benefit to humankind was emphasized by Bahá'u'lláh in the Tablet of Maqsúd:

> *Of all the arts and sciences, set the children to studying those which will result in advantage to man, will ensure his progress and elevate his rank.*[4]

To learn the arts and sciences is "the greatest glory of mankind," but, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá explained, only when a certain condition is met:

> *Although to acquire the sciences and arts is the greatest glory of mankind, this is so only on condition that man's river flow into the mighty sea, and draw from God's ancient source His inspiration....*
> *...By the one true God! If learning be not a means of access to Him, the Most Manifest, it is nothing but evident loss.*[5]

[1] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978), p. 145.

[2] *Bahá'í World Faith* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1956), p. 377.

[3] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks: Addresses Given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Paris in 1911* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1969), pp. 176–77.

[4] Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-*Aqdas (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978), p. 168.

[5] *Selections*, p. 110.

This article is a modified version of one of twelve chapters in a book by the same author entitled *Mirror of the Divine: Art in the Bahá'í World Community* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1993).



One of the gifts sent from the Bahá'ís of Alaska to the Bahá'ís of Samoa for the House of Worship in Apia.

The arts and sciences depend upon the pervasive grace of the Manifestation of God, so much so that they owe their very existence and life to the Manifestation. To this effect, Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

> *The Sun of Truth is the Word of God upon which dependeth the education of those who are endowed with the power of understanding and of utterance. It is the true spirit and the heavenly water, through whose aid and gracious providence all things have been and will be quickened. Its appearance in every mirror is conditioned by the colour of that mirror. For instance, when its light is cast upon the mirrors of the hearts of the wise, it bringeth forth wisdom. In like manner when it manifesteth itself in the mirrors of the hearts of craftsmen, it unfoldeth new and unique arts....*[1]

To the same effect, 'Abdu'l-Bahá is quoted in *Star of the West* as having said:

> *The Divine Teachers have the innate Light; They have knowledge and understanding of all things in the universe, the rest of the world receives its light from Them, and through Them the arts and sciences are revived in each age.*[2]

On another occasion, 'Abdu'l-Bahá indicated that the radiance of the arts is but a reflection of Bahá'u'lláh's divine and all-encompassing knowledge: *Again among His signs is the dawning sun of His knowledge, and the rising moon of His arts and skills....*[3]

When in London, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was reported to have said the following regarding the influence of the Holy Spirit and the highest purpose of art:

> *All Art is a gift of the Holy Spirit. When this light shines through the mind of a musician, it manifests itself in beautiful harmonies. Again, shining through the mind of a poet, it is seen in fine poetry and poetic prose. When the Light of the Sun of Truth inspires the*

[1] Bahá'u'lláh, previously untranslated Tablet, courtesy of the Bahá'í World Centre.

[2] *Star of the West, The Bahá'í Magazine,* vol. XXII, no. 3 (June 1931), p. 87.

[3] *Selections*, p. 15.

mind of a painter, he produces marvellous pictures. These gifts are fulfilling their highest purpose, when showing forth the praise of God.[1]

The principle that art is a form of worship is applied to a specific art form in the following passage from 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

I rejoice to hear that thou takest pains with thine art, for in this wonderful new age, art is worship. The more thou strivest to perfect it, the closer wilt thou come to God. What bestowal could be greater than this, that one's art should be even as the act of worshipping the Lord? That is to say, when thy fingers grasp the paint brush, it is as if thou wert at prayer in the Temple.[2]

The idea that the arts have to do with the worship and glorification of God is also reflected in a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice:

...Our Sacred Writings confirm it [music] as one of the great arts by which mankind can express its worship of God and joy in His creation ...It is from their [Bahá'í artists'] desire to glorify God through their creative activities that new arts and sciences will gradually develop to enrich a new culture.[3]

Running throughout the above passages like golden threads are three themes regarding the nature and purpose of the arts and sciences. We might summarize them as follows: All arts and sciences are for the worship and glorification of God; the arts and sciences should be a means of access to God; and arts and sciences should be of service to humankind. In reality, these are but different ways of saying the same thing. For in the Bahá'í teachings, the worship of God, the gaining of divine knowledge, and pure-hearted service to humanity are inseparably woven together in the golden brocade of spiritual growth. We saw in a quotation above how 'Abdu'l-Bahá equated worship with service. In the following passages, moreover, Bahá'u'lláh reveals that the knowledge of God and access to God depend upon one's deeds, upon one's observance of the divine teachings. Since the teachings are concerned with humankind's spiritual and social well-being, to observe the teachings is to render service:

The first Tajalli [Effulgence] which hath dawned from the Day-Star of Truth is the knowledge of God—exalted be His glory. And the knowledge of the King of everlasting days can in no wise be attained save by recognizing Him Who is the Bearer of the Most Great Name [Bahá'u'lláh].... Attainment unto the Divine Presence can be realized solely by attaining His presence.... True belief in God and recognition of Him cannot be complete save by acceptance of that which He hath revealed and by observance of whatsoever hath been decreed by Him and set down in the Book by the Pen of Glory.[4]

For man's knowledge of God cannot develop fully and adequately save by observing whatsoever hath been ordained by Him and is set forth in His heavenly Book.[5]

1 Quoted in Blomfield, Lady, *The Chosen Highway* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1940), p. 167.

2 "Extracts from the Writings and from the letters of the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice on the Arts and Architecture." Unpublished compilation prepared by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice. p. 2.

3 Unpublished letter, dated 22 February 1980.

4 *Tablets*, p. 50.

5 ibid., p. 268.

By emphasizing deeds, Bahá'u'lláh obliges the individual to make effort, to develop personal potential, to grow spiritually toward the fulfillment of the purpose for which each was created to know and to worship God.[1] In this light, all the foregoing appears to resolve itself into one principle: the common, the most general and fundamental aim of the arts and sciences, indeed of all human endeavors, however material or mundane they may seem, is to foster spiritual growth.

Art as a Means of Ennoblement

Beyond this general principle, however, questions arise. How is God worshipped and glorified through the arts? How are the arts a means of access to God and a service to humankind? How can the arts foster spiritual growth?

In the Bahá'í teachings, the arts are associated with certain spiritual and educational roles that have mystical, moral, and social facets. In one of his talks, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was recorded as saying, *Music is an important means to the education and development of humanity....* He immediately added:

> *...but the only true way is through the Teachings of God. Music is like this glass.... and the Teachings of God, the utterances of God, are like the water. When the glass or chalice is absolutely pure and clear, and the water is perfectly fresh and limpid, then it will confer Life....*[2]

A conversation 'Abdu'l-Bahá held with an actor, while in London, was described by a believer as follows:

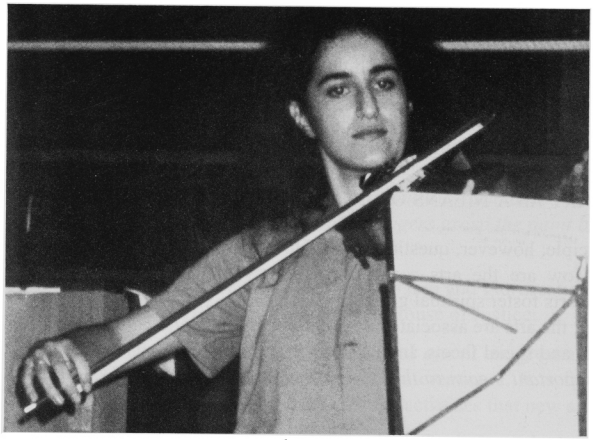
> An actor mentioned the drama, and its influence. "The drama is of the utmost importance," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá. "It has been a great educational power in the past; it will be so again." He described how as a young boy he witnessed the Mystery Play of 'Alí's Betrayal and Passion, and how it affected him so deeply that he wept and could not sleep for many nights.[3]

The far-reaching implications of this statement seem worthy of consideration. For the drama is not a single art form but usually a combination of two or more. Traditionally it can, and in many parts of the world does, involve poetry or dramatic prose, dance, music, and several auxiliary arts. Part of the "educational power" of such arts lies in their ability to probe the significance and preserve the memory of important historical events, to reinforce the divine teachings and exhortations, to demonstrate the consequences of obedience or disobedience to spiritual law, and to reveal the human soul in action—the process of spiritual growth. In short, such arts share with other arts the ability to impart an understanding of spiritual reality, and this is one way they meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá's requirement that the arts and sciences be "a means of access to Him, the Most Manifest." In so doing, they render a service on a mystical plane; that is to say, they help strengthen the relation between humanity and its heavenly king.

[1] In the Short Obligatory Prayer, revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, the believer recites: "I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee." (*Bahá'í Prayers,* Wilmette: Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 4.

[2] *Bahá'í Writings on Music.* Comp. Research Department of the Universal House of Justice (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1973), p. 8.

[3] *'Abdu'l-Bahá in London: Addresses and Notes of Conversations* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 93.



Roya Aschari playing the violin during Art Forum '91, organized by the Bahá'í Association for the Arts and held at De Poort, Netherlands.

A further example of the service the arts can render on the mystical plane is given in the following passage, in which 'Abdu'l-Bahá refers to music as a means of helping to draw the souls toward the radiant Source of divine love:

> *Thank thou God that thou art instructed in music and melody, singing with pleasant voice the glorification and praise of the Eternal, the Living. I pray to God that thou mayest employ this talent in prayer and supplication, in order that the souls may become quickened, the hearts may become attracted and all may become inflamed with the fire of the love of God!*[1]

However, on a moral plane, where the relation between artist and public is involved, another kind of service comes to light. As expressed by the Universal House of Justice:

> ...music, art, and literature ... are to represent and inspire the noblest sentiments and highest aspirations and should be a source of comfort and tranquillity for troubled souls....[2]

Moreover, viewed in its educational role as an edifying and uplifting power, art finds its moral responsibilities implied in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's outline of the cardinal principles underlying Bahá'í education *from the cradle up to the age of manhood.* One of the principles, He said, is

> *...service to the cause of morality, raising the moral tone of the students, inspiring them with the sublimest ideals of ethical refinement, teaching them altruism, inculcating in their lives the beauty of holiness and the excellency of virtue and animating them with the excellences and perfections of the religion of God.*[3]

Since the Bahá'í Faith aims to provide spiritual and moral education to the whole of humanity, the above passage will be seen to apply not only to students but also to people of

[1] *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.* Comp. Albert R. Windust (Chicago: Bahá'í Publishing Society, 1916), p. 512. *Bahá'í Writings on Music*, p. 3.

[2] *The Bahá'í World,* vol. XVIII (1979–1983) (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1986), p. 358.

[3] Quoted in *Star of the West,* vol. IX, no. 9 (20 August 1918), p. 98.

whatever age or occupation, and bears relevance not only to academic curricula but also to the educational aspect of art.

At yet another level—the social plane, involving human relations—the arts have a vital service to render: that of helping to unite humankind. On this theme, Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

> *The source of crafts, sciences and arts is the power of reflection. Make ye every effort that out of this ideal mine there may gleam forth such pearls of wisdom and utterance as will promote the well-being and harmony of all the kindreds of the earth.*[1]

This power of reflection, the source of the arts, is one of the faculties the Creator has bestowed upon human beings. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, too, said such powers should be employed for the attainment of human unity:

> *The truth is that God has endowed man with virtues, powers and ideal faculties.... We must thank God for these bestowals, for these powers He has given us, for this crown He has placed upon our heads.*
> *How shall we utilize these gifts and expend these bounties? By directing our efforts toward the unification of the human race. We must use these powers in establishing the oneness of the world of humanity....*[2]

Turning again to the educative influence of the arts, we find that social harmony and world unity are also included in the above-cited outline of educational aims given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Education must seek

> *...the elimination of the causes of ignorance and social evils.... [and] service to the oneness of the world of humanity; so that each student may consciously realize that he is a brother to all mankind, irrespective of religion or race.*[3]

The arts are especially well suited to promote unity, the central theme of the Bahá'í Revelation. First, when addressed to the spiritual life of humanity, the arts can highlight that which is universal. Second, their influence can be far-reaching: a single work of art may touch the lives of thousands, even millions of people, and in some cases may continue to do so for centuries. And third, as time goes on, the cumulative effect of the work of thousands of Bahá'í artists can be expected to contribute substantially to the emergence of a world environment, a world climate of thought and feeling with which all peoples feel themselves identified.

The Bahá'í teachings appear to indicate, in sum, that the principal aims and highest aspirations of the arts are as follows:

- On a mystical plane, to impart spiritual knowledge, attract the souls to the beauty of the All-Glorious, and brighten the flame of God's love;
- On a moral plane, to "represent and inspire the noblest sentiments and highest aspirations," foster a desire for moral excellence and obedience to the divine teachings, and "be a source of comfort and tranquillity for troubled souls";
- On a social plane, to promote social well-being, harmony, world unity, and universal brotherhood.

1 *Tablets*, p. 72.
2 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Foundations of World Unity* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1972), p. 62.
3 *Star*, vol. IX, no. 9 (20 August 1918), p. 98.

These aims apply to the arts that are called "the fine arts." They also appear to characterize the spiritual side of the service rendered by the design arts and the crafts. In other words, they apply as much to urban design as to poetry, as much to rug-weaving as to music. It is in realizing such aims that the arts glorify and become a means of access to God, render a service to humanity, and foster spiritual growth.

It would be an error to consider that the mystical aims are spiritual while the moral and social ones are not. All three aims are spiritual in nature and are integral parts of what we could call the spiritual role of art. For in the Bahá'í teachings, as we have seen, worship, morality, and social relations are inseparable parts of a way of life. Indeed, it is through a divinely ordained, world-embracing administrative and social order that the Bahá'í Faith channels and incarnates the bounties of a life-giving Spirit, thereby regenerating the spiritual life of the millions of individuals who constitute the body of its world community.

Due to their ability to render services of a mystical, moral, and social nature, the arts constitute an effective means of conveying spiritual teachings to the public. For in realizing such services, the arts are, directly or indirectly, making divine precepts known throughout society, diffusing the spirit of oneness and helping to deepen the understanding, the love, unity, and faith of humankind. The great potential of the arts in this domain was described in a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi:

> That day will the Cause will spread like wildfire when its spirit and teachings will be presented on the stage or in art and literature as a whole. Art can better awaken such noble sentiments than cold rationalizing, especially among the mass of the people.
> We have to wait only a few years to see how the spirit breathed by Bahá'u'lláh will find expression in the work of the artists. What you and some other Bahá'ís are attempting are only faint rays that precede the effulgent light of a glorious morn.[1]

Let us attempt to summarize. Art can impart a knowledge of things divine; it can also stir yearning for the Kingdom, strengthen faith in God, help instill fear of God's justice and hope for his mercy, and fan the flame of the love of his beauty; and it can, thereby, affect the will to act, to obey God's commandments, and to live in harmony with God's teachings, which are the essence of morality and the source of spiritual growth. In so doing, art assists humankind to attain the very purpose of its existence: to know and to worship God. Toward this end, moreover, art can promote the formation of praiseworthy character; can disseminate the divine teachings; can strengthen, through its unifying influence, the bonds of harmony and human fellowship; and can reinforce throughout the world the sense of common identity shared by members of the Bahá'í community.

All such services can be implied, in a word, by saying that art has to do with ennoblement: its highest purpose is to ennoble the individual soul and the collective life of humanity.

ART AND RELIGION

The reader familiar with the Bahá'í teachings will note that the ideal aims of art outlined above are in fact among the principal objectives of the Bahá'í Faith itself and that these aims harmonize with the spiritual values upheld by the teachings of the world's major

[1] From a letter dated 10 October 1932 to an individual believer (*Bahá'í News* No. 73 [May 1933] p. 7. Quoted in *Lights of Guidance.* Comp. Helen Hornby (New Delhi: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988), p. 98.

religions. What is the explanation of this unity of purpose? It is that art, when quickened by the spirit and teachings of religion, reflects (on an infinitely lower level) the generative process set into motion by the Word of God and attempts in its humble way to reinforce the spiritual and social handiwork of the Almighty. This is the principle implied in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's statement that *Music is an important means to the education and development of humanity, but the only true way is through the Teachings of God.* [1] This is also the reason why the arts, throughout the history of civilization, and particularly during its spiritual high tides, have been intimately associated with religion.

Here, though, one needs to distinguish between religion and religious community. In speaking of religion as a whole, our focus is not upon the institutions, dogmas, superstitions, rites, or customs associated with particular historical communities. Our focus is rather upon the body of spiritual and moral teachings that constitute the essence and common foundation of religion, as revealed by the Messengers of God. In the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

> *Religion... is not a series of beliefs, a set of customs; religion is the teachings of the Lord God, teachings which constitute the very life of humankind, which urge high thoughts upon the mind, refine the character, and lay the groundwork for man's everlasting honour.*[2]

It is true that art, throughout history, has been placed in the service of the dogmas, superstitions, and customs of particular communities. But parallel with this, art has been employed to reinforce the fundamental spiritual aims of religion as defined by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

It is also true that some religious authorities, at some points in history, have imposed their views and their will on artists and obliged them to serve the interests of religious institutions. But that alone would not explain the worldwide and long-enduring intimacy between religion and art. The intimacy, rather, is a spontaneous outcome of the awe or the love artists have borne toward the Creator (however diverse the forms in which they have conceived of that Creator), recognizing in religion a reservoir of God's grace to humankind, acknowledging that in the spiritual and moral teachings of religion are found the fountain and the bedrock of their civilization, and desiring to promote, by embodying such teachings in their works of art, the highest interests of their fellows.

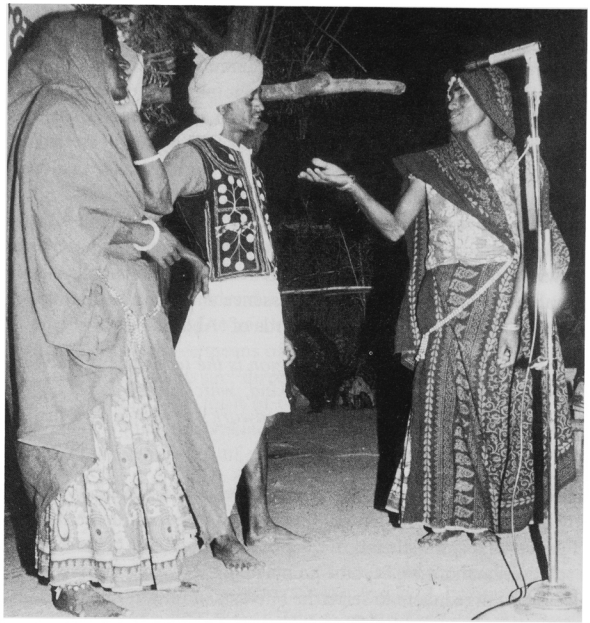
Since the sixteenth century, the arts in the West have steadily drifted away from a religious viewpoint—a process that in the twentieth century has spread to most parts of the world. Humanity, having turned away from God, has fallen into a spiritual and moral decline and is now descending to its utter depths. The Universal House of Justice indicated that the arts have not escaped the effects of the general chaos this spiritual decline has unleashed:

> Every discerning eye clearly sees that the early stages of this chaos have daily manifestations affecting the structure of human society; its destructive forces are uprooting time-honoured institutions.... The same destructive forces are also deranging the political, economic, scientific, literary, and moral equilibrium of the world and are destroying the fairest fruits of the present civilization.... Even music, art, and literature, which are to represent and inspire the noblest sentiments and highest aspirations and should be a source of comfort and tranquillity for troubled souls, have strayed from the straight path and are now the mirrors of the soiled hearts of this confused, unprincipled, and disordered age.[3]

[1] *Bahá'í Writings*, p. 8.

[2] *Selections*, pp. 52–53.

[3] From a circular letter, dated 10 February 1980, published in *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVIII. p. 358.



During an 'awareness camp' held in Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh, India, Bahá'ís are using street theatre as a means of teaching people principles on development themes such as health, education and agricultural issues. May 1988.

For the Universal House of Justice to have made such a strongly worded generalization, the decline blighting present-day society must have affected the spiritual and moral content of art to a high degree. If what constitutes religion, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, are divine teachings *which urge high thoughts upon the mind, refine the character, and lay the groundwork for man's everlasting honour*,[1] then art such as that described above would have to be considered either irreligious or non-religious. Nonetheless, even in the twentieth century, a significant number of works of art can be found that reflect the higher inclinations of the human spirit, inclinations "towards transcendence, a reaching towards an invisible realm, towards the ultimate reality, that unknowable essence of essences called God".[2] The current state of affairs, then, does not disprove that the bond between art and religion is natural, vital, and timeless; rather, it simply indicates that present-day civilization has descended spiritually to a low-water mark and that the nonreligious attitude currently reflected in the greater part of art constitutes one of the transient exceptions to a rule that has prevailed throughout thousands of years of world history. The matter is confirmed by the history of the arts in the various regions of the world.[3]

1 *Selections*, p. 53.

2 Universal House of Justice, *The Promise of World Peace* (October 1985), p. 4.

3 In some cases, during a certain period of a given civilization, the State may appear to have been a more important patron of the arts than was religion. But even when the artist worked for a king, a court, or some other temporal institution, it should be remembered that throughout the world, prior to the emergence of modern civilization, the worldview in which artists were immersed, in which they lived, and to which they gave expression in their works, was usually a religious one. The concept that art is a manifestation of cosmology is explored in Ludwig Tuman, "Toward Critical Foundations" (Tuman, Ludwig. "Toward Critical Foundations for a World Culture of the Arts," *World Order* 9.4 [Summer 1975]: pp. 17–21.)

With respect to existing primitive societies and to prehistoric peoples, in whose cases a history of art is impossible to construct, anthropology adds its confirmation that, on the evidence available, art and religious belief have universally gone hand in hand. In sum: the traditional arts of Oceania, of sub-Saharan Africa, of the pre-Columbian Americas, of Islamic domains, of Christendom, of ancient Greece and Rome, of the ancient Near East, and of the peoples of South Asia, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Far East, one and all give eloquent testimony to the abiding service art has rendered to the spiritual and moral aims of religion. In its highest role, art is a handmaiden of divine truth.

What observations could be made regarding the relation between religion and art, in the case of the Bahá'í Faith? First, the important distinction between religion and religious community should again be drawn.[1] In its relation with the Bahá'í Faith, the Bahá'í world community has a favorable position. The Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and those of the authorized interpreters of his Word provide for an institutional order that guides the affairs of the Bahá'í community. The Writings stipulate the few, simple rites that are observed; preclude the formation of rigid, divisive dogmas; and shield the community against schism by means of an explicit and inviolable Covenant. While such measures are indispensable and greatly aid the community in approaching the spiritual ideals upheld by the Bahá'í teachings, it should nonetheless be remembered that the religion and its followers are different entities. The artist's relation with the divine teachings of the Bahá'í Faith is one matter; the artist's relation to fellow believers is another.

Another important aspect of religion, as conceived of in the Bahá'í teachings, is that it envelops the whole of human life. For many, this is a difficult notion to accept. The world has grown accustomed, in the twentieth century, to seeing a wide gulf between religion and other human concerns. Indeed, many have come to regard this breach as the normal state of affairs. Yet to separate religion from the art of living has proven fatal, for the gap between the two has been filled by that materialistic view of life which Bahá'u'lláh regarded as *the chief factor in precipitating the dire ordeals and world-shaking crises* that afflict all peoples.[2]

The Bahá'í Faith restores the vital bond between religion and daily living. 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasized that deeds are the only sure proof of faith:

> *For in this holy Dispensation, the crowning glory of bygone ages and cycles, true Faith is no mere acknowledgment of the Unity of God, but rather the living of a life that will manifest all the perfections and virtues implied in such belief....*[3]

1 The Universal House of Justice draws this distinction between religion and religious community: "...true religion, far from being the product solely of human striving after truth, is the fruit of the creative Word of God which, with divine power, transforms human thought and action. A Bahá'í, through this faith in, this 'conscious knowledge' of, the reality of divine Revelation, can distinguish, for instance, between Christianity, which is the divine message given by Jesus of Nazareth, and the development of Christendom, which is the history of what men did with that message in subsequent centuries; a distinction which has become blurred if not entirely obscured in current Christian theology. A Bahá'í scholar conscious of this distinction will not make the mistake of regarding the sayings and beliefs of certain Bahá'ís at any one time as being the Bahá'í Faith. The Bahá'í Faith is the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh: His Own Words as interpreted by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian". (Universal House of Justice. "The Challenge and Promise of Bahá'í Scholarship." In *The Bahá'í World.* vol. XVII [1974–1978]. (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1986). p. 195.)

2 Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith: Messages to America, 1947–1957* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1965), p. 125.

3 *The Bahá'í Yearbook,* vol. I [1925–1926] (New York: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1926), p. 2.

Further still, in the following passages revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, we find that every aspect of life comes under the sheltering shade of the divine teachings and that every detail of civilization derives from the creative potential latent in such teachings:

> *Weigh not the Book of God with such standards and sciences as are current amongst you, for the Book itself is the unerring balance established amongst men. In this most perfect balance whatsoever the peoples and kindreds of the earth possess must be weighed, while the measure of its weight should be tested according to its own standard, did ye but know it.*[1]

> *...even the minutest details of civilized life derive from the grace of the Prophets of God. What thing of value to mankind has ever come into being which was not first set forth either directly or by implication in the Holy Scriptures?*[2]

From a Bahá'í perspective, then, religion subsumes all of human life. And as art is a part of life, religion also subsumes art. This is further confirmed by Bahá'u'lláh's teaching that the arts and sciences themselves are but reflections of the knowledge of the Manifestation of God, and in each age are revived and stimulated by the leavening spirit the Manifestation releases into the world:

> *Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God is endowed with such potency as can instill new life into every human frame.... Through the mere revelation of the word "Fashioner," issuing forth from His lips and proclaiming His attribute to mankind, such power is released as can generate, through successive ages, all the manifold arts which the hands of man can produce.*[3]

In referring to Jesus Christ, Bahá'u'lláh gave an example of the quickening influence that the Manifestation of God exercises over all aspects of civilization, including the arts:

> *The deepest wisdom which the sages have uttered, the profoundest learning which any mind hath unfolded, the arts which the ablest hands have produced, the influence exerted by the most potent of rulers, are but manifestations of the quickening power released by His transcendent, His all-pervasive, and resplendent Spirit.*[4]

Given such unequivocal teachings, to continue to regard art and religion as two separate powers, to continue to hold that art should be independent of religion, would be to perpetuate the fatal cleavage between religion and life that has undermined the basis of present-day civilization.[5]

1 Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976), p. 198.

2 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1975), p. 96.

3 *Gleanings*, pp. 141-142.

4 *Gleanings*, pp. 85–86.

5 Shoghi Effendi wrote that science and religion are "the two most potent forces in human life" and that, in the world society anticipated in the Bahá'í Writings, they "will be reconciled, will cooperate, and will harmoniously develop" (*World Order*, p. 204). It might well be asked, therefore: if one can speak of science and religion as distinct forces, why not speak of art and religion in the same way? It should be noted that Shoghi Effendi did not state that science is independent of religion, nor did he state that the two are, in all ways, equally potent. The present writer feels that the reconciling of religion and science, as spoken of in the above passage, could be understood as a reconciling of two basic human powers—those of faith and of reason. When faith is not blind but is supported by reason, the result is a religion that Shoghi Effendi described as "scientific in its method" (*World Order* [1938 ed.] xi). Similarly, when reason is informed and illumined by faith in the revealed Word of God, then science will be practiced with wisdom and will become imbued

But at this point a clarification should be made. If one says that it is in the nature of art to serve the spiritual, fundamental aims of religion, this does not imply that the content and style of the artist's work need be determined in all cases by the desires of religious institutions or by the devotional tastes of the religious community. (Here we see one reason why it is important to distinguish between religion and community.) Nor does it imply that one conceives of art as being constrained within the nine walls of the Bahá'í Temple. It implies, rather, that one recognizes life itself as a temple without walls, the sky as a limitless dome that speaks of the Creator's sovereignty, and religion (in its renewed and purified form: the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh) as the sun that rides the dome's center, shedding light and life on all things.

Viewed from such a perspective, the domain of art would legitimately include everything under the sun, from the first cry of a newborn child to the last breath of a departing soul. To make this statement is not only to affirm the right of artists to treat the entire range of human experience in their work: it is also to recall the holiness of life. It is to affirm that all aspects of life—both light and darkness, joy and suffering, triumph and setback—are contained within the framework of a divinely ordained purpose and are designed by the Creator to be conducive to spiritual growth.[1]

Beauty Reflected in the Creation and in Art

It is beyond the scope of this article to attempt even a brief survey of the points of agreement and divergence between established, specific theories of beauty and the outlook derived here from Bahá'í teachings. In one case, however, we need to examine what is not so much a theory as it is a general tendency found in much of current Western thinking on beauty—a

with divine and merciful qualities. In this case, then, we are viewing religion and science in the dimension of their human practice. But to acknowledge that science and religion can be reconciled and cooperate is not necessarily to place them on the same plane. If we view religion not in its human dimension, but rather as an expression of God's will through divine Revelation, then we find religion to be preeminent. The all-encompassing nature of the divine foundation of religion is affirmed in the following statement made on behalf of the Universal House of Justice: "...it should never be overlooked that the Revelation of the Manifestation of God is the standard for all knowledge, and scientific statements and theories, no matter how close they may come to the eternal principles proclaimed by God's Messenger, are in their very nature ephemeral and limited" (from a letter dated 21 July 1968 to a National Spiritual Assembly). Here again, we are led to conclude that religion envelops all of human life. And as the arts and sciences are parts of human life, religion also subsumes the arts and sciences.

[1] The painter Mark Tobey stated that Shoghi Effendi told him in a conversation that Bahá'í artists are free to produce as they wish. Care should be taken, however, not to make too much of this report: first, because it is a pilgrim's note; and second, because it does not specify the nature and extent of the freedom involved. It would be unwarranted to assume, on the basis of this verbal account, that the Bahá'í Faith regards art as being independent of religion (the latter understood as a body of divine teachings). The most that can be safely concluded is that artists, if they wish, can in certain ways be independent of the religious community. When Bahá'í artists operate as individual economic units, the style and content of their work need not respond to the prevailing taste of the religious community or of the Faith's institutions. Historically, religious institutions often required artistic style to remain within narrow limits. In the Bahá'í community, artists are free to operate independently; even when they produce specifically for the use of the community or its institutions, there will be no official style to which their work will have to conform. Even so, it should be noted that Bahá'í artists remain responsible for the spiritual and moral implications of their work, their ultimate background of reference being the Bahá'í teachings. Moreover, the absence of an official Bahá'í art does not preclude the spontaneous development of an important body of works explicitly dedicated to religious themes.

tendency that compels attention in a discussion where we are concerned with fundamental concepts.

In the West, there are several theories of beauty reflecting the idea that beauty is an end in itself, that it has no purpose outside the giving of some form of pleasure. The kind of pleasure emphasized may be sensual (as in hedonistic theory). The pleasure may be derived from the intellectual appreciation of design and pattern (as in naturalistic theory). It may arise from the recognition of artistic patterns corresponding to instinctive mental patterns (as in Gestalt theory); from an intuitive appreciation of qualitative vividness (as in contextualistic theory); from an appreciation of the work of art as an integrated organic whole (as in organistic theory); and from the recognition and appreciation of ideal forms (as in formistic theory). It may also involve satisfaction which the artist derives from the expression of emotion and the public from emotional arousal (as in expressionism). Each theory stresses a different facet of the experience of beauty, but what they have in common is the basic notion that beauty's essential characteristic is to give sensual, intellectual, or emotional pleasure without higher purpose. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, philosophers and theorists have gone to considerable lengths to elaborate upon this concept.[1]

What is the origin of this widespread, modern view of beauty? In the late Middle Ages, philosophers of Christian Europe certainly did not look upon beauty as a source of pleasure without purpose, but rather as the attractive power of spiritual perfection.[2] Is it a coincidence that modern theories viewing beauty as an end in itself emerged and were developed in the centuries following the Renaissance, when Europe drifted away from the shores of a religious world outlook into the seas of secularism and materialism?

Surely few would deny that beauty gives pleasure and that such pleasure may be of a sensual, emotional, intellectual, or even spiritual nature. In this regard, the findings of the various modern theories of beauty are most valuable for their analysis and insights into some of the ways in which beauty is experienced. Such studies, however, do not appear to go far enough. They deal intensively with the "how" of beauty, but scarcely with the "why." They focus on the ways that the experience of beauty engages the senses and the mind but offer little explanation as to what purpose this subtle and delicate process may serve except to give pleasure. The point here is to suggest that pleasure is not the end of beauty; it is only a natural part of the experience that beauty offers.[3]

The Great Architect designed the creation such that all creatures take pleasure in that which is natural to their lives. The dog enjoys romping about. The infant delights in play.

1 For an overview of occidental theories, see Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1981). *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present* (New York: Macmillan, 1966).

2 Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), p. 112.

3 Some theories observe that beauty has educational value because it hones sensory discrimination, or psychological value because it provides a release for pent-up emotions, or social value in that its employment in art can reinforce cultural identity. Such theories, however, stop short of recognizing that beauty affects not only human beings' sensory, mental, and social life but also affects, above all, the human soul. The very word *aesthetic* implies a viewing of art more as a sensory and mental experience than as a spiritual one. The term therefore appears inappropriate for use in a discussion where the essential nature, purpose, and effect of beauty are held to be spiritual. Coined in the eighteenth century by the thinker Alexander Baumgarten, it takes as its root the Greek *aesthesis*, which in Hellenic usage meant simply sense perception or physical sensation. Its opposite is the medical term *anaesthetic*, referring to the inability to feel such physical sensation. See the article s.v. "aesthetics" in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica; Macropaedia* 1, p. 150. See also Coomaraswamy, *Christian and Oriental Philosophy*, pp. 16, 46, and 64.

The body, when tired after a day's work, is refreshed by a night of rest. In each of these instances, there is not only pleasure but also divine wisdom in the service of a higher purpose. For exercise is indispensable to the dog's health. Through play, the child develops both body and mind. And sleep affords not only a pleasant restoration but also, to the Bahá'í, a preparation for further service. In this connection, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote:

> *...man must become evanescent in God. Must forget his own selfish conditions that he may thus arise to the station of sacrifice. It should be to such a degree that if he sleep, it should not be for pleasure, but to rest the body in order to do better, to speak better, to explain more beautifully, to serve the servants of God and to prove the truths.*[1]

We note that 'Abdu'l-Bahá did not deny the pleasure involved in sleeping but held that such is not its ultimate purpose.

This principle of pleasure channeled into the service of a divine purpose would seem to apply not only to humanity's physical life but also to its higher, spiritual life:

> *It is natural for the heart and spirit to take pleasure and enjoyment in all things that show forth symmetry, harmony, and perfection. For instance: a beautiful house, a well designed garden, a symmetrical line, a graceful motion, a well written book, pleasing garments—in fact, all things that have in themselves grace or beauty are pleasing to the heart and spirit....*
> *What is music? It is a combination of harmonious sounds. What is poetry? It is a symmetrical collection of words. Therefore, they are pleasing through harmony and rhythm...*
> *All these have in themselves an organization, and are constructed on natural law. Therefore, they correspond to the order of existence like something which would fit into a mold.... When it is so, this affects the nerves, and they affect the heart and spirit.*[2]

These words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which refer to all the principal mediums (visual, spatial, gestural, verbal, and auditory) in which art is constituted, show that beauty does indeed give pleasure, in this case to "the heart and spirit." But what higher end might such pleasure serve within the scheme of divine creation, within the framework of God's purpose for humanity? If it were to serve no such higher end, then the enjoyment of beauty in the arts would be little more than a frivolous pastime, hardly worthy of the noble distinction accorded to all arts and sciences in the Writings.

In a religious worldview, all things are found to have a reason for being. The fundamental purpose all created things have in common is to enable humankind to know and to love God:

> *Having created the world and all that liveth and moveth therein, [God] ... chose to confer upon man the unique distinction and capacity to know Him and to love Him—a capacity that must needs be regarded as the generating impulse and the primary purpose underlying the whole of creation....*[3]

Within the framework of this broad purpose, every created thing, from the humblest atom to the greatest spiritual law, has a specific role to play and an assigned purpose to fulfil. Bahá'u'lláh affirmed this ancient teaching in the following way:

1 *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 384.
2 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í Writings*, pp. 8–9.
3 *Gleanings*, p. 65.

> *...when the light of My Name, the All-Pervading, hath shed its radiance upon the universe, each and every created thing hath, according to a fixed decree, been endowed with the capacity to exercise a particular influence, and been made to possess a distinct virtue.*[1]

And addressing the world of humankind, Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

> O*ut of the wastes of nothingness, with the clay of My command I made thee to appear, and have ordained for thy training every atom in existence and the essence of all created things.... And My purpose in all this was that thou mightest attain My everlasting dominion and become worthy of My invisible bestowals.*[2]

Even the towering principle of justice—which Bahá'u'lláh called the *best beloved of all things in My sight*[3], which he made to be the axis of the Bahá'í World Order, and whose name He gave to the supreme governing body of the Bahá'í world community—is but a means to a higher end. *The purpose of justice*, Bahá'u'lláh disclosed, *is the appearance of unity among men.*[4] And unity itself, the central theme of the Bahá'í Revelation, stands revealed in another passage as a means to a still further end: *...unity and concord ... in turn are conducive to the maintenance of order in the world and to the regeneration of nations.*[5] In view of this consistent pattern, can we doubt that beauty, too, must have some role to play?

The Bahá'í Writings make many references to beauty, but space permits us here to consider briefly only a few passages from the Divine Pen of Bahá'u'lláh. In the first, there seems to be a distinction between the Beauty that is of God and the beauty found in the creation. The Beauty of God is inherently glorious, primary, original; whereas that of creation is subordinate, secondary, reflected:

> *I beseech Thee, O my God, by Thy Beauty that shineth forth above the horizon of eternity, a Beauty before which as soon as it revealeth itself the kingdom of beauty boweth down in worship, magnifying it in ringing tones, to grant that I may die to all that I possess and live to whatsoever belongeth unto Thee.*[6]

But since the Creator is *sanctified above all attributes and holy above all names,*[7] it is utterly impossible for humanity to perceive the beauty of God's essence:

> *Too high art Thou exalted for the eye of any creature to behold Thy beauty, or for the understanding of any heart to scale the heights of Thine immeasurable knowledge.*[8]

The most humanity can hope to perceive of a beauty that pertains to God is the beauty revealed in the attributes and perfections of God's divine Messengers, the founders of the

1 *Gleanings*, p. 189.

2 Bahá'u'lláh. The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1939), Persian #29, p. 32.

3 Hidden Words, Arabic #2, p. 3.

4 *Tablets*, p. 67.

5 *Tablets*, p. 36.

6 *Bahá'í Prayers* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1985), p. 241. (It is possible that the word *beauty*, when capitalized in Shoghi Effendi's translations of the Bahá'í Writings, refers in some cases to a Manifestation of God, such as Jesus, Muḥammad, or Bahá'u'lláh. For the purposes of our discussion, though, it is the same whether the passage refers to divine beauty in the abstract or as personified in a Manifestation of God, just as it is the same whether we speak of the sun's rays in general or as reflected in a flawless mirror. For what concerns us here is not the individuality of the mirror, but the light.)

7 *Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 12.

8 Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1969), p. 88.



Detail of a tapestry made by Vickie Hu Poirier called "Holding Up Half the Sky." It was made as a gift for the first Sino-American Women's Conference, held in Beijing in 1990.

world's great religions. Regarding the relation between such Messengers and the Supreme Creator, Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

> *Every one of them is a mirror of God, reflecting naught else but His Self, His Beauty, His Might and Glory, if ye will understand. All else besides them are to be regarded as mirrors capable of reflecting the glory of these Manifestations Who are themselves the Primary Mirrors of the Divine Being,...*[1]

> *These sanctified Mirrors, these Day Springs of ancient glory, are, one and all, the Exponents on earth of Him Who is the central Orb of the universe,... The beauty of their countenance is but a reflection of His image, and their revelation a sign of His deathless glory.... By the revelation of these Gems of Divine virtue all the names and attributes of God,... are made manifest.*[2]

In this connection we note that Bahá'u'lláh is often referred to in the Bahá'í Sacred Writings by the titles "the Blessed Beauty" and "the Ancient Beauty."

Divine beauty stands revealed, perfect and consummate, in the Manifestations of God; but, on the level of the creation, it is reflected by each created thing in a limited way, "each according to its capacity and rank."

> *...the revelations of Thy matchless Beauty have at all times been imprinted upon the realities of all beings, visible and invisible.*[3]

1 *Gleanings*, p. 74.
2 ibid., pp. 47–48.
3 ibid., p. 63.

From the exalted source, and out of the essence of His favor and bounty He hath entrusted every created thing with a sign of His knowledge, so that none of His creatures may be deprived of its share in expressing, each according to its capacity and rank, this knowledge. This sign is the mirror of His beauty in the world of creation. The greater the effort exerted for the refinement of this sublime and noble mirror, the more faithfully will it be made to reflect the glory of the names and attributes of God, and reveal the wonders of His signs and knowledge.[1]

Upon the inmost reality of each and every created thing He hath shed the light of one of His names, and made it a recipient of the glory of one of His attributes. Upon the reality of man, however, He hath focused the radiance of all of His names and attributes, and made it a mirror of His own Self. Alone of all created things man hath been singled out for so great a favor, so enduring a bounty.[2]

It is important to observe that in the above passages Bahá'u'lláh equates beauty with *the glory of the names and attributes of God.*

Though one can know absolutely nothing of God's essence, one can, however, appreciate God's Beauty as revealed in the Messengers or Manifestations. This capacity is mentioned in the following passage, whose context is a warning that those who turn away from Bahá'u'lláh and His Revelation will be held responsible before God:

...every man hath been, and will continue to be, able of himself to appreciate the Beauty of God, the Glorified. Had he not been endowed with such a capacity, how could he be called to account for his failure?[3]

By the same token, when one contemplates the beauty reflected in the creation, and in the human heart itself, one finds that it leads to the same divine Source:

Every created thing in the whole universe is but a door leading into His knowledge, a sign of His sovereignty, a revelation of His names, a symbol of His majesty, a token of His power, a means of admittance into His straight Path....[4]

The Creator's purpose in endowing humanity with the capacity to appreciate beauty is to enable the human soul to recognize and feel attracted to God and to the Manifestation. This capacity is alluded to in a passage from a prayer revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

O Lord, make me hear Thy call, and open before my face the doors of Thy heaven, so that I may see the light of Thy glory and become attracted to Thy beauty.[5]

Deprived of such a capacity, humanity, though surrounded by the evidences of God's presence, the signs of God's dominion, and the revelation of God's attributes, would be unable to respond to them, would remain insensible to their drawing power, and would feel no attraction to them. In such a condition, we would have no desire to make divine attributes our own and to reflect them in our way of life: no desire either to know God or to grow spiritually. We would lie wrapped in a paralyzing ignorance, and all our distinctive powers

1 *Gleanings*, p. 262.
2 ibid., p. 65.
3 ibid., p. 143.
4 ibid., p. 160.
5 *Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 62

would remain dormant and undeveloped. How much difference would there be, in such a case, between human and animal?[1]

Beauty may be regarded as an attracting quality that radiates from the Manifestation of God, is reflected in all of God's handiwork and is felt in the human heart as a stirring and awakening of love. Beauty, then, plays an essential role in aiding humanity to fulfil the very purpose of its existence: to know and to love God. In the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Real love is impossible unless one turn his face towards God and be attracted to His Beauty.*[2]

Humanity's love of God, in turn, generates a powerful desire to obey the Creator's will. What would a person not do for someone he or she loves? To obey God for the love of His beauty requires greater spiritual maturity than does an obedience motivated solely by fear of God or by hope for divine reward.[3] Yet Bahá'u'lláh, in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, calls for humankind to aspire to such maturity:

> *The Tongue of My power hath, from the heaven of My omnipotent glory, addressed to My creation these words: "Observe My commandments, for the love of My beauty."*[4]

To be sure, the Long Obligatory Prayer itself (one of the three prayers destined by Bahá'u'lláh to be regularly recited throughout the Bahá'í world for at least a thousand years) opens by supplicating God to enable the believer to perceive the Creator's beauty:

> *I beseech Thee by them Who are the Day Springs of Thine invisible Essence, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious, to make of my prayer a fire that will burn away the veils which have shut me out from Thy beauty, and a light that will lead me unto the ocean of Thy Presence.*[5]

Towards the end of the prayer, we find that the perception of divine beauty is linked with obedience to God's will:

> *I entreat Thee ... to ordain that I may gaze on Thy beauty and observe whatsoever is in Thy Book.*[6]

The result is an ascending spiral of cause and effect: beauty calls forth love; love motivates observance of the divine teachings; observance leads to greater knowledge and understanding, and stimulates spiritual growth; while growth, in turn, increases the capacity to respond to beauty and to love God. The final objective of this ascending spiral is to enable the human soul so to attune itself to the will of God that it may, in the words of Bahá'u'lláh, *be to all eternity the revelation of My everlasting being.*[7]

[1] In mystic theory, one finds an approach to art and beauty resembling that taken in this article. The mystic approach predominates in a large part of traditional Oriental theory and practice, notably in India and China. But even here it should be noted that some mystic theory regards beauty primarily as a stimulus conducive to a state or ecstatic union with God or with the universe, whereas the accent in this essay is on beauty as a means to the knowledge of divine attributes and as a stimulus in the daily process of spiritual growth. For an overview of art philosophy in the Orient, see Thomas Munro, *Oriental Aesthetics*.

[2] *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 364.

[3] The Báb, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb.* Comp. Research Department (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1976), pp. 77–78.

[4] *Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1973), p. 12.

[5] *Bahá'í Prayers*, pp. 7–8.

[6] ibid., pp. 13–14.

[7] The Hidden Words, Arabic #64, p. 19.



In Vanuatu, Bahá'ís are performing a custom dance during a spiritualization institute organized by Auxiliary Board members and held in Lawital, on Tanna. January 1992.

One common and current notion of beauty is to regard it as a kind of exalted prettiness. Beauty as we have conceived of it here is not incompatible with loveliness, but it is, however, of a different order. In the Bahá'í Writings, beauty is associated not merely with sensual and intellectual pleasure but with divinely revealed truth, with the spiritual principles and teachings that constitute truth insofar as we can know it, and ultimately with the attributes of God. ...*the pure heart*, wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *becometh the mirror of the beauty of truth.*[1] Thus viewed, beauty is not an end in itself but a means to an end. Its purpose in the world of creation is to draw the human soul into a spiral of spiritual growth, carried upward on the wings of love toward the kingdom of the most great Beauty. Its purpose in the realm of human creativity is the same. Art attracts the soul, through beauty, to a work in which the knowledge of things divine is imparted, by which attitudes to life are spiritualized, morality is strengthened, and service is rendered to the cause of spiritual growth. Acting as an agent of spiritual attraction, beauty thus plays an essential role in the process whereby art seeks to help ennoble the human soul.

This is not to suggest, however, that the subject matter of Bahá'í-engendered art need always be serene, harmonious, delicate, or blissful. It is also legitimate for art to portray the workings of the lower side of human nature, provided the latter is viewed in proper relation to the higher, spiritual side. On the subject of human nature, 'Abdu'l-Bahá taught:

> *In man there are two natures; his spiritual or higher nature and his material lower nature. In one he approaches God, in the other he lives for the world alone. Signs of both these natures are to be found in men. In his material aspect he expresses untruth, cruelty and injustice; all these are the outcome of his lower nature. The attributes of his Divine nature are shown forth in love, mercy, kindness, truth and justice, one and all being expressions of his higher nature. Every good habit, every noble quality belongs to man's spiritual nature, whereas all his imperfect and sinful actions are born of his material nature. If a man's Divine nature dominates his human nature, we have a saint.*[2]

[1] *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 333.

[2] *Paris Talks*, p. 60.

Man has two aspects: the physical, which is subject to nature, and the merciful or divine, which is connected with God. If the physical or natural disposition in him should overcome the heavenly and merciful, he is, then, the most degraded of an animal beings; and if the divine and spiritual should triumph over the human and natural, he is, verily, an angel. The Prophets come into the world to guide and educate humanity so that the animal nature of man may disappear and the divinity of his powers become awakened.[1]

If an artist portrays aspects of humankind's lower nature—such as greed, antagonism, hatred, and selfish struggle—in such a way as to demonstrate the truth of what Bahá'u'lláh taught on such subjects, is this not a service as valuable as that rendered by an artist whose works are permeated with undisturbed peace? What is important is not only the subject matter but also the way the artist treats it; not only the cognitive and emotional content manifest in a work of art but also, and especially, the effect such content is intended to have on the knowledge and the feelings of the participant.

In another passage from the pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, we find reason to feel that art—especially the narrative arts such as literature, theater, and dance—in fulfilling an edifying role, can legitimately treat aspects of humanity's lower animal nature:

...things are often known by their opposites. Were it not for darkness, light could not be sensed. Were it not for death, life could not be known. If ignorance did not exist, knowledge would not be a reality. It is necessary that each should exist in order that the other should have reality. Night and day must be in order that each may be distinguished.[2]

However, for art merely to display the workings of humanity's lower nature is not enough: if art is to be edifying, the portrayal needs to be placed within a spiritual context, within the framework of God's purpose in creating humankind. For it is only against such a framework that darkness can be perceived as the lack of light, evil as the absence of good. Only against such framework can viewers, listeners, or readers of a work of art measure their own potential and be stimulated to grow spiritually. In other words, if artists refer in their work to the darker as well as the brighter side of human nature, they should try to do so in such a way as to engender within the participants' souls an experience that will aid them to journey on "the road which leads to divine knowledge and attainment." In the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

Man must walk in many paths and be subjected to various processes in his evolution upward. Physically he is not born in full stature but passes through consecutive stages of fetus, infant, childhood, youth, maturity and old age.... Unless you have passed through the state of infancy, how would you know this was an infant beside you? If there were no wrong, how would you recognize the right? If it were not for sin, how would you appreciate virtue? If evil deeds were unknown, how could you commend good actions? If sickness did not exist, how would you understand health? Evil is nonexistent; it is the absence of good. Sickness is the loss of health; poverty, the lack of riches.... Without knowledge there is ignorance; therefore, ignorance is simply the lack of knowledge. Death is the absence of life. Therefore, on the one hand, we have existence; on the other, nonexistence, negation or absence of existence.

[1] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 41.

[2] ibid., p. 82.



The Bahá'í puppet theatre group known as El Retablo del Mosquito, from the May Maxwell Cultural Centre in Buenos Aires, Argentina, presenting a play in a park in 1988.

Briefly, the journey of the soul is necessary. The pathway of life is the road which leads to divine knowledge and attainment. Without training and guidance the soul could never progress beyond the conditions of its lower nature, which is ignorant and defective.[1]

The principle of making things known by their opposites has been applied in Western theater from ancient times, notably in the Greek concept of tragic drama. Consider, for example, a story about a person who was given a unique opportunity to establish justice but who exploited the chance instead for personal gain and in the end lost everything. In this story, injustice, worldly desire, and selfishness may figure prominently. If such negative qualities are presented in the light of Bahá'í teachings, however, they will be recognized as but the shadows cast by the positive qualities of justice, spiritual enkindlement, and altruism, and, if well conceived, the work may inspire in the reader or spectator a desire to attain these qualities and to shun their opposites. It is thus possible for art to be edifying even when its subject matter is apparently base, to be beautiful even when its subject matter is superficially unappealing; for beauty, as we have seen, is associated with divine truth and spiritual attributes.[2]

An important conclusion can be drawn from the foregoing discussion: One of the primary responsibilities of Bahá'í artists is to take care that the beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions manifested in their art, on the one hand, and those that are intended to be stimulated

1 *Promulgation*, pp. 295–296.

2 Note the parallels here with Keats, and with Oriental and medieval Christian thinking on the relation between beauty and truth. See Coomaraswamy, *Christian and Oriental Philosophy*, pp. 107–109.

and reinforced in the participant, on the other, vibrate in harmony with the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith. This is the best artists can do to make it likely that the experience their art engenders in the participant will have an ennobling effect.

EMOTION IN ART

Our consideration of the subject of beauty enables us now to turn to the closely related theme of emotion in art. One of the most popular and widespread views on this subject is that the purpose of art is to express the emotions of the artist or to stimulate those of the public. There is no doubt that certain feelings of artists may in fact become manifest in their work and that the emotions of the public are affected. Emotion, like beauty, is surely an important element in the experience of art. All the principal theories of art take emotion into account. But if we were to view art mainly as an opportunity to give expression to the artist's feelings, or if we were to value it primarily for the emotional stimulus it provides the public, would we not be giving disproportionate prominence to one element in the experience of art to the detriment of the others? Would we not, moreover, be losing sight of the highest aim of art, which is spiritual ennoblement?

To hold that the ultimate purpose of art is to provide emotional expression or stimulation is similar to holding that the value of beauty lies only in the pleasure it gives: in both cases means are mistaken for ends. We have seen that, according to the Bahá'í teachings, all created things serve some purpose and are a means to some further end, that of beauty being to attract the human soul toward its Creator and thereby to facilitate spiritual growth. We have seen, too, that beauty can accomplish such ends not only in the creation as a whole but in art as well. Might we not conclude that emotion, likewise, should be viewed from the perspective of its role in human life, and within the framework of the highest objectives of art?

In daily living, emotion serves to energize the mind and to activate the will.[1] Similarly, the emotions that art seeks to elicit, if appropriately managed and channeled by the artist, can aid the artist to fulfil art's mystical aspect by stirring up a joyous attraction toward the kingdom of God. Such emotions can assist the artist to realize the moral aspect of the role of art by arousing in the public, hope for God's bounty and fear of disobedience to divine law, and by imparting feelings of comfort and tranquillity to troubled souls. They can, furthermore, help the artist to render a social service by stimulating love toward humanity and sentiments of brotherhood and world unity.[2]

Emotion plays a key role in the realization of all the spiritual objectives of art, whether of a mystical, moral, or social nature. An example of its importance in the first case is found in the following passage from the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

[1] See *Emotion: A Comprehensive Phenomenology of Theories and Their Meanings for Therapy.* Ed. James Hillman (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960). See also Tuman, "Toward Critical Foundations", pp. 30–33 for parallels between the role of emotion in cognition generally and in the cognition of art specifically.

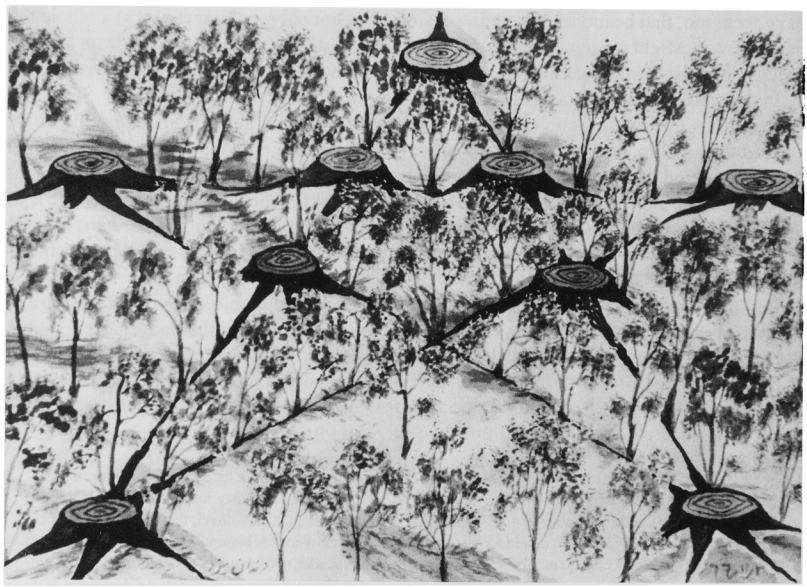
[2] We must distinguish between the emotions manifested by the work of art itself and those stirred within the person who experiences the work of art. They are often not the same. Grief expressed by actors on a stage may inspire in the spectator not grief but pity. In a novel, the fright expressed by a plotter whose scheming backfired may inspire in the reader not fear but satisfaction. (See Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* [Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1976], pp. 249–250.) Our focus here is on the emotions stirred by art within the participant.

Therefore...set to music the verses and the divine words so that they may be sung with soul-stirring melody in the Assemblies and gatherings, and that the hearts of the listeners may become tumultuous and rise towards the Kingdom of 'Abhá in supplication and prayer.[1]

A further example of the effect of emotion, this time on a moral plane, is afforded by Shakespeare's tragedies, whose underlying spiritual laws concerning human motivation and conduct could never be so effectively highlighted and driven home without that eloquent terror and consternation to which the violation of such truths inevitably leads. And for an illustration of effectiveness of emotion on the social plane, we have only to observe that the linking of appropriate verse with music can inspire such sentiments of national identity and cohesion that one of the earliest acts of a newly formed State is to commission the writing of a national anthem.

In brief, emotion in art is not an end but a means. By carefully designing works of art with the intention of inducing an experience in which the participant's emotions are selectively aroused and oriented, the artist can help ensure that the spiritual content of his or her work is effectively communicated, vividly felt, long remembered, and therefore the more likely to help broaden the vision, deepen the understanding, spiritualize the sentiments, and affect the thought and even the conduct of those who wish to receive it. Art can thereby assist the fundamentally joyous Bahá'í attitude to life, and with it the whole range of human emotions, to sail and find safe anchor in the harbor of God's remembrance.

[1] *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 378.



A painting by a prisoner in Yazd, Írán, showing nine felled trees representing the seven martyrs of Yazd in 1980, and two in 1984. The artist explained: "The earth is covered with snow. In some areas the snow is melting and thousands of tiny trees are growing out of the large roots. 'Verily God hath made adversity as a morning dew upon His green pasture.'"

7. ALTRUISM AND EXTENSIVITY IN THE BAHÁ'Í RELIGION

WENDY M. HELLER AND HODA MAHMOUDI

HUMAN history abounds with examples of oppression and injustice inflicted by one group on another. Over the centuries, ideologically sanctioned patterns of prejudice, distrust, and suspicion have given rise to norms of exclusiveness, aggression, and violence toward those outside one's own social group. Ironically, religion, which has the potential to transcend other group affiliations in uniting people into a community, has itself been the cause of some of the most bitter, violent, and seemingly unsolvable conflicts between peoples. Yet, even while religion has often been used to justify prejudice and hostility against other groups, religious scriptures have furnished inspiring appeals to altruism and enduring exhortations to embrace the "other".

Despite the pattern of group divisiveness, human history also contains examples of acts that defy this pattern: individuals who risk their lives to save others, who refuse to collaborate in acts of oppression even though in doing so they set themselves apart and risk ostracism or even death. Yet, in spite of the high cultural regard for valiant individual examples of moral heroism, societies have generally been slow to promote altruistic behavior as a model to be emulated; they have not deliberately encouraged the development of "altruistic personalities" able to transcend self-interest and group affiliation. However, it is precisely in those examples of altruistic acts that a glimmer of hope can be discerned for a solution to the monumental dysfunction that plagues human societies today, as well as solid evidence that human nature is not innately and incorrigibly aggressive and egocentric—that human beings are genuinely capable of selflessness and extensive behavior toward all people, regardless of the group to which they belong. This article will examine some of the ways in which the Bahá'í Faith combines the unifying function of religion with altruism in its aspiration to develop an altruistically oriented global society.

Located in over two hundred countries, the Bahá'í Faith has recently been identified as the second most widely distributed religion (geographically) after Christianity.[1] Although the Bahá'í Faith originated in nineteenth-century Írán, the vast majority of its multiracial and multicultural membership is now located in other countries, especially in the Third World, with the largest national community being in India. The Bahá'í religion has no clergy; its community administration is conducted by elected councils of nine members at the local, national, and international levels. The Bahá'í teachings are contained in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi. Bahá'ís accept these works as authoritative texts and the definitive model for belief and behavior, as well as the blueprint for social transformation and for the global social order that is the religion's ultimate goal.[2]

[1] Barrett, D.B., "World Religious Statistics." *Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1988), p. 303.

[2] Universal House of Justice, *The Promise of World Peace* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1985).

This paper was originally presented at an international conference, "Theoretical and Social Implications of Rescuing People in Extreme Situations: Another Look at Altruism," held in Radziejowice, Poland, June 12–15, 1989. A version of the paper has been published in *Embracing the Other: Philosophical, Psychological, and Historical Perspectives on Altruism*, (New York University Press, 1992).

Bahá'ís aim to transform civilization by transforming themselves and their own social institutions on the basis of principles contained in the Bahá'í scriptures. Both altruism and extensivity—a pattern of personal commitment and responsibility that embraces diverse groups of people[1]—are fundamental components of Bahá'í belief and practice, a factor that has important implications for the global society Bahá'ís are attempting to construct.

The social change envisioned by Bahá'ís involves interrelated and interactive processes of individual and structural transformation. Individual transformation embodies more than a profession of belief; it is viewed as a process of acquiring distinctive personal characteristics and demonstrating them in social interactions as well as in working, together with other Bahá'ís, to develop the emerging Bahá'í social institutions.

In the Bahá'í view, spiritual life is not separated from the realm of social relations but integrated with it. The Bahá'í teachings shift the primary focus of religious practice from individual salvation or enlightenment to the collective progress of humanity as a whole.[2] Those teachings address social conditions and global problems as directly related to the individual's spiritual life: issues of world peace, the equality of men and women, harmony between science and religion, the equitable distribution of wealth and resources, and the elimination of prejudice are, for Bahá'ís, inseparable from religious belief and practice.

Such an emphasis on collective progress has important implications for the relationship of individual entities—whether individual persons, nations, or other groups—to the larger society of which they form a part. As Shoghi Effendi wrote in 1936, that relationship is essentially based on the principle of the subordination of "every particularistic interest, be it personal, regional, or national, to the paramount interests of humanity...."[3] This principle, in turn, is based on the idea that, in a world of inter-dependent peoples and nations the advantage of the part is best to be reached by the advantage of the whole, and that no abiding benefit can be conferred upon the component parts if the general interests of the entity itself are ignored or neglected.

Yet, the interests of humanity as a whole are not conceptualized in terms of a vague abstraction that could be appropriated by a particular dominant group and interpreted as identical with its own interests, but rather as a complex dynamic relationship between the parts and the whole, in which the viability of the whole is served by ensuring the well-being of all its individual parts, an enterprise for which all share responsibility.

This conception is demonstrated at its most basic in the relationship of the individual person and society. Although that relationship is, as Shoghi Effendi has stated, "essentially based on the principle of the subordination of the individual will to that of society," a complex balance is sought between individual freedom and responsibility, in which the individual is neither suppressed nor excessively exalted. Cooperation between society and the individual is stressed, as is the fostering of "a climate in which the untold potentialities of the individual members of society can develop...."[4]

[1] Oliner, Samuel P., and Pearl M. Oliner, "Promoting Extensive Altruistic Bonds: A Conceptual Elaboration and Some Pragmatic Implications." In *Embracing the Other: Philosophical, Psychological, and Historial Perspective on Altruism*. ed. Pearl M. Oliner, et al (New York: New York University Press, 1992).

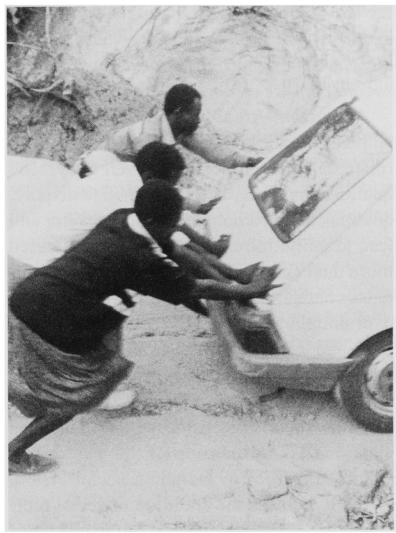
[2] Arbab, Farzam, "The Process of Social Transformation." In *The Bahá'í Faith and Marxism: Proceedings of a Conference Held January 1986* (Ottawa: Association for Bahá'í Studies, 1987), p. 10.

[3] Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Selected Letters* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 198.

[4] Universal House of Justice, *Individual Rights and Freedoms in the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: A Statement by the Universal House of Justice* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1989), p. 20.



The Huxtables—a Bahá'í family on St. Helena Island, in the South Atlantic. From left to right: Delia, Robert, Clifford, and Jane. 1986.



In Malawi, friends help to get the car of a visitor up the road. August 1990.



Members of the Spirit of Badí' teaching project in New Zealand enjoying a moment of relaxation. 1988.

Such a relationship, as it is envisioned, "must allow 'free scope' for 'individuality to assert itself' through modes of spontaneity, initiative and diversity that ensure the viability of society." Thus, even while the will of the individual is subordinated to that of society, "the individual is not lost in the mass but becomes the focus of primary development...."[1] The fulfillment of individual potential is to be sought not in pursuing self-centered desires but in contributing to the well-being of others, and *the honor and distinction of the individual consist in this, that he among all the world's multitudes should become a source of social good.*[2]

As Farzam Arbab has noted, this shift of emphasis to the progress of humanity is also reflected in the importance given to specific qualities that Bahá'ís are enjoined to acquire, qualities that promote prosocial behavior and lead to unity: for example, justice is stressed more than charity, and the acquisition of attitudes conducive to human solidarity is valued over simple tolerance. Even the qualities of love and of detachment from the material world are conceived of as active and social rather than passive and inwardly directed:

> ...the social dimension is also enhanced through the expansion of the meaning of most qualities to include a social vision. Love includes the abolition of social prejudices and the realization of the beauty of diversity in the human race. Detachment from the world is not taught in a way that leads to idleness and to the acceptance of oppression: it is acquired to free us from our own material interests in order to dedicate ourselves to the well-being of others. To this expansion of the meaning of almost all qualities is also added a constant endeavor to acquire social skills, to participate in meetings of consultation, to work in groups ... to reach and carry out collective decisions.[3]

Thus, he concludes, the Bahá'í path of spiritualization "should not be confused with one that defines goodness passively and produces a human being whose greatest virtue is not to harm anyone; it is a path to create social activists and agents of change."[4]

Altruism is a major component of that desired social change and figures prominently in the Bahá'í texts. Many scriptural exhortations delineate altruistic norms explicitly, holding in high regard those who *nurture altruistic aims and plans for the well-being of their fellow men....*[5] and urging individuals to *be ready to lay down your lives one for the other, and not only for those who are dear to you, but for all humanity.*[6]

Other teachings reflect values and attitudes that, as Oliner and Oliner report in *The Altruistic Personality*, are conducive to an altruistic orientation. These include a sense of unity with and responsibility toward others beyond one's own social group, a strong family orientation, emphasis on relationship rather than on status, generosity, trustworthiness, appreciation of diversity, as well as ethical values of justice and caring.

Unity and interdependence, and their link to helping behavior, are prominent themes in the Bahá'í texts, often expressed through organic metaphors, as in this passage from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh:

> *The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony.... So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.*[7]

1 ibid., pp. 20–21.

2 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1975), p. 2.

3 Arbab, "Process", p. 11.

4 ibid.

5 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978), p. 72.

6 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks: Addresses given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Paris in 1911* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1969), p. 170.

7 Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976), p. 288.

Explaining this metaphorical reference, 'Abdu'l-Bahá writes that because all humans are interconnected and mutually dependent, they must "powerfully sustain one another" by caring for each other:

> *Let them at all times concern themselves with doing a kindly thing for one of their fellows, offering to someone love, consideration, thoughtful help. Let them see no one as their enemy, or as wishing them ill, but think of all humankind as their friends; regarding the alien as an intimate, the stranger as a companion, staying free of prejudice, drawing no lines.*[1]

The theme of inclusiveness is emphasized in every aspect of Bahá'í individual and community life, beginning with the fundamental teachings of the oneness of humanity and the unity of religion. The Bahá'í teachings view divine revelation not as a static, unique event, but as a continuing process that is the central feature of human history. The spirit that inspired all the founders of the great religions of the past, the Manifestations of God, is recognized as one and the same. Their original teachings contain the same basic, unchanging spiritual and ethical precepts, prominent among which are the teachings that promote altruism. The tenets that change from one religious dispensation to another are the social laws and practices, which apply those precepts in specific forms. Thus, religious truth is understood to be relative, progressive, and developmental.

Such a perspective implies more than tolerance for the equality of individual religions as separate entities to be respected in a pluralistic society. It redefines the nature of their relationship to one another and thus sets new terms for a definition of identity based on connection rather than separation. Unlike religious groups who define themselves by their distinction from other groups based on the claim that their founder was the sole or the final source of truth or that their practices are the only correct form of worship, the Bahá'í religious tradition accepts all the great spiritual teachers as equals. Bahá'ís are expected to revere Buddha, Zoroaster, Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad, as well as Bahá'u'lláh, recognizing in them all the same spirit of the mediator between God and humanity. Thus, although the body of teachings composing the Bahá'í religion itself cannot accurately be called eclectic, the Bahá'í religious *tradition* includes all of the previous dispensations, which are viewed as "different stages in the eternal history and constant evolution of one religion, Divine and indivisible, of which it [the Bahá'í Faith] itself forms but an integral part."[2]

From the Bahá'í perspective, the principle of the unity of religion and progressive revelation restores the unific role of religion in society, providing a basis for resolving long-standing, apparently unbridgeable divisions among religious communities as well as a resolution of the dilemma posed by the existence of numerous religions, each claiming divine origin. For Bahá'ís, the principle removes any pretext for disunity deriving from religious affiliation; in fact, all religious conflict is forbidden. The Bahá'í writings direct Bahá'ís to *love... all religions and all races with a love that is true and sincere and show that love through deeds...*;[3] to exert their efforts so that *the tumult of religious dissension and strife that agitateth the peoples of the earth may be stilled, that every trace of it may be completely obliterated.*[4] *That the divers communions of the earth, and the manifold systems of religious belief,* Bahá'u'lláh writes, *should never be allowed to foster the feelings of animosity among men, is in this Day, of the essence of the Faith of God and His Religion.*[5] Affirming the preeminence of the principle of religious inclusiveness and unity, the Bahá'í writings go so far as to state that if religion

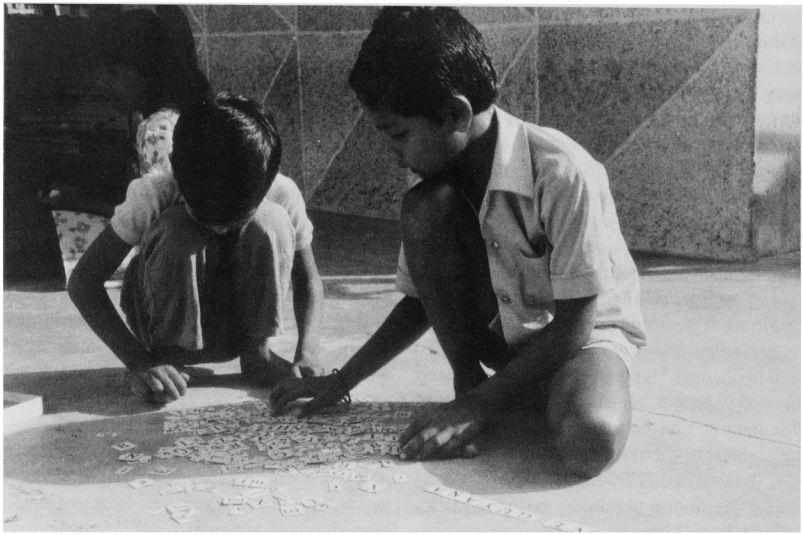
[1] *Selections*, pp. 1–2.

[2] *World Order*, p. 114.

[3] *Selections*, p. 69.

[4] *Gleanings*, p. 288.

[5] ibid., p. 287.



Children in Bahá'í literacy classes in the Upper Corentyne District of Berbice, Guyana, finding letters which spell out "I Love Guyana"; 1990.



An American Bahá'í Youth Year of Service volunteer who lived in Botswana in 1987 used a globe to help convey concepts while deepening some of the friends.

becomes the cause of division and disunity, it is better to have no religion at all.[1]

Closely linked to the principle of the unity of religion is the distinguishing feature of the Bahá'í dispensation: the principle of the oneness and wholeness of humanity. The full equality of all members of the human species and their close relationship to one another requires that Bahá'ís regard people from all racial, religious, ethnic, class, and national backgrounds as members of one global family. Rather than offering mere "symbols of internationalism" in the hope that these might, as Allport suggested, "provide mental anchorage points around which the idea of world-loyalty may develop,"[2] the Bahá'í religion begins with the underlying principle of world loyalty and human unity, which is itself the anchorage point, "the pivot," according to Shoghi Effendi, "round which all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh revolve...."[3] The extension of the individual's personal commitments and relationships to include the diverse groups composing humanity is repeatedly urged in Bahá'í texts in the strongest terms possible—that is, as no less than a divine commandment:

> *In every dispensation, there hath been the commandment of fellowship and love, but it was a commandment limited to the community of those in mutual agreement, not to the dissident foe. In this wondrous age, however, praised be God, the commandments of God are not delimited, not restricted to any one group of people; rather have all the friends been commanded to show forth fellowship and love, consideration and generosity and loving-kindness to every community on earth.*[4]

Far from being an abstract principle removed from the real social conditions, the unity of humankind must be lived in practice, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá told a gathering in Europe in 1912:

> *Do not be content with showing friendship in words alone...*
>
> *When you meet a [stranger]... speak to him as to a friend; if he seems to be lonely try to help him, give him of your willing service; if he be sad console him, if poor succour him, if oppressed rescue him... What profit is there in agreeing that universal friendship is good, and talking of the solidarity of the human race as a grand ideal? Unless these thoughts are translated into the world of action, they are useless.*[5]

Although the Bahá'í writings speak of the absolute equality of all, the intent is not sameness of conformity to a dominant culture, nation, race, class, or any other group. In theory and in practice, cultural and racial diversity is valued in the Bahá'í community. Along with the expression of the ideal, a conscious awareness exists that effort is necessary to break down age-old barriers of prejudice and separation. The cultivation of friendships with people of different backgrounds is repeatedly encouraged, but perhaps the most notable evidence of the Bahá'í commitment to interracial unity is the attitude toward interracial marriage, which is actively welcomed and encouraged in the Bahá'í writings.

In consonance with the prosocial orientation of the Bahá'í teachings, the ideal Bahá'í personality, as implied in the Bahá'í scriptures, is other centered, extensive, and altruistic. In one passage, 'Abdu'l-Bahá makes altruism itself the touchstone for a new definition of true human nature:

> *...man should be willing to accept hardships for himself in order that others may enjoy wealth; he should enjoy trouble for himself that others may enjoy happiness*

1 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912.* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1975) p. 117.

2 Allport, Gordon W., *The Nature of Prejudice* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1954), p. 44.

3 *World Order*, p. 42.

4 *Selections*, pp. 20–21.

5 *Paris Talks*, p. 16.

and well-being. This is the attribute of man....

He who is so hard-hearted as to think only of his own comfort, such an one will not be called man.

Man is he who forgets his own interests for the sake of others. His own comfort he forfeits for the well-being of all. Nay, rather, his own life must he be willing to forfeit for the life of mankind.[1]

Although personal transformation is seen as a lifelong process, according to the Bahá'í texts, the foundations of altruistic behavior can be developed in childhood. Children are believed to be born with the capacity for good or bad behavior; during the course of their development they can be influenced by their social interactions, especially in the family. Thus, the development of the prosocial individual begins with the training and socialization of children. The Bahá'í writings urge parents to *teach [children] to dedicate their lives to matters of great import, and inspire them to undertake studies that will benefit mankind.*[2] So crucial is the teaching of prosocial behavior that *training in morals and good conduct is far more important than book learning.*[3]

However, teaching children lofty ideas is not considered sufficient on its own. Emphasis is repeatedly placed upon behavior rather than professions of belief—on deeds, not words. Thus, the most powerful method by which children can be taught a prosocial orientation is the model of parents whose actions reflect the ideal personality characteristics.

The impact of modeling on children has received significant support in the literature on altruism and prosocial behavior. Mussen and Eisenberg-Berg write, "A substantial proportion of the individual's helping and sharing responses is acquired through observation and imitation of a model's behavior without direct reinforcements."[4] Yarrow, Scott, and Waxler conclude that "generalized altruism would appear to be best learned from parents who do not only try to inculcate the principles of altruism, but who also manifest altruism in everyday interactions."[5] The role of parental influence in fostering the development of the altruistic personality has been further underscored by Oliner and Oliner in *The Altruistic Personality*, their study of rescuers of Jews during World War II.[6]

Another area of related emphasis is parental discipline. The Bahá'í writings state that, *It is incumbent upon every father and mother to counsel their children over a long period, and guide them unto those things which lead to everlasting honour.*[7] The development of good character and behavior in children, however, is to be encouraged through the love, understanding, and wise guidance of the parents, using reason rather than force. Bahá'í texts strongly discourage the use of physical punishment or verbal abuse of children, stating that, *it is not... permissible to strike a child, or vilify him for the child's character will be totally perverted if he be subjected to blows or verbal abuse.*[8]

The Bahá'í view on parental discipline is supported by contemporary social psychologists. Hoffman, as well as others, suggests that the use of physical power or material resources to control a child's behavior (power assertion) is least effective in developing consideration for others. Power-assertion techniques of discipline promote in children aggressive behavior, self-centered values, and an unwillingness to share with other

1 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Foundations of World Unity* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979), p. 42.

2 *Selections*, p. 129.

3 ibid., p. 135.

4 Mussen, P., and N. Eisenberg-Berg, *Roots of Caring, Sharing, and Helping: The Development of Prosocial Behavior in Children* (San Francisco: Freeman, 1977), p. 31.

5 Yarrow, M.R., P. Scott, and C.Z. Waxler, "Learning Concern for Others." *Developmental Psychology* (1973), p. 256.

6 Oliner, Samuel P., and Pearl M. Oliner, *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe* (New York: Free Press, 1988).

7 *Selections*, p. 134.

8 ibid., p. 125.

children.[1] In contrast, the disciplinary technique of induction—reasoning and explanation based on the impact of the child's behavior on others—encourages prosocial behavior.[2]

Bahá'í child socialization aims to develop a prosocial orientation in children, who are encouraged to recognize themselves as members of a community that begins with the family and extends to include all of humanity. They are encouraged to develop a sense of personal spiritual responsibility to act toward others with empathy and compassion as well as justice and equity, and to sacrifice their own material self-interests for others in need. As adults, Bahá'ís are expected to make a commitment to continue internalizing such patterns until they become the foundation of the personality itself. Spiritual development is seen as an infinite process of self-transformation—that is, a continual, conscious refining of one's behavior in the crucible of social interaction. The cultivation of spiritual, altruistic qualities remains the aim and central focus of life for the adult Bahá'í.

In light of recent research, it is noteworthy that both the ethical principles of justice and of caring, important motivators of altruistic behavior (see Oliner and Oliner, *The Altruistic Personality*), are emphasized in the Bahá'í writings, where they are not viewed as contradictory or exclusive but as inseparably connected. Even when the ethic of justice is enjoined, it is usually as a practice to be performed out of concern for others. Justice is presented as the practice of equity, often linked with *safeguard[ing] the rights of the downtrodden....*[3] The Bahá'í conception of justice means that all have a right to receive care.

Well over half a century before Carol Gilligan called attention to the complementarity of the "masculine" ethic of justice and the "feminine" ethic of caring,[4] 'Abdu'l-Bahá had written: *"The Kingdom of God is founded upon equity and justice, and also upon mercy, compassion, and kindness to every living soul. Strive ye then with all your heart to treat compassionately all humankind...."* He then qualified this statement, asserting that oppression must be opposed: "Kindness cannot be shown the tyrant, the deceiver, or the thief, because, far from awakening them to the error of their ways, it maketh them to continue in their perversity as before."[5]

The Bahá'í teachings recognize that the transformation of individuals into altruistic persons cannot take place outside the social context, which must provide a matrix for that transformation. Recent research has drawn attention to the importance of group norms in motivating moral behavior, whether directly, as a response to the social expectations as such, or indirectly, as internalized personal norms.[6] The findings of Oliner and Oliner, outlined in *The Altruistic Personality*, further emphasize the importance of the "normocentric" orientation in motivating the altruism of rescuers of Jews during World War II.

Such findings imply that, while altruistic qualities must be fostered in individuals, a social framework must also be provided within which extensivity and altruism are valued and represent the norms of the group itself. The creation of such a society is inseparable from the development of individual altruistic personalities, for, so long as groups value egocentrism, unfettered individualism, status seeking, dominance, and a materialistic orientation, altruism will remain an exception to the rule, and the altruistic personality will

1 Hoffman, Martin, "Moral Internalization, Parental Power, and the Nature of Parent-Child Interaction." *Developmental Psychology* 11 (1975) pp. 228–239.

2 Mussen and Eisenberg-Berg, *Roots*.

3 *Gleanings*, p. 247.

4 Gilligan, Carol, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

5 *Selections*, p. 158.

6 Reykowski, Janusz, "Motivation of Prosocial Behavior." In *Cooperation and Helping Behavior: Theories and Research*. ed. V.J. Derlaga and J. Grizelak (New York: Academic Press, 1982), p. 359.

appear as deviant in comparison to the rest of the group. In Bahá'í society, this situation is reversed:

> Altruism is not an aberrant behavior contrary to convention because the normative expectations (which individuals are ultimately expected to internalize) are altruistic. It is beyond the scope of this discussion to describe in its entirety the social order Bahá'ís envision and to which they are committed. However, they believe that much of it will be the fruit of the process of integration of now isolated or even hostile races, groups, and nations who, as they come together and unite in the same cause, become transformed and help transform each other, and bring to the rising institutions of a new World Order the richness of different cultures and of different social thought and experience.[1]

Thus, in the Bahá'í view, it is through the individual practice as well as the institutionalization of the principle of unity in diversity that human society can evolve to an unprecedented level of cohesion and cooperation, and transcend the limitations implicit in the current state of separation and competitiveness. While the Bahá'í conception of unity in diversity should not be construed as merely a version of liberal pluralism, the safeguarding and encouraging of diverse elements within the Bahá'í community is a major institutional principle. It is embedded within Bahá'í institutions through practices that require the participation and support of the entire Bahá'í community because they apply at all levels of administrative and community functioning—local, national, and international.

Most prominent of these practices is consultation, a group decision-making process whose goal is to reach solutions to problems by consensus. Bahá'í consultation encourages the open and frank expression of diverse views on the topic under discussion in an atmosphere of love and respect that also allows the "clash of differing opinions" that can strike the "shining spark of truth".[2] Each member of the consultative group has an equal right of expression, and no blocs, factions, or any subdivisions of the group are permitted. Inseparable from the Bahá'í consultative process is the development of sensitivity and respect for the different voices whose expressions of opinion may not fit into conventional or dominant cultural modes of communication. Since the group attempts to work toward consensus on an issue, voting only as a last resort, the process does not necessarily require reduction to duality: alternatives need not be narrowed down to the two poles "for" and "against". Instead, the consultative process itself, drawing on the interactive contributions of all its diverse members, is looked to as the creative source of new solutions.

Consultation is regarded both as a method for generative decision making and conflict resolution as well as an instrument for reinforcing the unity of a diverse group. It is the method by which the Bahá'í administrative institutions conduct the affairs of the Bahá'í community, but Bahá'ís are also encouraged to use consultation in all aspects of their lives, whether in the family, neighborhood, or workplace.

Another way in which Bahá'í administrative institutions are structured to implement unity in diversity involves practices intended to ensure the participation of minority ethnic populations. (The definition of what constitutes a "minority" is left to the discretion of the national institution in each country.) "To discriminate against any race, on the ground of its being socially backward, politically immature, and numerically in a minority", is considered to be "a flagrant violation of the spirit" of the Bahá'í teachings.[3] In principle, protecting the "just interests of any minority element within the Bahá'í

[1] Arbab. "Process," p. 11.

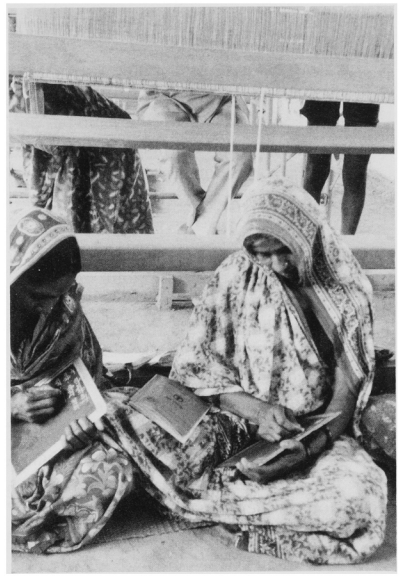
[2] *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 21.

[3] Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1984), p. 35.

community" and ensuring that all have the opportunity to contribute their perspectives to collaborative efforts of the group, is considered so important that representatives of minority populations "are not only enabled to enjoy equal rights and privileges, but they are even favored and accorded priority."[1] Bahá'í communities are instructed that it is their duty to ensure that "Bahá'í representative institutions, be they Assemblies, conventions, conferences, or committees, may have represented on them as many of these divers elements, racial or otherwise, as possible."[2]

One way in which the principle is practiced is the minority tie rule of Bahá'í elections. In the course of elections for Bahá'í administrative institutional membership—elections conducted without nominations or campaigning and decided by plurality vote—if voting results in a tie between persons, one of whom represents a minority, "priority should unhesitatingly be accorded the party representing the minority, and this for no other reason except to stimulate and encourage it, and afford it an opportunity to further the interests of the community."[3] In addition to its direct effect in increasing minority representation on Bahá'í administrative institutions, the practice of this rule heightens the sensitivity of the group to its minority membership and reaffirms the group commitment to valuing and encouraging minority participation. For the individual believer, conceding a tie vote to the minority representation becomes a concrete opportunity to practice sacrifice of self-interest for the other within a context of social approval.

Whether applied in community administration, in the family, in education, or in the economy, the Bahá'í principles and practices are viewed as catalysts whose application will ultimately bring about social transformation leading to the development of an altruistic global society. Such a society, in the Bahá'í context, begins with the individual striving daily toward personal transformation—the deliberate internalization of spiritual teachings incorporating altruistic, extensive values as personal norms. The Bahá'í teachings strive to imbue individuals with an inclusive orientation transcending, though not suppressing, other group loyalties and valuing the well-being of the entire planet and all its inhabitants. Throughout the Bahá'í writings, the vision imparted to the individual is that of a peaceful, just, and caring civilization whose foundation rests on the cornerstone of the unity of all human beings, a unity that is to be consolidated and protected by institutions which reflect and promote the principles of unity, equity, and altruistic service as normative expectations.



At the Bahá'í Vocational Institute for Rural Women in Kalyanpura, Madhya Pradesh, India, women learn how to read and write. 1988.

[1] Universal House of Justice, *Messages from the Universal House of Justice 1968–1973* (Wilmette, Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976), p. 49.

[2] *Advent*, p. 36.

[3] ibid., p. 35.

II
VERSE

THIS IS FAITH

To walk where there is no path
To breathe where there is no air
To see where there is no light —
This is Faith.

To cry out in the silence,
The silence of the night,
And hearing no echo believe
And believe again and again —
This is Faith.

To hold pebbles and see jewels
To raise sticks and see forests
To smile with weeping eyes —
This is Faith.

To say: "God, I believe" when others deny,
"I hear" when there is no answer,
"I see" though naught is seen —
This is Faith.

And the fierce love in the heart,
The savage love that cries
Hidden Thou art yet there!
Veil Thy face and mute Thy tongue
Yet I see and hear Thee, Love,
Beat me down to the bare earth,
Yet I rise and love Thee, Love!
This is Faith.

—Rúḥíyyih (Israel)
(Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum)

THE VISIT

"That Church no di exist for here again,"
that old woman said,
pointing a bony finger at the abandoned
Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds
now overgrown with grass and sadly derelict
like an old man who has neglected his beard.
Rumours of witchcraft had frightened the
villagers away.

We knew what we must do:
Summon the hosts of Abhá to action, and
with machets sharp and lean,
conquer the witchcraft and the grass.
Soon the green tufts were cleared from the
roof,
the path was made smooth,
the interior straightened and ordered.
We gathered some children,
taught them songs and prayers.

By evening, word had spread,
the children carrying the news
of our meeting to their families.

Sixteen Bahá'ís came
and two women inquirers.
The fruit of the meeting was the resolution
never to neglect again
the "church of Bahá" —
the center where all may come
in peace and unity.

—Samuel Tanyi-Tambe
(Cameroon Republic)

LIVING

On flax-clad hill I lie
watching the sun set
colours so thick I should
wrap them round me;
keep out the evening chill.

Increase my wonder and
amazement at Thee, O God

My children come to me.
Running.
Sharky smiles on grubby
little faces.
Instant action response to
this energy;
life

Increase my wonder and
amazement at Thee, O God

Smooth profiles woman of
candle-glow
curved in devotion.
Breathing sculpture.
Timeless.
Her beauty gladdens
my heart.

Increase my wonder and
amazement at Thee, O God

I hear of a man.
One man.
One
man
whose life is changing the
world
changing me.
He was real, no myth.
'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Increase my wonder and
amazement at Thee, O God

—Fay Sweetman (New Zealand)

TOGETHER

At last we are one, at last we are grafted
together,
You the outspread wing and I the feather.
We are the sail and the mast
We are the wind and the weather;
We are the song birds sing...
And the honey drawn from the heather.

We are one! We are parting and meeting,
Voice...and the echo replying.
We are farewelling and greeting,
Living...and dying.

We are one...the known and unknowing,
The wild wind blowing each to the other.
At last, at last we are one,
At last we are grafted together,
You...the outspread wing
and I...the feather.

—Kate March (Australia)

Bahá'u'lláh is the Prophet of God
'Abdu'l-Bahá is His son,
and They both shine under the sun.
They are a good two
because They gave away Their cloth
and shoes—
and that is the poem of Bahá'u'lláh
and His son.

—Geoffrey Cameroon (Canada)
(Age 8)

PROMISE FULFILLED

With lucent newsong,
dawn breaks.
With springsong and madrigals,
flowering rosetrees and
nightingales trilling,
dawn breaks.

With a sun of hope,
day is born.
Lightening shadows,
greening deserts,
uniting peoples and races,
defeating prejudices,
day comes surging.

With two morning stars,
dawn comes now,
with a chorus of cocks
sudden and sharp,
and with a song of lights and flowers,
a cry of great love,
and hope for a new day...

Oh Best Beloved!
Oh Living Faith!
Of Glory of Glories!
Oh Promise Fulfilled!
No one can stop You.
You come, breaking the dawn.
You come, bearing day.

With seven hundred fifty rifles,
they would darken the day.
Oh, Your weeping, Your pain.
Streams of blood
irrigate Your holy earth;
roses and lost stars
bring in the dawn.

—Jose Gre (Chile)
(Translation by Janet Ruhe-Schoen, Jaleh Ruhe, Emil Groth)

THE DANCE

(Dedicated to the Pygmy people of Mugambiro, Zaire, who tried to teach me the reality of Joy)

O star catchers, O forest dancers, your
heads only reach my breasts, but your vision
takes in the universe. Your laughter

echos in my head, your joy is a
suspended crystal reflecting light. You
give me a new name, Kahinda, the one

who rouses the people to move. You
teach me to see in the dark, you
teach me to move to the rhythm of

my heart, by moonlight.

—Kathleen LeMone (United States)

I am a rose,
single and alone—
but I know the Wind.

—Kateya Robbie (Canada)
(Age 9)

I

EVERYTHING IS OF GOD

They are of God
all the virtues
the merits
the most luminous gems
the arcane knowledge

They are of God
all future good
life and death
time
poetry
the hand and the pen
the Intellect and the heart
all that is searched for in the night
and is lost
among the stars of the sky

II

FROM INFINITE DISTANCES

The Well-Beloved was calling me
the Nightingale of the prison of 'Akká
the Exile Whom even
the guards venerated
with sympathetic smiles of understanding
and I heard His voice
intoning an irresistible song
I was caught by a lasso
one time
and forever
like a weary eagle
after a crazy race
of a dozing donkey

III

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IN A DREAM

The eyes
hard, sharpened diamonds
of indefinable steel penetrated
the dream
sweet-light as fragrant bread
that the baker has just
removed from the oven
You came at dawn
the day of my years
and You toasted with crystalline
springwater that
quenches every thirst
from every throat
In the torment
of contorted thoughts
in the nucleus of a swooning soul
I was devastated
mutely cringing on the bed
among a festive gathering
of tender, unknown friends

The dawn filtering through the window
found me astonished and without voice
The room tasted of
mint and of poetry

(Selected stanzas from "The March of Utopia")

—Daniele Giancane (Italy)
(Translations by Iskander Tinto and Elizabeth Peedo)

NOTES POSTMARKED THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD

Beginning
Arrival

The plane touches down at Ben Gurion.
Like a latter-day Noah he is disgorged
to move groggily through humid air,
the smell of warm tarmac
and the hum of Levantine confusion.
Everywhere, the seduction of orange
blossoms.
The luggage he struggles with
bulges with untried convictions,
rusted resolve and unrelinquished
disappointments.
He has brought more clothing
than he will have time to wear.
Hope, his best provision,
is crammed in among random indiscretions,
outworn hesitancies and inappropriate
tweeds.
Had he not guessed this venture calls for
the lightweight wardrobe of beginnings?

The journey has taken longer
than the airline's tidy prediction.
The passenger has known false starts,
obscure delays and ill-judged detours
but feels he has at last
attained the suburbs of authentic arrival.

Outside the airport, as he hails a cab,
Israel opens itself to him
offers its noise, vitality and
curiously familiar foreignness,
presents the gift of palpable certainty
that this is a holy land.

Alone, he offers a small prayer
through fatigue-numbed lips,
surrenders his weariness and jetlag
to the Tel Aviv hotel bed
and, mumbling like a drowsy child,
Tomorrow, Haifa and the Mountain of God,
falls into a welcoming chasm
of restorative sleep.

Beyond his window confident stars
form new configurations,
effortlessly shaping themselves
into the alphabet of homecoming.

Day One
Visit to the Shrine of the Báb

The first glimpse brings assurance,
like learning that the Alps
resemble the postcards, and a sense
of familiarity, of longstanding personal
ownership.
Mingling at Pilgrim House he finds himself
lightheaded with happiness and anticipation,
his hopes fleshed, his expectations peopled.
A sense of belonging invades him, causes
the others to seem like family.
He recognizes even the furniture as that of
home.
The luxury of saying *Alláh-u-Abhá*
cloistered from offence or ridicule,
the immediate acceptance, are as he has
dreamed,
a minor private confirmation.

The visit to the Shrine takes place
in an easy but awesome silence.
The crunching of tile shards underfoot as
he moves in file with the others towards
the goal
helps anchor him to his purpose from which
he might be pulled by exquisite details
of the garden
or even the unself-conscious trill of a bird
that clothes in song his mounting ecstasy.
His senses collude with the beauty to delay
his pace
and postpone the rewarding confrontation.
But then he is there with the others—
too soon
and far from soon enough—and the door,
giant-tall and heavy and swung on its
hinges,
extends its irresistible invitation.
Attar of roses becomes his oxygen.
The pattern in the carpet provides

occupation to his insatiable eyes
till he raises them to see the petal-strewn
threshold
and, beyond, the inner chamber screened by
golden mesh.
Are the prayers offered here invested with
a special potency? he wonders,
but his words
seem impertinent in this setting and
leave no imprint on his mind.
He blushes, concerned that he might
have spoken aloud,
and cannot tell,
so articulate is this silence, so resonant
of all the anguish deposited there.
He hears a fellow pilgrim weep
and longs to have his own heart break
or conflagrate that he might rush forward,
ashes dribbling from his cupped hands,
to scatter them upon the threshold.
A scornful voice in his head causes him to
squirm
in discomfort, but shrugging it away
he finds it possible to recite prayers
and then he slowly takes his leave
wondering what he may have left
on the threshold
where the petals gave their lives.

As day expires he reflects
on the Báb's captivity,
turns to his journal, writes:

"He Who had no candle
has here, ensconced in circled circle,
amid adoring flowers
and green deferential trees,
this whitest marble taper
tipped with gold.
It gleams serenely from Carmel,
inextinguishably lights the world,
our reverential hearts
the willing wick.

"This light will melt
remotest snows,
outlast the names
by which we know it.
"See, Azerbaijan,
this constant flame
which casts no shadow."

And then he sleeps.

In a troubling dream he sees the face
of the girl
whom he had hoped long ago to companion
on pilgrimage
(when such excursion was but a phantasmal
impulse)
but whom he had driven away
through his awkward and immature
insistence
that she—puzzled and ill prepared—
wear the cloak of his vision
though her spirit drew her elsewhere.
He remembers their last despairing
conversation,
a classic *pas de deux* of misunderstanding,
the telephone receiver heavy in his hand,
his head throbbing, his voice clotted
with hurt,
the long imponderable silences
thick with unspoken accusations.
He had imposed on her blindly his singular
need
to feel he was her rescuer,
oblivious to the mystery of her own
integrity,
her private and necessary rebellion, the
personal choices
through which she found protection and
fulfillment
and, eventually, the contented life
he could never have afforded her.

In the dream he sees a sooty congregation—
crows he supposes—arranged high overhead
along a telephone wire, their light-struck
feathers
glinting with vague menace.

He awakens with a start from his broken
rest,
greets his mirrored reflection raw-eyed and
ruefully,

thinking: One brings one's past on
pilgrimage and—
what? Does one leave it here unassimilated,
tangled
and opaque, or take it home transmuted,
God's *providence* that had been concealed
in the *calamity* revealed at last?

He is flooded with a sense of relief
and freedom.
With pre-dawn chill invading the room
and mourning doves beginning to voice
their nonspecific discontent, sleep proves
impossible.
An image from his dream tickles his mind.
Opening his notebook he scribbles hastily
"Punctuation"
and sets down the poem that presses itself
upon him:

"Tentative as commas
they balance on wing-swung wires
along which our voices speed,

"preside with feigned indifference
over crackling reports of our triumphs,
our dissembled defeats, our garbled
anguish,

"and sometimes rise, excitedly cawing,
a flurry of black exclamation marks
against the sky's pale slate

"pointing, perhaps, a lover's
voluble avowals or the finality
of a choked goodbye,

"then settle nervously
on their high-strung perch,
a dark ellipsis,
resigned to brood on the ambiguous
tongue
of those who cannot soar."

That is the past, or part of it, he thinks,
closing his book and walking to the window
before his inner dissenting voice
presents its inevitable quibble.

As dawn takes command of the sky
he offers the prescribed prayer,
then, extemporizing, supplicates: As day-
light appropriates the darkness
may God's will appropriate mine—
and with quiet elation prepares leisurely
to descend to breakfast.

All that one relinquishes of the past is not so
consciously shed, he thinks, as the wake-up
call
which he forgot to cancel cuts through his
reverie
with an imperious ring.

Day Two
The Trouble with Mountains

Leaving the hotel with others
in the light camaraderie of pilgrimage
he remembers with renewed astonishment
that the sun-drenched vista presenting
itself before them
is the mountain of God. At last the unattain-
able attained.

He thinks of mountains he's known,
remembers the Rockies, Kilimanjaro, San
Jacinto,
the snow-furred lions of Vancouver's
coastal range.
And now this rocky hill, Carmel's bony
spine
from whose grudging soil these gardens
were coaxed
and jacaranda persuaded to grant its mauve
benefaction.
But nature was here before the designer
imposed his Order
intent upon the ravishment of human vision
and the pilgrims' eyes are furnished proof,
seared by the sight of a brilliant red poppy
defiant among the tangle on the untended
outcrop
beyond the garden's boundary.

He thinks of his father
who found mountains claustrophobic,
and of the upward climb of the soul,
and of the early pilgrim who was reminded
by Shoghi Effendi, when she protested
the slope
and the challenging paths,
that Bahá'u'lláh bids us advance on feet of
brass
led by Him on feet of steel.

He wonders why he has waited so long
to approach this unprepossessing hill
that so daunts him and whether
his commitment
is adequate to aid him up its incline
where a panorama and enhanced perspective
are the rewards. He imagines himself
at the crest, flushed and breathless,
looking and pointing—*There! There! There!*
barely able to withstand the beauty,
the acuity of vision, the intensive joy.

Extraneous thoughts,
but that evening he writes:

"We come to this mountain late
in laggard wonder
and atrophied awe,
in distrust of the promptings of angels,
the voice in the thunder.

"Like the old plainsman brought dazed
to the coast to die,
needing to hate
Vancouver and his death,
who glared sullenly at its peaks
which to outwit defeat
he'd never try
protesting they block the view
and stifle breath.

"An ant's dusty truth. We gaze
at our thorn-stabbed feet.
It is too late, too late,
the bruising stones reveal
to follow to the summit
One Whose feet were steel.

"And do not hear the battered bird
high in the torturing wind: *Pass! Pass!*
With adamant soul
and sharpest sight
on feet of brass!"

I shall call it, he reflects as he falls asleep,
"The Trouble with Mountains",
though the trouble is with us.

A bird invades his dreams of labouring
upward
urging him forward with sharp little cries
and sometimes dipping to gaze into his eyes.

At breakfast he asks a fellow pilgrim
to whom he related his dream,
"Was it Dickinson who wrote
Hope is the thing with feathers?"
Although knowing the lines well,
he hoped to explore their implications,
savour the meaning of his experiences
behind the locked door of sleep
and postpone entry
into the day's experience.
But poetry has no place
amid the clatter of cutlery
and the pilgrims' hasty preparations,
is dismissed with a shrug by his companion
who, delirious with anticipation,
pores over a city map
and charts an unscheduled visit
to a holy site.

The insistent world is never far away,
he thinks,
gulping coffee that has not had time to cool.

Day Three
Choreography of Reverence

Another day of soul-reeling busyness,
of gluttonous banquets of the spirit
and ample feastings of the eyes.
He is a magpie gathering memories
seizing and sorting and storing
a miscellaneous haul to nourish him

after the banishment of departure,
time's cruellest farmán.

In the courtyard, as he chats with a pilgrim,
her young daughter rushes up
in the uninhibited exuberance of six
fresh from her private possession
of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Shrine
which had been momentarily deserted.
With shining eyes she announces
that within the Master's tomb
filled with forgiveness and soft pink light
she had ached to leave Him something
so broke into a small rapturous dance
having nothing else to offer.
He had been so lonely as a prisoner,
she tells them, then, exulting,
she floats away
fulfilled, a rush of swirling skirts
and evanescence, oblivious to her mother's
apprehensive glance. But the Shrine beams
back approval.

Learning, always learning,
is his late-night thought,
the skipping child's smile still with him
and her assuredness in tendering
her spontaneous gift.
Tired as he is, he yet takes up his journal,
writes of "the choreography of reverence"
and then:

"We, deft practitioners
of protocols of piety
are stranded on uncertainty
who had entered and then left
that rare Presence,
rehearsed petitioners,
joylessly
and empty-handed."

Other phrases suggest themselves
but he is too fatigued and
laden with impressions to carry the thought
further.
That night he dreams of the biblical widow
offering her mite, her face shining,
her eyes full of light. And she is dancing.

Day Four
The Perfect Journey

The pilgrimage a meal,
each day a different course,
but no cessation of hunger.
Why had he waited to walk
on the mountain that had known
the footstep of the King?
Had he a shadow self intent upon
the sabotage of his best interests,
the shipwreck of his growth?
All day, in quiet moments,
he gives himself to this question,
jingling it in the pocket of his mind
like a worn but favourite coin.
Later, alone and sated with the
day's unassimilated sensations and delights,
he writes:

"This, the perfect journey; this alone
Although the spurious brother came
with petulant demand
he was substanceless in all that light.

"The choices leading to this holy stone
I blessed in silence but could not name;
outstretched a timid hand
but heard the banished sobbing in his
night.

"Turned to embrace him then. *To claim*
this home,
an angel spoke, *enter whole or else*
remain
Eden's orphan; understand—the brother
blesses, too,
though is not blessed with sight."

He has been at Bahjí. He sees the heart of
Carmel aglow
at sunset as the bus returns to its starting
point,
feels the shadow self offering conciliation,
a tenuous truce, the wholeness
that makes one human,
the unity from which one can choose
between

the dark and the light, the murk and the
gleam.
He remembers reading the Master's avowal
that the mere mention of the name of the
Magdalene
brought a smile to the face of Bahá'u'lláh—
she had risen from shade and obscurity,
chosen the light that is unfading,
and while the men wept and cowered
became the first among Christ's followers to
know.

The mountain in his sleep that night
is drenched with light,
covered with velvety grass and starred
with flowers from which tears flow.
The hearts of the lovers, he murmurs
in the Pidgin of half-consciousness
but the dream ends and sleep draws him
closer to her anesthetizing breast.

Day Five
A Metropolis of Owls

'Akká disturbs him, unrelievedly grey,
brooding, and malevolent. Its menacing walls
give off an exhausted, sour odour,
refusing to reflect the light
and giving foothold, in their crevices,
to only the hardiest weeds.
He knows he sees it through the eyes
of the exiles.
He walks through the city's narrow lanes
hoping fancifully to hear the footstep of the
Master
or glimpse Him at a window.
But 'Akká is a shuttered world,
confining and oppressive and filled with an
air of loss,
the clanging iron of deprivation.
Denial lurks in every doorway.

He enters the cell as though hobbled in
heavy chains
picturing it dank, dark and verminous.
He shudders. Is it his heart he trails
behind him,
an unbearable weight, and his intractable
will that clasps his wrists in an icy grip?

From the shore he looks across
to the mountain
where have been raised in marble
the vindicating structures which,
in the play of shimmering light,
grow luminous.
At the crest he glimpses the imposing edifice
where God has seated justice
and raised the nine men of Bahá to serve her.

'Abbúd's house, all majesty and power,
gives him solace. From its balcony he looks
down
on the congested alleys of 'Akká
then gazes at the room where
the Kitáb-i-Aqdas
was revealed, its Author commanding a full
view
of the neighbour's petty transgressions and
their lines of
flapping laundry, limp as the flags of defeat.

Though he knows in the late hours
that on subsequent visits
'Akká will be the bustling town of
vivacious people he glimpsed
like an artists' underdrawing
behind the historical overlay
his distress superimposed upon it,
his journal bears the brunt of his dismay.
He pictures 'Akká as an ageing courtesan,
cold-hearted, and abandoned to beg her
bread,
then writes:

"With disconsolate dusk
the carnival of her bazaar subsides
leaving her in darkness, with no warming
fire,
leaning toward the water's edge
where the mortified day will expire.

"Low squatting, knees clasped
to her thin, unsuccouring chest,
she does not raise her bat-encircled head

at the hawk's cry,
nor heed the querulous questions of the owl.
The pale paste jewel of her lighthouse
beckons wanly but the senile, impotent mosque
can only lewdly smile. She does not see
the stricken night huddling comfortlessly
by her garment's soiled, unfastened hem
nor hear her own demented keening
echoed in the surf's low moan,
much less gaze adoringly at Carmel
extreating greenly from across the bay.
Indifferent to the lascivious mist
obscenely fingering her lank hair
her stare is inward,
fixed upon her private stunning grief,
turned from the world,
consumed beyond self-pity or contrition.

"She knows the moment when she chose her death,
knows it, lives it, nightly
as the murmurous sing-whispering waves pile in,
forty upon forty, restless with accusation:

the Cargo of cargoes ignominiously spewed ashore;
the metallic futile protest of the rusted chain;
the thickening indignation of the sordid, misled mob;
the unwilling lock-key turning in a prison cell;
the infamous farmán piously read (she knows it well, the parchment crackling wildly in her reeling brain);
the shattered skylight and the frail youth's twisted frame;
the mother's sob—and then, and then,
Oh then, unbearably, the scratching of a Pen!

"The dawn releases her to trinkets, plastic wares,
the haggling of housewives,
and leering merchants' trivial affairs.

"She rises shivering, and disfiguring her face,
rehearses a grotesque, coquettish smile
for her reeking market-place;
but leaving, looks back to where
the denunciatory waves recede,
her unspeakable, lip-locked, bosom-buried crime
(till their eve's retelling)
a secret aqueously kept:
To have seen the loneliness of God
and not have wept!"

The pain of reviewing the Beloved's tribulations leaves him spent and restless.
"We are saved not once
but once in every moment", he broods, "with every
breath we must choose grace. Stasis is death."

Sleep, when it comes, brings him Mazra'ih,
soothes him with echoes of laughter.
He is surrounded in dream by
verdancy and dehiscence, the hibiscus gaping in wonder,
their leaves clapping green hands in jubilation,
and sees delineated in an unwavering light
the spareness and simplicity
of the architecture of happiness.

Day Six
The Refuge of Cowards

Every hour new bounties to catlogue.
Bahjí is an oasis, its garden a
rare and living carpet,
its walks the very corridors of heaven.
It draws the pilgrims to it with quiet power
that causes their hearts to shake.
He, with the others, approaches in an exquisite fear
with trembling knees. What will be asked of him here?

But beyond the stately doors
the atmosphere
is all compassion and unquestioning
welcome.

He feels as though the silence—its punctation, birdsong—
comprehends all, answers all; that no word
has yet been coined to describe this fragrant
hush.
Had he expected lightning to cleave him,
choirs of angels to strike up ethereal hymns?
The feel of the threshold when his brow
touches it
is that of a father's worn hand extended in
forgiveness,
soothing, warming, calming, and offering
the "There, there, little one" comfort that a
parent
provides a fretting child exhausted from
sobbing.
All prayer save that transcending
syllables and sounds—
the phrase drifts to him from a
half-remembered prayer—
seems inappropriate here where
supplications sing
in the pulse and praise ascends in the breath
of every moment.
An industrious ant toils across the mosaic of
petals
that uncomplainingly accept its slow
progress.

He remembers having written at one time,
imagining this present visit:

"...Stillness gives us back with scented
breath:
Who chooses love of Me must first
choose death."

The words seem too stark for this restful
haven
where he would gladly close his eyes and
sleep
blissfully, innocently, securely,
his own breathing his lullaby.

He wanders through the garden's tapestry
wondering at the art of it, the sheer beauty,
the suitability of its spoked paths
to hold the jewel set there within which lies
God's Own Gem.

And struck by the simplicity, he writes,
leaning against a tree:

"Is this then all there is, a simple garden,
And a silence that displaces need for
words?
What portent in the blood-red wayside
poppy?
What message in the music of the birds?

"The hero's heart is hoisted on a cypress,
The saint's is softly folded as a rose;
But mine lies shattered here among the
pebbles
On the only path the fainting coward
knows."

Pleased with his efforts he hums,
fitting a melody to the words,
till he is called back by a waving pilgrim
to the bus-to-catch realm, the arena of need,
uncertainties and sudden departures.

"I came here to war with my soul
and I think I've lost the battle,"
a pilgrim remarks as they stroll
through fading light to the hotel.
"The beauty of the gardens alone
was enough to capture the castle."

In his room the words will not leave him.
He plays with the conceit, decides on the
title "Dispatch from a War Zone" and
writes:

"Spring's unheralded invasion
arrows of light ambush intention
zeppelin clouds in an azure assault
vision held hostage by verdancy

"shrapnel of petals
the air's fragrant artillery

bombards the reeling senses
unconditional surrender demanded

"rhetorical birds
melodious saboteurs
forecast capitulation
the conscripted grass assumes its green uniform

"landmines of flowers in red pools
ranks of bauhinias
camouflaged in twigs engage in espionage
plot pink and white cannonades

"sap rises in the trees like adrenalin
buds of affirmation on every branch
and the heart explodes into bloom
always the first casualty."

The critic somewhere deep inside of him
offers the accustomed ridicule
but, lighthearted and chuckling, he counters:
"If you're my still, small voice—be still!
This is my pilgrimage, my response, my poem!"
Within minutes, sleep brings armistice
and he hears no sound till morning.

Day Seven
Conditional Truces

Surfeited with bright social exchanges,
he eludes the convivial congregation of pilgrims,
sets out for the Shrine of the Master,
walking slowly, relishing the scent,
the gentle morning sunlight, his solitude,
picking his way among—he smiles at a knot
of youngsters bound for school—*the children of Israel,*
savouring the metaphor, Isaiah's words flitting
lightly across the screen of his mind,
...and ye shall be gathered one by one,
O ye children of Israel... when the refracted light
suddenly cancels the green day
presenting to him a mirage, a trackless desert,
with a suddenness that takes his breath away.
Fishing for his notebook he remembers
the *desert place* of Matthew, Mark and Luke
and writes, resting on a low stone wall:

"In the sandy convolutions of this land scape
grainy, parched and impersonal as God's brain
perception shifts and shimmers
and the crazed hot wind mutters apocalyptically.
Here, we are beyond the known and possible.

"Can anything survive the unquenchable sun?
A solitary lizard darting from invisibility
to invisibility like a fleeting thought
leaves no trace.

"The stinging eye, amazed,
sees the heat as a solid malignancy
hulking on the horizon
mesmerizing and merciless.
The combustible soul might vanish in a puff
leaving the charred self to stumble back
into the verdant world
wild-eyed and jabbering incoherently about last things.

"Small wonder the Prophets were placed in this oven
where the heat consumes all but compassion
that they might return to our midst,
igneous and authoritative, but speaking redemptive words glacially austere
to cool our raging fever."

His effort restores to his eye the palette,
the greens returning with heightened intensity,

the flowers riotously coloured, the sky
indelibly blue.
He imagines he sees Bahá'u'lláh's pitched
tent,
the imprint of His sandals and, in the
distance,
'Abdu'l-Bahá striding away rapidly
bent on some errand for His Father,
His cream-coloured 'abá swirling behind
Him,
His white hair glinting where it escapes His
turban.

The Shrine again compels him. He draws
close
overwhelmed by a desire to protect it,
even to feel responsible for it, on a plane
exalted above private ownership,
that it become part of the heritage
of coming generations. Reaching it
as tourists
begin to arrive, busload after busload,
he stands aside watching, touched by their
subdued bearing
that is incongruous with their festive
clothing,
their holiday mood, their cameras and
sunhats.
The rows of shoes they leave outside stab
him with tenderness,
as though this small obeisance has left them
vulnerable and,
unweighted by leather, they might float
away skyward,
delirious with delight, never to be seen again.
Is it not theirs too, though they may not yet
claim it?
The Revelation, warrant for service for all,
the Shrine its emblem, the Covenant its seal.

Alone, later, in his chosen ventricle,
delivered of his prayers,
he offers wordless gratitude, remembers
friends,
experiences a tranquil sense of well-being,
almost a coziness, in the diffuse rosy light.
What tithe is asked here? he asks the
dustmotes
cavorting animatedly in a ray, but hears the
bruised petals reply
Accept! Accept! and the Master's warm
laughter
that offers renewal of courage and the
intimacy of an embrace.
On what conditions must I accept? But,
unanswered,
the trite words sink into the plushy carpet
with the arrival of other worshippers.

An evening stroll, listening to his own
footfall,
he thinks of the mind's spat with the heart,
the quintessential row, the lastingness of it,
the tentative and conditional truces between
skirmishes.

A rhythm begins in his head and, stopping
for coffee
in a quiet café, he takes up a paper napkin
and writes:

"A lifetime is composed of rows
and grudges daily borne.
Though evening calm repairs the breach
the quarrel resumes each morn.

"If my lifetime were dumbstruck as peace
I would bicker as a ruse
and set it warring with my heart—
too soon comes final truce."

"Something is owed to Emily Dickinson,"
his internal voice scorns,
but ignoring his fractious mentor he walks to
the lookout
that places in view a crescent of winking
lights
stretching around the bay from Haifa to
'Akká
like a discarded tiara. "All poets owe some-
thing to all poets,"
he retorts, emboldened by the darkness
and his need to etch the scene in memory.

He is glad to join the small circle of friends
in the hotel lobby who are postponing sleep

reviewing the day's treasures,
whispering, giggling, or in awe,
enjoying their own recounting. Their affable chatter
restores his social self, bonds them to him
even more deeply, makes parting difficult
though his pillow beckons and his eyes droop.
Rising to go the words "Seventh day!" are on every lip.
Has it for them, too, passed too swiftly?

But sleep is elusive. The reality of leaving
Mount Carmel begins to bear in. He reconstructs
for his journal lines he had written
long years before he embarked on this pilgrimage
when he had wondered about the "What now?"
that he felt must be every suppliant's nervous, parting plea:

"'O my Beloved', the pilgrim said,
'I am filled with childish dread.
You send me forth. But where?
Do not leave me in despair,
tell me what now lies ahead.
What strange, dark roads must I tread?'

"'Go gladly without a care,
naught shall harm a single hair
of your dear, faithful head.
Wherever you may be led
know this: I shall be there
beside you. I shall be there.'"

The voice of derision casts up its scorn.
"They'll say you've been reading George Herbert,"
he hears as he closes his notebook.

"Had I Herbert's purity of heart
I could make it needle to my compass,
launch my frail craft of faith
on the turbulent sea that laps the shores of 'Yea, verily!'",
he thinks, eyes shut, but cannot rescue the thought
which is carried away on a tide of exhaustion
to a deep cool place where no sound can be heard
above the gentle plashing of water among the ferns.

Day Eight
A Call on the Sleepers

Here on the mountainside are the graves of holy ones
the chaste white columns of their markers,
smooth as alabaster, standing in unreproachful dignity.
Now his most tenuous prayer uttered almost inaudibly
seems to give ready access
to these choicest of the choice
whose sacrifice and service
earned them proximity to their Beloved
in this palm-fringed setting.

And at the mountain's foot another cluster of sleepers
who dropped their labours here at the world's heart
rest in a genial garden where warm sunlight
plays hide-and-seek among the eucalyptus and pine.
There is no sorrow here, only triumph
and a companionable silence. Sweet promptings pervade—
he might, on impulse, hug the markers,
recite aloud the victorious tenants' names.
He feels a need to knit and purl himself
into history, to gain a sense of belonging,
as though his choice of the Faith
had ostracized him from the ordinary,
expunged his record, denied him common privileges,
left him without citizenship or passport.
Now in this hushed colony
the gravemarkers like unfurled scrolls
offer their mute, comforting testimony,
the verification of heaven's handful.
In the rustling of the palms he hears

Accept! Accept!

Here lies Winnifred Harvey who passed to
him
the chalice containing the immortal draught.
It had come to her from Rowland Estall
who had accepted it from May Maxwell's
hands.
The link contemplating its place in the
chain.
This Faith so young one can trace ancestry,
dare hope secretly for kinship of spirit.
But he turns abruptly from the presumptuous
claim.
He thinks of those who have laid their bones
in farflung tombs—those victors
in whose wake all advance—and of
Thomas Breakwell in his lonely unmarked
grave.

Familiar names now meet his gaze, carved
on white tombstones formal as engraved
invitations:
Horace Holley, Fugita,
the Revell sisters, John Esslemont,
many distinguished and obscure.
Waves of admiration sweep over him.
For each dear name a smile of recognition
and a prayer.

From the cemetery he looks up to Carmel
needing always to have replenished to his
vision
the slope's white ornament, its dome
gleaming in the sun;
and looks out to the sea, Alfred de Musset's
words *Et je me demandais: Est-ce assez
d'admirer?*
coming to his mind, casting a small shadow
across his contentment. The sea. The Most
Great Ocean.
"It is not enough to marvel; the sea asks
more",
he recites aloud, remembering an early
poem
he had written, but only a fragment comes to
him:

"Let the dreaming, lovely drowned
who loll and bob in bubbled wonder
tell us why, returning,
weeping without sound,
we stand, wistful and incredulous,
along the shore."

At Pilgrim House later he feels
an unearned excruciating happiness
amid the happy babble of voices rising and
falling in soft exclamations of reunion.
Am I feeling this, or is it that
I feel I should feel it? an inner voice chal-
lenges,
but he turns from it to render a small service
to a pilgrim. Was the gesture sincere?
the voice persists, the bicameral mind
a constant observer, ever disdainful,
tireless in spying on even his most private
moments.
"Prithee desist, Hamlet", he chides himself,
clumsily counterfeiting Shakespeare,
"lest thou bar thy way back to innocence."
The notion of return seems feasible here
in this sea of fellowship and warm
acceptance.

Preparing for bed, thinking of Esslemont,
he chuckles remembering Samuel Johnson's
"Much may be made of a Scotchman
if he be caught young." He takes up his pen
to write a tribute, imagines the graveside
trees remarking *This bonny lad did well*
and pauses, pleased with his inventiveness.
Let Esslemont stand for all the faithful ones
whose memory we keep, he thinks, before
sleep
engulfs him in a black cloak of
forgetfulness.

Day Nine
Souvenir

The day bursts open like a pod
in this complex garden
dispensing the promise of a potential
fulfilled.

The silky air carries the commingled scents
of roses and mysteries
and the faint echo of unanswered questions
that have come to rest among the placid
flowers
or tumble fretfully on the grass
where pools of sunlight soothe them.
On the trees the enviable oranges
glow like contented stars in their green uni-
verse.
Was it submission that taught them
roundness,
passion that set them ablaze?
Their juices have the sharp taste of renuncia-
tion.

Does one weary of nightingales and
peacocks?
he wonders irrelevantly, pausing by statuary,
teasing out his progress.
But no preparation is adequate to what
awaits.

All paths lead to the centre where
—aspiration given form—
the marble marvel holds upright
its golden head above dust that altered
history.
Entry gained, the pilgrim knows
this is the breeding place of questions,
this ideal model of the heart's own
chambers,
this humbling vault where,
head on carpeted threshold,
the suppliant hears whispered in his veins
Accept! Accept!

Must I accept, he wonders, that my life is
the sum of my questions, my answers?
That I must make a higher will my own?
He frowns at the uselessness of words,
the fruitlessness of speculation,
smiles at his wish to wring from that reticent
place
a formula for perfection, then emerges to
stumble
from sanctuary into demanding daylight.
A petal has clung to his moist forehead.

He smilingly removes the fragile token,
a scented receipt, places it in his prayerbook.
Almost furtively he passes the disinterested
cypresses that point heavenward,
the wind in their uplifted boughs sighing
Accept! Accept!

A sense of urgency pervades him
but he is reluctant to part from the garden
where now the jasmine's perfume captivates
his sense,
paralyzing his will.

"Laughter is divine antidote to pomposity;
art is a bulwark against fanaticism;
there are many molds of holiness"—
all he had reasoned he rehearses here,
panning for affirmations. But he has been
given
all the nuggets his heart can hold.

A rosary of farewells at Pilgrim House,
promises to keep in touch.
The pilgrims' faces glow with earnestness
and gratitude: they have won through,
gathered to them their trophies.
Dazedly they call "Good-bye! God bless!"
His affection affords each head a nimbus.

He leaves through the gate's lacy iron barri-
cade
which yields daily to the ardency of lovers
to resume his ordinary life
in the world of contention and crises and
clocks.
Already, deadlines tug at his sleeve
and schedules jostle one another
clamouring for his attention.
He looks back wistfully to his refuge
then returns to his room to pack
the belongings he would gladly jettison
though already his bag feels weightless.
He is gnawed by a sense of having forgotten
some vital possession, wonders what
he may have unwittingly relinquished
among the petals or lost like a cherished
talisman along some pebbled path. A failed
self?

Later, there is one more good-bye
as the cab flashes past his loved landmark,
just a glimpse, a pang,
the bloodless death of separation
under a moon coolly indifferent to this
wrenching.
The car speeds on, bent obsessively
on effecting his expulsion from all he knows
of Eden.

At the airport, seeking consolation,
possessive, hoping to bolster memory,
he buys a last postcard
of the building with the gold tiled dome,
makes his seat selection,
smuggles his convictions past Customs
and, aboard the aircraft, in the fretful
sleep of the traveller, broods on the
aptness of his purchased bric-a-brac
despairingly matching gift to receptor.
As dawn musters its luminous rose
affirmation
he turns in his dream to his truest souvenir:
Many pilgrims. Many questions.
One unalterable answer:
Accept! Accept!

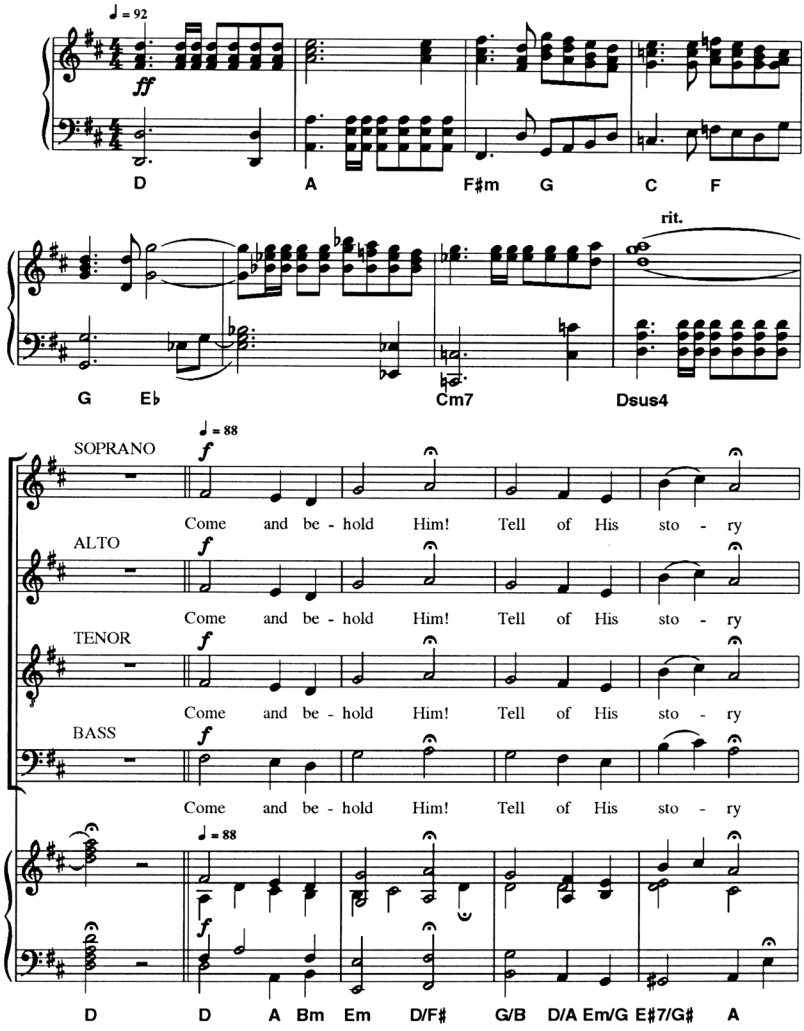
Roger White (Israel)

[The poem does not follow strictly the program of pilgrimage nor does it allude to every point of historic interest visited by Bahá'í pilgrims during the course of their stay in the Holy Land.]

SEE THE LIGHT OF HIS GLORY

For Mixed Chorus (S.A.T.B.)

Jack Lenz, Tom Price & Jim Seals



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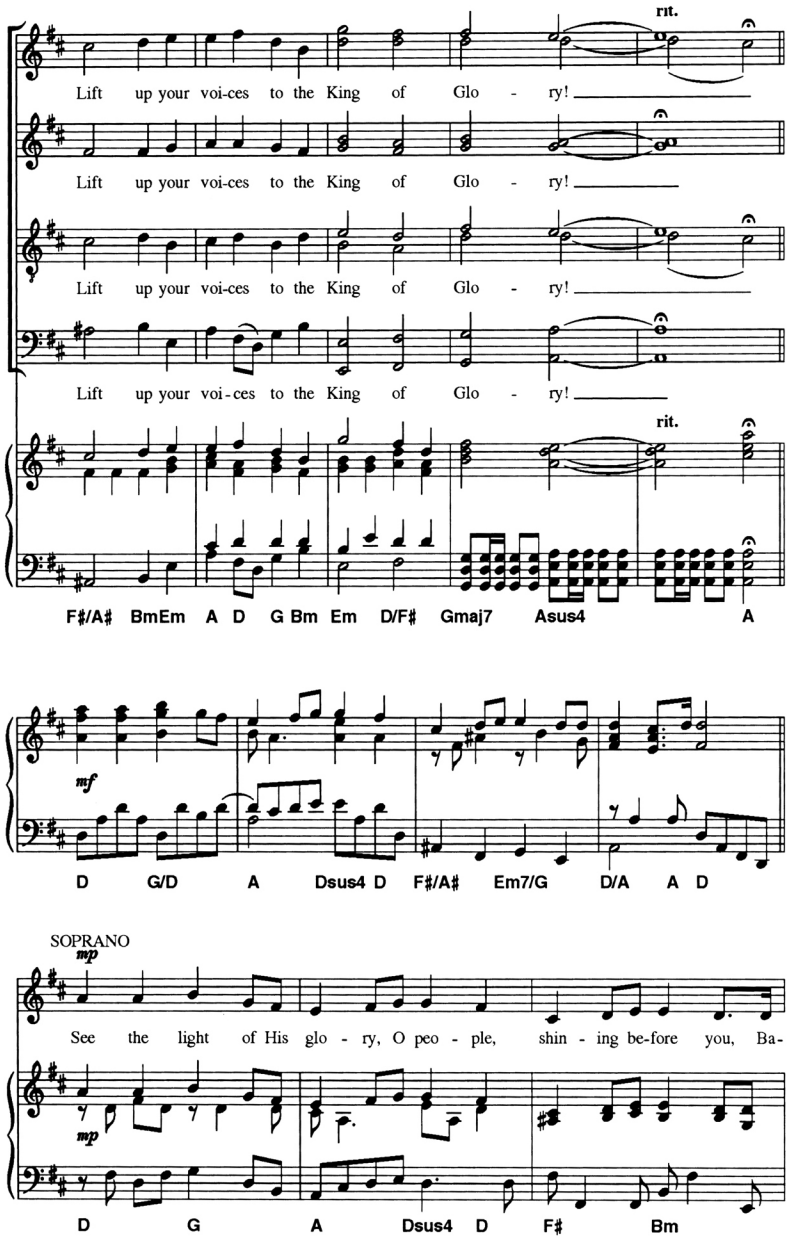
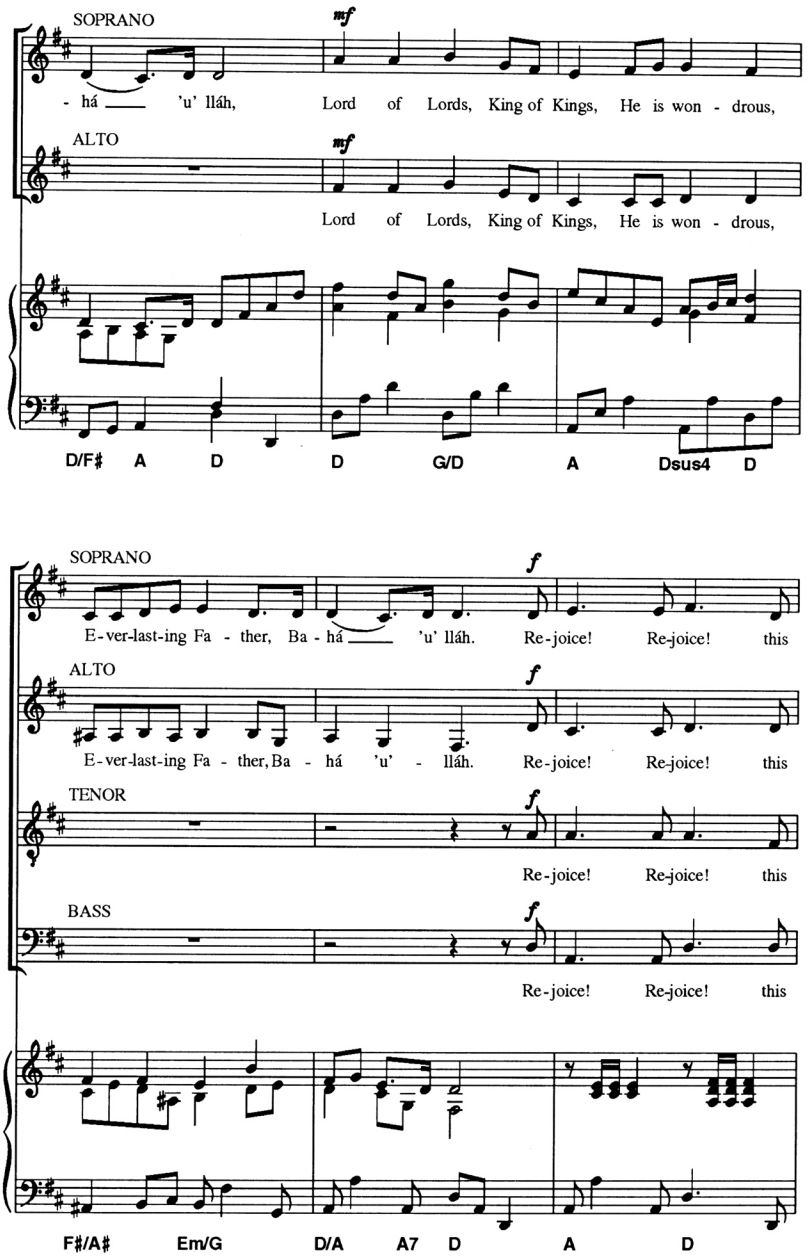
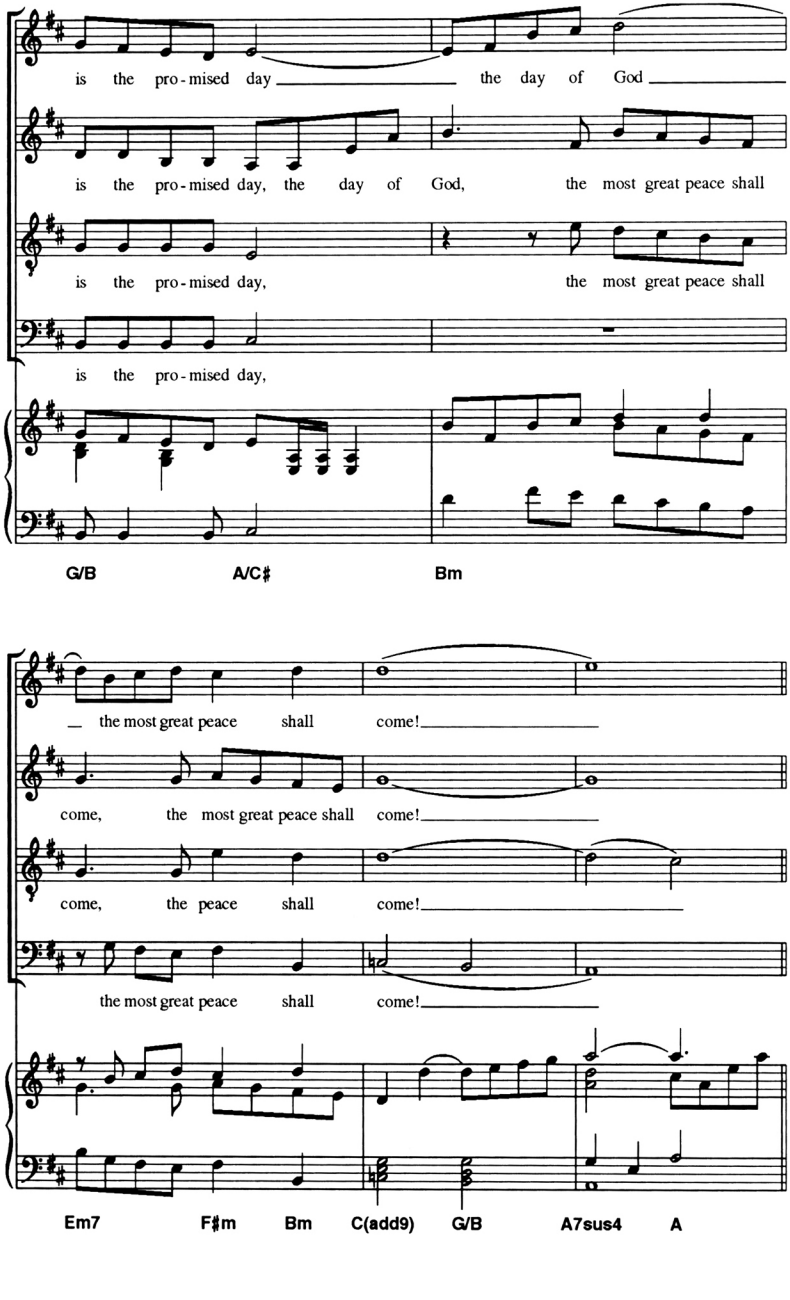
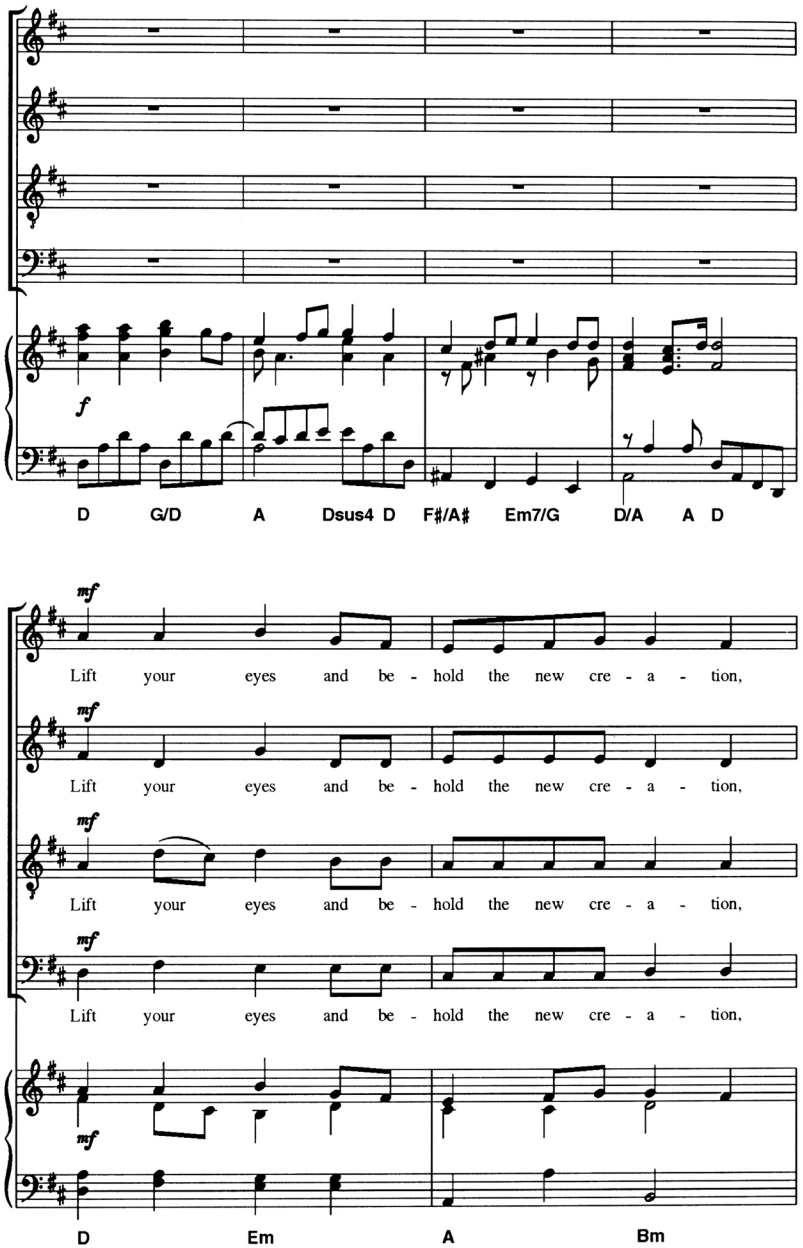
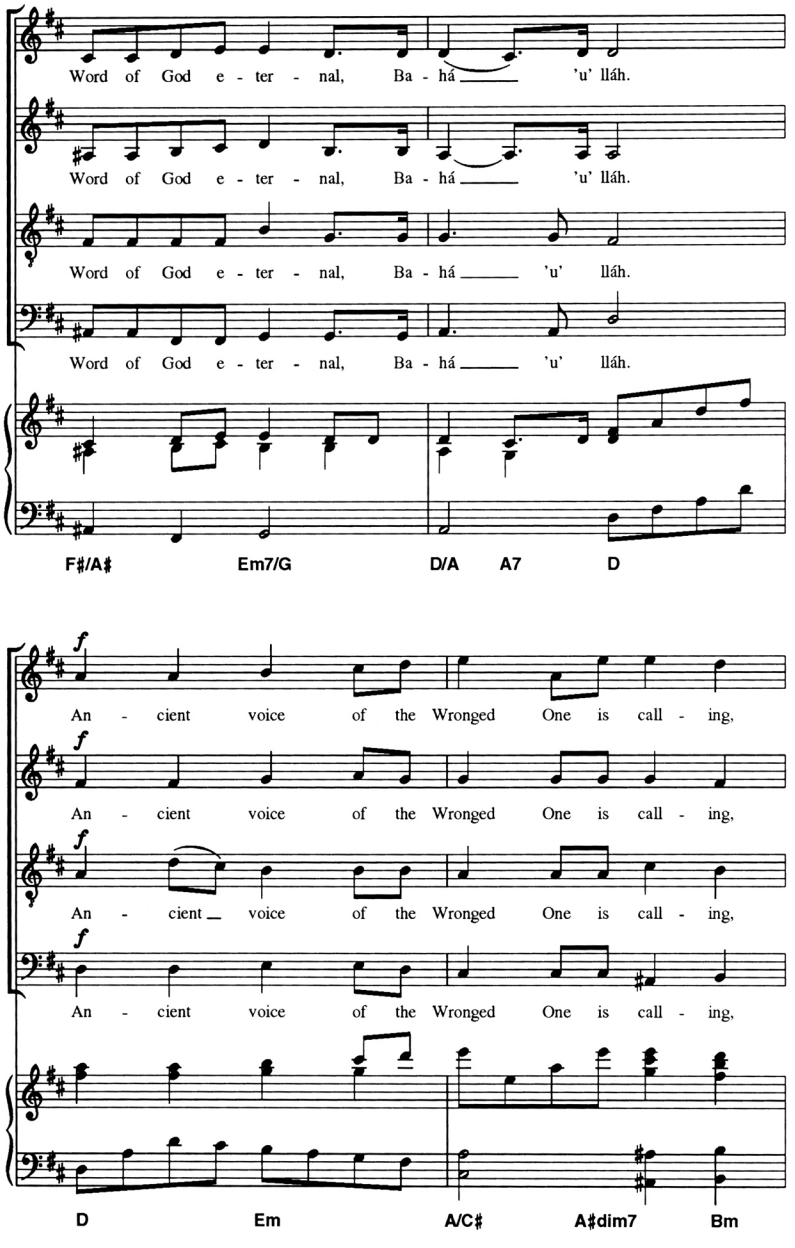
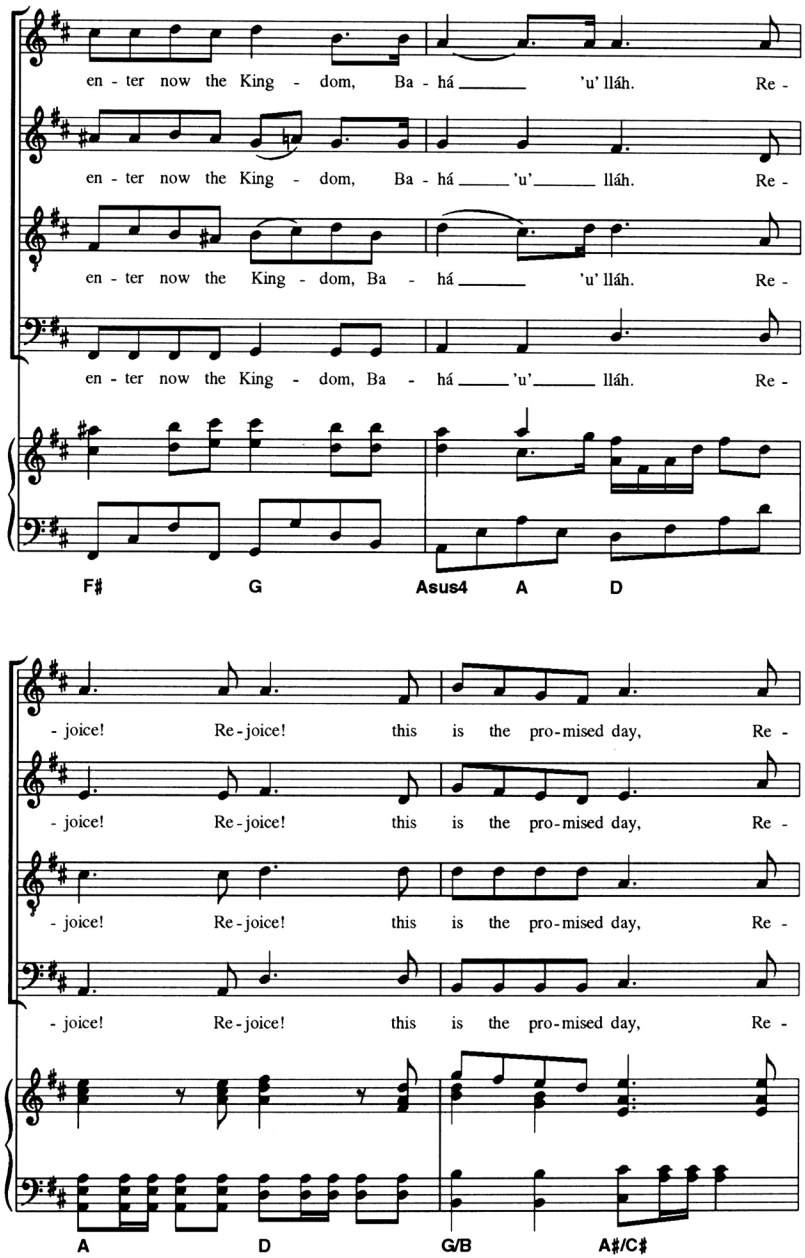

rit.
Lift up your voi-ces to the King of Glo - ry!
Lift up your voi-ces to the King of Glo - ry!
Lift up your voi-ces to the King of Glo - ry!
Lift up your voi-ces to the King of Glo - ry!
rit.
F♯/A♯ BmEm A D G Bm Em D/F♯ Gmaj7 Asus4 A
mf
D G/D A Dsus4 D F♯/A♯ Em7/G D/A A D
SOPRANO
mp
See the light of His glo - ry, O peo - ple, shin - ing be-fore you, Ba-
mp
D G A Dsus4 D F♯ Bm

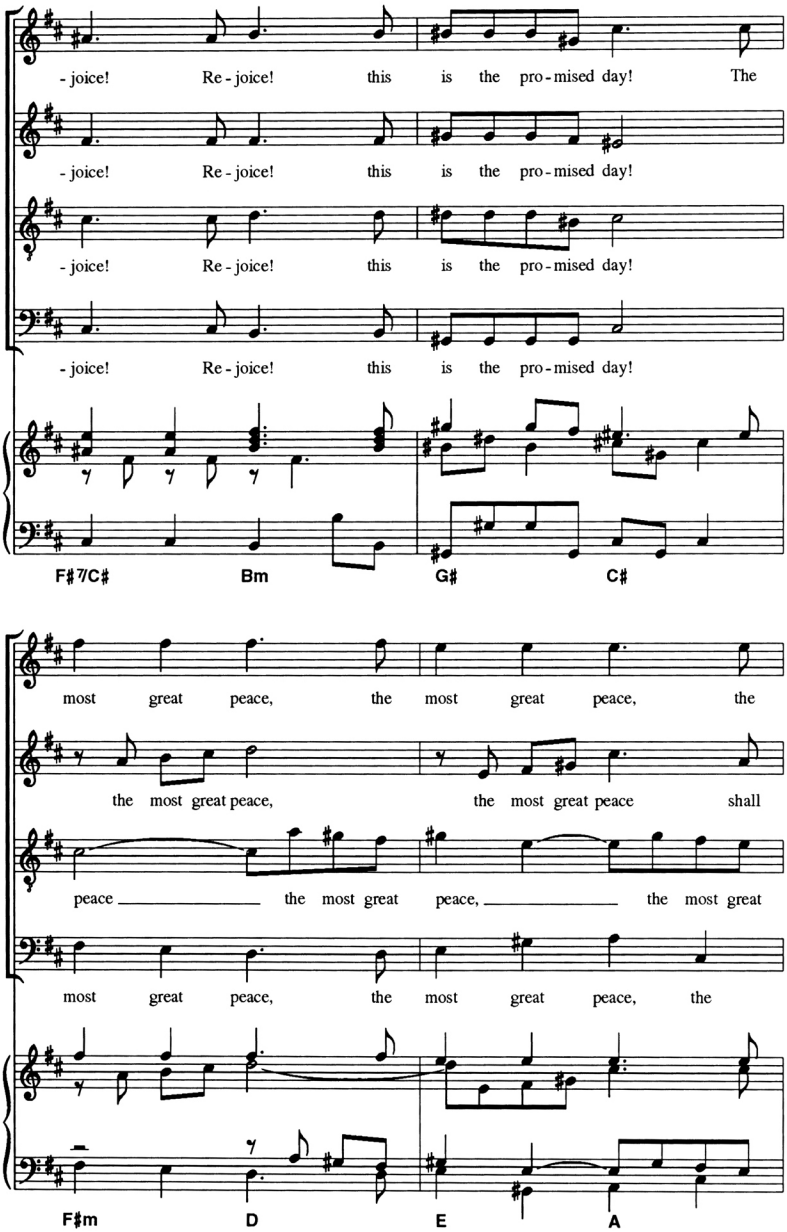

SOPRANO
mf
- há ___ 'u' lláh, Lord of Lords, King of Kings, He is won - drous,
ALTO
mf
Lord of Lords, King of Kings, He is won - drous,
D/F♯ A D D G/D A Dsus4 D
SOPRANO
f
E-ver-last-ing Fa - ther, Ba - há ___ 'u' lláh. Re-joice! Re-joice! this
ALTO
f
E-ver-last-ing Fa - ther, Ba - há 'u' - lláh. Re-joice! Re-joice! this
TENOR
f
Re-joice! Re-joice! this
BASS
f
Re-joice! Re-joice! this
F♯/A♯ Em/G D/A A7 D A D

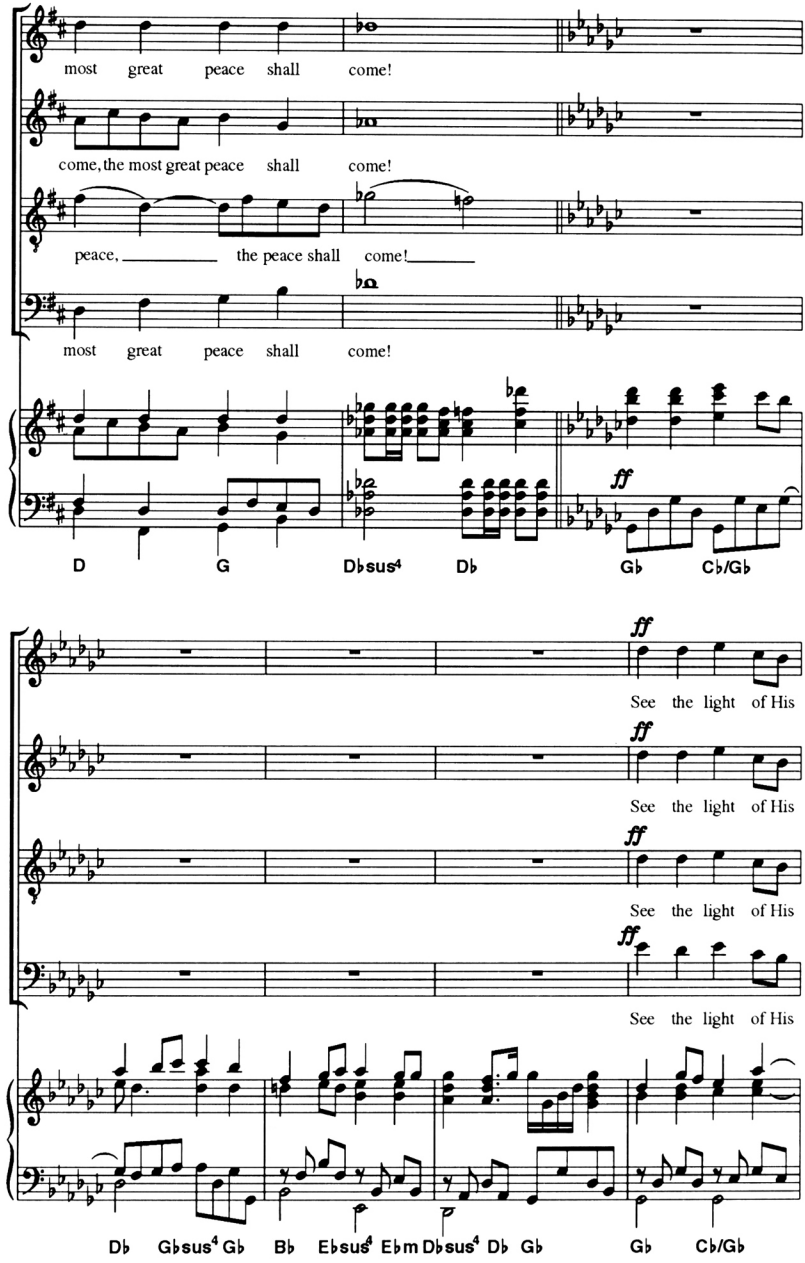

is the pro-mised day the day of God
is the pro-mised day, the day of God, the most great peace shall
is the pro-mised day, the most great peace shall
is the pro-mised day,
G/B A/C♯ Bm
the most great peace shall come!
come, the most great peace shall come!
come, the peace shall come!
the most great peace shall come!
Em7 F♯m Bm C(add9) G/B A7sus4 A

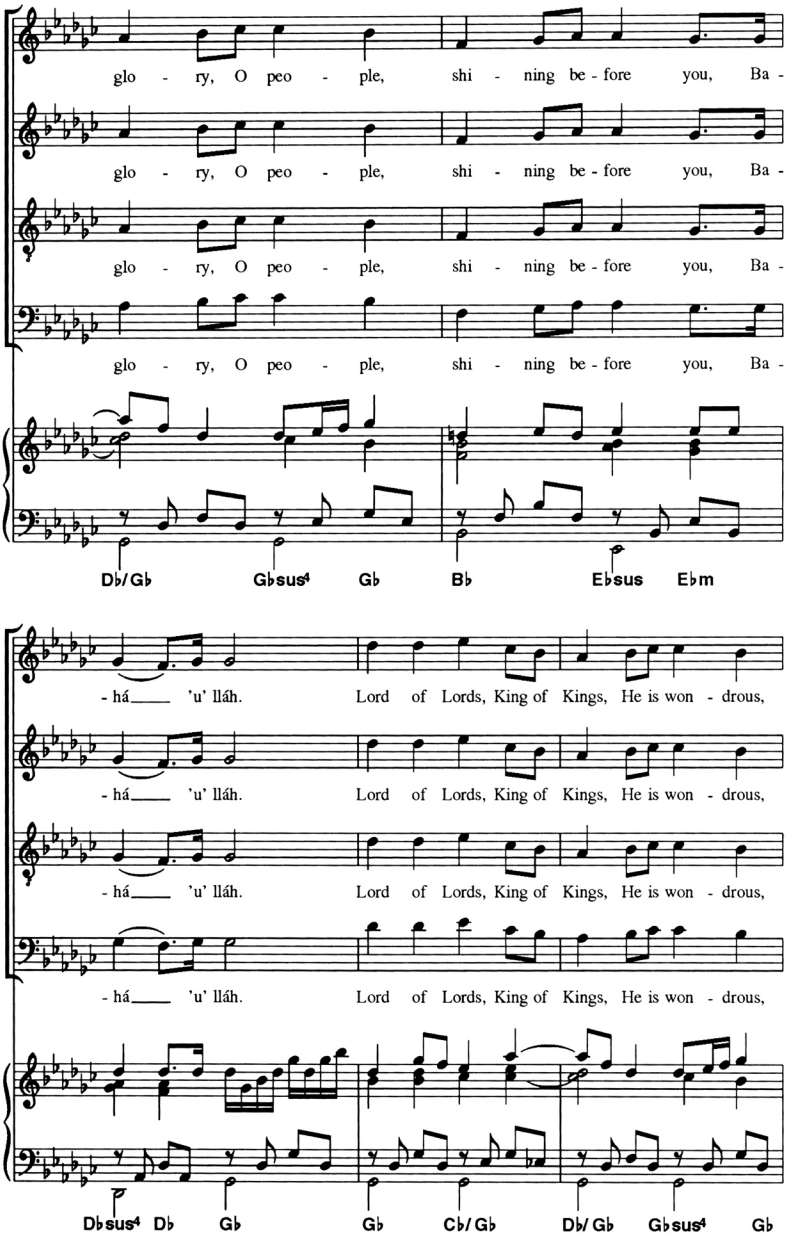

f
D G/D A Dsus4 D F♯/A♯ Em7/G D/A A D
mf
Lift your eyes and be - hold the new cre - a - tion,
Lift your eyes and be - hold the new cre - a - tion,
Lift your eyes and be - hold the new cre - a - tion,
Lift your eyes and be - hold the new cre - a - tion,
mf
D Em A Bm

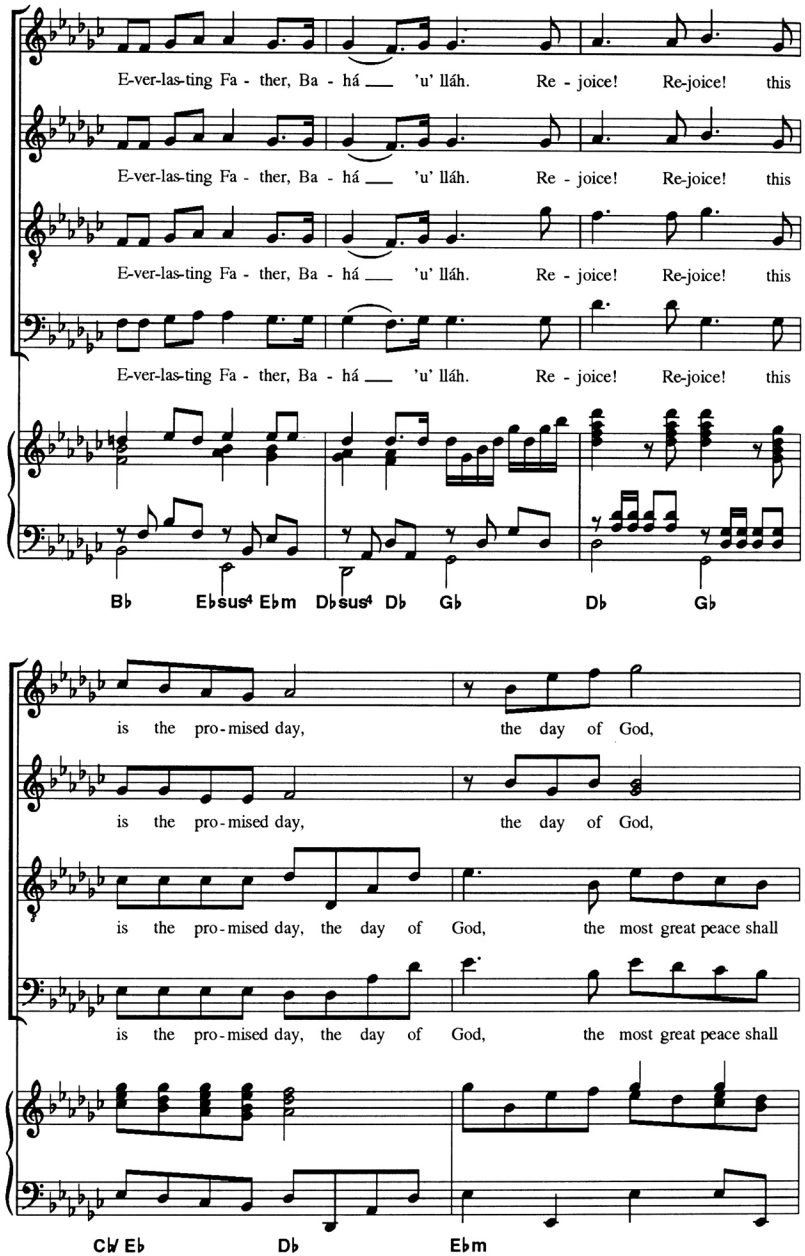

Word of God e - ter - nal, Ba - há 'u' lláh.
Word of God e - ter - nal, Ba - há 'u' lláh.
Word of God e - ter - nal, Ba - há 'u' lláh.
Word of God e - ter - nal, Ba - há 'u' lláh.
F♯/A♯ Em7/G D/A A7 D
An - cient voice of the Wronged One is call - ing,
An - cient voice of the Wronged One is call - ing,
An - cient voice of the Wronged One is call - ing,
An - cient voice of the Wronged One is call - ing,
D Em A/C♯ A♯dim7 Bm

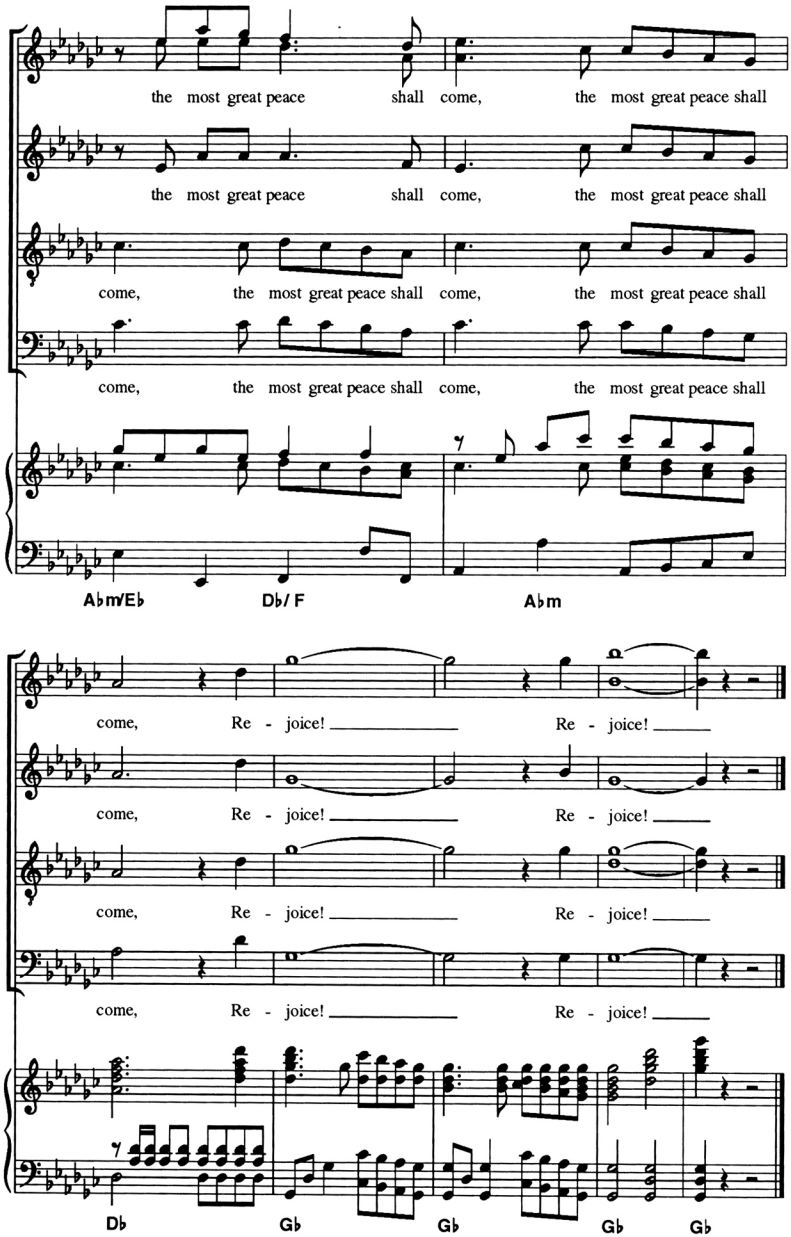

en - ter now the King - dom, Ba - há 'u' lláh. Re -
en - ter now the King - dom, Ba - há 'u' lláh. Re -
en - ter now the King - dom, Ba - há 'u' lláh. Re -
en - ter now the King - dom, Ba - há 'u' lláh. Re -
F# G Asus4 A D
- joice! Re - joice! this is the pro - mised day, Re -
- joice! Re - joice! this is the pro - mised day, Re -
- joice! Re - joice! this is the pro - mised day, Re -
- joice! Re - joice! this is the pro - mised day, Re -
A D G/B A♯/C♯


- joice! Re - joice! this is the pro - mised day! The
- joice! Re - joice! this is the pro - mised day!
- joice! Re - joice! this is the pro - mised day!
- joice! Re - joice! this is the pro - mised day!
F♯7/C♯
Bm
G♯
C♯
most great peace, the most great peace, the
the most great peace, the most great peace shall
peace the most great peace, the most great
most great peace, the most great peace, the
F♯m
D
E
A


most great peace shall come!
come, the most great peace shall come!
peace, the peace shall come!
most great peace shall come!
D G D♭sus4 D♭ G♭ C♭/G♭
ff
See the light of His
See the light of His
See the light of His
See the light of His
D♭ G♭sus4 G♭ B♭ E♭sus4 E♭m D♭sus4 D♭ G♭ G♭ C♭/G♭


glo - ry, O peo - ple, shi - ning be - fore you, Ba -
glo - ry, O peo - ple, shi - ning be - fore you, Ba -
glo - ry, O peo - ple, shi - ning be - fore you, Ba -
glo - ry, O peo - ple, shi - ning be - fore you, Ba -
D♭/G♭ G♭sus4 G♭ B♭ E♭sus E♭m
- há___ 'u' lláh. Lord of Lords, King of Kings, He is won - drous,
- há___ 'u' lláh. Lord of Lords, King of Kings, He is won - drous,
- há___ 'u' lláh. Lord of Lords, King of Kings, He is won - drous,
- há___ 'u' lláh. Lord of Lords, King of Kings, He is won - drous,
D♭sus4 D♭ G♭ G♭ C♭/G♭ D♭/G♭ G♭sus4 G♭

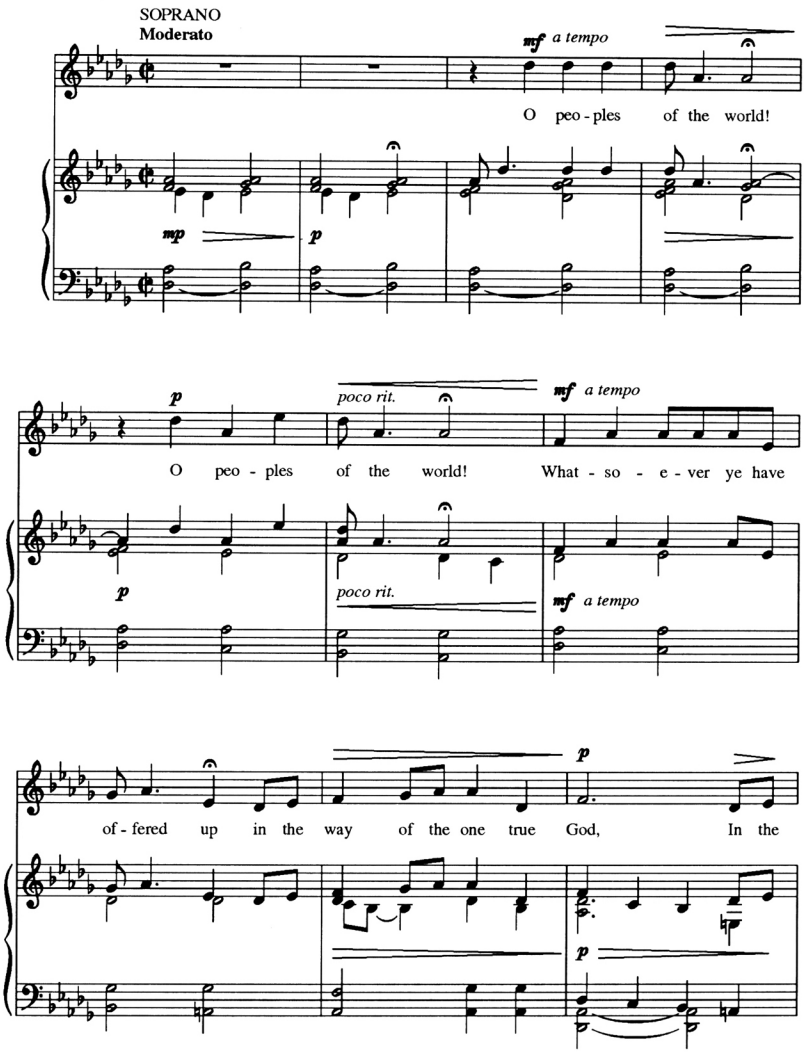

E-ver-las-ting Fa - ther, Ba - há ___ 'u' lláh. Re - joice! Re-joice! this
E-ver-las-ting Fa - ther, Ba - há ___ 'u' lláh. Re - joice! Re-joice! this
E-ver-las-ting Fa - ther, Ba - há ___ 'u' lláh. Re - joice! Re-joice! this
E-ver-las-ting Fa - ther, Ba - há ___ 'u' lláh. Re - joice! Re-joice! this
B♭ E♭sus4 E♭m D♭sus4 D♭ G♭ D♭ G♭
is the pro-mised day, the day of God,
is the pro-mised day, the day of God,
is the pro-mised day, the day of God, the most great peace shall
is the pro-mised day, the day of God, the most great peace shall
C/ E♭ D♭ E♭m

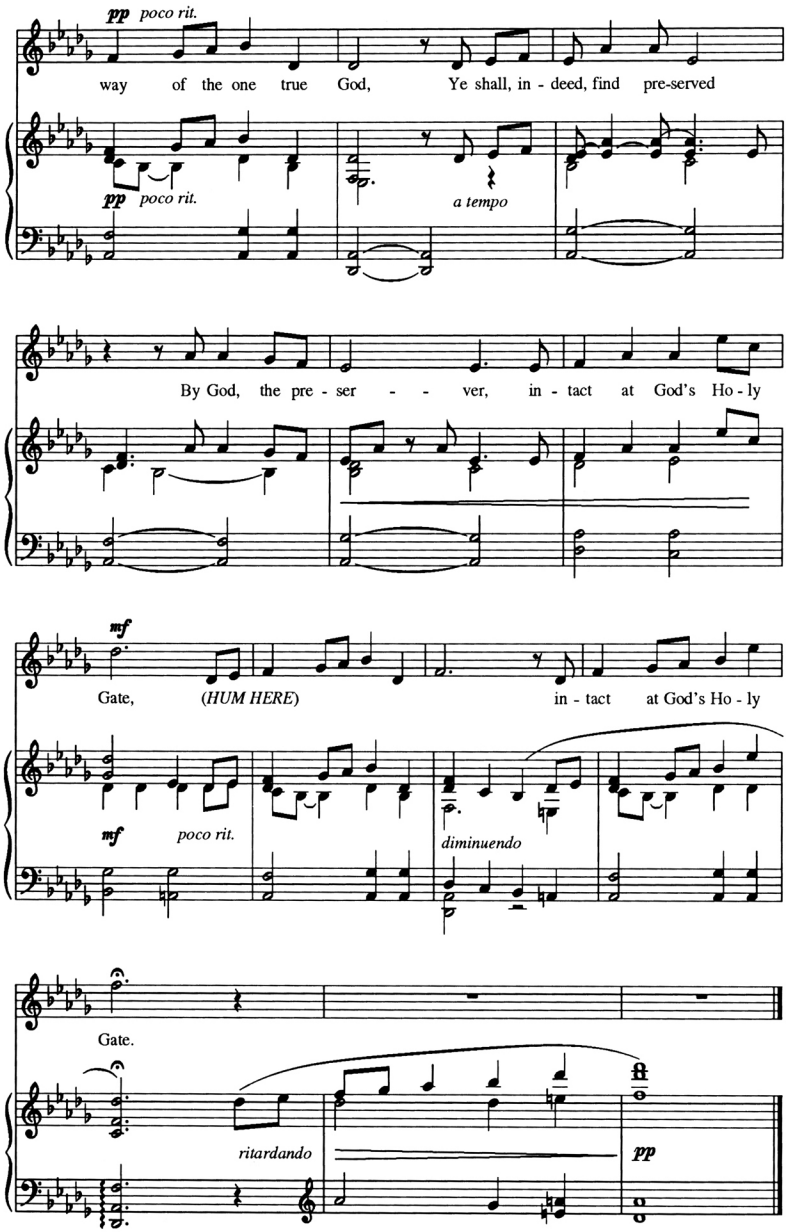

the most great peace shall come, the most great peace shall
the most great peace shall come, the most great peace shall
come, the most great peace shall come, the most great peace shall
come, the most great peace shall come, the most great peace shall
A♭m/E♭
D♭/ F
A♭m
come, Re - joice! Re - joice!
come, Re - joice! Re - joice!
come, Re - joice! Re - joice!
come, Re - joice! Re - joice!
D♭
G♭
G♭
G♭
G♭

O PEOPLES OF THE WORLD

Words of the Báb

Music by Jean SOUTH

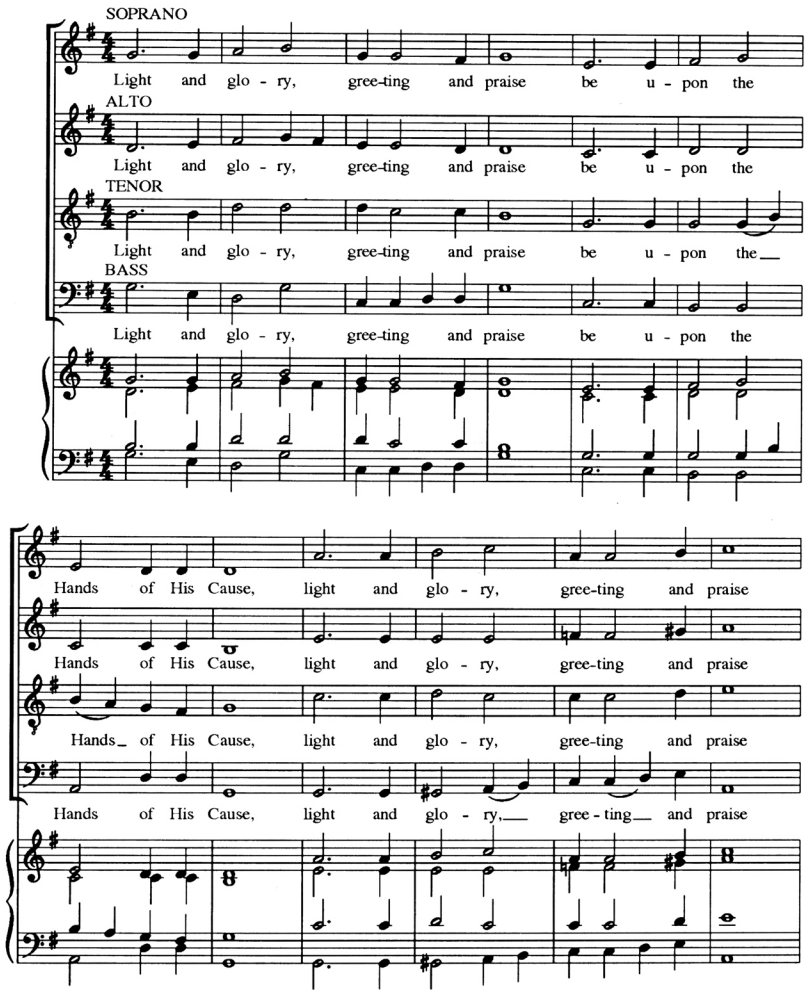



pp poco rit.
way of the one true God, Ye shall, in - deed, find pre-served
pp poco rit.
a tempo
By God, the pre - ser - - - ver, in - tact at God's Ho - ly
mf
Gate, (HUM HERE) in - tact at God's Ho - ly
mf poco rit.
diminuendo
Gate.
ritardando
pp

PRAYER FOR THE HANDS OF THE CAUSE

For Mixed Chorus (S.A.T.B.)
A Capella

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Tablet of the World*
Music by Tom Price



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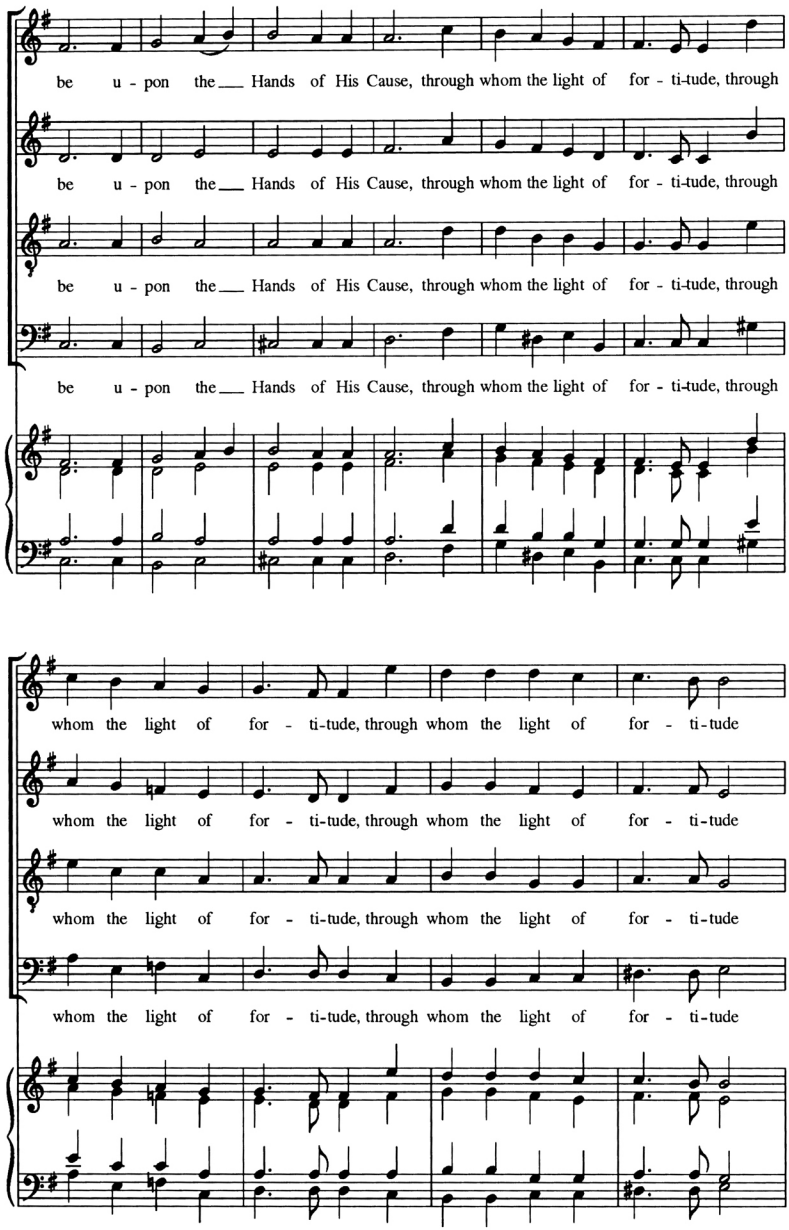
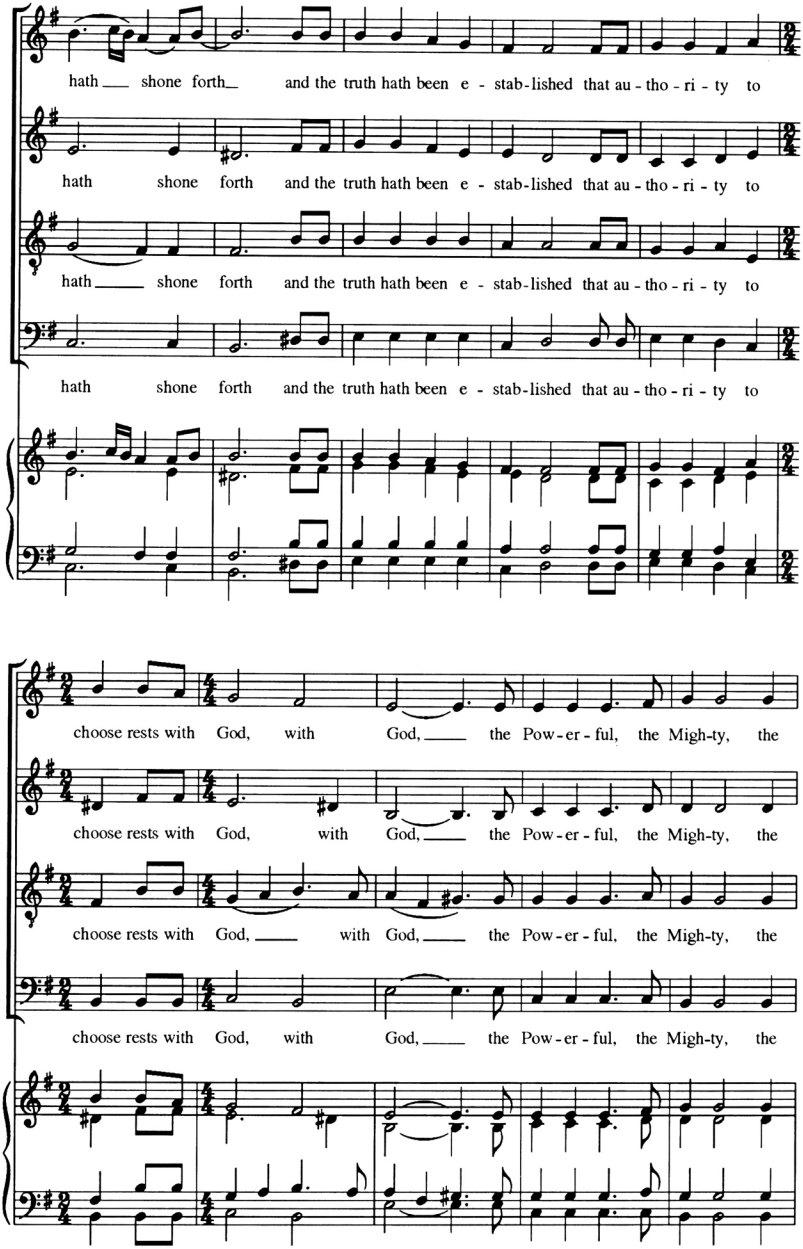
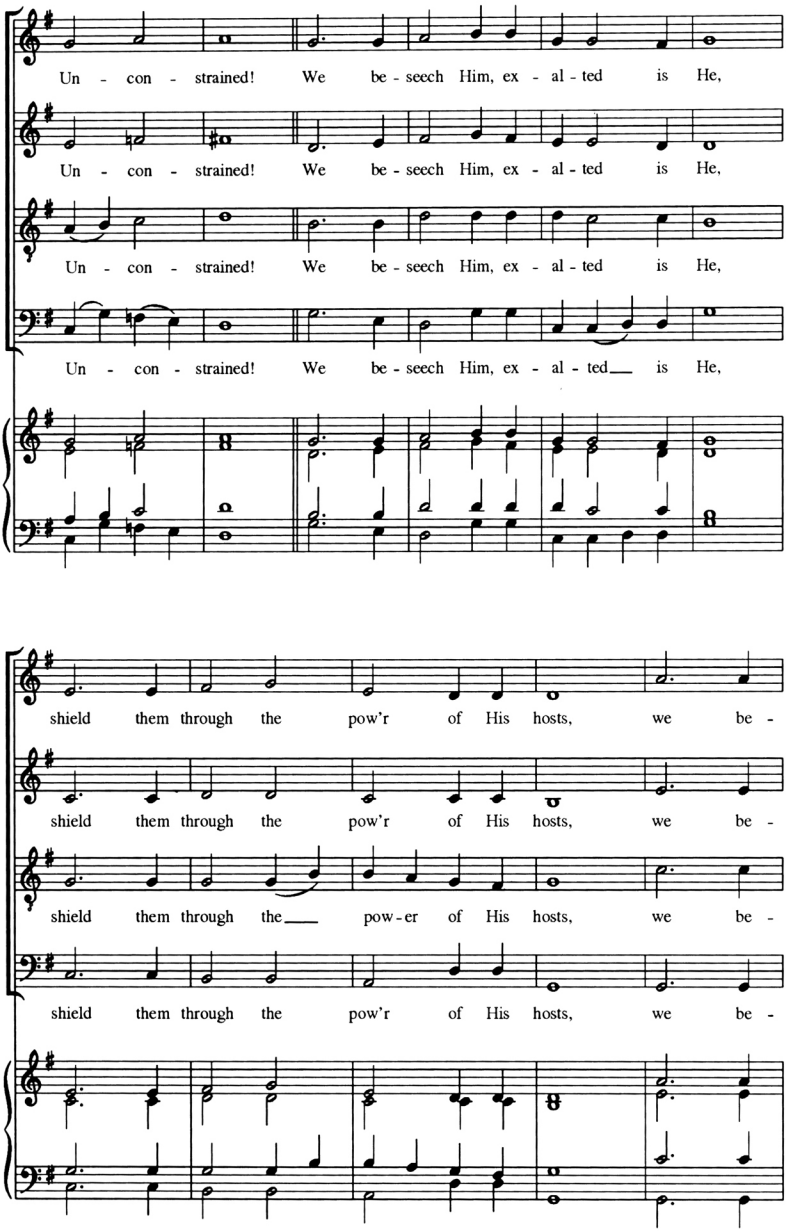
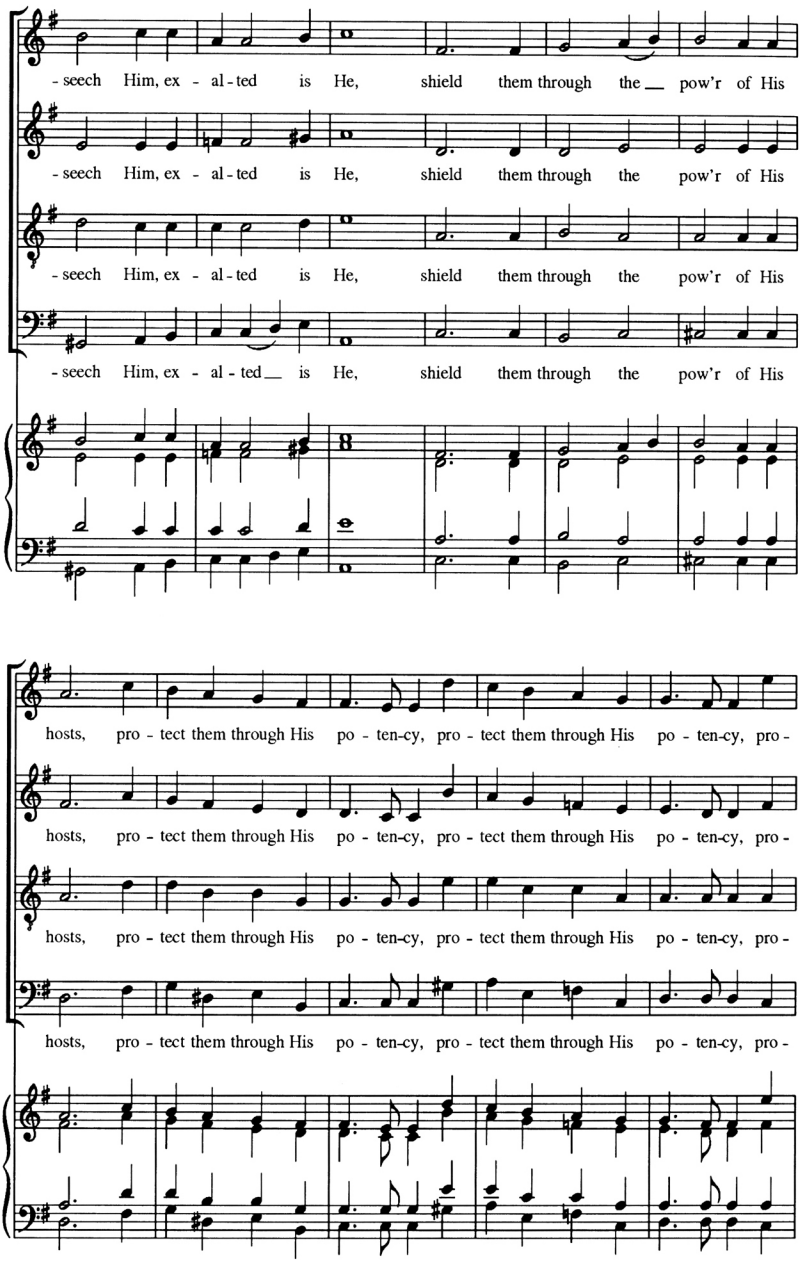
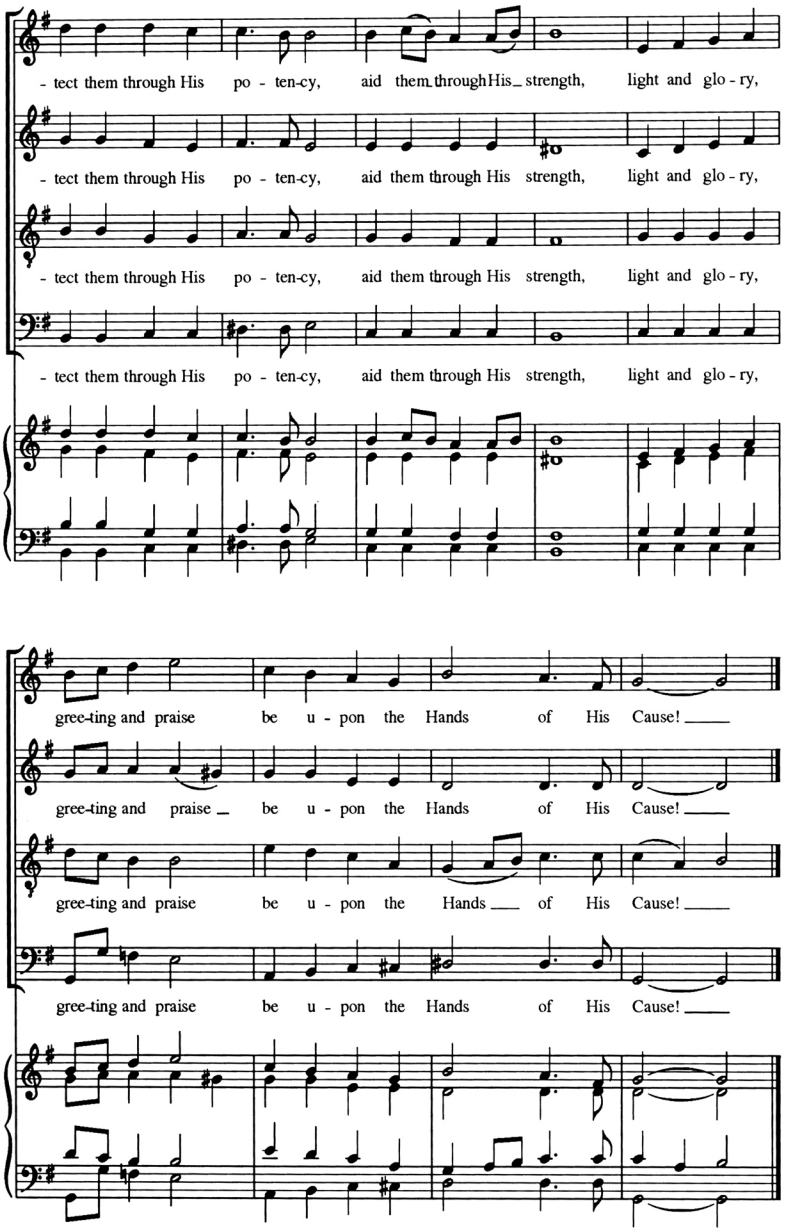

be u - pon the Hands of His Cause, through whom the light of for - ti-tude, through
be u - pon the Hands of His Cause, through whom the light of for - ti-tude, through
be u - pon the Hands of His Cause, through whom the light of for - ti-tude, through
be u - pon the Hands of His Cause, through whom the light of for - ti-tude, through
whom the light of for - ti-tude, through whom the light of for - ti-tude
whom the light of for - ti-tude, through whom the light of for - ti-tude
whom the light of for - ti-tude, through whom the light of for - ti-tude
whom the light of for - ti-tude, through whom the light of for - ti-tude


hath ___ shone forth_ and the truth hath been e - stab-lished that au - tho - ri - ty to
hath shone forth and the truth hath been e - stab-lished that au - tho - ri - ty to
hath ___ shone forth and the truth hath been e - stab-lished that au - tho - ri - ty to
hath shone forth and the truth hath been e - stab-lished that au - tho - ri - ty to
choose rests with God, with God, ___ the Pow - er - ful, the Migh-ty, the
choose rests with God, with God, ___ the Pow - er - ful, the Migh-ty, the
choose rests with God, ___ with God, ___ the Pow - er - ful, the Migh-ty, the
choose rests with God, with God, ___ the Pow - er - ful, the Migh-ty, the

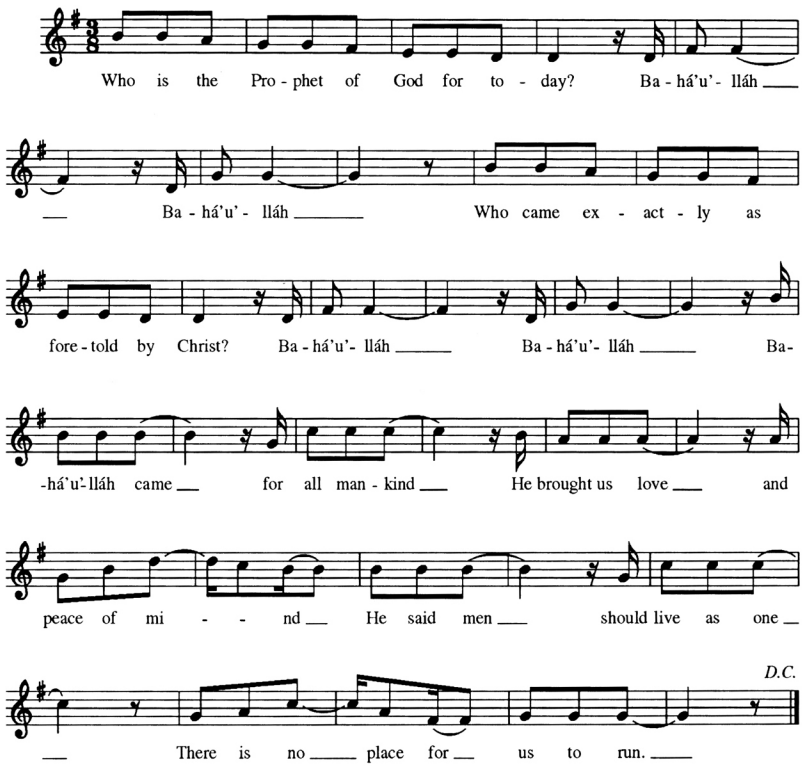

Un - con - strained! We be - seech Him, ex - al - ted is He,
Un - con - strained! We be - seech Him, ex - al - ted is He,
Un - con - strained! We be - seech Him, ex - al - ted is He,
Un - con - strained! We be - seech Him, ex - al - ted is He,
shield them through the pow'r of His hosts, we be -
shield them through the pow'r of His hosts, we be -
shield them through the pow-er of His hosts, we be -
shield them through the pow'r of His hosts, we be -


-seech Him, ex - al - ted is He, shield them through the pow'r of His
-seech Him, ex - al - ted is He, shield them through the pow'r of His
-seech Him, ex - al - ted is He, shield them through the pow'r of His
-seech Him, ex - al - ted is He, shield them through the pow'r of His
hosts, pro - tect them through His po - ten-cy, pro - tect them through His po - ten-cy, pro -
hosts, pro - tect them through His po - ten-cy, pro - tect them through His po - ten-cy, pro -
hosts, pro - tect them through His po - ten-cy, pro - tect them through His po - ten-cy, pro -
hosts, pro - tect them through His po - ten-cy, pro - tect them through His po - ten-cy, pro -


- tect them through His po - ten-cy, aid them through His strength, light and glo - ry,
- tect them through His po - ten-cy, aid them through His strength, light and glo - ry,
- tect them through His po - ten-cy, aid them through His strength, light and glo - ry,
- tect them through His po - ten-cy, aid them through His strength, light and glo - ry,
gree-ting and praise be u - pon the Hands of His Cause!
gree-ting and praise be u - pon the Hands of His Cause!
gree-ting and praise be u - pon the Hands of His Cause!
gree-ting and praise be u - pon the Hands of His Cause!

WHO IS THE PROPHET?

Saul Accouche



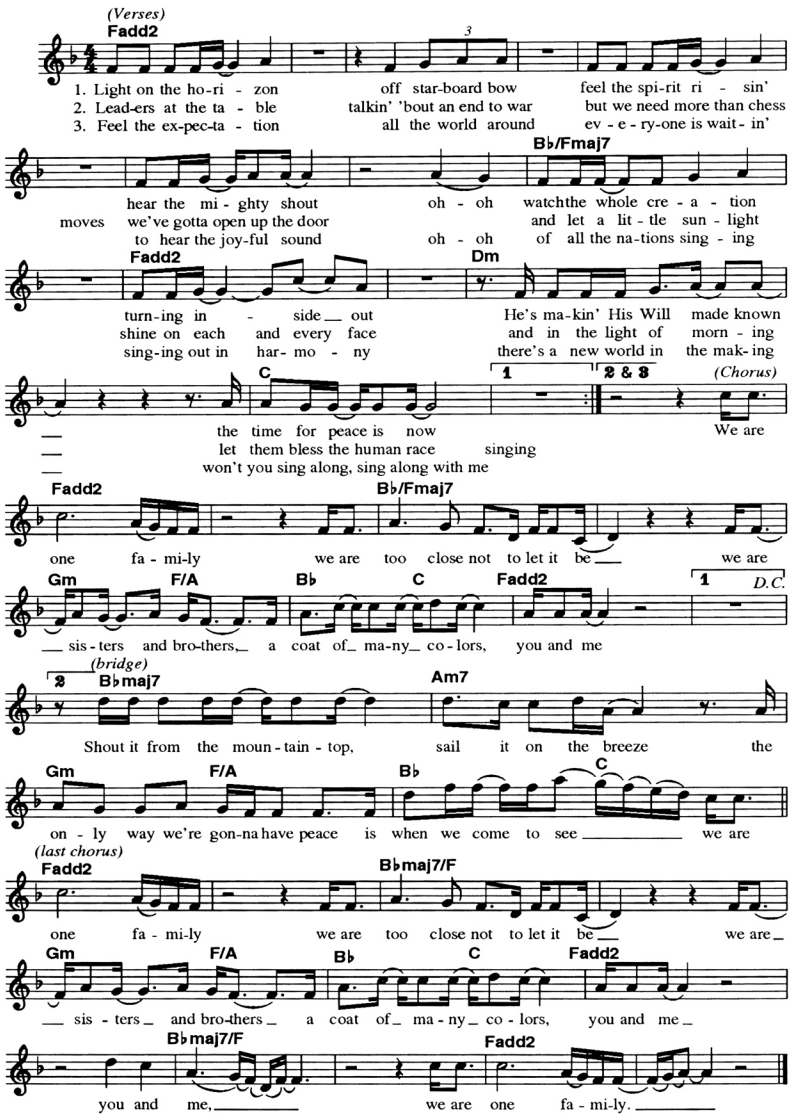
Verse 1. Who is the Prophet of God for today - Bahá'u'lláh, Bahá'u'lláh.
Who came exactly as foretold by Christ - Bahá'u'lláh, Bahá'u'lláh.

Chorus Bahá'u'lláh came for all mankind
He brought us love and peace of mind
He said men should live as one
There is no place for us to run.

Verse 2. Who brought this message of love to mankind - Bahá'u'lláh, Bahá'u'lláh.
Who said that justice was best in His sight - Bahá'u'lláh, Bahá'u'lláh.

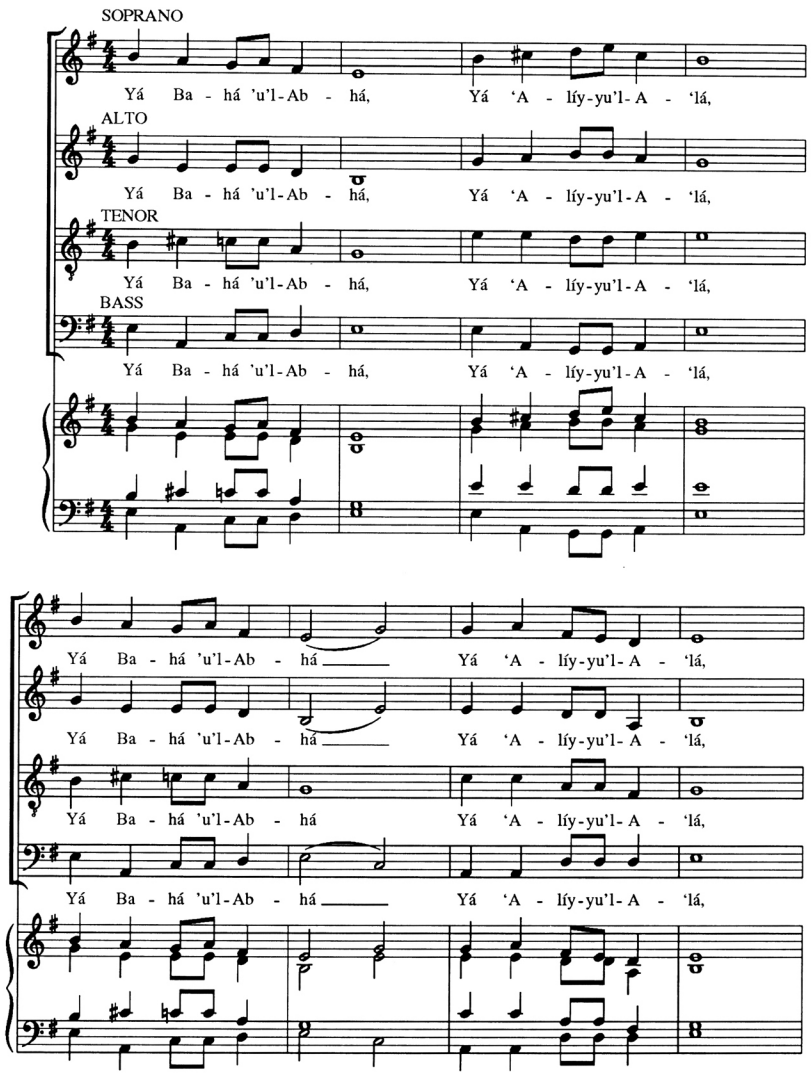
ONE FAMILY

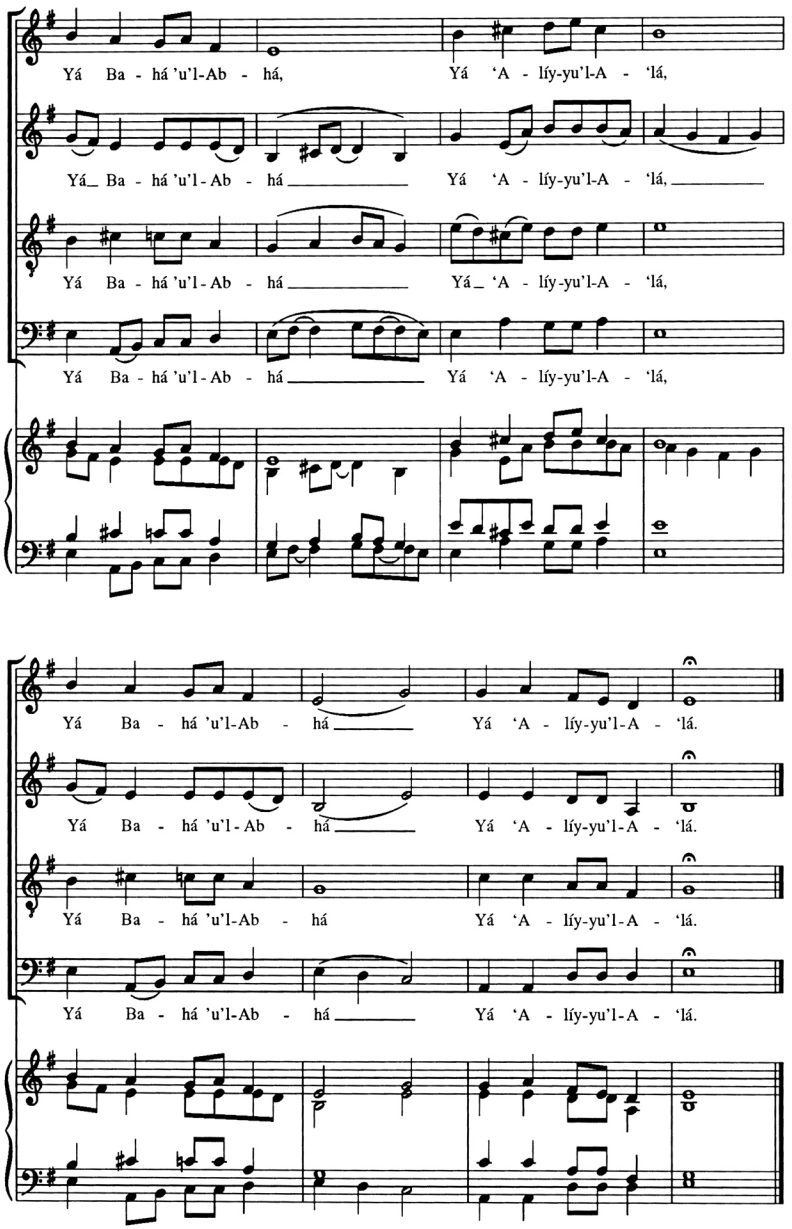
Red Grammer



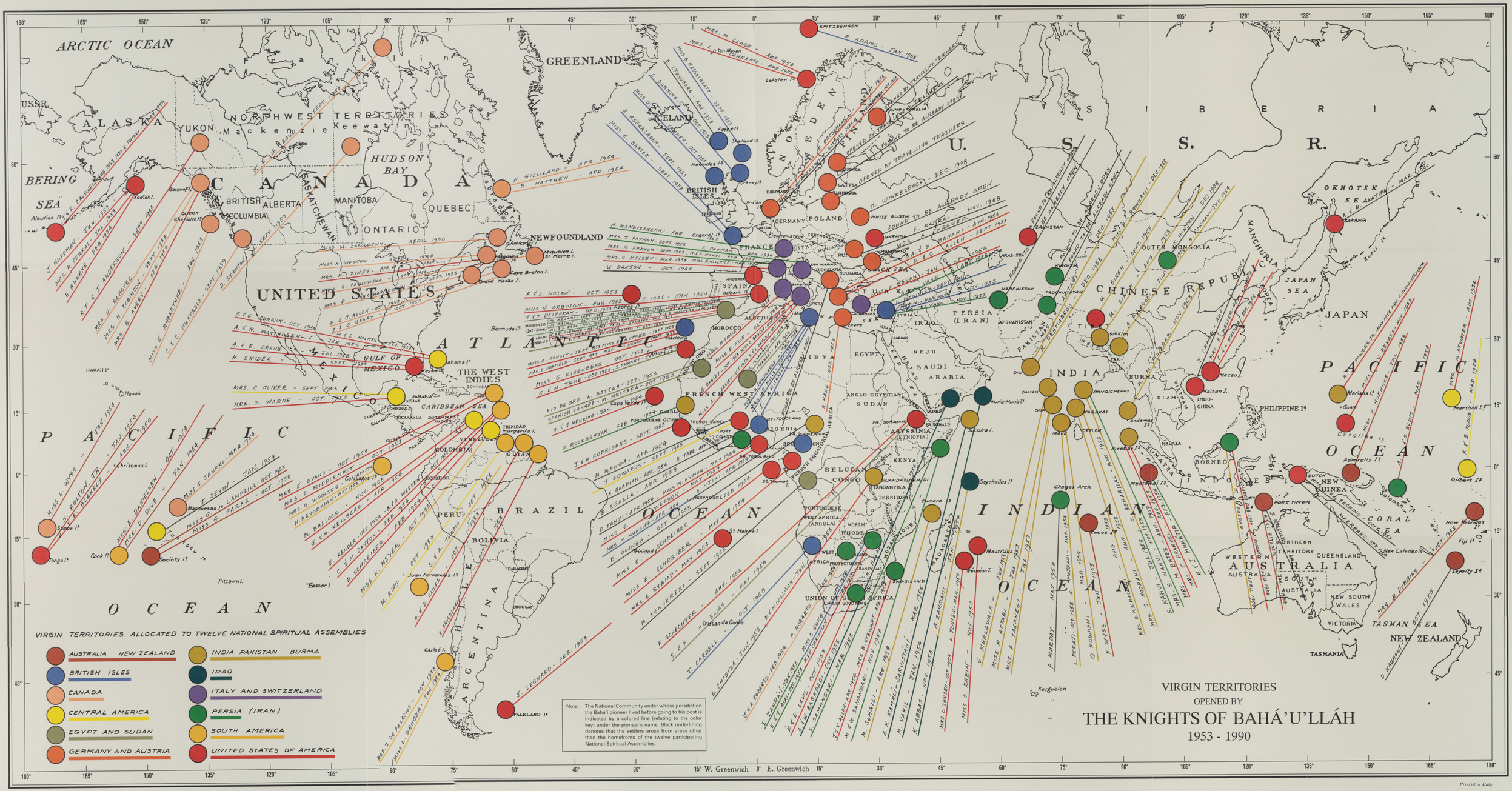
YÁ BAHÁ'U'L-ABHÁ

Music by Hooper Dunbar
Arranged by Tom Price




Yá Ba - há 'u'l-Ab - há, Yá 'A - líy-yu'l-A - 'lá,
Yá Ba - há 'u'l-Ab - há Yá 'A - líy-yu'l-A - 'lá,
Yá Ba - há 'u'l-Ab - há Yá 'A - líy-yu'l-A - 'lá,
Yá Ba - há 'u'l-Ab - há Yá 'A - líy-yu'l-A - 'lá,
Yá Ba - há 'u'l-Ab - há Yá 'A - líy-yu'l-A - 'lá.
Yá Ba - há 'u'l-Ab - há Yá 'A - líy-yu'l-A - 'lá.
Yá Ba - há 'u'l-Ab - há Yá 'A - líy-yu'l-A - 'lá.
Yá Ba - há 'u'l-Ab - há Yá 'A - líy-yu'l-A - 'lá.


Roll of Honour
Bahá'í World Crusade
1953 1963
Violet Brehme
m. 1931
Abiminda Je
Abdolhossein Bushrooeh-din
Bahiyyih Khánum
Ali-Akbar Furútan
Dar Je
Found to be already open
Kirgizia
Sophie Macfarlane
m. 1931
Queen Charlotte Je
Found to be already open
Albania
Robert Oliver Wolff
c. 1951
Dutch Guiana
Munir Fakih
c. 1954
Maria Maria Je
Leland
Opal Jensen
m. 31 c. 1933
Reunion J
Jessie Mae Gilliard
m. 1934
Mildred Mosley
m. 1954
Alaskan Je
Ely Becking
c. 1938
Lex Meerburg
Dutch Guiana
Bruce Matthew
c. 1938
Bernard Gilliland
c. 1951
Labrador
Elizabeth Bevan
c. 1951
Rhodes
B. Foshar
m. 1951
Andaman Je
Matthew Pollock
m. 1951
John Marjorie Kelleher
c. 1954
Dutch West Indies
Found to be already open
Latvia
Amin Battah
c. 1953
Rio de Oro
William Jansen
c. 1953
Andorra
Opened by travelling teachers
Estonia
Hispanic Bishop Mercedes
Bond Shirley
Poole Reader
Charles Mary Barlow
Leeward Je
Rev. Mary Collison
m. 1951
Brandon Christa
m. 1957
Kanada Grand
Clifford Catherwood
m. 1951
Gulf Islands
Mary Lakselaya
Ashcroft
John Leonard
m. 1954
Falkland Je
Amir
Diamond Manuscher
m. 1953
Liechtenstein
Feredun Khayrati
m. 1968
Rumania
Benedict Obalia
m. 1951
Antonia Protectorate
Eskil Lyngberg
m. 1953
Faroe Je
Opened by travelling teachers
Lithuania
Abdur-Rezzaq Bolton
m. 1951
Sakhalin J
Richard Lee Rolen
c. 1951
Ayres
Opened by travelling teachers
Finno-Karelia
Milton Clarke
m. 1951
Lepers Lawrence
m. 1953
Leicester Je
Lilian Wyse
c. 1951
Samoa Je
Gerard Vivian Caldwell
m. 1951
Andorra Anna Matthieu
Andorra Ethel Palmer
Pitcairn Je
John Mathew Bond
m. 1953
Franklin
Daniel Baumont
c. 1953
Loyalty Je
Schrade
Tchandeli Bowman
m. 1953
San Marino
Virginia Orbeen
m. 1951
Charles Jean
Jean Tony Delaroy
Palestine Je
Roman Rishi
m. 1951
Mekonyan Marcelle
m. 1953
Fr. Cameroons
Florence Bellet
Cont. Loretta Scherer
m. 1953
Macau J
Marie Cocco
m. 1953
Sardinia
Emil Asrop
m. 1951
Helen Robinson
m. 1951
Grace Babcock
Barnard J
Max Rengercy
m. 1953
Fr. Equatorial Africa
Shah Bahram
Elizabeth Bopper
Sara Alvarez
Ella Bosfield
Maritime
Ruhiyyih Abbas
Abdul Rahman
m. 1951
Seychelles
Frederick
Elizabeth Laws
c. 1953
Basutoland
Orchard Freudlach
c. 1953
Fr. Guiana
Kathleen Wates
m. 1951
Bay Linsky
m. 1953
Magdalen Je
Brigitte Hasselblatt
m. 1953
Shetland Je
John
Andrew Roberts
Patrick Kennedy
Rechimaland
Fred Schechter
Sabri Lehmah Glas
Fr. Somaliland
Lionel Bergi
Abdul Allah Rembum
Abdurahim Mirjam
Malay
Emma Rice
m. 1951
Stanley Florence
Carl Gerrit Johan Sophie
Shetland
Shipper Rainbow
Ardeshir Farzodi
m. 1954
Bhutan
David Tamm
Maire Ramon
Vivian Wexton
Fr. England
Ana Tomashow
Olga Mills
John Mitchell
Malta
Abu Florence Dingle
m. 1953
Sikkim
Enoch Olinga
c. 1953
Br. Cameroons
Habib Estakhari
Habib Estakhari
Fr. West Africa
Ruth Meyer
c. 1953
Margarita
Jr.
Gretta Lampritt
Glad Parker
Hecetji Je
Malcolm King
m. 1953
Br. Guiana
Clea Huysmans
Geertrui Aldersmit
Ursula van Brom
Fresnia Je
Robert Powers
Cynthia Olson
m. 1951
Marianna Je
Freya Joy Hitchcock-Bernstein
m. 1953
Hooten
Cora Oliver
Shirley Warde
Br. Honduras
Gayle Woolston
Basil Kenderdine
Galapagos
Jr.
Gretta Jenkins
m. 1951
Marquesas
Je
Alvin
Gertrude Blom
m. 1951
Solomon Je
Edmund Cabe
Albert Boapiah
Br. England
Ferdory Herzebrynan
m. 1954
Gambia
Marcia Ahnatee
m. 1954
Marshall Je
Peter Gary
Zephaniah Zahra
Kenneth Roberta Christian
Rosalie Robert Alan
Southern Children
John Fox Dave
Darryl Clark
Jr.
Charles Duncan
Bruce
L. Roy Glenn
Fernie
Gilbert Ellice Is
Ottilie Rhein
m. 1953
Amuricus
Leo Cardell
m. 53
South West Africa
Bernard Lambert
George Margaret Ann
Shanks Roberta
Lindsay Je
Rashan Afnan
Fereydun Ayanoglu
m. 1953
Goa
Rahmat
C. Jean Mayer
m. 1954
Mentawai
Jr.
Elsie Schreiber
m. 1951
Spanish Guinea
Frederick Jean Alice
Young Neville Gwen
m. 1951
Cape Verde J
Dory
Richardson
m. 1951
Cornwall Mainland
Ola Paulsen
m. 1953
Marquesas J.
J. St Pierre
Paula Cromwell
Lucille Dymond
John Lesley Fleming
Agar Stevenson
Dominik Mercer
Desmond
Jeanne Menking
m. 1954
Cape Verde Je
Anne Sheila Bonner
Dwight Fowler Allen
m. 1953
Greece
Tanemaria Kruger
m. 1953
Moldavia
Muhanad
Mustafa Suliman
m. 1953
Spanish Sahara
Virginia Breault
m. 1951
Caroline Je
Rose
Wilhelm Bagshaw
Hanson Malabi
Kaldermund
Katie French
Dymond Gladys Bennett
Florence Allen
Florence Ulrich
Monaco
Elsie Schreiber
m. 1951
St Thomas J
Puna Murday
m. 1951
Chagos Archipelago
Jr.
John Z. Y. Chang
m. 1951
Romania J
Dean Johnson
m. 1949
Mongolia
Elizabeth Stamp
m. 1951
St Helena
Cornelius Augustus
Evelyn Baxter
m. 1953
Channel Je
Geraldine Cromey
c. 1953
Hebrides Je
Paul Adams
m. 1951
Smithbergen
Louise Gregor
Lumsden De Palacios
m. 1951
Enlos J
Mabel Brockington
Gabriel Symmonders
Shoemaker
Bertha Dobbins
c. 1951
New Hebrides
Jr.
Paula Stewart
John Valera Allen
m. 1951
Swaziland
Frank Hyss
m. 1951
Cocos J
Salvadore
Adela Serena
c. 1951
Fernandez Je
Margaret Bates
Jeanne Frankel
Nicobar Je
Found to be already open
Tadzhikstan
Mehrabon Soltanie
m. 1954
Comoro Is
Sakan Rezwani
Ghiem Feerani
m. 1953
Rarotai
Julius Connell
Martin Manga
m. 1953
Northern Territories
Nasi Narain Singh
m. 1951
Tibet
Valerie Vose
Edith Bonnoleson
m. 1953
Cook Is
Found to be already open
Kazakhstan
Charles Dunning
c. 1953
Orkney Je
Mosley Potter Jr.
Dudley Ruth Pinkney
m. 1951
Tonga Je
Rolf Haug
m. 1953
Crete
Dick Stanton
m. 1953
Kecmanin
Greedy
Shankhat Rashan
Ghiem Khan Lai
m. 1951
Pondeberry
Jean Hewin
c. 1951
Tasmania Archipelago
Robert M. Finlay
Violet M. Finlay
Cyprus
Arthur Ethel Cottam
Hinder
Key West
Jose
Hilda Rodrigues
m. 1951
Port Guinea
Found to be already open
Ukraine
Ghulam
Ali Ayarlamala
m. 1953
Daman
Jack Huffine
Rose Pitchal
Bernice Fischer
Kodiak J
Dandy
Florence Fitzpes
Jose Marques
Port Timor
Found to be already open
Uzbekistan
Helmut Windschuh
1953
White Russia
Esther Evans
Lilian Middlemas
1953
Windward Je
Raymond
Joan Anderson
m. 1951
Bahrein


VIRGIN TERRITORIES
OPENED BY
THE KNIGHTS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
1953 - 1990
VIRGIN TERRITORIES ALLOCATED TO TWELVE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND
BRITISH ISLES
CANADA
CENTRAL AMERICA
EGYPT AND SUDAN
GERMANY AND AUSTRIA
INDIA PAKISTAN BURMA
IRAQ
ITALY AND SWITZERLAND
PERSIA (IRAN)
SOUTH AMERICA
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Note: The National Community under whose jurisdiction the Bahá'i pioneer lived before going to his post is indicated by a colored line (relating to the color key) under the pioneer's name. Black underlining denotes that the settlers arose from areas other than the homefronts of the twelve participating National Spiritual Assemblies.
ARCTIC OCEAN
BERING SEA
ALASKA
CANADA
UNITED STATES
ATLANTIC OCEAN
PACIFIC OCEAN
INDIAN OCEAN
GREENLAND
ICELAND
NEWFOUNDLAND
THE WEST INDIES
BRAZIL
ARGENTINA
CHINESE REPUBLIC
JAPAN
INDIA
AUSTRALIA
NEW ZEALAND
SIBERIA
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E. Greenwich
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