The green light expedition: part II
Universal House of Justice Message

Hands of Cause named as representatives to conferences

To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá’í Friends,

We joyfully announce that the following Hands of the Cause of God have been named as our representatives to the International Conferences:

Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum
Ugo Giachery
‘Alí Akbar Furútan
Paul Haney
Enoch Olinga
William Sears
Collis Featherstone
Abu’l-Qásim Faízí

Paris, France
Helsinki, Finland
Hong Kong
Mérida, Mexico
Bahia, Brazil
Nairobi, Kenya
Anchorage, Alaska
Auckland, New Zealand

August 3-6, 1976
July 6-8, 1976
November 5-8, 1976
February 4-6, 1977
January 28-30, 1977
October 15-17, 1976
July 23-25, 1976
January 19-22, 1977

With loving Bahá’í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice

May 27, 1975
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International Bahá'í Community, Australia, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica,
Dahomey, Dominican Republic, France, Hawaii, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea,
United States

Cover photo: Ruhiyyih Khánum in a touching moment with one of the young Bahá'ís of Kamaloea.
The green light expedition

On March 23, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum bade farewell to the Venezuelan friends gathered at the Caracas airport. Many of those present had helped with innumerable arrangements for the expedition's trip on the Orinoco River and were thus joyfully sharing in its successful conclusion. Both smiles and tears could be seen on the radiant faces as the friends waved good-bye.

The flight of about 900 miles southeast from Caracas brought Rúhíyyih Khánum and her companions, Counsellor Mas'úd Khamsí, Dr. Nosrat Rabbani and the four filmmakers, to Surinam, the next stop of their itinerary.

Until recently Surinam and its neighbors, Guyana and French Guiana, were the last European colonies in South America. To some extent each country reflects the language and characteristics of its European mother country: Holland, England or France. Surinam is small by comparison to its South American neighbors. Its land mass of 162,000 square kilometers is just a bit larger than the state of Florida, yet it is five times the size of Holland, from which, at the end of 1975, Surinam will achieve, quietly and peacefully, its full independence.

It was the British who first settled on the Surinam coast in 1650 and started a small settlement where the capital city of Paramaribo now stands. A number of skirmishes ensued between British and Dutch forces culminating in the Treaty of Breda in 1667, under the terms of which the British agreed to let the Netherlands have the area that is now Surinam in exchange for what was considered the less valuable Dutch colony of New Amsterdam, later to be named New York City.

Next year Surinam will join the community of nations with a polyglot population of 400,000, composed mainly of Creoles (of mixed but predominantly African descent) and Hindustani (of predominantly East Indian extraction), plus Indonesians, Chinese, Amerindians, Europeans, and the Bush Negro. The latter represents 10% of the population and lives along the rivers in the hinterland.
Among those elected to the first Spiritual Assembly on the Surinam River was one of the women. "Amatu'l-Bahá and the captain of Redi Doti in his store.

A beautifully kept private home in Redi Doti; the sleeping room is in the other half of the hut.

During the first two days of our stay in Surinam, while arrangements were being made to travel inland, Ruḥíyyih Khánum was able to meet the Paramaribo Bahá'í community. The Surinam friends were overjoyed — this was the third time she had been to the Guianas and many recalled that she had interrupted her African safari to be present, as the representative of The Universal House of Justice, at the formation of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Guianas in 1971.

Among the Bahá'ís visiting with Amatu'l-Bahá in the capital city were pioneers who had come from their posts in French Guiana — a family who had pioneered in Dahomey, Africa, and a young man from Canada. It was a happy moment for Ruḥíyyih Khánum to see this family which she had met while traveling in Africa. She was pleased to recall the beloved Guardian's hope that Africa would one day send pioneers, self-sacrificing and radiant souls, to teach the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh to the peoples in the Western Hemisphere. She spoke of the urgent need for pioneers, not only from abroad but also from among the city Bahá'ís, to go out and live in the smaller communities and teach the Faith to the people in villages, who constitute two-thirds of the world's population. She directed these words primarily to the youth, and encouraged them to make teaching trips into the interior and to consider their future plans with this urgent goal in mind.

Ruḥíyyih Khánum had previously arranged for Auxiliary Board member Jamshid Arjomandi to make the plans for our trip into the Surinam interior. We learned that fortunately he would also be able to join the expedition as our guide and interpreter. Some years ago he had come to Surinam as a pioneer and married a local girl of Indonesian background. As a government geologist he grew to know the jungles and river routes very well; he also speaks fluent Surinam Tongo or Taktaki, the lingua franca in the region inhabited by the Bush Negro.

There are many Bahá'í communities among the Bush Negro villages of
Getting ready to embark for Kamaloa village from Boto Passi.

Surinam, but it was decided we should visit Redi Doti first. This village of the Aukaner tribe, is considered pagan by the other tribes as the people have not been converted by any church. As yet, we had no Bahá'ís in Redi Doti.

Rúhíyyih Khánum and the other members of the expedition set out for this village early on March 28. After traveling overland all morning we reached Afobaka Dam (a hydroelectric installation on a large man-made lake) and there transferred our gear to two large dugout canoes, powered by outboard motors. The trip along the lake and up the small Sarakreek River took four uncomfortable but interesting hours. Along the way we got caught in a heavy rain squall during which we huddled together under our plastic sheets. Shortly thereafter, the motor on the second canoe broke down. We paddled along until the lead canoe returned to tow us to our destination. Upon our arrival at Redi Doti, the captain of the village gave us the local guest house where we lived for three days. At night we slept in hammocks inside
heavy mosquito nets. It was a strong, well-ventilated wooden hut. The walls opened halfway up on three sides, the dirt floor was kept impeccably clean. Outside were large oil drums filled with rainwater that drained from the roof, which we used for drinking and washing. As to toilet facilities, the jungle was at our disposal: women to the left and men to the right. Although it was the rainy season we observed that at twilight the villagers would go their separate ways to bathe in the river; after a day of much activity we were glad to do the same.

The Bush Negro huts were kept as clean and spotless as their pots, pans, and cutlery, which were carefully arranged along the walls. It was easy to see they are a house-proud people—some of the huts looked almost like the interiors of shops although they were only very small private homes. After visiting similar villages, Ruḥiyyih Khánum stated that as regards personal hygiene and tidy homes the Bush Negroes were the cleanest villagers she had ever met and a lot cleaner than most city people.

Village life began at dawn: the men went to work in their fields of cassava and plantains while the women and children were busy in the village. In the early morning we noted that at one of the village shrines a number of the villagers could be seen, some kneeling, some chanting, in an attitude of prayer.

We were visited by the village captain and his sub-chiefs, or bashas. They sat in a semi-circle around Ruḥiyyih Khánum, who as the honored guest was placed at the head of the room according to strict, age-old protocol. She told the captain of the purpose of our visit and asked his permission to film some village scenes. He readily consented. She told them about some of her experiences in Africa during her 36,000-mile trip through that continent and suggested that one day the Bush Negroes might be able to find out from what part of Africa they had come. It pleased them to know that when completed, the film would be shown to the Baha’is in Africa. They listened attentively while she explained that the younger generation should learn the culture and tribal traditions from the older people; otherwise they would become as a tree without roots.

It rained intermittently during our stay, but the film crew (trying unsuccessfully to be as inconspicuous as possible), was able to get some good scenes of village life. At one point a member of the crew played his flute to entertain a group of children. A villager who had been listening left and returned shortly with a large brand-new Japanese tape recorder and asked if he could make a recording of the music.

On the afternoon of March 30, Ruḥiyyih Khánum and some of the members of the expedition traveled upriver to visit another Aukaner village, called Baku. They were greeted by the captain’s wife and invited into their house where Amatu’l-Bahá spoke to a number of the village elders. Two of the bashas were women and Ruḥiyyih Khánum told them of the importance of women in the Baha’í Dispensation, and how happy she was to see women holding such positions in village life. This pleased the women very much. She also said that the Baha’í Faith is a religion of reason, that whereas other religions often taught respect of God through fear of hell, Baha’u’lláh taught the knowledge of God and love of Him. One of the chiefs got up and said that although he knew little of the outside world he believed all that he had heard was the truth. Bringing the palms of his hands together, he said, “Before your visit my mind was closed, but now (he opened his arms wide) my mind and my heart are open.” Then turning to the others, he said, “Listen well to this lady. You have never heard truer words spoken and you may never hear such words again, so listen well.”

The importance of setting a Baha’í example with our daily activities was never more evident than when living in close
Rúhíyyih Khánum explains the Bahá'í teachings to the captain and bashas of Boto Passi.

Tellers reading the ballots for the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Kamaloea.
proximity to village people where we were always being observed. We returned to Paramaribo the following day after saying farewell to the captain of Redi Doti. He thanked Rūhiyyih Khánum for the very handsome shirt she had given him and said that the Bahá'ís would always be welcome in his village.

The following 12 days were to be busy ones. It was decided that we should visit an area on the Surinam River where Bahá'ís of the Saramaccaner tribe lived. It was an area which no other Bahá'ís had visited. By chartered plane, Rūhiyyih Khánum and the crew, equipment and foodstuffs kept to a minimum, flew to a jungle airstrip on the Surinam River 190 kilometers from Paramaribo. We landed at the village of Boto Passi (“the boat passes”) where the villagers were expecting us. Using a variation of the African custom of sending messages by drum, we had broadcast a message over the government radio station informing Viome, a Bahá’í living somewhere in the area, of our arrival. Our destination was the village of Kamaloea, a few miles upriver from Boto Passi. With the kind and friendly assistance of the villagers, who helped carry all our things from the airstrip to the river and rented us two canoes, we were able before dark to reach the village where the Bahá'ís lived. The friends working on their plantations had not heard the broadcast and were unaware that we had arrived. The other villagers invited us to stay and gave Rūhiyyih Khánum and Dr. Rabbani the thatched-roof guest hut while allotting three others to the remainder of the expedition members. The young daughter of Viome (the first Bahá’í Bush Negro to represent his people as a delegate at a national convention) ran into the jungle to call her father and the other Bahá’ís. It was night when they arrived. Greeting Rūhiyyih Khánum, they spoke of the great honor her visit brought them. “We have told others about Bahá’ú’lláh, but because they never met any Bahá’ís, they wouldn’t believe. Now that you are here they will believe!”

In the following days Rūhiyyih Khánum visited and spoke to the headmen and people of three villages—Boto Passi, Kamaloea (where we stayed) and Lafanti. Following the same distinctive protocol, they listened as she explained that “… more than 100 years ago Bahá’ú’lláh spoke beautiful words that went out into the world as do the fragrance of flowers. The power of His Words have begun to change… Their homes were kept clean and spotless—it was easy to see they are a house-proud people.
mankind, but like the sweet perfume on the breeze, the scent is there but one cannot see from whence it comes. Happy is the man who learns of Bahá'u'lláh and His Teachings, because not only will he inhale the fragrance of world change, he will also recognize its Source and become aware of God's Plan for mankind for today.

She also taught using a variety of visual aids. At one gathering she took a sheet of paper which she folded and then tore into different shapes. She said that mankind today has already accepted some of Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings. Picking up the assorted pieces of paper one at a time, she named a few: "The need to abolish all prejudices, the equality of rights for men and women, the need for an international language, the necessity of education for all peoples, the need for unity in the world, an international tribunal. But as single ideas, often promoted by people who know nothing about the Bahá'í Faith," (she dropped the slips of paper to the ground), "they just float about." Then, gathering and joining together the different pieces of the paper puzzle, she said, "Only the Bahá'ís have all Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings," (pointing to the reunited sheet of paper) "and a Divine Plan for the unification of mankind."

We returned to Boto Passi to buy gasoline and Rúhíyyih Khánum met with the captain and his sub-chiefs; they were curious to know the purpose of her visit for by this time we were not seen as ordinary tourists. To them she spoke of Christ's promised return, for the villagers of Boto Passi (the largest of the villages visited so far) was thoroughly evangelized by a Protestant (Moravian Brotherhood) group. The captain was pleased and begged Rúhíyyih Khánum to spend at least one day at his village. Time was short but he was assured that we would spend one night with them on our way downriver.

In the "pagan" village of Lafanti six villagers asked to be accepted as believers; they said they would try to be Bahá'ís but they hoped others would return soon to help them learn more about the Teachings. With the enrollment of new believers in Kamaloea the first Spiritual Assembly was elected forthwith. This greatly pleased all of us, especially the enthusiastic small group of local Bahá'ís which included the aged and much respected captain of the village. On the evening of April 4, by the light of two lanterns, in the presence of Amatu'l-Bahá and with the guidance and assistance of Counsellor Khamsí and Auxiliary Board member Arjomandí, the 10 believers of Kamaloea village elected their first Spiritual Assembly. This was the first one to be elected on the Surinam River and the newly-enrolled captain was one of the first to cast his ballot. It was a moving experience to see the Bahá'ís voting one by one, those who could not write whispering their vote to the Board member who would, in turn, write their ballot for them; the tellers' heads all gathered around counting the votes with Mr. Khamsí. Among those elected was one of the Bahá'í women.

After the election formalities Rúhíyyih Khánum presented the captain with a gift. All the villagers showed their pleasure at this with much clapping and laughter. She later explained that like other villagers in Africa, any gesture or distinction shown to one, pleased all as a group, especially if it was to one in authority.

The Bush Negroes are all good woodsmen but the Saramaccaner tribe is known for its excellent woodcarving. Originally the intricate bas-relief designs were a means of communication which they preserve today as decorations on the exterior.
To them she spoke of Christ’s promised return, for the villagers had been evangelized by the Moravian Brotherhood.

They were very happy. In another, the village was all but deserted except for a Bahá’í youth who was overjoyed at meeting Rúhíyyih Khánum.

One of the rapids was quite rough and the canoe got stuck on a rock. Some of our crew tried to jump overboard to push but were forcefully stopped by the Bush Negro friends. “Your white skins will only attract the piranha,” they said as they pushed the canoe free.

Finally we arrived at Mamadam, a most desolate spot on the edge of the man-made Afobaka Lake, the official name of which is “Professor Doctor Engineer Van Blumenstein Lake.” Here we spent two days waiting for a large government boat to ferry us across the lake. That night all twelve of us thoroughly enjoyed a dried piranha and plantain soup which Viome and the other friends prepared. Rúhíyyih Khánum said she thought it was delicious, which greatly pleased our friends.

Our only shelter at Mamadam was a long wooden hut, built by the government to house the Bush Negro villagers who travel to town. We were soon joined by about 30 other guests with whom we shared cooking and hammock space. Never before had we looked forward to a rainstorm as we did during our stay at Mamadam, for rainwater was all we had for drinking and washing. To be assured of an adequate supply meant collecting every drop in any available container every time the downpour came.

While at Mamadam our friends lost no time in teaching, and by the second day they had enrolled a new believer. This meant that another village was opened to the Faith. Watching all the teaching activity, Rúhíyyih Khánum told us how happy the beloved Guardian had been with the first large number of enrollments of African believers—and the beginning of mass conversion. Before the four Bush Negro friends returned to their village, Rúhíyyih Khánum presented them with a Coleman pressure lamp as a gift to the Bahá’í
community of Kamaloea. The new believer, as a gesture of solidarity, also placed his hand on the gift as it was being presented.

During the trip, Rúhíyyih Khánum had commented on how much she appreciated the way the Bush Negro villagers dressed and their sense of modesty. Their choice of colors, even their relative state of undress, was not only becoming but suitable to the tropical conditions in which they lived.

April 9 found the expedition members scrambling into the government boat along with everyone else—there must have been over 100 passengers! Five hours later we reached Afobaka Dam whence we proceeded by car to Paramaribo.

The following day we sadly bade farewell to Dr. Rabbani, who was leaving the expedition to return to her pioneering post as government medical officer on the island of Curaçao. It had been a wonderful experience for all of us. But it was especially rewarding for Dr. Rabbani, who was the first Persian pioneer to come to Surinam where one of her medical posts had been with the Bush Negroes.

Before leaving Surinam for Brazil, Rúhíyyih Khánum was a guest at the Arjomandi’s home for a luncheon where she had the opportunity to meet a traveling teacher from Canada and a young couple who had just arrived as pioneers from the United States.

When the going had been very tough, or for some reason the film crew’s expectations were disappointed, these encouraging words of Amatúl-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum would keep us going: “If someone my age can do it, so can any one of you.”
Around the World

International Bahá’í Community

Bahá’í statements presented to delegates at major UN conferences

Bangkok:

Bahá’í communities of Malaysia, Laos, the Philippines and Thailand sent representatives to a regional conference of non-governmental organizations sponsored by the United Nations Office of Public Information, held in May in Bangkok, Thailand.

Participating were Counsellor Firaydun Mithaqiyan (Laos), Counsellor Vicente Samaniego (Philippines), Auxiliary Board member Shantha Sundram (Malaysia), and Chusiri Faridan (Thailand).

Bahá’ís made available pamphlets sent by the Bahá’í International Community, such as “The Environment and Human Values—A Bahá’í View,” “One World, One People,” “Cooperation of the Bahá’í International Community Against Drug Abuse,” and Bahá’í statements to the Food Conference, the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women.

Mrs. Sundram reported that many delegates expressed appreciation and further interest.

Caracas:

Carole Woodard, a Bahá’í from Venezuela, represented the Bahá’í International Community at a United Nations seminar on the “Integration of Women in Development with Special Reference to Population Factors.” The seminar was held in Caracas, Venezuela, April 28 to May 2.

Mrs. Woodard reported that she met with delegates informally to present the Bahá’í point of view and present copies of the Bahá’í International Community statement to the Commission on the Status of Women in 1974 on the importance of the education of women as the key to the development of humanity, as well as other general Bahá’í literature.

Nairobi:

The Bahá’í principles of the unity of mankind and the importance of education were stressed in a paper presented by Bonaventure Wafula, representative of the Bahá’í International Community with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) Secretariat in Nairobi.

The paper, prepared with the assistance of Tim Rost, was delivered at the annual meeting of the International Assembly of Non-Governmental Organizations Concerned with the Environment. The meeting was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in April.

The statement explained the specific application of the Bahá’í concept of the organic unity of mankind and the Bahá’í view of the importance of education in the establishment of a desirable environment for human beings. The statement was followed with great interest and unanimously approved for inclusion in the report of the working group to the plenary, being summarized as follows:

The Assembly therefore urges that UNEP Programs of Education and Information should include activities to achieve these changes, because human experience has a unity which encompasses spiritual and moral values as well as social and physical relationships.

Later, at a reception held by the Bahá’í community of Kenya on behalf of the Bahá’í International Community, a delegate from the Philippines remarked that the Bahá’í statement had had definite influence on the recommendation that went from the plenary session of the International Assembly of NGOs to the Governing Council of UNEP. The Bahá’í reception was attended by about 100 guests, including many delegates from the Governing Council and from the NGO Assembly. Counsellor Peter Vuyiya gave a talk on the Bahá’í view on the environment. This was followed by a showing of the film “And His Name Shall Be One.” Each guest was given a folder containing several pieces of Bahá’í literature, including the Bahá’í pamphlet on the environment and the Bahá’í statement, “Global Education and the Environment.”

Australia

Mr. Featherstone home for Convention

The Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone attended his first Australian National Bahá’í Convention in 11 years, held in his hometown of Adelaide, South Australia. Auxiliary Board member Peter Khan and his wife, Dr. Janet Khan, who were visiting from the United States, also attended the Convention and spoke at the national teaching conference which followed. In the photograph Mr. and Mrs. Featherstone can be seen standing in the center of the fourth row.
Every state represented at first youth institute

The Yerrinbool Bahá’í School, located in the bushland 100 kilometers south of Sydney, was the venue for Australia’s first National Bahá’í Youth Institute held May 10-17. More than 50 youth from every state in Australia attended the gathering which was organized by the Sydney Metropolitan Youth Coordinating Group.

The Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone and Mrs. Featherstone spent a few days at the institute and shared memories of their pilgrimage to the Holy Land and meetings with Shoghi Effendi. National Assembly member Beverly Stafford, Auxiliary Board member John Davidson, and Terry Spratt, chairman of the National Goals Committee, also lectured and led discussions.

The youth had plenty of time to enjoy singing, the performance of skits, and playing educational games. The most popular pastime, according to the National Youth Goals Committee, was a competition involving the recitation from memory of passages from the Arabic Hidden

Words. Mr. Davidson had issued a challenge to learn all the Arabic Hidden Words by heart, which was eagerly taken up by the youth. Later it was decided to formally challenge all Australian Bahá’í youth and to “assess the results at the January 1976 National Youth Conference in Brisbane.”

Bahamas

Diversity of Faith impresses church group

Recently the Bahá’í community of Nassau, Bahamas, discovered that roller skating can not only be fun, but also an excellent way of teaching the Faith. The community reserved the local roller skating rink for two hours one Sunday, for the exclusive use of the Bahá’ís and their friends. When the representatives of the Local Spiritual Assembly arrived, however, the manager told them that a church group had traveled 40 miles to use the rink for a skating party and had not been aware of the previous reservation made by the Bahá’ís. He asked if they would mind extending the time of the church group by an hour. The Assembly representatives said the group would be welcome.

“Soon the Bahá’ís and their friends began to arrive,” an observer reported. “Eyebrows were raised and whispers went the rounds. Bahá’ís and their friends kept arriving—young, old, black, white, business men, the niece of the mayor, farm and factory workers... Finally a man approached the Bahá’ís and said, ‘I am the pastor of this church and I am amazed at what I see among your group. How is it that you integrate the way you do? What is your group called?’

“When a new Bahá’í enters our Faith,’ the Bahá’ís replied, ‘he is like a newborn child who must be welcomed into the family; it never occurs to us to consider whether he is poor or rich, black, red, or white, if he has position or is lowly, literate or illiterate—we love him and rather than “integrate” him, we absorb him into our family through unity.’

“The pastor then said: ‘Well, this is the most amazing and wonderful thing that I have seen and my people are all talking about it!’ Later the Assembly decided to send the pastor a copy of Christ and Bahá’u’lláh.

“This incident happened in a community that just a year ago consisted of a handful of new and undeepened Bahá’ís. We
now have a functioning Assembly which observes all Feasts, the Fast, and Holy Days. We hold regular children's classes and a high percentage of the community contributes to the Fund,” the report concluded.

Hazíratu’l-Quds site of institute

The newly acquired Hazíratu’l-Quds was the site of the first teaching institute ever held for all of the Bahamas May 2. The institute was organized by the Teaching Committee of the Bahamas, a committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States. The purpose of the institute was to discuss ways of improving the quality of Bahá’í life in the Bahamas.

The institute was the first official function held in the Hazíratu’l-Quds purchased by the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly in January to complete a goal of the Five Year Plan. A National Spiritual Assembly will be elected in the Bahamas during the Plan.

The principal speaker at the institute was William Tucker, the Auxiliary Board member for the Bahamas. Dr. Tucker focused on the institutions of the Faith and their respective functions.

The Bahamas believers enthusiastically supported the institute. Of the 50 Bahá’ís attending, at least 37 were native-born Bahamians.

Bangladesh

Historic purchase of Temple site completed

The National Spiritual Assembly of Bangladesh sent the following cablegram which was received at the World Center on May 30: “Joyfully report conclusion historic purchase, registration Temple land Bangladesh May 29 marking completion one goal Five Year Plan . . .”

Canada

Bahá’ís represented at Quebec Book Fair

The Message of Bahá’u’lláh was proclaimed at the Fourth Quebec International Book Fair which attracted 130,000 visitors from May 21-25 at Laval University.

On the shelves of the Bahá’í stand, which was the responsibility of the Spiritual Assembly of Ste-Foy, one could find not only a good selection of French and English books but a few samples of foreign literature.

A continuous representation of the Faith was also made possible by the projection of slides depicting quotes from Bahá’í writings. During the Book Fair, teams of two or three persons rotated continuously, ensuring a permanent presence at the Bahá’í stand.

Many people, young and old, would stop to inquire about this “new religion”. Some bought books. Some had already heard of the Faith, but not necessarily in Quebec.

During the week following the fair, a woman teaching religion requested that the Bahá’í Faith be presented to four of her classes.

Colombia

Unity is stressed at Colombia meeting

During a tour of Latin American Bahá’í communities earlier this year the Hand of the Cause of God Adelbert Mühlschlegel attended a conference called by the Continental Board of Counsellors for South America. The meeting, held in Cali, Colombia, at the end of March, was called to provide a forum for consultation among the Counsellors and their Auxiliary Boards from Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Colombia.

Dr. Mühlschlegel opened the conference with a discussion of the accomplishments of the Five Year Plan. His comments focused upon the importance of developing the distinctive character of Bahá’í life and strengthening Local Assemblies.

He said that unity among the members of the Assemblies is essential and is the key to success and, if the choice must be made, unity is preferable to efficiency.

Counsellors Peter McLaren, Raúl Pavón, and Donald Witzel spoke about various aspects of the functioning of the Auxiliary Board. The role of the newly appointed assistants to the Auxiliary Boards was discussed amply and in depth.

It was concluded that the effective working
of these assistants "is vital to the development and growth of the Bahá’í community, and constitutes the most effective medium for knitting together all of the communities, as remote and distant as they might be."

During the last two days of the conference sessions were held at the Bahá’í institute in Puerto Tejada, located in the heart of a mass enrollment area. These sessions were open to the friends of Colombia.

Dahomey

First National Assembly elected; goals listed

The first National Spiritual Assembly of Dahomey was elected April 26 at the National Convention in Avrankou. Twenty-five delegates and many other friends assembled at the National Teaching Institute located in the lush green countryside surrounded by scarlet-flowering trees. Nearly every region of the country was represented at the Convention. One village, however, that had been nearly destroyed by a windstorm the previous Thursday, was unable to send its two delegates.

Shortly after the multilingual devotions that opened the first session on Saturday Auxiliary Board member Thelma Khelgati was introduced and it was announced that the neighboring community of Togo had elected its first National Assembly the previous weekend.

The Dahomey National Assembly reported that during consultation on the Five (Continued on page 16, col. 3)

Costa Rica

Children are enthusiastic in Costa Rica

This photograph of a children’s class in the Guanacaste province of northwestern Costa Rica was taken in May of this year during a teaching trip by a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Costa Rica. Thirty-eight of the 50 Local Spiritual Assemblies in Costa Rica are in Guanacaste, which was the center of mass enrollments some five years ago. Intensive consolidation efforts in the area are beginning to bear fruit in the increasing activities of Local Assemblies.

As is often the case, an enthusiastic response comes from the children, who frequently can be heard singing songs about the Faith as they play. Whenever a Bahá’í teacher arrives in a village, the children surround the car as soon as it stops, and call out “Llegaron los Bahá’ís!” (The Bahá’ís are here!)
Three women elected to Dominican Republic National Assembly

Delegates and visitors to the fifteenth National Bahá'í Convention held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, April 25-27. Seated in the second row (center) are Counsellor Carmen de Burafato and Auxiliary Board member Regino Pepín. It was reported that the election of three women to the National Assembly at this Convention was an indication of a greater participation by women in all aspects of the Faith in the Dominican Republic.

(Continued from page 15)

Year Plan goals for the coming year many goals were filled. Delegates from nine different villages offered local endowments of land; 11 villages chose extension teaching goals; and 17 villages promised to hold regular dawn prayers. Special gifts contributed to the National Fund included generous amounts of rice, bananas, and corn.

The believers elected to the first National Assembly were: Dénégan Chancouin, Alfred Houessou, Frédéric Hon­donou, Adrien Gnambodé, Samuel Zodehouungan, Cosme Kponton, Gerald Van Deusen, Peter Gottert and Leslie Gott­ert.

On Sunday morning following dawn prayers each National Assembly member and the Auxiliary Board member planted a young fruit tree in front of the institute. The orchard is intended to benefit the Bahá'í children in the area in the future.

Learning to be a brilliant light in Moca

Bahá'í classes for children are held weekly in Moca, Dominican Republic. The children learn through readings, games, and songs the tenets of the Faith. They are shown in the photograph with two of their teachers, Eladio Martínez Durán and Pedro de Jesús.
France

Members of new National Spiritual Assembly of France

The 18th National Convention of the Baha'is of France was held April 26-27 at the International Center in Paris, the site of the International Baha'i Conference to be held in August 1976. Auxiliary Board member John Paul Vader represented the Continental Board of Counsellors at the Convention. Auxiliary Board members M. Ezzat Zahrai and Paulette Bodansen Khalili also attended.

Children's institute is held near Paris

The quiet Parisian suburb of La Celle St. Cloud was the setting for the first French Baha'i institute for children held last weekend in March. Nine children, eight to thirteen years old, and seven adults participated.

Auxiliary Board member Ezzat Zahrai and Mrs. Zahrai opened their home for the three-day program during which the children studied and discussed such topics as "What is religion?" "The Family and Baha'i Life," "Baha'i Administration," and "The Messages of the Prophets to Humanity." They also discussed the recently created French children's magazine and made recommendations to its editors. Viewed a UNESCO slide program about children in Africa, Asia, and South America, and prepared a letter to the Universal House of Justice to report on their activities.

Hawaii

State House praises Baha'i TV programs

The House of Representatives of the State of Hawaii recently passed a resolution, No. 688, the purpose of which was described as "recognizing the Baha'i Faith's television programs produced in conjunction with Channel Four (KITV)."

The text of the resolution follows:

"Whereas, the Baha'is of the Hawaiian Islands, in conjunction with KITV, Channel 4, have produced a series of thirteen half-hour television shows on the Baha'i Faith; and

Whereas, these color programs will be televised around the globe, in numerous countries, territories, and islands; and

Whereas, these programs which feature the beauty of the islands and its diverse cultural and ethnic heritage, will bring Hawaii's unique spirit and beauty to the entire world; now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the Eighth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 1975, that congratulations be extended to the Hawaii Baha'is and KITV upon the completion of the television series and that best wishes be extended for their success; and

Be it further resolved that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the Hawaiian Islands and to the management of KITV."

A concurrent resolution, No. 123, was passed by the Senate.

Kenya

5,000 at show visit Baha'i booth

A team of Baha'i youth, at the request of the Spiritual Assembly of Kisumu, Kenya, erected an information booth at the annual Rachuonyo Agricultural Show which this year attracted an estimated 5,000 visitors. The youth had two successful days pro-

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claiming the Faith, answering questions, and establishing friendships with people from all walks of life and a variety of religious backgrounds. Thirty-one inquirers accepted the Faith.

Mexico

Hand of Cause Muhájjir visits Yucatán, Mérida

The Hand of the Cause Rahmatu’lláh Muhájjir stands with the members of the South American Continental Board of Counsellors outside the Hazíratu’l-Quds of Mexico. The Counsellors (from left to right) are Paul Lucas, Carmen de Burafato, Artemus Lamb, Alfred Osborne, and Rowland Estall.

In February of this year the Hand of the Cause Rahmatu’lláh Muhájjir journeyed north from South America to visit the believers in Mexico. Arriving in Yucatán in mid-February, he visited the friends in the northern part of the peninsula as well as at the Martha Root Institute in Mérida. Throughout the trip Dr. Muhájjir emphasized the importance of making each home an example of Bahá’í life.

In Mérida on the evening of February 20 he spoke to a very receptive audience including some 60 non-Bahá’ís at the Anthropological Museum. The meeting, which had been announced frequently on local radio stations and in newspapers, received unprecedented television coverage.

Throughout Dr. Muhájjir’s visit, whether in Yucatán or in Mexico City where he met with the Continental Board of Counsellors and the National Spiritual Assembly, he encouraged the friends to participate in preparations for the International Conference to be held in Mérida in February 1977. A plan inspired by the Hand of the Cause and developed by the National Assembly, intensified the goals for the intervening period. The plan received the approval of The Universal House of Justice and includes goals such as enrolling thousands of new believers, sending more traveling teachers, strengthening Assemblies along the northern border, and focusing greater attention on the 59 indigenous groups in Mexico.

The Amelia Collins Institute in central Mexico, built in 1968 and 1969 as a site for Bahá’í gatherings, and damaged by an earthquake in 1973, is now being repaired and enlarged by the National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico.

The Collins Institute, at which National Conventions and other national and international Bahá’í gatherings have been held, consists of several buildings: the central, two-story circular meeting hall, dormitories for men and women, a small house for the caretakers, and a building that serves as kitchen and dining hall.

During 1974 the structure of the meeting hall was reinforced and the earthquake damage repaired. The water system was overhauled, and some repair work was performed on other damaged structures at the institute. Currently, the second story of the circular meeting hall is being enlarged to serve as an auditorium. It will encompass an area of 293 square meters, which will make the structure extend beyond the circumference of the first story, and it will seat approximately 300 people. The designer of the expanded facility is Sano Berger, who is also supervising construction. However, work has slowed in recent months because of the increasing cost of construction materials.

Many of the Mexican friends have been so impressed by the Collins Institute that they have bought property in the area. Several Bahá’ís have even built homes in the area.

Several months ago Mark and David Caldwell, sons of Jenabe Caldwell, who was largely responsible for the construction of the Collins Institute, spent two months in Mexico assisting with the work of restoration and expansion.

Pakistan

Youth is keynoter at equality meeting

Under the direction of the National Spiritual Assembly of Pakistan the Bahá’í Youth Committee of Karachi sponsored a symposium on the equality between men and women in observance of International Women’s Year. Several leaders of thought participated in the discussion held in Bahá’í Hall, Karachi, last February. A Bahá’í youth gave the keynote address. The program also included songs with Bahá’í themes and a reading of poems by a well known Bahá’í poet.

Following the discussion, each of the guest panelists was presented with a copy of Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era, and each expressed an intention to attend Bahá’í meetings in the future.

Papua New Guinea

Students jam hall for teaching events

The National Assembly of Papua New Guinea cabled news of dramatic teaching events: “Outstanding proclamation meetings held both universities Papua New Guinea addressed by American Auxiliary Board member Peter Khan over 150 students visitors present May 18 in Port Moresby and over 700 on May 20 in Lae. Dramatic meeting, Lae Hall overflowing ...”

United States

Future to be stressed in Bicentennial plans

The National Spiritual Assembly of the United States has appointed a Bicentennial committee to draw up plans and recommendations for Bahá’í participation in the 1976 American Revolution Bicentennial celebration. Among the activities contemplated by the ad hoc committee are well-
designed exhibits and publicity campaigns in large metropolitan areas, and the development of a full range of proclamation materials for use by communities in purely local efforts.

Speaking on the committee’s tasks, Firuz Kazemzadeh, Chairman of the National Assembly and a member of the committee, said the optimism in the Bahá’í Writings about the ultimate future of this country provides an opportunity to express the Community’s interest in and hope for the nation. “Many groups are speaking of the Bicentennial in terms of the history of this country,” he added, “but for Bahá’ís, the future holds great promise and our program should communicate this to the nation.”

Assigned to the Bicentennial Committee along with Dr. Kazemzadeh are: Glenford Mitchell, the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States; Russell Busey and Betty Fisher, the general manager and general editor of the Bahá’í Publishing Trust, respectively; Eileen Norman, secretary of the National Education Committee; Joan Bulkin, secretary of the National Teaching Committee; William Geissler, secretary of the National Bahá’í Information Committee, and Beth McKenty, information officer for the National Bahá’í Information Committee.

Bahá’í participation in the national celebration will start with a full-page advertisement to appear in the Bicentennial edition of Life magazine, which will be published September 1. Other projects include: the production of a series of radio programs and public service announcements, the production of a film, newspaper ads, and the publication of special Bicentennial issues of The American Bahá’í and World Order magazines.

Bahá’ís among delegates at religion conference

Representatives of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States met with delegates from over 200 religious groups in Washington, D.C., May 21-22, at a conference called Project Forward ‘76. Sponsored jointly by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, the governmental planning agency for the United States’ Bicentennial celebration, and the Intercurch Center, an interfaith group based in New York, the conference examined the future of America and the role religion will play in its further development.

Elsie Austin, a former member of the National Spiritual Assembly and a long-time pioneer to Africa, and Beth McKenty, information officer for the National Bahá’í Information Committee, attended the conference as representatives of the National Spiritual Assembly, and participated in seminars examining such questions as: “In what way does my religious community sustain my spiritual life in today’s world? How do I understand the right to “pursuit of happiness”? and, Eth­nic and religious unity and diversity: How do we manifest “E Pluribus Unum” (one out of many)?

In one seminar at which Mrs. McKenty was present, she was the only person not still affiliated with the faith into which she was born, and was consequently asked to explain what the conditions were that led her to become a Bahá’í. At the end of the session the minister of the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem approached her and said he liked to gaze often on the portrait of the “good old Bahá’í man” that had hung in his church for many years. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke at the Abyssinian Baptist Church during his visit to New York in 1912.

Throughout the entire conference, the longing of people to draw closer together in this difficult time was frequently expressed. In his concluding remarks, Dr. R. H. Edwin Espy, chairman of Project Forward ’76 and a former secretary of the National Council of Churches, said: “We are bound to all people of the world by our common humanity as children of God. We are united as American citizens in devotion and responsibility under God to the nation He has given us. . . we worship the God of the ages. The ground of our very being, the Creator of the universe, is the ultimate source of our unity. Our origin and faith in God far transcend our differences.

“Our need at the threshold of our third century thus is not to redeclare our inde­pendence but to build responsible inter­dependence both among our own people and between the other peoples of the world. Both national independence and human interdependence are dependent for their viability on the grace of God, in Whom all humanity is one. The only sure foundation for human community is the divine order, the eternal verities and values of the Creator of the universe. . .

“We therefore declare our dependence on Almighty God,” concluded Dr. Espy, “to Him be honor and glory, and to us may the grace of His love and truth and freedom and justice be ever present. May His will be done in the United States of America and in all the world.”

Bahá’ís meet with pueblo governor

As part of an effort to proclaim the Faith to American Indians, a group of Bahá’ís recently presented a copy of The Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh to Peter Johnson, the governor of San Felipe Pueblo, a village in northern New Mexico. San Felipe Pueblo is at the foot of Black Mesa, on the south side of the Rio Grande. The San Felipe proclamation was the third in a series of meetings with pueblo governors; others had taken place at Isleta Pueblo in January 1974, and at Cochiti Pueblo in July 1974.

The Bahá’í delegation, consisting of Chris and Linda Cholas, from Durango, Colorado, and Larry and Celia Gates, from Argentina, were welcomed by the governor through tribal spokesman and translator Joseph Ansara. “We want to thank you for this gift,” said Governor Johnson. “We also are striving for peace and harmony of the people, and this is good that you would think of us.”

The Bahá’ís were invited to the governor’s home for a dinner which consisted of chili, San Felipe bread, fresh corn, potatoes, green beans, and watermelon. An invitation was extended to the Bahá’ís to return to San Felipe Pueblo for the village feast day, which they promised to do.

Domestic teaching trips by youths increasing

In August, 1974, during the national Five Year Plan conference in St. Louis, the
National Spiritual Assembly launched a two-year youth program calling for, among other things, the completion of 500 domestic teaching trips and 75 international circuit teaching trips by Bahá'ís 15-20 years old. With 15 of the 24 months remaining, the National Youth Office reports an increase in the number of these trips: as of June 1, 1975, 295 domestic and 34 international teaching trips had been reported. "We seem to have many more youth traveling to teach the Faith, and many more telling us about it," said Philip Christensen, secretary of the National Bahá'í Youth Committee.

Teaching trips lasting more than two months are being undertaken at a slower rate. Only three were completed in the first nine months of the youth plan, out of a goal of ten. "In developing this goal, the Youth Committee was thinking that youth could devote an entire summer vacation to a teaching project," Dr. Christensen noted, "or a full semester or school year as an interlude to their studies.

The Youth Committee also reported on the progress of other goals of the Youth Plan:

- Seven youth have settled at foreign posts during the Five Year Plan. Eighteen more must go by September 1976 to fill the youth plan goals. The best way for youth to go pioneering is to go with their families or to attend school in foreign countries, the committee said.
- Interest in local youth clubs is increasing. Twenty-four of the required 100 have been formed. This kind of activity presents a challenge for the youth, that of finding ways to fulfill the goals which have been set for such clubs which are primarily social, recreational, and devotional.
- The goal for 51 youth conferences will be completed by the end of June.
- The goals of the program requiring individual teaching must be given more attention. The growth of the youth segment of the community has not been impressive during the course of the youth plan, the committee noted.
- Only 25 of the 100 homefront pioneering goals for youth have been filled. In 20 cases the youth have settled in areas where communities already functioned. The plan calls for the opening of at least 40 localities by homefront youth settlers.
- College clubs still need attention. The goal requires that there be 350 functional college clubs in the country by September 1976. At the end of this school year there were 245 functioning Bahá'í college clubs on campuses. "We must form more than 100 new clubs during the 1975-76 school year," the Committee noted, "and that is a very challenging task. Bahá'í youth attending schools where there are currently no clubs must do everything in their power to establish one. That means they will have to teach the Faith until they have the required membership of three, and then they will have to make the necessary applications to the university. In addition, those clubs that are currently active will have to remain active."

**California Bahá'ís discuss Indian teaching**

Bahá'ís from more than 20 communities in California met in Los Angeles earlier this year to discuss approaches for teaching the Faith to American Indians.

Speakers at the institute included Auxiliary Board member Nancy Phillips; David Villaseñor, an artist and member of the Otomi-Huichol tribe of Mexico; Lorenzo Hall, a Yakima Indian; Jerry Boisclair of the Cupa tribe, and Wayne Steffes, an Oneida.

Mr. Villaseñor stressed the importance of truthfulness in teaching American Indians, and said the actions of the teachers should be commensurate with their words. To illustrate his point he quoted the Indian proverb: "Your action is so loud I cannot hear a word you are saying."

"Sometimes it is better to only do and not talk," he said. "If a Bahá'í approaches the Indians and says one thing but does another, he would be regarded as a 'windmill' and lose his credibility."

Mr. Villaseñor recommended that Bahá'ís make efforts to learn about the history and culture of the people they intend to teach. He said Indians were not a difficult people to teach, but that they should not be approached in an "uncomely manner." He suggested that Bahá'ís learn about the history and culture of the people they intend to teach. Many of the Indians "beliefs pertaining to the coming of the Promised One have always been a part of them. They will adhere to the Bahá'í teachings because they are spiritual," he said.

Mr. Steffes, whose mother was the first Indian Bahá'í in the United States, pointed out that more than half of the Indian population of the United States now lives in the cities. Statistics from the last census show there are now more than 100 cities in the country with an Indian population of at least 1,000.

He encouraged the believers to approach Indians in their areas without fear or hesitation.

"Indians are proud of their heritage and would joyfully say more about themselves if prompted to do so. Indians will find the Bahá'í Faith appealing when they discover the deeper spiritual truth of the Faith, because it parallels their own culture."

One way to teach might be to offer assistance to Indian community centers in the cities, he said. But to be effective that assistance would have to be longterm and regular, he added. Many Indian communities are suspicious of religious organizations because of unpleasant experiences with church groups, but persistence and friendliness will get through to the Indian heart, he said.

David Villaseñor encourages Bahá'ís to teach American Indians by deeds rather than words.
Illuminated (decorated) Prayers and Passages of Bahá'u'lláh for teaching and deepening make welcome gifts, provide inspiring wall decoration and aid in memorization.

Illuminated Prayers and Passages of Bahá'u'lláh

Preservation and consolidation of the victories won: This is one of the three major objectives of the Five Year Plan as the Cause of God goes "from strength to strength" throughout the worldwide Bahá'í community.

We can do this even in the face of rising global chaos if we use the strengthening serenity of our Sacred Texts, the Creative Word of God, to deepen and consolidate Bahá'ís. For this purpose several short, simple, powerful quotations of Bahá'u'lláh have been chosen and are now available in large type, illuminated by dignified artwork.

These attractive, brief prayers and meditations are suitable for framing or other kinds of display. Ten different quotations have been printed on 8.5 by 11-inch paper — large enough for wall or window display, yet small enough to be carried in a notebook.

Members of teaching, proclamation, conference, and consolidation committees might want to give particular attention to this set for possible use at summer schools, institutes, and children's classes. They are excellent for complementing normal teaching materials or for gifts to participating individuals at Bahá'í gatherings.

The large type and easy-to-handle pages also make the material useful for persons with poor eyesight, or for beginning readers, either children or adults, who are not yet accustomed to Bahá'í literature. In addition, these passages are generally brief enough so that students can memorize them without difficulty.

The entire set of ten can be bound into a new believers' booklet either as they are or mounted artistically on colorful heavy paper. Further decorative illumination can then be added, limited only by the artist's imagination. In this way home-made albums can be tailored to a variety of indigenous cultures. Other possible uses include mementos for friends on special Bahá'í occasions, or gifts for the sick or shut-in.

These ten quotations by Bahá'u'lláh are available either in complete sets or as individual prayers and meditations in multiples of ten.

How to Get the Illuminated Prayers and Passages of Bahá'u'lláh

Your local Bahá'í librarian or authorized Bahá'í distributor may have them in stock, or may be able to supply you with prices and ordering information. If, however, you cannot find them in your area, you may send your inquiry to the International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Centre, 1640 Holcomb Road, Victor, N.Y. 14564, U.S.A. for forwarding to the proper organization.
Building the Ark on God's Holy Mountain
Excavation begins at site of Universal House of Justice Building

Joyfully announce commencement excavation site Universal House Justice Building are Mount Carmel. Contract removal forty thousand cubic meters rock and earth at cost approximately two hundred thousand dollars. Invite all believers contribute unstintingly building fund ensure uninterrupted progress historic undertaking.

June 17, 1975

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
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Cover photo: men and machines begin removing earth and rock from the site of The Universal House of Justice Building. Shrine of the Báb is in the background.

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Building the Ark on God's Holy Mountain

Universal House of Justice Message

To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the World

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

As the Five Year Plan gathers momentum in all parts of the world, with the followers of the Blessed Perfection firmly embarked on the course that will lead to victory, the time has come for us to contemplate, in preparation for its imminent initiation, the project which will rank as the greatest single undertaking of that Plan, the construction of a befitting seat for the Universal House of Justice in the heart of God's Holy Mountain.

Nearly thirty-six years ago, after overcoming a multitude of difficulties, the beloved Guardian succeeded in transferring to Mount Carmel the sacred remains of the Purest Branch and Navváb, interring them in the immediate neighborhood of the resting-place of the Greatest Holy Leaf, and alluded, in these words, to the "capital institutional significance" that these events constituted in the unfoldment of the World Center of the Faith:

"For 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 inestimably reinforces the spiritual potencies of that consecrated Spot which, under the wings of the Bab's overshadowing Sepulcher, and in the vicinity of the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, which will be reared on its flank, is destined to
Work has started on the greatest single undertaking of the Five Year Plan, construction of The Universal House of Justice Building in the heart of Mount Carmel. In the left background is the Archives Building and in the right background is the Shrine of the Báb.

The first of the majestic edifices constituting this mighty Center, was the building for the International Archives of the Faith which was completed in the summer of 1957 as one of the last major achievements of Shoghi Effendi’s Guardianship and which set the style for the remaining structures which, as described by him, were to be raised in the course of time in the form of a far-flung arc on the slope of Mount Carmel. In the eighteen years since that achievement, the community of the Most Great Name has grown rapidly in size and influence: from twenty-six National Spiritual Assemblies to one hundred and nineteen, from some one thousand to seventeen thousand Local Spiritual As-

evolve into the focal center 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.’

To attempt to visualize, even in its barest outline, the glory that must envelop these institutions, to essay even a tentative and partial description of their character or the manner of their operation, or to trace however inadequately the course of events leading to their rise and eventual establishment is far beyond my own capacity and power. Suffice it to say that at this troubled stage in world history the association of these three incomparably precious souls who, next to the three Central Figures of our Faith, tower in rank above the vast multitude of the heroes, Letters, martyrs, hands, teachers and administrators of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh, in such a potentially powerful spiritual and administrative Center, is in itself an event which will release forces that are bound to hasten the emergence in a land which, geographically, spiritually and administratively, constitutes the heart of the entire planet, of some of the brightest gems of that World Order now shaping in the womb of this travelling age.”

The first of the majestic edifices constituting this mighty Center, was the building for the International Archives of the Faith which was completed in the summer of 1957 as one of the last major achievements of Shoghi Effendi’s Guardianship and which set the style for the remaining structures which, as described by him, were to be raised in the course of time in the form of a far-flung arc on the slope of Mount Carmel. In the eighteen years since that achievement, the community of the Most Great Name has grown rapidly in size and influence: from twenty-six National Spiritual Assemblies to one hundred and nineteen, from some one thousand to seventeen thousand Local Spiritual As-
semblies, and from four thousand five hundred localities to over seventy thousand, accompanied by a corresponding increase in the volume of the work carried on at the World Center of the Faith and in the complexity of its institutions. It is now both necessary and possible to initiate construction of its institutions. It is now both necessary and possible to initiate construction of a building that will not only serve the practical needs of a steadily consolidating administrative center but will, for centuries to come, stand as a visible expression of the majesty of the divinely ordained institutions of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

Faced, like the Archives Building, with stonework from Italy, and surrounded by a stately colonnade of sixty Corinthian columns, the seat for the Universal House of Justice will contain, in addition to the council chamber of the House of Justice, a library, a concourse for the reception of pilgrims and dignitaries, storage vaults with air-purification for the preservation of original Tablets and other precious documents, accommodation for the secretariat and the many ancillary services that will be required. Conceived in a style of enduring beauty and majesty, and faced with stone that will weather the centuries, the building in its interior arrangements will be very simple and capable of adaptation in the generations ahead to whatever technological advances will be made by the rapid growth of human knowledge.

The erection of this building which, comprising five and a half stories far surpasses in size and complexity any building at present in existence at the World Center presents a major challenge to the Bahá'í community, whose resources are already all too meager in relation to the great tasks that lie before it. But the spirit of sacrifice has been the hallmark of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh of every race and clime and as they unite to raise this second of the great edifices of the Administrative Center of their Faith they will rejoice at having the inestimable privilege of taking part in a "vast and irresistible process" which
The Transformation of Mount Carmel

Men labor on Mount Carmel. Machines whine as rock and earth are removed. Work has started on the second majestic edifice of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

Every step of that holy mountain is blessed by the Prophets. The Old Testament speaks of it. The ancient Prophets of Israel trod there and it is said that Jesus and Muhammed walked there also. It is the site of Elijah's cave.

Bahá'u'lláh pitched His tent on Mount Carmel and He pointed out to 'Abdu'l-Bahá the location on the slope of the mountain where the Báb's remains were eventually placed.

In the Tablet of Carmel, Bahá'u'lláh says: "He, verily, loveth the spot which hath been made the seat of His throne, which His footsteps have trodden, which hath been honored by His presence, from which He raised His call, and upon which He shed He tears." 

The beloved Guardian often spoke of the potent spiritual power of Mount Carmel, the vineyard of God.

On June 5, 1975, The Universal House of Justice announced the greatest single undertaking of the Five Year Plan, "the construction of a befitting seat for the Universal House of Justice in the heart of God's Holy Mountain."

On June 17, 1975, The Universal House of Justice cabled the joyful news that excavation work at the site on the central axis of God's Own Arc was under way.

"It is now both necessary and possible to initiate construction of a building that will not only serve the practical needs of a steadily consolidating administrative center but will, for centuries to come, stand as a visible expression of the majesty of the divinely ordained institutions of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh."

The Universal House of Justice announced a concourse for the reception of pilgrims and dignitaries, accommodation for the secretariat and many other ancillary services that will be required, and storage vaults with air-purification for the preservation of original Tablets and other precious documents.

Shoghi Effendi stated in "unexampled in the spiritual history of mankind", a process "which will synchronize with two no less significant developments—the establishment of the Lesser Peace and the evolution of Bahá'í national and local institutions—the one outside and the other within the Bahá'í world—will attain its final consummation, in the Golden Age of the Faith, through the raising of the standard of the Most Great Peace, and the emergence, in the plenitude of its power and glory, of the focal Center of the agencies constituting the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh."

The Universal House of Justice, June 5, 1975

The City of Love

‘Ishqábád and the institution of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár

By Bruce W. Whitmore
The Holiest House of Worship, the Mother Temple of the West, dedicated May 2, 1953, at Wilmette, Illinois, U.S.A. Baha‘u’llah ordained the institution of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkâr to support individuals in their efforts to become “a true Baha’i.”

The numerous curves of the rock-strewn pathway lessened noticeably as the weary traveler finally descended into the Joothilis of the Elburz mountains. Like so many others, he had left Tehran, nearly 460 miles to the southwest, to free himself of the suffering and anguish so frequently experienced by the Baha’is. His thoughts, however, were not of past agonies; he could think only of the wonders that lay before him. It was dusk but he did not consider stopping; he was too close to his long-sought goal.

Suddenly elation surged through him, for on the faraway horizon lay his destination: Ishqabad (meaning City of Love), a mecca of peace and safety for all Baha’is. As he gazed across the desert plain of Western Turkistan, the last rays of the sun darted amidst the distant buildings and danced about a large domed structure rising high above the city. Even from far away he knew that radiant dome was the goal of his seemingly endless journey: the first House of Worship ever raised in Baha’u’llah’s Name.

As the moon began its steady climb into the evening sky and the traveler hurried toward the dim lights of the city, his thoughts turned to the events of the past which had established Ishqabad as a refuge of serenity. The year was 1910.

When the Baha’is first settled in the area during the early years of Baha’u’llah’s Mission, all that existed were a few scattered mud huts. As the town grew the Baha’is became an integral but unobtrusive element, contributing selflessly to the well-being and prosperity of the community.

Then tragedy struck as a group of Moslems, fearing the steady growth of the Faith, hired two assassins who brutally murdered a prominent and learned Baha’i in the middle of the bazar. The Russian authorities responded swiftly, arresting all those involved.

The Czar, Alexander III, sent a military commission from St. Petersburg to conduct the trial. The two assailants were found guilty of murder and sentenced to death. Six others, proved to have been involved in the murder plot, were ordered transported to Siberia. Strenuous efforts were made to have the verdict altered, but to no avail. However, right at the foot of the scaffold it was announced that the Baha’is had magnanimously interceded for the murderers, who were banished to Siberia. Baha’is gained greatly in prestige. Furthermore, the ground was now prepared for the initiation of enterprises, such as the establishment of schools, libraries and the construction of a House of Worship . . . H. M. Balyuzi, ‘Abdu’l-Baha, (George Ronald, Oxford, 1971), p. 109.

During the early years of ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s ministry, interest in building the first Mashriqu’l-Adhkâr, as designated by Baha’u’llah, developed in many countries throughout the area that is now called the Middle East. The Master decided that Ishqabad should be the site for the first Temple and He sent Hajji Mirza Muhammad-Taqi, also known as Jenab Afnan, to coordinate the historic undertaking.

Jenab Afnan, his features characterized by bright, smiling, blue eyes and a snowy-white beard, was a first cousin of the Bab. He and the Bab were close childhood friends and often played games together. It was for his father, the Bab’s uncle, that Baha’u’llah revealed the Kitâb-i-Iqân. Jenab Afnan sacrificed not only his time but also his wealth to raise the Ishqabad Temple.
The Mother Temple of Africa, dedicated Jan. 14, 1961, at Kampala, Uganda. The House of Worship is the central Edifice to which individuals should turn for spiritual revitalization; a place to acquire virtues and serve your fellow man.

After the project was completed, he would return to Haifa, continuing to serve the Master until his death at the age of 85. He would be buried near Elijah’s grave on that same Mountain of God where the remains of his blessed cousin, the Báb, were laid.

Arriving at 'Ishqábád in the latter part of 1902, Jenáb Afnán busied himself with securing a suitable design for the Temple and making preparations for construction. Trenches were dug and the foundation for a nine-sided structure was begun. Jenáb Afnán, himself, laid the first stone.

Shortly after construction was started, the community received word that General Krupatikin, the governor-general of Turkistán, would lay a cornerstone for the building on behalf of the Czar. The following account, written two days after the event, reveals some of the joy and excitement that must have been felt.

On the 11th of Ramazan the Governor of the State, escorted by a company of officers and soldiers together with the foreign Minister and the local Consul, all dressed in uniform and decorated with royal medals, came to the blessed grounds of the Mashrak-el-Azcar to express his congratulations. Three days before his coming the news was received and preparations were made for his reception. The grounds were especially adorned and the most exquisite rugs were spread. Shady arbors and bowers were erected, each having nine columns. In the parlors two tables were set, one of them covered with many kinds of sweetmeats, most luscious fruits and flowers of all kinds; on the other were placed the Holy Scriptures, the sketch of the Mashrak-el-Azcar, and both Russian and Persian translations of the history and the date of the building being newly erected.

At half past three that afternoon the Government carriages approached, and, at the first gate of the grounds they stopped. They could have entered the grounds with carriages, but, through respect, they alighted at the gate. They walked over the beautiful rugs and came to where the believers were assembled. There were from six to eight hundred of the people of Baha and about the same number of Russians, Armenians . . . (and other nationalities).

Then the Governor removed his overcoat and gloves, the officers all following his example, and came to the appointed place for his work. . . . Then the silver box (containing a description of the construction methods and the materials to be used in the building) was brought and presented to the Governor who took it in his hand and began the work. While he was laying the corner stone he spoke the following words which were translated by the interpreter, word for word: 'It gives me great pleasure to realize the House of Worship of the Bahais is being erected in my days, and my hope is that I will see it when it is finished.'

Even though contributions were received from believers in Persia and other nearby countries, it was the tireless efforts of the local believers that made the completion of the project possible. Many thousands of stones were hand-carried to the site from the surrounding countryside while several masons labored month after month to raise the Temple’s walls. When finished, about 1905, it was nearly five stories high, towering above all other structures in 'Ishqábád.

Located in the heart of the city, the Temple sat amid luxurious gardens bor-
The Mother Temple of the Antipodes, dedicated Sept. 16, 1961, at Sydney, Australia. The educational institutions within the Mashriqu’l-Adhkar are intended to develop man’s awareness of the spiritual realities as well as the physical realities.

dered by four tree-lined avenues. Its main entrance, facing the Holy Land and flanked by minarets, was two stories high and opened into a graceful rotunda crowned by a hemispherical dome of exquisite beauty. Two series of balconies, called loggias, surrounded the rotunda and opened out upon the verdant gardens.

At the four corners of the gardens were dependencies: the Bahá’í schools, a medical dispensary and an inn for travelers. The Ḥaẓratu’l-Quds was located near the Temple while farther back lay a utilities building and the residence of the grounds keeper.

Over the years hundreds of believers made the long journey to the City of Love and many of them became part of the vibrant community. Expansion continued unabated in not only ‘Ishqábad but many Russian cities; even after the Bolshevik Revolution there was no apparent opposition to the Faith as the Bahá’ís continued their teaching and publishing activities.

Then in 1922 “The official gazette of the Soviet government published an article in which it said that the Bahá’ís were turning the thoughts of the Russian from Bolshevism to their own religion and beliefs (and) consequently their efforts should be stopped.”

Although some inconveniences were experienced following the appearance of the article, little open hostility occurred until 1926 when believers in Moscow were detained and questioned, their books and papers were confiscated and, in some cases, their homes and other property were seized.

In 1928 the first Bahá’ís in ‘Ishqábad were arrested. The activities of the Spiritual Assembly were severely restricted, publications were suspended, and mail was confiscated.

Late in the summer of 1928 the government decreed that all places of worship inside Russia were henceforth property of the Soviet Union. For three months the Temple’s doors were barred while local newspapers carried government-placed advertisements offering to rent the building. The Temple was reopened only after the Bahá’ís agreed to sign a costly rental contract.

Calm then settled over the Bahá’í communities of Russia. The lease was renewed on the Temple in 1933. Two years later the government announced that religious structures were to be returned to their original owners, provided that specified major repairs could be completed within six months. Believers throughout Russia sacrificed their few remaining possessions to pay for the numerous repairs required on the Temple. The work was completed prior to the deadline and ownership was transferred back to the Bahá’í community.

Public meetings were resumed in ‘Ishqábad and soon were being conducted twice weekly. A large sign was placed at the entrance to the Temple, proclaiming the principles of the Faith in four languages. The Great Hall in the Ḥaẓratu’l-Quds again overflowed with Bahá’ís on Holy Days and other special events as melodious chanting and lyrical music filled the air.

The reprieve, however, was short-lived:

“On the eve of February 5, 1938, all the members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of ‘Ishqábad, and a great number of the friends were arrested by order of the authorities and that same night the houses of the friends were searched, and all Tablets, Bahá’í records and other articles were confiscated. Some of the women, more active than the rest in Bahá’í administrative affairs, were also led away to prison.”

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The Mother Temple of Europe, dedicated July 4, 1964, at Frankfurt, Germany. The Mashriqu’l-Adhkar is also a focal point for social, humanitarian, educational, and scientific pursuits.

For the final time the Temple was seized. A Soviet law, requiring that a religious community must consist of at least 50 members to be allowed to maintain a place of worship, was enforced as the Bahá’í population of the City of Love, once numbering in the thousands, steadily fell.

"According to recently received information, the Soviet Government has taken over the Temple, has turned it into an art gallery, and is keeping it in its original condition. For there are no longer any Bahá’ís in ‘Ishqábad.’"

The Temple, however, was not destined to be used for other than that which God intended.

On August 25, 1963, The Universal House of Justice announced to the Bahá’í world that the Mashriqu’l-Adhkar in ‘Ishqábad, the first Temple raised to the glory of Bahá’u’lláh, had been demolished by the authorities and the site cleared.

In 1948 violent earthquakes shook the whole town causing devastation and ruin. The building was seriously damaged. The only section which remained relatively secure was the central rotunda. Heavy yearly rains further weakened the structure to such a degree as to endanger the safety of houses in the vicinity. It was at this point that the authorities decided to demolish the remaining edifice and clear the site. The Universal House of Justice appealed to Chairman Nikita Khrushchev to set aside the Temple ground as a public park and to agree to the erection of a suitable marker pointing out the significance of this site to the Bahá’ís of the world. It is not known whether any action was taken. The letter remains unanswered.

Even though Bahá’í communities throughout Russia suffered hardship and persecution for several years, that land will be remembered fondly by Bahá’ís of future generations. Not only will it be noted for the influence it exerted on behalf of the Blessed Beauty in securing His release from the Siyáh-Chál in 1853 when the Russian Minister to Persia left no stone unturned to establish the innocence of Bahá’u’lláh, but that it also provided an environment that allowed the believers of ‘Ishqábad to accomplish far more than just the building of the first Bahá’í House of Worship. All of the glorious events associated with the history of the City of Love pale when placed alongside the believers’ supreme achievement: the development of the institution of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkar (the Dawning Place of the Mention of God) to a degree never before attained, thereby giving the Bahá’í world a foundation of experience invaluable to the present and the future.

Efforts of other Bahá’í communities during the early years of the Faith, however, cannot be dismissed lightly. Many localities in the land of Bahá’u’lláh’s birth had special places, albeit often only simple houses, where the friends could gather for prayer. The early believers were committed to educating their children and to providing for their fellow man through a variety of social and humanitarian services, all appropriate elements of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkar.

Significant strides were made in other countries as well. For example, Kunjangoon, a small village nestled in the jungles of Burma where the Faith was embraced by hundreds of the villagers shortly after the turn of the century, quickly achieved
The Mother Temple of Latin America, dedicated April 29, 1972, at Panama City, Panama. These structures, incomparable in their beauty and majesty, are always domed, always nine-sided, and always surrounded by breathtaking gardens.

remarkable standards. A school was built, an administrative agency was established and a special place for prayer was set aside; many of the activities the people engaged in were supportive of the concepts of the institution.

It is 'Ishqâbâd, however, that must be recognized for having achieved the first viable, cohesive, functional institution complete with several stately structures which served as dependencies and which will be characteristic of Mashriqu'l-Adhkârs in the future.

The institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkâr, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh, is the practical exemplification of the spiritual reality of our Faith. He revealed that God's purpose for man is "to know Thee and worship Thee" and declared that knowing and loving God is the "generating impulse and the primary purpose underlying the whole of creation." He called upon each individual to be of service to humanity and emphatically stated that all work done in the spirit of service is elevated to the station of worship.

'Abdu'l-Bahá stated that:

He is a true Bahá'í who strives by day and by night to progress and advance along the path of human endeavor, whose most cherished desire is so to live and act as to enrich and illuminate the world, whose source of inspiration is the essence of Divine virtue, whose aim in life is so to conduct himself as to be the cause of infinite progress. Only when he attains unto such perfect gifts can it be said of him that he is a true Bahá'í. For in this holy Dispensation ..

true Faith is no mere acknowledgement of the Unity of God, but the living of a life that will manifest all the perfections and virtues implied in such belief.

It is the institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkâr that Bahá'u'lláh has provided specifically to support individuals in their efforts to become "a true Bahá'í." The first requirement delineated by the Blessed Beauty is gaining knowledge of God's purpose for man. Educational institutions within the Mashriqu'l-Adhkâr are intended to develop man's awareness of not only the physical but also the spiritual realities of our existence. Individuals become fully cognizant of the two specific obligations for which God has declared them responsible: that of acquiring virtues and that of being of service to their fellow man.

'Abdu'l-Bahá teaches that our purpose in life is to acquire virtues—the attributes of God translated into human behavior. Shoghi Effendi confirms that the object of our lives should be to promote the oneness of mankind. Indeed, he says that the oneness of mankind is the pivot around which all of Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings revolve.

Bahá'u'lláh stated that: "It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action". The process, beginning with acquiring knowledge, is complete only when that knowledge is manifested in action for the betterment of humanity. The transition is dependent upon volition, defined as "the action of consciously willing or resolving; the making of a definite choice or decision with regard to a course of action; the exercise of the will." Volition may be acquired primarily through the use of one of God's special gifts: prayer. By enabling us to free ourselves from all attachment to anything but God and by supporting our
individual efforts to develop the essential qualities of perseverance and patience, prayer becomes an absolute necessity in translating that which we know into that which we do.

The Guardian explained that the very "core of religious faith is that mystic feeling which unites man with God. This state of spiritual communion can be brought about and maintained by means of meditation and prayer. And this is the reason why Bahá'u'lláh has so much stressed the importance of worship..."

"The believers... should therefore fully realize the necessity of praying. For prayer is absolutely indispensable to their inner spiritual development, and this... is the very foundation and purpose of the religion of God." 12

It is the "central Edifice" of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, the House of Worship, to which individuals turn for spiritual revitalization; a haven in which to seek out spiritual power and energy. These structures, inspiring man to attain to new heights of artistic excellence, are incomparable in their beauty and majesty. Always domed, always nine-sided, always surrounded by breathtaking gardens, they irresistibly beckon man to enter and commune with his Father.

Shoghi Effendi, however, emphatically warned that:

But however inspiring the conception of Bahá'í worship... it cannot be regarded as the sole, nor even the essential, factor in the part which the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, 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 centering around the Dependencies of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, Bahá'í worship, however exalted in its conception, however passionate in fervor, can never hope to achieve beyond the meager 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 Dependencies of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar to facilitate and promote. 13

These dependencies, "... 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..." 14 are arenas in which the finest fruits of man's science and technology as well as his spiritual understanding and insight will be applied. As focal points for action, they allow individuals to fulfill their God-given obligations by conscientious and deliberate integration of the attributes of God within their souls through service to humanity. Not only do they experience spiritual growth, but a life filled with meaning and contentment as well.

It should not be inferred, however, that the dependencies are the only places where spiritually motivated action can be released. If our goal is to serve humanity through the application of the attributes of God, then obviously it is appropriate to strive toward achieving that goal daily through every interaction with our fellow man. The institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, embodying the physical application of spiritual principles, guides and supports us individually in these efforts.

Further, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, including the House of Worship and all of the dependencies—among them the Hazíratu'l-Quds (The Sacred Fold), the administrative headquarters of the elected local and national institutions of our Faith—motivates man collectively to "carry forward an ever advancing civilization" 15 and is therefore fundamental to the unification of the human race. It draws together people of diverse and often opposing backgrounds and elevates their purposes and standards to a level far above the hatreds and prejudices so prevalent today. With their goals fixed upon lofty, noble aspirations, these individuals experience an irreversible transformation as their former animosities steadily assume less significance, while the achievement of their aspirations assists the concept of the oneness of mankind to move forward relentlessly.

The institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar is the "necessary agency capable of removing the ills that have so long and so grievously afflicted humanity..." 16; therefore, it will be essential to mankind long before imposing, regal structures, such as those at Ishqábád, appear throughout the countryside. Initially, perhaps, existing structures in cities and towns everywhere will be called upon to shelter its social and spiritual activities, and thus "provide the essentials of Bahá'í worship and service, both so vital to the regeneration of the world." 17

The Guardian, commenting on its loftiness, its potency and its unique position, declared that the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar is "one of the outstanding institutions conceived by Bahá'u'lláh." 18 Little wonder, then, that Bahá'ís will always marvel at the momentous achievements of those early believers of Ishqábád.

References
1. Thornton Chase Papers, Collection M-4, Box 2, Folder 40, National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Ill.
4. Ibid., p. 89.
10. Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 250.
15. Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 215.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
International Conferences

Plans under way for Helsinki meeting

About 1,500 persons are expected to attend the International Teaching Conference to be held July 6-8, 1976, in Helsinki, Finland.

This will be the first of eight International Teaching Conferences scheduled by The Universal House of Justice to be held during the Five Year Plan.

The primary purpose of this Conference, one of the two scheduled in the Arctic for July 1976, is the rapid achievement, in the northern hemisphere, of one of the three major objectives of the Plan—"a vast and widespread expansion of the Bahá'í community." The Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery will represent The Universal House of Justice.

Finlandia Hall, a modern mid-town congress and concert center, has been reserved for the Helsinki Conference and preparations for the three-day teaching and proclamation are well under way. The Conference will also provide and opportunity for an intensive teaching and proclamation effort in Finland.

The second Arctic Conference will be held in Anchorage, Alaska July 23-25, 1976. The Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone will be the representative of The Universal House of Justice on that occasion.

Information about travel and accommodations in Helsinki and Anchorage will soon be available through all National Spiritual Assemblies.

International Bahá'í Community

Conference held on public information

The Bahá'í International Community was represented at the Regional Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations sponsored by the United Nations Office of Public Information in May. The conference was held at the headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand. From left are Counsellor Firaydún Mithâqiyan from Laos, Counsellor Vincente Samaniego from the Philippines and Auxiliary Board member Mrs. Shantha Sundram.

Mr. Bond attends Tehran, Cairo meets

Jameson Bond, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, represented the Bahá'í International Community at the Preparatory Regional Human Settlements Conferences for Asia, the Pacific and Western Asia held in Tehran June 14-19, and for Africa held in Cairo June 21-26.

These were important meetings for the Bahá'í world since the Bahá'í International Community was included in the official list of participants at both conferences and Mr. Bond received in both Tehran and Cairo official invitations from the Iranian and Egyptian governments for a reception and a dinner.

Bahá'í International Community participation in these conferences not only showed the Bahá'í concern for the problem of human settlements, understood in the broad sense of "human communities," but provided a historic opportunity to foster the recognition and prestige of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh in countries where it has experienced much difficulty.

Faith represented at World Food Council

Dr. Victor de Araujo and Dr. Marco G. Kappenberger represented the Bahá'í International Community at the first session of the World Food Council in Rome, Italy, June 23-27.

The Council was formed at the 1974 World Food Conference to establish programs to eliminate starvation and hunger within the next decade by increasing food production in developing countries, improving consumption patterns and nutrition, and strengthening food security.

As a means of implementing this goal, the Council discussed the necessary steps to make food available for the most seriously affected developing countries and to meet minimum food requirements; to implement an international undertaking on food security; to provide fertilizer and pesticides for developing countries; and to bring into existence as soon as possible an International Fund for Agricultural Development agreed upon at the World Food Conference.

The Bahá'í representatives met many delegates, including several ministers of agriculture. They also had an interview with the Council president, Sayed A. Marei, speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt.

The Bahá'í International Community joined with several other non-governmental organizations in submitting an official statement expressing support for the World Food Council and offering constructive comments.

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Around the World

Alaska

Progress of work on Hazíratu'l-Quds

Construction of the Hazíratu'l-Quds in Anchorage is continuing on schedule. Masonry was completed at the end of June in preparation for the next step of framing.

The artist's sketch shows how the building will look when it is finished.

Cameroon Republic

Mr. Samandari attends Conference

Counsellor Mihdí Samadari represented the Continental Board of Counsellors of Western Africa at a recent National Teaching Conference in Mamfe, Cameroon.

About 80 Bahá'ís attended the important Conference. A film and slide program on the second evening drew a large and appreciative public audience and one person accepted the Faith.

Canada

Prayer stressed by National Assembly

At its first meeting this year the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada adopted a suggestion by the Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts to spend the first and last hour of each Assembly meeting in prayer.

Speaking before the delegates and visitors at the Canadian National Convention held in Guelph, Ontario, Mr. Robarts called upon the Canadians to "pick up the threads of the prayer campaigns" held in the past and "from coast to coast, every Bahá'í be concerned with praying and asking Bahá'u'lláh to help us."

In addition to his suggestion for the National Assembly, Mr. Robarts proposed that Local Assemblies include 30 minutes of prayer in each meeting and that every Bahá'í in Canada say the Long Obligatory Prayer, the teaching prayer for Canada, and the Greatest Name 95 times... every day.

"I guarantee friends, that if this were done across Canada that our problems would be over. We would enter our third year of the Five Year Plan with our goals well ahead, with our national Fund in excellent shape and we would have at least a doubling of our community."

The Hand of the Cause of God William Sears also spoke at the Convention. He focused his remarks on Canada’s responsibility for the French-speaking goals of the Five Year Plan. He stated: "You know that 50 per cent of your goals are in the French-speaking countries of the world... 50 per cent!" said Mr. Sears. "Do you know why? Because you are the co-heirs of the Tablets of the Divine Plan. The United States doesn't have any French-speaking peoples... they do not have the resource... to send people out into the French-speaking world... La Belle Province is going to conquer the French goals... Canada is going to win one of the most glorious, one the most singularly important victories of the Five Year Plan and in the world by conquering the French-speaking countries... nobody else can do it."

Miss Kelson named as Board assistant

Miss Ina Kelson has been appointed assistant to Auxiliary Board member Adrienne Reeves, the Continental Board of Counsellors for North America announced.

Miss Kelson will serve in the Atlantic Provinces.
Colombia

Mr. Mühlschlegel stirs believers

The Hand of the Cause of God Adelbert Mühlschlegel addressed a number of meetings during a recent tour of Colombia.

One gathering was attended by 450 friends. In addition, Dr. Mühlschlegel was interviewed on radio and spoke to many enquirers.

Dr. Mühlschlegel is on a three and one-half month visit to Latin America.

His tour of Colombia was reported to the World Center in a letter from the India Baha'is of the north coast.

As a result of his visit, the letter said, "and the bounty of Dr. Mühlschlegel's wisdom, gentleness and kindness, and the humbling example of what is true service during five blessed days, we can never again be the same. In spite of his age, delicate health and the unaccustomed heat, Dr. Mühlschlegel spared neither his time nor energy to serve Baha'u'llah, and rather than avail himself of ready translators, he exerted himself constantly to speak directly to the friends in Spanish, which effort affected the believers deeply."

Hawaiian Islands

Office established for human rights

The Spiritual Assembly of Hawaii has announced the establishment of an office for human rights known as NAHBOHR. The name stands for National Assembly of Hawaiian Baha'is Office for Human Rights.

The purpose of NAHBOHR is to promote this year an active observance of International Women's Year and in this and future years to promote the achievement of human rights. The office will also establish an award for service to humanity.

Mrs. Gladys Johnson of Waianae was appointed director of NAHBOHR. She is a member of the Spiritual Assembly of Waianae and chairman of its Teaching Committee. She previously served on the National Baha'i Child Education Committee.

Tony Pelle of Kaneohe was appointed secretary of NAHBOHR. He also serves as public information officer for the Hawaii Baha'i Community.

The office of NAHBOHR will be located at the National Baha'i Center, 3264 Allan Place, Honolulu.

India

300 hear message from House of Justice

More than 300 friends from all parts of India attended the National Teaching Conference held May 23-26 at Bangalore.

The Conference was preceded by a well-attended press conference and a public meeting on May 22. Both events resulted in excellent publicity.

Charles Macdonald was the main speaker at the public meeting. Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao, a distinguished educator and a former education minister in the government of India, was the principal guest.

Counsellor Shirin Boman of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South Central Asia opened the Conference by reading a message from The Universal House of Justice calling upon the friends to "arouse the multitudes from slumber before it is too late." All present felt that this gathering was destined to change the destiny of India.

Workshop discussions were held on a number of topics including "Living the Life," "Baha'i Education of Children," and "Strengthening Local Spiritual Assemblies." An appeal for sustained support for the National Fund evoked a tremendous response.

The mature and practical suggestions that were made during the conference, it was reported, and the participation of indigenous people, are conclusive evidence that Indian believers are now increasingly determined to bring the "waiting, pure-hearted noble masses" into the Faith in large numbers as rapidly as possible.

India

First Spiritual Assembly of Agartala

The first Spiritual Assembly of Agartala, Tripura, is pictured with Auxiliary Board member S. Chatterjee (seated second from left).
Around the World

Iran

16,700 attend Baha'i School

The following are highlights gleaned from a report by the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran concerning activities within the community during the last six months of 1974.

A total of 314 Persian-speaking Baha'is residing in other countries or pioneering abroad visited the Baha'i Summer School which attracted a total attendance of 16,700. A special session was devoted to Baha'i youth.

Forty representatives from different parts of Persia participated in a teacher training course in which they prepared themselves to train, advise and guide those friends who conduct children's classes. One traveling teacher went throughout the country, under the direction of the National Assembly, assisting Local Assemblies with youth and child education programs.

Baha'i youth have served actively as traveling teachers. A three-day class conducted by Counsellor Masih Farhangi of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Western Asia drew 70 young Baha'is who participated in workshops on teaching.

The 300 Persian communities where Youth Committees have been established held conferences in October to consider how to hasten implementation of the Five Year Plan.

The Baha'i Women's Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly has been conducting courses and other programs concentrated on the themes of improving Baha'i family life, child education, and accomplishment of the Five Year Plan goals.

Italy

Plans are pushed for youth campaign

An enthusiastic group of 170 persons attended the National Youth Symposium at Florence-Saltino held May 29-June 2.

Counsellor Anneliese Bopp of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe gave an inspiring talk.

There were four declarations. Plans were made for the second year of the youth campaign, including pioneering, traveling teaching, greater participation in the Fund and classes to develop the characteristics of Baha'i life.

Leeward and Virgin Islands

Free radio time nets good response

The Spiritual Assembly of St. Thomas has obtained free radio time and in June a series of 52 fifteen-minute broadcasts about the Faith was launched.

Scripts for the broadcasts were adapted from the book "52 Baha'i Talks for All Occasions", by the late Sidney I. Dean.

The Assembly said the response has been exciting.

New Zealand

Haziratu'l-Quds is dedicated

More than 50 Baha'is came to Wanganui recently for the dedication of the Haziratu'l-Quds, one of the goals of the Five Year Plan for New Zealand.

Auxiliary Board member Gina Garcia dedicated the center and Toni Smit read a message from the National Spiritual Assembly. Also present were Mrs. Brenda Maxwell and Miss Diane Maxwell, daughter and grand-daughter, respectively, of the first Baha'is in Wanganui. Mr. and Mrs. Erica Watkin. Mrs. Maxwell presented to the Haziratu'l-Quds a painting by her father of the House of Worship in Wilmette, Ill.

A declaration just prior to the dedication and another one at a Regional Conference which followed added to the joyous feeling of the weekend.

North East Africa

Ethiopians solve election problem

Six years ago there was one Local Spiritual Assembly in what later became known as the mass conversion area of Sidamo. Seventy Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed this year!

The Baha'is in this spiritually fertile valley had some problems with elections. The people of Sidamo were used to an open atmosphere when choosing their leaders and had difficulty adjusting to secret ballot.

The number of Local Spiritual Assemblies increased to 18 in 1972 and to 59 in 1974. Problems continued despite efforts by the National Teaching Committee. A plan had been developed to send volunteers and literature to Sidamo. They conducted the elections.

Problems developed in finding enough manpower for the elections this year. Abdul Nabi, a pioneer to Awassa, set up deepening institutes on Baha'i election

Malaysia

First Teaching Institute at Sarawak

This group attended the first Teaching Institute at Kampong Tun Razak (Triboh), Sarawak, East Malaysia, which was inaugurated on March 29.
procedure for a small group of teachers and others.

They went into Sidamo to observe—not conduct—the elections. There were no problems this year.

Papua New Guinea

950 hear talks by Dr. Peter Khan

More than 700 persons, including almost the entire student body, heard Auxiliary Board member Peter Khan talk about the Faith at a university in Lae recently.

Large crowds were turned away because the hall was filled.

Dr. Khan also spoke at a university in Port Moresby where about 250 persons attended.

In Lae, the vice chancellor of the university chaired Dr. Khan’s meeting. “It was a victory for the Faith to receive the sponsor-

ship of the university and its chancellor,” the National Spiritual Assembly of Papua New Guinea reported.

The Assembly said that plans are under way to pursue the awakened interest of the students.

A luncheon to introduce Dr. Janet Khan to the women of Lae was held at the home of Counsellor Violet Hoehnke of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia.

Mrs. Khan spoke on International Women’s Year and its relation to the Faith. Present were the wives of the district commissioner and the chief of police, the matron of the local hospital, and a newspaper reporter.

Spain

Bahá'ís gather at Regional Youth School

Participants in the first Regional Bahá'í Youth School held in Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Canary Islands, on March 29, 1975. Santa Cruz is the capital city of the Canary Islands which lie in the Atlantic Ocean some 800 miles southwest of the Spanish coast. The islands form two provinces of Spain.

Arucas Bahá'ís win mountain village rally

The Bahá'ís of Arucas won first price in an auto rally at the small mountain village of Valleseco. The driver was Hilario Pedomo, kneeling in front of the car (with glasses). Behind the car are Mrs. Heidrun Schmoller and Horst Schmoller, pioneers from Germany and Chile, respectively. All participated in teaching activities.
Note in a bottle points out oneness

In March 1974, Peggy True, a pioneer in the Canary Islands, wrote a brief note referring to the Faith and containing her name and address, sealed it in a glass bottle, and cast it into the sea.

On May 30, 1975, she received the following letter from Auxiliary Board member Edith McLaren who is serving the Faith in Nicaragua:

"You will be very happy to know what happened to your little proclamation note which you sent out in a bottle in March 1974.

"For about 10 days before Ridván I was visiting several towns on the Atlantic coast with another pioneer helping the Local Spiritual Assemblies to prepare for their elections. . . In one town where there are at least forty registered Bahá'ís (Tasbapouni), north of Bluefields, a native woman brought us your note which she found on the shore near her home.

"The friends there and in other towns we visited were very excited about this and it helped them really feel the oneness of Bahá'ís in all the world . . . They were even more excited to know that I knew you—it arrived the only full day I spent in their town!"

United States

Youth goal won with Conferences

One goal of the Two Year Youth Program, announced last year by the National Assembly at the historic conference in St. Louis, was for youth to "participate in the series of state and district conferences, including one on an Indian reservation, to be held in 1975 to stimulate the winning of the youth goals."

The goal was completed June 29 at the conclusion of a five-week series of 51 youth conferences sponsored by the National Youth Committee in cooperation with Local Spiritual Assemblies and District Teaching Committees throughout the country.

More than 2,700 believers attended these meetings, which focused on "Planning a Life of Service." Through lectures, workshops, and fellowship they learned what opportunities exist for service to the Faith, what must be done to plan for education, careers, marriage, and future Bahá'í service, and how to set personal goals.

In the words of one young Bahá'í, "These two days . . . have given a wonderful view of what Bahá'í life is and a glimpse of what the Golden Age of the Faith can be."

Largest group at Pioneer Institute

Fifty prospective pioneers attended sessions at the National Center in Wilmette, Ill., June 12-15 designed to assist them in successfully filling the goals of the Five Year Plan.

The Pioneer Institute was the largest since the institutes began in 1970.

After the Institute, the friends were headed for such posts as American Samoa, Caroline Islands, Honduras, Tanzania, Guatemala, Leeward and Virgin Islands, San Andres, Brazil, Haiti, Colombia, Indonesia, Uruguay, Kenya, Zaire, French Guyana, India, Belize, Fiji, the Central African Republic, Ecuador, Peru, Nicaragua, and Togo.
Special visits held at House of Worship

The first in a series of four-day organized visits to the House of Worship this year was labeled "a significant experience" by many of the Bahá'ís who took part.

The visitors received an intensive introduction to the conduct of Bahá'í administration and the workings of the National Spiritual Assembly.

The visit began June 19 with a presentation by Counsellor Edna True of the Continental Board of Counsellors for North America who talked about the early days of the construction of the House of Worship. A film of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the United States, which included a segment on His visit to Wilmette to lay the cornerstone of the Temple, was also shown.

The following day, Glenford Mitchell, secretary of the National Assembly, discussed the significance of the construction of the seat of The Universal House of Justice, the teaching plans of the National Assembly, and the operation of the national committees.

Then the visitors went to the National Center, touring all of the committee offices, the Bahá'í Publishing Trust offices, and the Bahá'í Home for the Aged.

On the third day, they heard Charlotte Linfoot, assistant secretary of the National Assembly, talk about the Administrative Order and the development of the National Assembly, drawing from her many years of experience in national administrative positions. Stephen Jackson, assistant to the National Assembly Treasurer, discussed the importance of the Fund.

On the final day, the visitors toured the House of Worship and were guests of the National Assembly secretaries for lunch at the Hazíratu'l-Quds.

Hundreds of Bahá'ís have requested reservations for the special visits, but the groups are being limited to 30 at a time.

Methods to reach Spanish studied

A teaching seminar was held at the Bosch Bahá'í School June 6-8 by the National Spanish Speaking Teaching Committee.

Purpose was to discuss various aspects of reaching and teaching Spanish-speaking persons, one of the goals of the Five Year Plan.

One major idea explored in depth at the seminar was more effective use of television and radio stations which broadcast in Spanish.

Expansion completed At Gregory Institute

Another step in expansion of teaching facilities has been completed.

A classroom-dining hall has been added to the Louis Gregory Bahá'í Institute at Hemingway, S.C.

Institute focuses on Indian teaching

Over 100 Bahá'ís took part in the first Oregon Indian Teaching Institute at Tygh Valley, Ore., June 20-22.

One of the goals of the Five Year Plan is the establishment of 25 Local Spiritual Assemblies on Indian Reservations in the United States. At present there are 12.

One goal of the Oregon District Teaching Committee, one of the sponsors of the Institute, is to raise a Spiritual Assembly on each of the three Indian Reservations in Oregon during the Five Year Plan.

The Institute was also sponsored by the Auxiliary Board and the Bahá'í Groups of Wasco County and The Dalles.

Participating in the program were Auxiliary Board members Nancy Phillips and Paul Pettit, and assistants to the Auxiliary Board Ethly Lindstrom and Willard Kimerling.
Around the World

National Center gets a cleaning

Improvements have been made to the interior of the House of Worship at Wilmette, Ill.

New draperies for the auditorium and gallery windows were recently installed. It was the second change of draperies since the building was dedicated in 1953.

In addition, the chairs in the auditorium have been reupholstered, much of the interior ornamentation has been cleaned, and the lighting fixtures have been cleaned and buffed.

Meanwhile, the staff of the National Baha'i Center suspended normal activities on June 19 to participate in a massive exterior cleanup project.

Among the tasks completed:
- Painting the greenhouse for the Temple gardens;
- Cleaning the galleries and the gallery windows of the House of Worship;
- Cleaning the siding at The National Center offices;
- Painting the portions of the Secretariat offices;
- Raking the large beach at Lake Michigan, removing the underbrush and cleaning the banks along the lakefront property.

The crew broke at midday for a picnic lunch on the lawn of the Haziratu'l-Quds in an atmosphere of festivity.

Windward Islands

Extensive teaching program starts

The National Assembly has launched an extensive teaching program in 13 areas of the Windward Islands. The program will be expanded throughout the Five Year Plan.

Proclamations, institutes on teaching, conferences on Local Spiritual Assemblies and the quality of Baha'i life are some of the subjects to be explored during the program.

The program this year will be concentrated in 13 areas on Barbados, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Granada.

Zaire

Mr. Hanbury named to Auxiliary Board

The Continental Board of Counsellors in Central and East Africa has appointed Paul Hanbury as a member of the Auxiliary Board.

Mr. Hanbury has been a pioneer to Zaire from Canada for many years and has served on the Spiritual Assembly of Zaire.

June 19 was a day for extra hard work at the National Center. Top left, Charlotte Linfoot assistant secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, scrapes paint, and a staff member applies fresh paint inside at left. Above, old curtains from the House of Worship are discarded, and, below, grass and weeds along the lakefront property are chopped.
Preservation and consolidation of the victories won: This is one of the three major objectives of the Five Year Plan as the Cause of God goes “from strength to strength” throughout the worldwide Bahá’í community.

We can do this even in the face of rising global chaos if we use the strengthening serenity of our Sacred Texts, the Creative Word of God, to deepen and consolidate Bahá’ís. For this purpose several short, simple, powerful quotations of Bahá’u’lláh have been chosen and are now available in large type, illuminated by dignified artwork.

These attractive, brief prayers and meditations are suitable for framing or other kinds of display. Ten different quotations have been printed on 8.5 by 11-inch paper — large enough for wall or window display, yet small enough to be carried in a notebook.

Members of teaching, proclamation, conference, and consolidation committees might want to pay particular attention to this set for possible use at summer schools, institutes, and children’s classes. They are excellent for complementing normal teaching materials or for gifts to participating individuals at Bahá’í gatherings.

The large type and easy-to-handle pages also make the material useful for persons with poor eyesight, or for beginning readers, either children or adults, who are not yet accustomed to Bahá’í literature. In addition, these passages are generally brief enough so that students can memorize them without difficulty.

The entire set of ten can be bound into a new believers’ booklet either as they are or mounted artistically on colorful heavy paper. Further decorative illumination can then be added, limited only by the artist’s imagination. In this way home-made albums can be tailored to a variety of indigenous cultures. Other possible uses include mementos for friends on special Bahá’í occasions, or gifts for the sick or shut-in.

These ten quotations by Bahá’u’lláh are available either in complete sets or as individual prayers and meditations in multiples of ten.

How to Get the Illuminated Prayers and Passages of Bahá’u’lláh

Your local Bahá’í librarian or authorized Bahá’í distributor may have them in stock, or may be able to supply you with prices and ordering information. If, however, you cannot find them in your area, you may send your inquiry to the International Bahá’í Audio-Visual Centre, 1640 Holcomb Road, Victor, N.Y. 14564, U.S.A. for forwarding to the proper organization.
The Mountain of God and the Tablet of Carmel
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Cover photo: The majestic Shrine of the Báb, in the heart of Mount Carmel which in turn is in the heart of the Most Holy Land. The Shrine fulfills the promises of many prophets.
Carmel:

The Mountain of God and the Tablet of Carmel

By the Hand of the Cause of God Dhikru'lláh Khádem

THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD

The beloved Shoghi Effendi, in referring to the Tablet of Carmel, designated it as the “Charter of the World Spiritual and Administrative Centers of the Faith on that mountain.” Many prophecies had been made by the prophets about Mount Carmel. The mountain was called after the name of God: Carm (the Vineyard) and el (God). *

Bahá'u'lláh Himself, in the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, testified that “Carmel, in the Book of God, hath been designated as the Hill of God, and His Vineyard.” *

‘Abdu'l-Bahá, in His prayer during the war, wrote:

“Thou seest me, O God, in this lofty mountain, . . . the abode of the prophets, the home of His Holiness Elijah, the mountain where Isaiah took refuge, through which the Spirit of God, Jesus Christ, upon Him be greeting and Praise, passed, and where the footsteps of the Lord of Hosts (Bahá'u'lláh) trod . . . Lord this is the mountain Thou hast named Carmel in the Torah, and related to Thyself in the very texts of Thy holy Books and Tablets. Lord I pray to Thee in this lofty Shrine (the Shrine of the Bab) in the middle of the dark nights.” **

The Master also told pilgrims around the end of 1907:

“This mountain (Carmel) is where Israel's prophets passed their nights in prayers. Every step of it has been blessed by the footsteps of the prophets . . . This land will be the envy of the world, the center of arts and sciences. ‘Akká and Haifa will be connected and all the vacant lands will be cultivated. All these caves** that you see have been the abode of the prophets, step by step. Every atom of this soil is holy. All the prophets, while praying, longed to reach this day and give the glad tidings of the coming of the Lord. They prophesied that the Lord of Hosts would come and the tent of the Lord would be pitched on Mount Carmel. . . . in all these mountains and caves the prophets of God prayed at night, shed tears, and longed to be with us in these days of the

*In fact all the words ending in “el” have their significances, such as Israel (hasten to God), Ishma’el (listen to God), etc.

**Including reference to the Cave of Elijah, known also as Maqáman-i Khidr, blessed by the footsteps of Bahá'u'lláh for three days (according to Memoirs of Dr. Mu'ayyad. Vol. II, p 258) and of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for about two months (as per an unpublished manuscript).
The Purest Branch, Mirza Mihali, the martyred son of Bahá’u’lláh. The door of pilgrimage was opened. At top is his Tablet of Visitaton (see page 79).
Blessed Beauty. Since I am a prisoner and cannot move, you make a pilgrimage on My behalf. My utmost desire is to go and visit in freedom, but I cannot. You go on behalf of 'Abdu'l-Baha and make a pilgrimage to all of the Holy Places . . . and beseech God's bounty. I cannot go. I am a prisoner. I am re-incarcerated, and I have no permission to go out. The government prohibits me.”

He also said in 1914:

“Many Israelitish prophets either lived here or passed a portion of their lives or sojourned for a while or spent the last days of their existence on this mountain . . . Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, David, Solomon, Moses, Isaiah, Zachariah and, last of all, Christ. Elijah lived on Mount Carmel . . . His holiness Christ came to this mountain many times.”

“Even Zoroaster came to this land (Holy Land). That lofty figure also made a trip to this region and met some of the Israeli prophets . . .”

For thousands of years man read prophecies and ardently prayed for their realization:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

“And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths . . .

“And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

"O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.”

With great sorrow Carmel was being consumed in separation from her Lord, impatiently awaiting the fulfillment of these prophecies.

The Templars had already immigrated from Stuttgart, Germany, in anticipation of the coming of the Father and Son and had built their houses at the foot of Mount Carmel. The inscription over the window of a Templar house, "Der Herr ist nahe" (the Lord is nigh) on HaFagen Street (known as a German street) is still in existence.

When the promised hour did strike in 1890, Bahá'u'lláh, accompanied by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, came to the mountain and sat under a circle of planted cypress trees. His blessed eyes gazed upon the German street and upon the view of the sea. He pointed with His blessed finger to the site where the Shrine of the Báb is now located and uttered that, indeed, that spot was best and proper for the resting place of the Throne of the Exalted Báb. He instructed 'Abdu'l-Bahá that it should be purchased for that purpose. After two or three days, the Tablet of Carmel was also revealed. An eyewitness had mentioned to the beloved Guardian the details of that historic day, and was ordered by him to record it for posterity. His account said that Bahá'u'lláh sat on a chair in the middle of the round of trees with but little shade (it consisted of 15 trees each as thick as a finger), facing East, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá was seated on another chair one meter away, facing West. The cypress trees still exist above the Shrine of the Báb.

The beloved Guardian also told the writer on April 7, 1937, that 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself said that the Blessed Beauty with His own blessed hand pointed out the location for the Shrine of the Báb and directed Him that the pure remains of the Báb should be entombed there, in a structure with nine rooms, additional stories, and a dome.

The entombment of the remains of the Báb was, indeed, in accordance with the will of Bahá'u'lláh.

The beloved Guardian told the pilgrims that the Blessed Beauty had said that Palestine, now called Israel, is the Qiblih of the nations and the heart of the world. Geographically, it is in Asia, adjacent to Europe and Africa. The enemies of the Faith, the Persian and Turkish governments, had united for the banishment of Bahá'u'lláh and were the cause of His immigration. It was called the Holy Land and now has become the Most Holy Land. In the heart of this Most Holy Land is situated the Mountain of the Lord and in its heart, the Shrine of the Báb.

He has also noted the great significance of that holy place, now the Queen of Carmel, in these words:

"Her face (the Queen of Carmel) is toward the Greatest Abáh Prison, called by the Supreme Pen (Bahá'u'lláh) the Heaven of Heavens, as well as toward the Qiblih of the people of Bahá, the center of circumambulation of the Concours on High in the Holy Valley, the plain of 'Akka. On her right are the hills of Galilee, the Cradle of the beautiful Messiah (Jesus), the place of proclamation of His Holiness the Spirit (Christ), situated close to the shore of the Jordan River; on her left at the top of Carmel, the Cave of Elijah and the exalted site blessed and honored by the footsteps of the Blessed Abáh Beauty, where the Tablet of Carmel was revealed from the Treasure of the Supreme Pen; at her back, the two hills of Zion and Ziyta and Old Jerusalem; behind her, Biat'ul-Muqqaddas (Holy House), the site of martyrdom and grave of His Holiness Jesus Christ, and the place of the throne of David, as well as the Great Temple of Solomon, also the Aqá Mosque, the third Shrine (after Mecca and Medina) of the Muslim world; and farther back, the Mountain of Sinai, the Cradle of the Jewish (Moses) Faith of Túr, . . . the Holy Land where Moses heard the voice from the Burning Bush; and still farther back on the Arabian Peninsula, the land of Hijáz, the Cradle of the Muslim Faith and the city of Ya'qúb and Batá, the glorious Mecca and the luminous city of Medina, the Qiblih of Islám and the resting place of the Siyyid (Master) of the world.
incarcerated. He was in ‘Akká while construction of the Shrine was in progress on Mount Carmel according to His instructions.

The Covenant-breakers started great intrigues and machinations that led to the arrival of the Sultan’s Commission of Investigators. They approached the Commission and offered their cooperation. The Commission also started its own investigation and made trips from ‘Akká to Haifa for this purpose. One of the members of the Commission touched the wall of the Shrine and said in Turkish, “Chukh matin dur” (It is very strong). They thought that the building was going to be used to fight the Ottoman government. ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd, the Sultan, became worried and fearful. The Commission was busy with its investigation when suddenly a bomb exploded in Istanbul. The Sultan changed his mind. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “God’s bomb exploded.” ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd was imprisoned while ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gained His freedom.

In the following year, 1908, a constitutional government was announced. A year later, ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd was dethroned. The same year ‘Abdu’l-Bahá transferred His residence from ‘Akká to Haifa, where He ceremoniously deposited, on Naw-Rúz 1909, the holy, the luminous remains of the Báb (which had been transferred from one place to another for sixty years) in the sacred sarcophagus ordered from Burma, within the exalted Shrine on Mount Carmel.

The Guardian relates that as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was “sitting, facing the holy Shrine and gazing upon that holy structure, a phrase issued from His pure tongue: ‘It did not come to pass that the Shrine of the Báb be completed. God willing, it will be done. We have brought it thus far.’” It is apparent that this was left for the Sign of God, the beloved Guardian, to perform.

With an unfading zeal and resolution, the beloved Shoghi Effendi took it upon himself to comply with the wishes of Baha’u’llah and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and complete this important assignment. He enlarged the property by acquiring vast areas of land for the gardens, added three more rooms in the same architectural style as the original six built by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and commenced the construction of the Shrine on Naw-Rúz, 1949. The arcade and the

At left is the cave on Mount Carmel in which Elijah lived. At right is a house near the cave in which Baha’u’llah spent some time. The Cave of Elijah was blessed by the footsteps of Baha’u’llah for three days and of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for about two months.
parapet (the first crown of that great Edifice) were completed for the commemoration of the centenary of the Martyrdom of the Báb on July 9, 1950. The beloved Guardian placed a fragment of plaster from the Báb’s prison cell in Mák-Kú in the golden dome of the Shrine on April 29, 1953 (to contrast the Báb’s suffering, when He had not even a candle at night, to the glories and victories won for the Faith when the exalted name of the Báb and His fame reached to approximately 128 countries and territories of the globe.) Finally, in October 1953, the beloved Shoghi Effendi completed that glorious Shrine, the spiritual world center of the Faith, as in the Qur’án, but also guard it. In fact, the beloved Guardian, while preparing the plan, advised Mr. Sutherland Maxwell, the dear Hand of the Cause of God and the architect of that glorious Edifice, to consider the significance of eight in the Qur’án and quadruple it by placing eight columns for each of the four arcades. He also advised him to plan 18 lancet windows around the clerestory (representing the 18 Letters of the Living).

The beloved Guardian must have been so pleased and thrilled with his marvelous and majestic work, as he was moved to send these greetings and record them for genness, joy, and enthusiasm, pointing to Thee with their fingers, circumambulating around Thee, inhaling the fragrance of Thy flowers and roses, seeking the blessing of Thy Dust, covering their faces in dust before Thy Face, praising and glorifying the Sakineh (Ark) of God in Thee, and the hidden pearl in Thy bosom. Blessed, a thousand times blessed, is he who visits Thee, circumambulates Thee, serves Thee, waters Thy flowers, smells the fragrances of Thy roses, praises Thee, glorifies Thee because of his love for God, Thy Creator in this luminous, holy, great and dignified new

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**Immigrants from Stuttgart, Germany, settled at the foot of Mount Carmel in the late 1800s, impatiently awaiting the fulfillment of the ancient prophecies. The Templar House at right still stands on Hagefen Street. The inscription above the window at left is “Der Herr ist nahe” (the Lord is nigh).**
THE TABLET OF CARMEL

Earlier in these pages reference was made to the Tablet of Carmel as the "Charter of the World Spiritual and Administrative Centers of the Faith on that mountain." With completion of the Shrine of the Báb, the establishment of the Queen of Carmel on Her glorious throne, the glad tidings of Bahá'u'lláh concerning the world spiritual center of the Faith were realized.

'Abdu'l-Bahá recounts some of the incidents when the tent of Bahá'u'lláh was pitched on Mount Carmel:

"... 'Abdu'l-Hamid was harsher than ever; although he constantly insisted on his Captive's strict confinement—still, the Blessed Beauty now lived, as everyone knows, with all power and glory. Some of the time Bahá'u'lláh would spend at the Mansion, and again, at the farm village of Mazra'íih; for a while He would sojourn in Haifa, and occasionally His tent would be pitched on the heights of Mount Carmel. Friends from everw bern presented themselves and gained an audience. The people and the government authorities witnessed it all, yet no one so much as breathed a word. And this is one of Bahá'u'lláh's greatest miracles: that He, a captive, surrounded Himself with panoply and He wielded power. The prison changed into a palace, the jail itself became a Garden of Eden. Such a thing has not occurred in history before; no former age has seen its like: that a man confined to a prison should move about with authority and might; that one in chains should carry the fame of the Cause of God to the high heavens, should win splendid victories in both East and West, and should, by His almighty Pen, subdue the world. Such is the distinguishing feature of this supreme Theophany." 13

"... In that Day when "the hour at which" the "resistless Faith was to be made manifest did strike" 16 and nearing the evening of His life, "the fragrances of mercy have been wafted over all created things," Bahá'u'lláh addressed Carmel:

"... Render thanks unto Thy Lord, O Carmel. The fire of Thy separation from Me was fast consuming thee, when the ocean of My presence surged before Thy face... Rejoice, for God hath in This Day established upon thee His Throne, hath made Thee the dawning-place of His Signs... He, verily, loveth the spot which hath been made the seat of His Throne.

"... The Tongue of Grandeur (Bahá'u'lláh) hath been moved to disclose that which had been wrapt in His knowledge and lay concealed within the treasury of His might." 17
"Call out to Zion, O Carmel, and announce the joyful tidings: He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come! His all-conquering sovereignty is manifest; His all-encompassing splendor is revealed. Beware lest thou hesitate or halt. Hasten forth and circumbulate the City of God that hath descended from heaven, the celestial Kaaba round which have circled in adoration the favored of God, the pure in heart, and the company of the most exalted angels. . . . "Ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee, and will manifest the people of Bahá who have been mentioned in the Book of Names.

"Sanctified be the Lord of mankind, at the mention of Whose name all the atoms of the earth have been made to vibrate, and the Tongue of Grandeur hath been moved to disclose that which had been wrapt in His knowledge and lay concealed within the treasury of His might. He, verily, through the potency of His name, the Mighty, the All-Powerful, the Most High, is the ruler of all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth."18

No wonder He had not disclosed the hidden glad tidings earlier, waiting until the evening of His life to do so. Man was not ready nor did he deserve it.

GLAD TIDINGS FORETOLD BY THE PROPHETS

When "by the grace of the Lord of Revelation, the Tabernacle of Glory hath been raised"19 on Mount Carmel, all the promises Bahá’u’lláh deemed advisable were revealed. The Kingdom of the Father on earth long prophesied by Jesus Christ was initiated and the truth of the revelation of St. John became manifest: Malakút-i-Pidar mubárak bád (blessed by the kingdom of the Father)!20

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away: and there was no more sea. . . . And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. . . . And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."21

The Parsís were long awaiting the fulfillment of their prophecies that, "After the victory of the Arabs and the decline of the Zoroastrians I (God) will raise a great man in Iran from the dynasty of the Kings, who will gather the people of the world from the east and the west to the worship of God."22 "He (the Promised One), then (at that time) will make the whole universe anew."23

Isaiah, the greatest prophet of Israel, again referred to Bahá’u’lláh and His Kingdom:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever."24

"And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."25

In further reference to the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh and The Universal House of Justice, the beloved Guardian said:

"The Muslims have recited the first chapter of the Qur’án in their daily obligatory prayers (five times), praying for the coming of the 'King of the day of judgment'. In reference to the 'King', the exalted Báb said, 'The King of the day of judgment will appear in the year 80** (1280 AH, Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation in the Ridván Gardens).

The Prophet-Herald martyr of Bahá’u’lláh, the Báb, in His Mother Book, the Bayán, revealed in explicit language: "Well is it with him, who fixeth his gaze upon the Order of Bahá’u’lláh."27

All these predictions were, in a sense, realized with the revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, with His proclamation to the kings and leaders of the world, with His Messages and Tablets to the whole of mankind, and with the revelation of the Book of His Laws, the Most Holy Book, the Aqdas. The earth was indeed filled with "the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."28 However, because of the inadequacy of man, Bahá’u’lláh did not reveal the mysteries which were still hidden in the Tablet of Carmel.

FORMATIVE AGE

With the passing of 'Abdu’l-Bahá the Formative Age started. The beloved Guardian nurtured and consolidated the Administrative Order, the foundation of which was laid by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He strengthened the Local Spiritual Assemblies, the bedrock of the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh. He trained the Bahá’ís, constantly urged them to promote the Cause, guided them in electing National Spiritual Assemblies, and encouraged them to collaborate with him until the final crown, The Universal House of Justice, was won.

His deeply inspiring messages, as bountiful rains of divine blessings, showered upon all communities without interruption, causing them to arise and respond befittingly to his heavenly calls.

In his moving message of August 1927, addressed to the long-suffering Bábí in the East, he announced the glad tidings that, "the spring season of the Faith has passed and the summer, with choice fruits and harvest, has come."

Later, in November 1927, he shared the great triumph of the members of the Central American Bahá’í Assembly and highly praised them for enacting their constitution and by-laws, and for presenting this document to the official authorities of their government—an act which led to the recognition of the Cause in that continent. In that same message the beloved Shoghi Effendi was moved to offer his thanks to Bahá’u’lláh and to quote some of the preceding passages from the Tablet of Carmel. He ended his 32-page message with a very moving and heart-rending prayer. He continued to quote some of the passages of

*—These passages were quoted by the beloved Guardian in his message to the East in August 1927.

**—One vahid (19 years) after the Revelation of the Bab and beginning of the year 1280 AH.
the Tablet of Carmel in his further messages, such as one in a 24-page message of November 27, 1929:

"O Carmel . . . . Well is it with him that circletcb around thee, that proclaimest the revelation of thy glory, and recounteth that which the bounty of the Lord thy God hath showered upon thee."

I had the great privilege and honor to listen with gratitude to the revelation of the glory of Carmel proclaimed by the beloved Shoghi Effendi on April 3, 1937, in the vicinity of the Master's House. Oh, that I could have been able to grasp and recall all the gems and interpretations recounted by him on that great day! How sweet, very sweet, was the melody of his voice!

"Have you read the Tablet of Carmel?" was his query. "The Tablet is there in the Pilgrim House. The Blessed Beauty revealed this Tablet when His tent was first raised on Mount Carmel near the Deyr (Carmelite Monastery)**. The Tablet was not completed. It contains the divine mysteries of God. Baha'u'llah said, 'Call out to Zion, O Carmel', which means, O Carmel, address Jerusalem, 'and announce the joyful tidings: He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come!' . . . Hasten forth and circumambulate the City of God. The City of God refers to the establishment of the Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel. The City of God in this Tablet is Baha'u'llah's promise to entomb the sacred body of the Báb. A 'celestial Kaaba' is a mystery" (which he did not disclose, nor did I dare to ask). "These are mysteries. Baha'u'llah proceeds in this Tablet, 'Ere long will God sail His ark upon thee', a further mystery which means The Universal House of Justice will be established here on Mount Carmel under the shadow of the Shrine of the Báb. The Ark, in this Tablet, is the Ark of God's civilization. And 'the people of Bahá', the occupants of the Ark, are members of the House."

These were some of the explanations (already confirmed in his messages) which I heard on that historic day in my life from the blessed lips of the beloved Guardian. As I took my leave from him I found myself incapable of recalling any of his further statements, so powerful were his words, words of the Sign of God on earth.

Later the beloved Guardian explained that the Tablet of Carmel was revealed from the Holy lips of Baha'u'llah in a loud voice and recorded by His amanuensis, whom Baha'u'llah called to take dictation. The power and melody of His voice deeply impressed the monks of the monastery who were standing in reverence and listening.

A year later, the beloved Guardian bade me to memorize the Tablet of Carmel, visit Shiráz and Yazd, and chant it for the Afnán (kindred of the Báb).

**MONUMENT GARDENS**

Baha'u'llah offered up His dear son, the Purest Branch, "created of the light of Bahá', the 'trust of God' and His 'Treasure' in the Holy Land" . . . . as a 'ransom' for the regeneration of the World and the unification of its peoples.

In a highly significant prayer in memory of the Purest Branch Bahá'u'lláh revealed: "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." A "death to the rank of those great acts of atonement associated with Abraham's intended sacrifice of His son, with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the martyrdom of the Imam Husayn." 32

The beloved Shoghi Effendi, on Christmas Eve, 1939, transferred the remains of the brother and mother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Mount Carmel and announced the glad tidings:

"Blessed remains Purest Branch and Master's Mother safely transferred to hallowed precincts shrines Mount Carmel . . . Cherished work Greatest Holy Leaf fulfilled. Sister, Brother, Mother wife 'Abdu'l-Bahá reunited one spot designed constitute focal center Bahá'í Administrative Institutions at Faith's World Center . . . Shoghi Rabbani." 33

He had already erected the Monument of the Greatest Holy Leaf and designated it as symbolic of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, The Universal House of Justice. He had explained both in his messages and his talks to the pilgrims that the three steps of the monument of the Greatest Holy Leaf are symbolic of the three steps of the election of The Universal House: first, the election of the delegates of the believers to the National Conventions; second, the election of the members of the National Spiritual Assemblies by the delegates; and third, the election of The Universal House of Justice by the members of the National Assemblies. The nine pillars of the monument symbolize the National Assemblies, and the dome, The Universal House of Justice.

He also explained that when the nine pillars on the monument were being constructed, he called the engineer and directed him to place the head pillar so that it precisely faces the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, and not 'Akká.

The beloved Guardian emphasized in his writings as well as in his talks to pilgrims that in the Tablet of Carmel Bahá'u'lláh established and gave the glad tidings for two institutions, the world spiritual and the world administrative centers of His Faith on Mount Carmel. The world spiritual center is the Shrine of the Bab; the world administrative center is The Universal House of Justice. These two, according to his message on the occasion of the transfer of these two blessed souls, are inseparable—a fact that is significant and unique.

The spiritual and administrative centers of the Muslim faith which, in the beginning of Islam, were together in the Arabian Peninsula, became separated from each other. Mecca and Medina remained as the spiritual centers, but the administrative center moved to Damascus, 'Iraq, and eventually to Turkey, where it collapsed (the Caliphate). The same thing happened in Christianity. After the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, Jerusalem, where Jesus Christ was crucified and buried, was considered the spiritual center of Christianity.

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**—It is written with excellent penmanship, enclosed in a big frame, and hung in the middle of the wall in the upper hall of the Pilgrim House. The beloved Guardian used to sit facing the Tablet of Carmel in a wicker chair two chairs from the window (which naturally remained unoccupied).

**—Very close to the site of the present obelisk that the beloved Guardian had designated for the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkar.
The first Christian church under the leadership of one of Christ's brothers was also located in Jerusalem. However, because of the teaching activities and dispersal of His disciples, the administrative center moved to Rome where the Pope resides.

DEDICATION OF THE TWIN MONUMENTS

The writer had the bounty to be present at the dedication of the monuments of the brother and mother of ʻAbdu'l-Bahá, which took place on February 9, 1940 (first Muḥarram 1359, birthday anniversary of the Báb according to the lunar calendar).

After a large meeting in the Pilgrim House and en route to visiting the Shrines of the Báb and ʻAbdu'l-Bahá, the Guardian bade me to chant two prayers, one in each Shrine. At the time I was unaware of the purpose of these prayers, but upon leaving the Shrines learned from the beloved Guardian that one was for reducing the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran and the other for opening the door of pilgrimage. He stated further that as a result of these prayers the door of pilgrimage would indeed open and all the Bahá'ís who had been permitted to go on pilgrimage but were deprived because of the strict passport restrictions would come, openly proclaiming their purpose. It is interesting to note that 70 years earlier the Purest Branch, on his deathbed, entreated Bahá'u'lláh to accept him as a ransom that the door of pilgrimage be opened for those of His loved ones who yearned, but were unable, to come; again on this day of the dedication of the twin monuments, the beloved Shoghi Effendi gave the joyous tidings of the opening of the door of pilgrimage. Indeed, the Guardian's prediction came to pass. Over 120 pilgrims attained their hearts' desire, openly proclaiming that they were proceeding on pilgrimage to the Bahá'í holy Shrines in ʻAkka and Haifa. So many came that the Guardian finally temporarily discontinued the pilgrimages.

On that historic day of the dedication, the beloved Guardian gathered all the petals from the Shrines of the Báb and ʻAbdu'l-Bahá and spread them in two big white sheets. These were then taken to the monuments, where an entire sheet with the rose petals was spread over each monument, following which the beloved Guardian added a rose to each with such care that it seemed as if he were searching for the exact and proper spot to adorn their holy and blessed hearts, an act, the tenderness of which deeply moved all who were present at the dedication. He then chanted their Tablets of Visitation:

"Upon thee, O Branch of God! be the remembrance of God and His praise, and the praise of all that dwell in the Realm of Immortality, and of all the denizens of the Kingdom of Names. Happy art thou in that thou hast been faithful to the Covenant of God and His Testament, until thou didst sacrifice thyself before the face of thy Lord, the Almighty, the Unconstrained. Thou, in truth, hast been wronged, and to this testifyst the Beauty of Him, the Self-Subsisting. Thou didst, in the first days of thy life, bear that which hath caused all things to groan, and made every pillar to tremble. Happy is the one that remembereth thee, and draweth nigh, through thee, unto God, the Creator of the Morn.

"Blessed art thou, and blessed he that turneth unto thee, and visiteth thy grave, and draweth nigh, through thee, unto God, the Lord of all that was and shall be. . . . I testify that thou didst return in meekness unto thine abode. Great is thy blessedness and the blessedness of them that hold fast unto the hem of thy outspread robe . . . ."

"O Navváb! O Leaf that hath sprung from My Tree, and been My companion! My glory be upon thee, and My loving kindness, and My mercy that hath surpassed all beings. We announce unto thee that which will gladden thine eye, and assure thy soul, and rejoice thine heart. Verily, thy Lord is the Compassionate, the All-Bountiful. God hath been and will be pleased with thee, and hath singled thee out for His own Self, and to serve Him, and hath made thee the companion of His Person in the day-time and in the night-season.

"Hear thou Me once again, God is well-pleased with thee, as a token of His grace and a sign of His mercy. He hath made thee to be His companion in every one of His worlds, and hath nourished thee with His meeting and presence, so long as His Name, and His Remembrance, His Kingdom, and His Empire shall endure. Happy is the handmaid that hath mentioned thee, and sought thy good-pleasure, and humbled herself before thee, and held fast unto the cord of thy love. Woe betide him that denieth thy exalted station, and the things ordained for thee from God, the Lord of all names, and him that hath turned away from thee, and rejected thy station before God, the Lord of the mighty throne."

Then the beloved Guardian proceeded to the monument of the Greatest Holy Leaf, where he chanted with a melodious and sweet voice a prayer, walked to the two foot columns of her monument, and said the Tablet revealed in her honor, engraved with pure gold on the crown of the monument. This according to him, is the highest tribute to her revealed by Bahá'u'lláh:

"He is the Eternal! This is My testimony for her who hath heard My voice and drawn nigh unto Me. Verily, she is a leaf that hath sprung from this preexistent Root. She hath revealed herself in My name and tasted of the sweet savors of My holy, My wondrous pleasure. At one time we gave her to drink from My honeyed Mouth, at another caused her to partake of My mighty, my luminous Kawthar. Upon her rest the glory of My name and the fragrance of My shining robe."

After reciting this Tablet the beloved Guardian turned to the right and shared certain verses of the 54th chapter of Isaiah. He said the Master had explained that the whole chapter was addressed to ʻAbdu'l-Bahá's mother.

"Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; For
thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame. . . . For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of Hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall He be called. . . . For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. . . ."

Then the beloved Guardian said that God promised to build her monument with most precious stones.

". . . behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones."

The beloved Shoghi Effendi said for thousands of years the people read this chapter ignorant of its significance. Even the Bahá'í teachers did not know its true meaning. How explicitly it is said that: "Thy maker is thine husband; the Lord of Hosts is His name." It could not be said more explicitly than this: "Thy maker (Bahá'u'lláh) is thy husband."

The beloved Shoghi Effendi then in a very moving way expressed his thanks:

"Thanks to God, now their holy, blessed remains have been placed in pure, shining marble, and the promises of God have been fulfilled. The result of these prophecies will become manifest in the second Bahá'í century."

THE ARK AROUND THE ARC

During my last pilgrimage on the second fortnight in March, 1952, the beloved Shoghi Effendi was busy preparing the dome over the octagon in order that gilded tiles could be placed on the third crown of the Shrine of the Báb and completed for the Ridván Centenary of the Holy Year Nine (1953). In his presence I watched as he pointed with his right hand to the Shrine of the Báb and thanked Bahá'u'lláh that the spiritual center of the Faith on Mount Carmel was almost complete. Then he waved his left hand, pointing to the lands of the Monument Gardens, and said, "From now on we must exert our efforts to build the Administrative World Center there."

He often remarked that the believers must be waiting anxiously for the realization of the promises of God uttered in the Tablet of Carmel:

"Ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee."

While walking in the mountains, waving his hand, he said that it means, "The Laws of God will flow from Thee, O Mount Carmel, to the world and its inhabitants."

This reminds us that the phrase, "the Laws flowing from the mountains", has been a common phrase in all religions. Please see prophecies of the Old Testament in the book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 33, when Moses, for the last time in His life, blessed the children of Israel. He referred to the mountains of Sinai (Moses), Sair (Jesus) and His (God's) shining forth from Mount Paran (Muhammad).

We can now go to Carmel and say, 'Come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.'

Thereafter the beloved Guardian started to build an Arc around the monuments in the Monument Gardens, along which would be erected the international institutions of the Faith. The first of these was, according to him, the Archives, majestically built and prepared for the sacred relics and Writings of the Faith. For its furniture, he visited England. It was there that he passed away, but he completed his plan. The beloved Shoghi Effendi predicted that the Ark of God (The Universal House of Justice) will be built around the Arc.

The beloved Guardian referred to these institutions in two beautifully different ways. In the first way, he used the original Arabic word Daru'l (House of, Center) for all the institutions: Daru'l-Athár (Archives), Daru'l-Tablíg or Daru'l-Tarvij (Teaching or Propagation Center, for the Hands), Daru'l-Taşhir (House of Legislation, Universal House of Justice). He also referred to these by using the prefix letter M, which in Arabic means "place of," and in a very joyful manner said the members of The Universal House of Justice will first go to the Mašr-i-Anvár (the Dawning Place of Light, the Shrine of the Báb), to seek blessings, then to the Mashriq-i-Adhkár (the House of Worship, which is to be built near the obelisk at the top of Mount Carmel), then they will come to Markáz-i-Áthár (the center of relics, the Archives) for reference to the Holy Texts, and will gather in the Majmá'í-Ábrár (the gathering place of the righteous, the House of Justice) for deliberation.

Thanks to Bahá'u'lláh, the beloved Shoghi Effendi, through his self-sacrifice and his untiring 36 years of work, day and night of work with no rest, brought that body, The Universal House of Justice, "the source of all good and freed from all errors" 36, into its embryonic form as he promised in his first message to the Bahá'ís of the East. He did not leave us before he completed his ministry.

Again thanks to the Blessed Beauty that the Supreme Body, The Universal House of Justice, the last refuge for mankind as predicted by all the Prophets, is now formed. The eyes of creation are illumined, the Ark of God is sailing, and His Laws are flowing from Mount Carmel.

The beloved Guardian said the Shrine of the Báb, in spite of all its beauty and marvelous attraction, is under the shadow of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, even as the number eight, symbolic of the octagon and columns in the arcade, is under the shadow of nine (numerical value of Bahá). The beloved Guardian had named the Shrines of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb Daryá'y-i-Nür (the Ocean of Light) and Küh-i-Nür (the Mountain of Light) (also the titles of the two biggest diamonds in the world), the second one being under the shadow of the first.

Thanks, a thousand thanks that now, as a result of the abundant bounties of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb, the miracles of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and the untiring, strenuous efforts of the beloved Shoghi Effendi, we can go to the Mountain of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob, and say, "Come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord." 28

Praise be unto Him (God) that now we can see with our own eyes, in the circuits of Jerusalem ('Akká and Haifa), blessed by God, the signs of God shown to Muhammad, Apostle of God, almost 1400 years ago in His one-night journey.
“Praise be unto him who transported his servant (Muhammad) by night from the sacred temple of Mecca to the farther temple of Jerusalem, the circuit of which we have blessed, that we might show him some of our signs.”

Let us examine closely these passages from the recent inspiring and moving message of the House of God, The Universal House of Justice:

“As the Five Year Plan gathers momentum in all parts of the world, with the followers of the Blessed Perfection firmly embarked on the course that will lead to victory, the time has come for us to contemplate, in preparation for its imminent initiation, the project which will rank as a template, in preparation for its imminent realization, for those Grand Houses of Tomorrow, the future Mashriqu’l-Adhkar, which will evolve into the focal center of those world-shaking, world-embracing, world-directing administrative 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’u’lláh who have been mentioned in the Book of Names.’

... The first of the majestic edifices constituting this mighty Center, was the building for the International Archives of the Faith which was completed in the summer of 1957 as one of the last major achievements of Shoghi Effendi’s Guardianship ...

... It is now both necessary and possible to initiate construction of a building that will not only serve the practical needs of a steadily consolidating administrative center but will, for centuries to come, stand as a visible expression of the majesty of the divinely ordained institutions of the Administrative Order of Bahá’u’lláh."

What a glory for each one of us in this perishing world, where “Nothing but the Face of God remains.” (Qur’án) to respond befittingly to the call of the Supreme Body of the Faith by presenting to the altar of the Blessed Beauty our humble means, energies, and resources and to arise unitedly, as never before, to bring into being the Kingdom of the Father, Bahá’u’lláh’s Commonwealth.

PLEASE GOD WE MAY ACHIEVE IT!

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3. Published at the time in Persia in Arabic.
9. Jinábi HuDéyén Iqbal, letter to the beloved Guardian and letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., pp 16, 17.
20. Na’im, well known Bahá’í poet.
23. Gúl’dást-i-Chaman-i’ín of Zoroaster, p 71; Manájiratu’l-Diniyyih, p 38.
25. Ibid., 11:5.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., p 188.
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34. Ibid., pp 249, 251.
35. Ibid., p 251.
38. Isáhá’í, 2:5.
A turning point in North America

Members of the senior institutions of the Faith meet in Wilmette at historic continental conference

Scarcely three months after the Ríjúdán 1975 message of The Universal House of Justice which called the attention of the Bahá'í world to the evidences of “gathering clouds widespread opposition Divine Message,” a conference unique in the annals of the Faith in North America was called. Initiated on behalf of The Universal House of Justice by the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears, the conference brought members of the senior institutions of the Faith from every corner of North America to Wilmette, on the weekend of July 4.

As a constant stream of visitors eddied about the House of Worship on the sunny holiday weekend, few could guess the significance of the gathering that took place quietly and unobtrusively in Foundation Hall. It was a “historic, energizing” gathering, unprecedented in its scope and in the ramifications of its deliberations.

Although many Bahá'í conferences of a national or international nature have been held in the past, this was the first continental conference for North America. It represented not only a new level of gathering, but a new awareness of a “continental oneness.”

Three Hands of the Cause, Zikrullah Khadem, John Robarts, and William Sears; Counsellor 'Aziz Yazdi of the International Teaching Center in Haifa; all the members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for North America, the National Spiritual Assemblies of Alaska, Canada, and the United States; and the members of the Auxiliary Boards met at the House of Worship Saturday and Sunday, July 5 and 6.

A warm welcome from all the conference participants was extended to their distinguished visitor from the World Center, Counsellor Yazdi, in Wilmette to discuss matters of common interests and to attend the consultation.

At the end of the conference, Mr. Yazdí explained that he had the blessing of the International Teaching Center to meet with the Counsellors and Board members to get to know them better, and to be present at the conference sessions. He warmly expressed praise for the entire program, arranged in detail by the Hands of the Cause.

A number of events of great significance took place during the weekend. Three National Spiritual Assemblies consulted on Friday; the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States met with
the Counsellors, including the representative from the World Center; and separate meetings took place in the Temple areas of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Canada and Alaska. Tracy Hamilton, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands, was also present for the inter-Assembly consultations.

"Something new has happened in North America," said one conference participant. "There has been a turning point." Many felt that a milestone in Baha’i history had been reached as a result of the gathering. Counsellor Edna True pointed out that only as time went on would we realize more fully the influence of the gathering.

Serious deliberation on matters connected with the protection of the Faith could not quench the enthusiasm and excitement generated by the scope of the gathering.

"As the Cause expands and its institutions become more consolidated," commented one of the participants, "we may expect the opposition to grow also. It is inevitable." He went on to explain that the conference was called to assist Baha’is to understand the nature of this kind of opposition, in view of the fact that the Faith is growing in prestige.

At each successive stage in the development of the Faith, as it grows from strength to strength, opposition has arisen to "extinguish its light and discredit its name." At each step guidance is given as to the appropriate response of the believers. The Guardian wrote in *God Passes By*:

"The tribulations attending the progressive unfoldment of the Faith of Baha’u’llah have indeed been such as to exceed in gravity those from which the religions of the past have suffered. Unlike those religions, however, these tribulations have failed utterly to impair its unity, or to create, even temporarily, a breach in the ranks of its adherents. It has not only survived these ordeals, but has emerged, purified and inviolate, endowed with greater capacity to face and surmount any crisis which its resistless march may engender in the future."

Although primarily concerned with the issue of protecting the Faith from opposition, the conference also provided an opportunity for members of the three National Spiritual Assemblies, and the Auxiliary Boards to share teaching ideas and learn of goals achieved in other areas.

One National Assembly member commented: "It was especially useful and strengthened our long held view that we should collaborate more specifically on a variety of things with nearby National Spiritual Assemblies."

Another member said, "We are learning firsthand the approach to the Five Year Plan goals of fellow Baha’is in the other institutions, and it is like looking through an open window on great beauty... The effect of this conference will be felt for a long time."

Throughout the conference the Hands of the Cause and the visiting member of the International Teaching Center offered guidance and warm words of encouragement.

At a meeting of the Continental Board of Counsellors with its Auxiliary Boards that took place in nearby Evanston immediately before and after the Wilmette conference, the participants consulted upon methods of carrying out their work and upon ways to release the power for that "vast and widespread expansion of the Baha’i community," a prime goal of the Five Year Plan.

"We all have the qualities to rise to achieve great victories," said Mr. Sears, "if we but know who we are and the Day in which we live!"

In addition to the universally felt concern to augment the teaching efforts to achieve the goals of the Five Year Plan, some topics of special consideration were: the appointment of assistants to Auxiliary Board members and the best utilization of their services; ways to increase awareness within the Baha’i community of the spiritual and practical value inherent in the collaboration of Assemblies and Board members, and the especially vital matter of protection of the Faith.

Commenting on the need for greater awareness within the Baha’i community of the nature and purpose of the work of Auxiliary Board members, Mr. Yazdi explained that this also existed many years ago when the Guardian first appointed Hands of the Cause.

"It will take time and patience," he said, "but in the long run it will be victorious."

Speaking at a regular monthly staff meeting at the National Baha’i Center following the weekend conference, Mr. Yazdi also had words of encouragement for "those Baha’is whose sacrificial efforts in inconspicuous but vital areas of the work of the Faith," who help "to prepare the way for the army of Baha’u’llah to win still greater victories, saying that working without expectation of reward or even acknowledgment is in itself the greatest reward."
Around the World

Bolivia

Rúhíyyih Khánum completes journey

The Hand of the Cause of God Amatul-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum completed her arduous five-month journey to the Amazonas by paying a courtesy call on President Hugo Banzer Suárez. She presented Bahá’í literature in Spanish and English. The newspaper El Diario published a photograph and a sympathetic and accurate account of the interview.

Prior to the interview, Rúhíyyih Khánum participated in a conference in the village of Sacaca in which 300 persons attended. Increased teaching activity was pledged by the Indian believers.

Colombia

Teachers prepared at 3-day Institute

Counsellor Donald Witzel huddles with the friends at Puerto Tejada at a three-day Regional Teaching Institute. Purpose of the Institute was to prepare teachers for Bahá’í children’s classes.

The Institute was one of several events in July.

A Regional Teaching Conference was held July 18-20 at Monterria, Cordoba. Mr. Witzel discussed the distinctive characteristics of Bahá’í life, the Bahá’í community, and the members of the Local Spiritual Assembly; Auxiliary Board member Maxine Roth spoke on the function of the Local Spiritual Assembly; Alan Fryback, a National Spiritual Assembly member, talked about recent messages from The Universal House of Justice; and Dr. Farzam Arbab of the National Teaching Committee spoke about regional and national teaching goals and plans.

Among other stops on Mr. Witzel’s

Brazil

Tribute to Greatest Holy Leaf highlights first Bahá’í Winter School

About 75 Bahá’ís attended the First National Bahá’í Winter School of Brazil July 27-Aug. 2 at Vitoria, Espirito Santo.

Highlight of the exciting school was a touching tribute to the Greatest Holy Leaf by Counsellor Leonora Armstrong. The talk was taped and the National Spiritual Assembly plans to preserve it.

Among the subjects discussed at the school were teaching requirements, marriage and morals, the distinctive character of the Bahá’í community and talks about the early history of the Faith.

The National Assembly reported that one of the outstanding characteristics of the school was the active participation of the youth.

Meanwhile, institutes were held about the same time in Rio Grande do Sul, Bahia, Rio Grande do Norte, and Ceará. Persons attending the Winter School at Vitoria visited the nearby community of Jardim Colorado where almost 100 friends packed the Hazíratu’l-Quds there. A public meeting followed in the Vitoria Bahá’í Salão in which two adults and four youth presented a program on the Faith. One declaration followed.
Around the World

schedule was Kilometer 18 in the Colombian Guajira. Mr. Witzel, Auxiliary Board member Cecilia Yguaran, and Mr. and Mrs. Fryback participated in a two-day course on teaching. More than 50 Bahá'ís from seven communities attended.

One lady offered a portion of her land on which to build a local Ḥażíratu’l-Quds.

El Salvador

Mr. Lamb conducts special institute

About 50 youth and young adults attended a teaching institute on courtship, marriage, the family, and the education of children held in July and conducted by Counsellor Artemus Lamb and his wife, Dee.

The institute was held at the National Ḥażíratu’l-Quds and was one in a series given by Mr. Lamb.

The Counsellor reported that the seven-hour institutes have been well received by both Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís.

Ghana

121 accept call to action at International Youth Conference

A total of 121 youth volunteered for pioneering and traveling teaching assignments following a stirring message from the Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga at the historic International Bahá'í Youth Conference.

Mr. Olinga represented The Universal House of Justice at the July 10-13 Conference in Accra.

An estimated 400 persons from 25 countries on four continents attended the Conference.

Mr. Olinga read a message from The Universal House of Justice which expressed the hope that the Conference would strengthen, inspire, increase the spirit of devotion, and demonstrate to Assemblies the value and services of the youth toward achievement of the goals of the Five Year Plan.

Counsellors Zekrollah Kazemi, Friday Ekpe, and Mihdi Samadari of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Western Africa also spoke at the conference.

Other speakers included Ben Asare, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Ghana; Nathaniel Quao, chairman of the Ghana Teaching Service; Akouete Akakpo of Togo; Ranzie Mensah of Ghana; Mrs. Lea Nys of Belgium; Mrs. Effiong Ekpe; and Shoghi Ghadimi.

The Conference was co-sponsored by the National Assemblies of Ghana and Togo.
Hawaiian Islands

Judge is honored at International Women's Year Banquet

More than 150 persons attended an International Women's Year Banquet sponsored by the Hawaiian Bahá'í community in Honolulu on July 20.

Highlight of the banquet was presentation of the Agnes Baldwin Alexander Award for Service to Humanity to Judge Betty M. Vitousek of the Family Court of Hawaii.

The award was presented by the National Assembly of Hawaiian Bahá'í Office for Human Rights (NAHBOHR) on the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Hand of the Cause of God, Agnes B. Alexander.

The citation for the award read in part: "Judge Betty M. Vitousek has distinguished herself by her outstanding service to the legal profession and the judiciary, and by her outstanding community service. She was a leader in establishing the Family Court and the Legal Aid Society in Hawaii. As a Judge to the Family Court since 1970, and presently the only woman judge in Hawaii, she has shown herself to be sensitive, able, compassionate, progressive, and an independent thinker. Judge Vitousek's concern for children and family are attested to by her personal life and by her community work. The Bahá'í Community of Hawaii through its Office for Human Rights delights in presenting the Agnes Baldwin Alexander Award for Service to Humanity to Judge Betty M. Vitousek, at left, who received the award from Mrs. Gladys Johnson, NAHBOHR director. Tracy Hamilton, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly, looks on. In bottom picture, William P. Alexander Jr., grand-nephew of the Hand of the Cause of God Agnes B. Alexander, admires a painting of Miss Alexander done by Leonard Herbert of Honolulu, left.

Mrs. Mildred R. Mottahedeh of New York, above, speaks at an International Women's Year Banquet in Honolulu. Highlight was presentation, below, of the Agnes Baldwin Alexander Award for Service to Humanity to Judge Betty M. Vitousek, at left, who received the award from Mrs. Gladys Johnson, NAHBOHR director. Tracy Hamilton, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly, looks on. In bottom picture, William P. Alexander Jr., grand-nephew of the Hand of the Cause of God Agnes B. Alexander, admires a painting of Miss Alexander done by Leonard Herbert of Honolulu, left.

Principal speaker at the banquet was Mrs. Mildred R. Mottahedeh of New York and the award.

In her talk, Mrs. Mottahedeh pointed out the plight of women who live in underdeveloped countries, the advances being made in women's rights, and the leadership given by the Bahá'í Faith.

Counsellor Elena Marsella of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Northeast Asia spoke on Miss Alexander's life, the example she set, and the legacy she left to the Bahá'í of the Pacific area.

Tracy Hamilton, Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands, welcomed those attending and gave a brief summary of the Faith and the work that is being done in the field of human rights.

Several messages were received at the banquet. William P. Alexander, nephew of Miss Alexander who could not attend because of age and illness, sent a message expressing appreciation for the award.

Congresswoman Patsy T. Mink of Hawaii sent a message of congratulations to the banquet and to Judge Vitousek. Congressman Spark Matsunaga of Hawaii stated of the Bahá'ís: "Yours is an organization which continues to contribute unselfishly to the welfare of the people of Hawaii."

U.S. Senator Hiram L. Fong of Hawaii praised Judge Vitousek.

U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye of Hawaii stated: "... It is fitting that the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Hawaiian Islands-observing decades of devoted efforts which led to the introduction and growth of the Bahá'í religion throughout the world—should bend itself now to another crusade of world dimensions, that of women's advancement. I hope that your activities, beginning with the tribute which you are tonight paying to Judge Vitousek, will contribute as much to this cause as Agnes Baldwin Alexander's tireless crusades contributed to the Bahá'í Faith. I think the confluence of three great causes in your program tonight—the Bahá'í belief, the international women's movement, and the humanitarian ideal—speaks well for all three, and you have sincere wishes that this continuing affinity will promote the advancement of all of them. I know the work of NAHBOHR will continue in all of these areas and you have my abiding support for this."

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Iceland

Mr. Sears visits temple site and Youth Conference

A dream long cherished by the Bahá'í community of Iceland, where the Icelandic translation of *Thief in the Night* has attracted many believers, was realized in July when the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears, together with Mrs. Sears and a party of four other Bahá'ís, took part in the Nardvik Youth Conference, concluding a two-year plan by the Icelandic Bahá'í youth.

One of the first countries in the world to achieve total literacy, Iceland has a tradition of keen interest in books and newspapers. The arrival of Mr. Sears, whose books on the Bahá'í Faith have been translated into many languages, was deeply appreciated by the Bahá'í community and a full schedule occupied his five-day visit.

Arriving earlier than anticipated, Mr. Sears and his party met, by chance, two of the Icelandic community when they went to a late-night cafeteria in Reykjavik after their long flight from Frobisher Bay, in the Canadian north. Their airplane, owned by David Hadden, a Canadian Bahá'í living at Port Hope, Ontario, made an overnight stop at Frobisher Bay on the way to Iceland and in a small village of Newfoundland on the return trip. At a refueling stop on the Greenland coast, Mr. Sears and his party were greeted by a colorful Bahá'í poster on the wall of the air terminal.

The visit began with a commemoration of the Martyrdom of His Holiness the Exalted Bab, held at noon, July 9, at the temple site near Reykjavik. The services included all of the Bahá'ís present joining hands in prayer at this historic gathering.

The following day, those gathering for the Youth Conference at Nardvik were greeted by unusually festive decorations in the hall at the naval base where the conference was held. Auxiliary Board member Svana Einarsdottir participated in the program, as well as many of the Icelandic youth.

In 1973, following a visit by the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'lláh Muhájír, the youth of Iceland adopted a two-year plan, with main objectives including a large contribution to the national Fund, deepening, and expansion of the Faith among the youth of Iceland. Although severe inflation has adversely affected the economy, making contributions more difficult, much of the fund goal was realized through large donations made during the conference.
Theme of the conference was: “Man hath been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization.”

There were many sessions of open consultation, with full opportunity to visit with Mr. Sears and ask questions.

Greetings cabled to The Universal House of Justice said, in part: “Greetings first International Youth Conference Iceland overjoyed blessed presence Hand Cause William Sears youth present nine countries. Beseech prayers Holy Shrines teaching work this month...”

At the end of the conference, the adults in Mr. Sears’ party made a one-day trip to Thorshavn, in the Faeroe Islands, where the local community enjoyed meeting their distinguished visitor and received his encouragement and prayers for their isolated community.

A trip to the Shetland and Orkney Islands was planned for the next day, but extreme fog made that impossible, so the plane returned to Reykjavik. After a final farewell from the Icelandic Bahá’ís, Mr. and Mrs. Sears and their fellow passengers made the long flight back to Port Hope, Ontario.

Liberia

President honored by presentation

President Tolbert of Liberia receives a copy of Bahá’í World, Vol. XIV, from William Enoanyi, right, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Liberia and Guinea. The presentation was made at Monrovia, Liberia, on July 25.

President Tolbert said he felt honored to receive the book. He expressed appreciation to the Bahá’ís and wished them success in teaching the Faith in Liberia and Guinea.

Netherlands

Six nationalities at Summer School

Bahá’ís from six nationalities attended the Dutch Summer School and Youth Camp in July.

The Hand of the Cause of God Abu’l-Qásím Faízi and Counsellor Dorothy Ferrabay of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe were among the speakers.

North West Pacific Ocean

Shopping plaza proclamation success

A proclamation and public service event was held recently at a shopping plaza in Dededo, Guam, which attracted a large attendance of island children and their parents.

As the children arrived they were encouraged to participate in such creative activities as finger painting, clay modeling, collage, bead stringing, and making soap bubbles. A particularly popular activity was a puppetmaking table where throngs of boys and girls of all ages gathered to create their own puppets from scraps of colorful cloth.

Bahá’í pamphlets were available and many were accepted and read by non-Bahá’í parents whose children were participating in the fun-filled activities.

Encouraged by the success of this venture the Bahá’ís of Guam plan another at Inarajan on the southern end of the island.

Pakistan

First Summer School

About 80 persons attended the first Summer School at Quetta July 21-27.

Nicaragua

Teachers travel to four Central America countries

Participants in a Central America traveling teaching project, plus representatives from the National Spiritual Assemblies of Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Honduras, get together for a recent briefing an Managua, Nicaragua. After the briefing, the teachers broke into four teams of three persons each and traveled in the four countries for about a month.
Papua New Guinea

House of Justice praises award winner

Elti Kunak, the first woman elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Papua New Guinea, has been awarded the British Empire medal for her work in women’s rights.

The Universal House of Justice sent this cable concerning the award:

“Delighted news award British Empire medal Elti Kunak. Please convey warm greetings commendation this recognition her distinguished service. Assure prayers Holy Shrines divine blessings confirma­tions may crown her efforts.”

Spain

Mr. Giachery speaks at Summer School

The Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery spoke at the National Summer School of Spain in July which was attended by believers from Spain, Germany, France, and Morocco.

United States

Council fire held at Chinle, Ariz.

An Indian Council Fire was held July 11-13 at Chinle, Ariz., in which Indians and non-Indians attended from the Dakotas, the Mexican border, Arizona, New Mexico, the Pacific Northwest, and California.

There were beautiful meetings; love expressed by a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, Franklin Kahn, himself a member of the Navajo Tribe; a fireside by Auxiliary Board member Nancy Phillips; and talks by Indians and whites.

Youth participate in 9 special projects

Many youth participated this summer in nine special teaching projects in seven states.

The events ranged from county fair booths to large proclamations. The projects were sponsored and coordinated by Local Spiritual Assemblies, District Teach-

ing Committees, and the National Youth Committee.

The projects were held in Illinois, California, South Carolina, New York, Colorado, Minnesota, and Michigan.

In Chicago, a storefront center was used in a Spanish-speaking neighborhood. In Los Angeles, a coffee house was set up in the Bahá’í Center to reach Armenians.

Other teaching projects were held at the Louis Gregory Bahá’í Institute at Hemingway, S.C.; in South Carolina District No. 2 North; at the county fair in Holyoke, Colo.; at fairs, conferences, and meetings in Olmstead County, N.Y.; at a fair in Hamburg, N.Y.; and at Carbondale, Ill., and Sault Sainte Marie, Mich.

50th anniversary for Berkeley Bahá’ís

The Bahá’ís of Berkeley, Calif., are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Local Spiritual Assembly.

As part of the celebration, a “Tea and Reminiscences” event was held June 15 in which Mr. and Mrs. Ali Yazdí shared with the friends their experiences in the early days of the Faith in Berkeley. The highlight was recollections of a talk given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at Berkeley High School on Oct. 9, 1912.

Venezuela

Three village chiefs attend institute

A group of 38 Motílon-Yukpa Indians, including the chiefs of three villages, attended the first institute course held June 28-29 in Toroma, a village in the Perijá mountains.

Counsellor Donald Witzel of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South America was among the teachers at the institute which was planned by the Regional Teaching Committee for the state of Zulia.

The village chiefs received from the National Spiritual Assembly pictures of the Shrine of the Báb for placement in local Hazíratu’l-Quds which will be constructed in their villages.

Mr. Yazdí meets with Bahá’ís in Los Angeles

Counsellor ‘Azíz Yazdí of the International Teaching Center chats with some of the 200 Bahá’ís who met on July 26 at the Los Angeles (Calif.) Bahá’í Center.

Mr. Yazdí spoke about Bahá’í activity all over the world, including news from the World Center.
Illuminated (decorated) Prayers and Passages of Bahá'u'lláh for teaching and deepening make welcome gifts, provide inspiring wall decoration and aid in memorization.

Illuminated Prayers and Passages of Bahá'u'lláh

Preservation and consolidation of the victories won: This is one of the three major objectives of the Five Year Plan as the Cause of God goes "from strength to strength" throughout the worldwide Bahá'í community.

We can do this even in the face of rising global chaos if we use the strengthening serenity of our Sacred Texts, the Creative Word of God, to deepen and consolidate Bahá'ís. For this purpose several short, simple, powerful quotations of Bahá'u'lláh have been chosen and are now available in large type, illuminated by dignified artwork.

These attractive, brief prayers and meditations are suitable for framing or other kinds of display. Ten different quotations have been printed on 8.5 by 11-inch paper — large enough for wall or window display, yet small enough to be carried in a notebook.

Members of teaching, proclamation, conference, and consolidation committees might want to pay particular attention to this set for possible use at summer schools, institutes, and children's classes. They are excellent for complementing normal teaching materials or for gifts to participating individuals at Bahá'í gatherings.

The large type and easy-to-handle pages also make the material useful for persons with poor eyesight, or for beginning readers, either children or adults, who are not yet accustomed to Bahá'í literature. In addition, these passages are generally brief enough so that students can memorize them without difficulty.

The entire set of ten can be bound into a new believers' booklet either as they are or mounted artistically on colorful heavy paper. Further decorative illumination can then be added, limited only by the artist's imagination. In this way home-made albums can be tailored to a variety of indigenous cultures. Other possible uses include mementos for friends on special Bahá'í occasions, or gifts for the sick or shut-in.

These ten quotations by Bahá'u'lláh are available either in complete sets or as individual prayers and meditations in multiples of ten.

How to Get the Illuminated Prayers and Passages of Bahá'u'lláh

Your local Bahá'í librarian or authorized Bahá'í distributor may have them in stock, or may be able to supply you with prices and ordering information. If, however, you cannot find them in your area, you may send your inquiry to the International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Centre, 1640 Holcomb Road, Victor, N.Y. 14564, U.S.A. for forwarding to the proper organization.
International Women’s Year: the Bahá’í impact
Illuminated (decorated) Prayers and Passages of Bahá'u'lláh for teaching and deepening make welcome gifts, provide inspiring wall decoration and aid in memorization.

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Bahai News has returned to consecutive numbering of the issues. This issue is No. 534. February 1975 was No. 527. Please make the following changes: March should be No. 528, April should be No. 529, May should be No. 530, June should be No. 531, July should be No. 532, and August should be No. 533.

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Women's year:

The Bahá'í impact on the World Conference and the Tribune
Quantities of Bahá’í literature, notably a new Bahá’í International Community brochure Equality of Men and Women: A New Reality, and Women: Attaining Their Brithright, a pamphlet by Constance Conrader, were available to the more than 5,000 persons attending the conference and tribune.

Several thousand copies of a special International Women’s Year issue of World Order, which carried statements on the status of women submitted to the United Nations by the Bahá’í International Community, were presented to selected delegates. The contents reportedly were of interest to some delegates that translations into Spanish were made immediately, with copies soon in circulation.

A display on the equality of men and women, designed for the conference by the Bahá’í Information Office of the United States, was well received. Many people remarked that it was the most effective display at the conference, Dr. Nelson said in a post-conference report. The three-panel bi-lingual display—each panel showing a bird in flight—used brief quotations from the Bahá’í writings—white letters on a field of black—to emphasize the Faith’s relevance to the multiple concerns of the conference: equality, development, and peace. The placement of the display was opportune. It was given space along the main passageway, just a few feet from the delegate’s coffee and tea station.

"From the moment of its completion the exhibit became a major publicity attraction," Dr. Austin later wrote. "Outstanding in its simplicity and charm, it was unique and was repeatedly photographed by press and radio representatives and by the delegates."

She said it had an eye arresting simplicity and stood out from the clutter that characterized many of the other exhibits. "Beneath each wing on each panel, in white printing against the dark background, were the beautiful quotations from the Bahá’í writings... These words seemed to capture the eye and the mind of each passer-by. Each stopped to read and continued to move from panel to panel reading the Creative Words." So many people came to the table for literature that the friends attending the display had to continually replenish it, Dr. Austin said.

The Bahá’í delegation combined to host a reception for important participants of the two events, after many, many inquiries about the Faith had been received. Approximately 150 invitations were issued for a reception June 26, held at the El Presidente Hotel in a tastefully appointed circular banquet hall. The refreshments—melons, cheeses, cakes, sweets—were arranged colorfully on a massive round table. The guests began arriving at 8:30 p.m., and by 11 p.m. they were still coming. Roughly 130 of those invited appeared, notwithstanding that it was stormy in Mexico City that night. Among the guests were Mildred Per singer, chairman of the UN Tribune Committee, officials of the UN Tribune, and members of delegations from many countries.

Representatives from several non-governmental organizations attended, among them: United Church Women, the International Council of Women, the National Girl Scouts Association, and the National Council of Negro Women.

A local television news team circulated at the reception conducting interviews, which were broadcast on Saturday June 28, as part of a more comprehensive program on the Bahá’í Faith done by one of Mexico’s celebrated television personalities.

"The interviewer was excellent," Dr. Nelson reported. "He let us all (de Burafato, Munsiff, Austin, Mboya, Nelson) speak and emphasize certain points... The unity in diversity of the teachings was truly demonstrated."

A number of the Bahá’í delegates attended Embassy parties given during their stay in the Mexican capital. In addition, several were interviewed by members of the international press. Mrs. de Burafato, Dr. Austin, and Dr. Nelson, for example, were recorded for television by a CBS correspondent. Dr. Nelson was interviewed by ABC television and was invited to write a series of articles about the conference for the Los Angeles Times.

A public meeting was held during the second week of the conference at a convenient downtown hotel. It became a semi-official Tribune event when news of it was published in Xilonen, the official conference publication. More than 100 persons attended. Dr. Nelson and Mrs. Fozdar were speakers. Their theme: "The Challenge of the Twentieth Century." A translation was provided by Counsellor Paul Lucas.
In a post-conference session to summarize their collective impressions, the Bahá’í delegates in consultation agreed that the significance of the Mexico experience was that for the first time a commitment to equality for women had been certified by the community of nations. The delegation believed that its presence served to heighten interest in the Faith and its teachings and provided opportunities for presenting information to officials and delegates attending both assemblies.

Statement by Bahá’í International Community

The Bahá’í International Community, comprising Bahá’í communities in 335 countries and territories, expressing through its members—men and women representing 1,600 tribes and ethnic groups—a worldwide unity in diversity, welcomes this opportunity to make a contribution to the World Conference for International Women’s year.

Bahá’í communities have found that education must go beyond intellectual development or the acquisition of skills. An

Below is a scene at the International Women’s Year Tribune which was held concurrently with the World Conference.

The display at left was designed for the International Women’s Year World Conference by the Bahá’í Information Office of the United States. The sketch above shows how the display was arranged. Each panel showed a bird in flight and used brief quotations—in English and Spanish—from the Bahá’í Writings to emphasize the Faith’s relevance to the concerns of the conference: equality, development, and peace.
essential characteristic of such an education, the experience of the Bahá'í International Community for over a century suggests, is a wider and deeper understanding of the purpose and value of human life. A sense of worth, assurance, and courage, as well as a sense of direction, are dependent upon the attainment of spiritual as well as material goals. If human beings are to realize fully their potentialities and be willing to contribute their talents and skills to aid others in attaining happiness, then “progress,” frequently understood exclusively in terms of physical well-being, and “development,” defined as the use of human resources to achieve a higher standard of living, should have broader and deeper dimensions.

The full commitment of women—and men—to the advancement of society, the Bahá'í International Community has found, demands a source of belief powerful enough to effect, through life-long education, a transformation in the goal and the quality of life, so that each person will contribute steadily to the development of his own country and of a world society. Bahá'í communities operate on the belief that such power and pattern have been released in the world in this new stage of human evolution, and that we can all become attuned to this constructive force.

A study entitled “Preliminary Enquiry into the Status of Women in the Bahá'í World Community,” made available to the Commission on the Status of Women indicated that all Bahá'í communities teach equality of the sexes and act to eliminate prejudice and discrimination against women; and that within the Bahá'í International Community “great advances have already been made towards equality of the sexes.” As the “Enquiry” suggests, women already participate actively in voting for local and national Bahá'í administrative bodies—an easy process for them since there is no electioneering or nominations, and the ballot is secret; and they are elected to serve on such bodies. Women take part also in consultation—the process by which decisions are arrived at in Bahá'í community affairs—since they are able to rid themselves of feelings of inferiority and lack of worth brought about by an overemphasis on material values, through their understanding of the spiritual nature of human life. The development of the mind, through an unfettered investigation of knowledge, and the welcome expression of each individual’s views in the process of consultation, have been two vital ingredients in the social and administrative structure of Bahá'í communities that have made possible the participation of women and men in all areas of community life.

In the Bahá'í world community the education of women has high priority. Although universal compulsory education applies to both sexes, the education of women, because mothers are the first teachers of the child, is considered more important than that of men. Therefore, if parents, who have the primary responsibility for the education of their children, are not able to fulfill their duty to educate both boy and girl in a family, preference is given to the girl. In no way does this choice suggest that women are to be limited to the rearing of children and to household duties; for it is vital that women develop all their talents and skills, so that they may achieve through their constructive activities recognition of complete equality.

This realization of equality however does not relate to roles ro the different functions and qualities of women and men. The importance of a balance between forceful and aggressive qualities and the attributes of mental alertness, intuition, love and service, in which women throughout history have been strong is becoming recognized; and the deep-seated inclination of women to peace and their great reluctance to sacrifice their children to war is recognized in Bahá'í communities as holding great promise for the future. Further, as prejudices of sex, as well as of creed, race, class, and nationality, are abandoned, in a spirit of dedication to the unity of mankind, the necessary motivation for the establishment of peace can take place in both men and women.

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**International Women’s Year World Conference delegates**

Dr. Dorothy Nelson, head of the delegation, from the United States.

Dr. Nelson is Treasurer of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States.

She is a lawyer and is currently a professor of law in the University of Southern California's Faculty of Law.

She was also the first woman dean of an accredited law school in the United States. In 1975 she published *Judicial Administration and the Administration of Justice*.

Mrs. Shirin Fozdar, from Singapore.

Mrs. Fozdar was born of Iranian parents in India. Her career has meant a life of active public service, particularly in those areas relating to the improvement of the status of women. As a worker for recognition and opportunity for women, she has attained international fame and recognition.

She was elected as a representative for Asian Women to the League of Nations in 1934. She worked for the emancipation of women and to remove the burden of caste discrimination in India.

In Singapore she organized a council of Women of Singapore which has united Chinese, Malay, and Indian women in an effort to achieve equal rights and end discrimination against women.

In recognition of her services toward the progress of women, Mrs. Fozdar was invited to China. She has also been the recipient of leadership grants from the United States.

In 1969 she was chosen “Woman of the Year” by the Los Angeles Times.

Married to Judge James Nelson of California, and the mother of two children, Dr. Nelson is an example of a woman’s ability to have a well rounded career.
International Women's Year Tribune delegates

Dr. H. Elsie Austin, head of the delegation, from the United States.

Dr. Austin holds a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from the University of Cincinnati, and two honorary degrees in recognition of her career of law and public service. She has combined a legal and diplomatic career. As the first black woman graduate of the University of Cincinnati’s College of Law, she went on to become the first woman of her race to serve as assistant attorney general of the state of Ohio. Thereafter she continued her legal career in Washington, D.C. serving as a senior attorney with federal agencies. She entered the Foreign Service in 1960, becoming the first Regional Women’s Affairs Attaché for Africa. Working in 13 countries she developed programs of organization on assistance and leadership training for African women leaders and their organizations. Recently retired she now serves as a part-time field consultant with the Domestic Education Assistance Program of the Phelps-Stokes Foundation.

Dr. Austin is the editor of a French-English Edition of The Community Service Handbook, published by Nouveau Horizons Press and widely distributed in African and Asian countries. She has also written an article on African Women and Problems of National Development.

Mrs. Afnan is a fifth generation Baha’i who was born in Iran. Her professional studies were done in England where she has served as director of health education for a county. She has lectured widely on health studies and social studies.

She serves as the Baha’i member of the Religious Advisory Committee of the United Nations Association of the United Kingdom. She has also participated in U.N. seminars of the Role of the Family in Changing Society.

Mrs. Sheila Banani, from the United States.

Mrs. Banani works with the University of California’s School of Public Health in the Graduate Division of Population, Family, and International Health. She is currently working with a joint rural health project which the university co-sponsors with the University of Ghana Medical School. She holds a recent degree in urban planning, specializing in social development. Mrs. Banani is currently teaching at Santa Monica College in California.

Professionally Senora de Burafato has served several important business firms in public relations and administrative services.

Senora Carmen de la Vega de Burafato, from Mexico

Senora de Burafato is an outstanding Mexican Bahá’í who serves as a Counsellor for the Faith in Mexico, Central America, Panama and the Antilles. Fluent in Spanish and English, she has both written and lectured for the Faith in many areas.

Professionally Senora de Burafato has served as an administrator of health education for a county. She has lectured widely on health studies and social studies.

She serves as the Baha’i member of the Religious Advisory Committee of the United Nations Association of the United Kingdom. She has also participated in U.N. seminars of the Role of the Family in Changing Society.

Mrs. Catherine Mboya, from Kenya, East Africa.

Mrs. Catherine Mboya is an African Baha’i from Nairobi, Kenya. She has served on administrative bodies of the Faith in her country. She is treasurer of the Nairobi Baha’i Assembly.

She is also the first woman of her race to attain this profession. Currently she is a solicitor and legal advisor to a petroleum company.

Dr. Edris Rice-Wray, from Mexico.

Dr. Rice-Wray is a medical doctor who has specialized in family planning and population studies. An American by birth, she moved to Mexico in the interest of extending knowledge of the Bahá’í Faith and its Teachings.

In Mexico she has acquired a reputation for professional excellence. Currently she is a professor of population studies at the University of the Americas in Puebla, Mexico. Dr. Rice-Wray was a pioneer in family planning studies. She established the first Family Planning Clinic in Mexico. She has also done special research in Oral Contraceptives, and has published more than 50 scientific articles on this research. She is a recognized authority on the subject and has lectured in many countries.

Dr. Jane Failey, from the United States.

Dr. Failey is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Michigan who is currently serving as a professor in the Department of Psychiatry on the medical faculty of the University of North Carolina. Dr. Failey has done graduate work at Harvard University, Atlanta University, and the Sorbonne. Her professional specialization has been in community mental health and group psychotherapy.

Dr. Failey is an Auxiliary Board member who has travelled and spoken widely for the Faith in many areas of the United States and the Islands of Micronesia.

Mrs. Catherine Mboya, was also the first Indian woman to attain this profession. Currently she is a solicitor and legal advisor to a petroleum company.

A third generation Bahá’í, Miss Munsiff has combined her personal achievement with service to the Faith.

Miss Jyoti Munsiff, from England.

Miss Munsiff is Indian by birth. She has pursued a legal career in England where she was the youngest woman to qualify as a solicitor in that country. She was also the first Indian woman to attain this profession. Currently she is a solicitor and legal advisor to a petroleum company.
Teaching the cause

The story of Mrs. Isabella Brittingham

by C. Z. Whitehead
Born on Feb. 21, 1852, Mrs. Isabella D. Brittingham had a distinguished ancestor. Her great grandfather, John Morton, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Her father was an Episcopal clergyman. In 1886, she married James Brittingham.

She attended the first Bahá’í class held in New York City in 1898. She realized that Jesus Christ and the Messengers before Him had often described in symbolic terms the coming of Bahá’u’lláh.

Not long content to serve the Cause in just one city, she soon made the first of her many teaching trips to other parts of the United States.

In 1899, her niece, Miss Elizabeth Stewart, completed her studies to be a nurse at the Medico-Chirurgical hospital in Philadelphia.

During that same year, Mrs. Brittingham spoke of the Cause to this deeply spiritual girl. Almost immediately convinced of its truth, she only asked her aunt one question: “Are there any martyrs in this Cause?”

Early in the evening of August 20, 1901, just after ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had returned to Akka from Bahjí where He had spent the afternoon, the governor informed Him that He and His brothers, by the decree of Sultan Abdul-Hamid, would again be strictly confined within the city limits of Akka and would no longer be allowed to walk in the countryside.

A few weeks later, Mrs. Brittingham arrived in Akka to visit the Master. In her scholarly, instructive essay, The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, she related her experience there in these words: “Within the walls of the city abides One upon Whom the thoughts of the world are centering; some consciously, and others unconsciously. A preparation is going on in all hearts. The vibrations from this great Center are quickening and vitalizing all intellectual forces and spiritual powers. Having made a great and holy Pilgrimage to that city of spiritual Light, Love, Joy, and Peace, it is my privilege to bear the Fragrance of its blessed consummation unto all.”

With deep conviction, she stated that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is the Center of the Covenant of God, that “He knows no station save that of servitude, humility and lowliness to the beloved of El-Baha,” that “recognition of this Station is the Life of every soul,” and that “in the Holy Hands of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh.”

As a result of her precious meetings with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, on her return to America Mrs. Brittingham served the Cause with even more spirit than before.

During February of 1902, The Bahá’í Publishing Society, then located in Chicago, published The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh.

In the first chapter of this stimulating, historic work, Mrs. Brittingham has explained: “Jesus Christ used physical illustrations in order to impart the highest knowledge of God. Since our environment is material in character, every Messenger and Prophet from God has made use of material figures in order to convey to our understanding certain spiritual realities. Thus the appearance of the Founder of each Dispensation is the Sun of Truth, newly arising upon the horizon of the darkened spiritual heavens, and bringing forth a New Day of Light.”

In the fourth and last chapter she has concluded: “In this day the veil is to be removed from the entire earth... Until today the sacred books of all religions have been sealed. Today their seals are broken. Therefore it is the cycle for teaching and for bringing every religion into a knowledge of an accord with all others.”

The Master revealed these words to Mrs. Brittingham about her essay: “Blessed art thou that thou hast compiled in the name of Thy Lord, the Clement, a treatise comprising evident proofs regarding the appearance of the Kingdom of God in this sublime age.”

Mrs. Brittingham taught constantly. Whenever she succeeded in helping to lead someone into the Cause, she would enclose in a letter which she sent to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that person’s declaration of Faith. The Hand of the Cause of God Hasan Balyuzi, has written that the Master, much pleased with the results of her efforts, had “said laughingly: ‘Mrs. Brittingham is our Bahá’í-maker.’”

Although Dr. Susan Moody had already attended Bahá’í classes for some years in Chicago, she did not become a confirmed believer until 1903 when she made an intensive study of the Faith with Mrs. Brittingham in New York. Dr. Moody, named by the Master, Amatul-A’la, the Handmaid of the Most High, and often extolled by the Guardian throughout a long career of heroic Bahá’í service, mostly spent in Tehran, as a doctor, educator, and bearer of God’s Message for this day, often expressed her gratitude to Mrs. Brittingham for her invaluable instructions.

The Master revealed many Tablets for Mrs. Brittingham. In the spring of 1904, He answered one of her numerous questions in these words: “Thou hast written regarding the tests and trials to be manifested in the American countries. Know this, that hardships and misfortune shall increase day by day, and the people will be distressed. The doors of joy and happiness shall be closed upon all sides; terrible wars shall happen, disappointment and the frustration of hopes shall surround the people from every direction, until they are obliged to turn to God. Then the lights of great happiness will enlighten the horizons, so that the cry of ‘Ya Baha-El-Abha!’ may arise upon all sides. This will happen!”

(Signed) ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

In 1906, shortly after the much loved Mary J. Revell, a resident of Philadelphia, had come into the Bahá’í community, Mrs. Brittingham spent several months in that city. During part of this time she made the first of her frequent visits to Mrs. Revell’s home. Situated around the corner from the railway station, her home was the only one which the Master went to in June of 1912 when He spent three days in Philadelphia.

Mrs. Brittingham’s husband, James, was a firm, active Bahá’í. He worked in

Mrs. Brittingham taught the Cause to many seekers during the early 1900s. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá referred to her lovingly as ‘our Bahá’í-maker.’
the office of a railroad company in New York City. As a result he was unable to accompany his wife on her teaching trips, but he gave her whatever assistance he could.

In 1909, he published, The Message of the Kingdom of God, a moving, persuasive talk that he had given at a public meeting in New York City. As his wife had done in a more comprehensive work, he related a short history of the Cause and explained with pertinent quotations from both the Old and New Testaments that the promise made by Jesus Christ has now been fulfilled.

In a powerful, closing passage, he asserted: "The Light of Knowledge hath appeared, before which the darkness of every superstitious fancy will be annihilated. The Hosts of the Supreme Concourse are descending to assist all those who rise up to serve their Lord, to subdue and gain the victory over the city of the hearts, to proclaim the Glad Tidings of the Coming of God and to unite the souls of His creatures."

In October of that same year, Mrs. Brittingham made her second pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Although 'Abdu'l-Bahá had been released from the prison house about a year and two months before as a result of the "Young Turk" Revolution and was no longer confined to the city limits, He had not yet moved from 'Akka to Haifa.

Among her notes, she recorded the following statement by the Master: "Human-kind have come to the world in innumerable numbers, and passed away; their physical bodies and that which belonged to them passed away with them. Their health and disease both passed away. Their rest and hardship both vanished. Their wealth and poverty ended. Their honor and misery terminated. But the reality of man is immortal. The spirit of man is everlasting. It is the spirit to which importance is to be attached. The difference (between spirit and body) is this: that one will enter the realm of enlightenment whereas the other will fall into the world of darkness."10

On March 10, 1910, Mrs. Brittingham and her niece, Miss Elizabeth Stewart, were appointed to the newly established Unity Band. The stimulating task of each member was to correspond every month with one of the 12 Women's Assemblies of the Orient. Mirza Aziolah Khan of Tehran, to whom the women of the West addressed their letters, assured them of the great happiness which these letters gave to "their dear sisters of the East" and earnestly requested the ladies of the West to continue writing to them.

In 1909, Dr. Susan Moody left the United States to live in Tehran to serve the Cause of God in that country. By now, a well trained, skilful doctor, she was able to establish in Tehran a much needed medical practice, particularly among the poor. Two years later, she invited Elizabeth Stewart to come there and be her assistant. These two ladies, working under the most difficult circumstances, not only saved hundreds of lives, but helped to bring the Bahá'í communities of Persia and the United States closely together.

Except when it became impossible during certain periods of World War I, Mrs. Brittingham and her niece wrote to each other regularly.

In April 1911, while He was visiting Egypt, several months before He had begun His travels to the West, 'Abdu'l-Bahá revealed a Tablet for Mrs. Brittingham which included these remarks: "If the believers of God in New York and other cities of America establish in a befitting manner, union and harmony, with spirit, tongue, heart, and body, they shall find 'Abdu'l-Bahá in their midst. Unless this union is brought about, the Breath of the Holy Spirit shall not have any effect, for the physical body must find capacity so that the life of the Spirit may breathe through it."

On November 5, 1916, in Chicago, Mrs. Brittingham gave a stirring address entitled, The Turning of the Pages of the Book of the Covenant.

She asserted that nine days after the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh His Will and Testament was read in His Most Holy Tomb before a company of believers whom 'Abdu'l-Bahá had brought there, that in 1893 the "Message of the Kingdom" was first publicly mentioned in America, that several years later some American believers first visited 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 'Akka and returned home to confirm the glad tidings, that from then onwards a proclamation of those wonderful glad tidings was carried on throughout the United States with increasing intensity, that in 1912 'Abdu'l-Bahá made a journey to America which changed the face not only of that country, but of the world, and that just recently 'Abdu'l-Bahá revealed five great Tablets for the community of North America.12

She described these Tablets as the greatest call that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had ever given the American Bahá'ís to summon those who are spiritually asleep to the Kingdom of God. In conclusion she urged all of the believers to make a superhuman effort to respond without delay to His great command.

Early in 1917, Mrs. Brittingham spent several months in Arizona. On her arrival in the city of Douglas, a newly declared believer arranged for Mrs. Brittingham to address an open forum in the club room of the Young Women's Christian Association. During her visit to Douglas, which lasted two weeks, she taught individuals and groups at the home of this same believer. These beautiful meetings resulted in the formation in Douglas of the first Spiritual Assembly of Arizona.

During this trip, she gave the message to about 150 people. She thought, however, that her work had merely broken the ground in Arizona for future teachers to achieve there great results for the Cause.

Early in 1919, Mrs. Brittingham wrote

She makes a second pilgrimage to the Holy Land and is appointed to the Unity Band, a group of women who wrote regularly to 'their dear sisters of the East.'
to Albert Vail the following information about herself for inclusion in his article for Star of the West called “The Teaching Campaign”: “Since January 1917, I have raised the call of the Kingdom in Arizona, Southern California, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming, Utah, and very briefly in Reno, Nevada. I have given the Message in one church in Arizona and three in California, to employees of the lunch room of the Great Northern Shipping Dock, Seattle, to army boys at Fort Wright, Spokane, in the State Prison, Salt Lake City, and to Metaphysical, Theosophical and many other gatherings in halls and homes, having thus addressed up to January 1, 1919, one hundred and thirty-three assemblies.”

She often taught by correspondence receptive individuals whom she could not meet regularly.

She took the Master’s advice even on such matters as diet.

On the last afternoon of my pilgrimage in January of 1955, as we were talking together in her sitting-room, The Hand of the Cause of God Amelia Collins said to me with much amusement: “Once Mrs. Brittingham came to stay with my husband and myself in California before he had met many Bahá’ís. The morning after her arrival I made a particular effort to prepare what I thought would be a delicious breakfast.

“After she had come into the dining-room and looked at the table she said with some distress. ‘Oh! but the Master told me to eat apples.’

“My husband politely suggested to her: ‘Perhaps you would be more comfortable in a hotel.’”

The distinguished Bahá’í writer, Marzieh Gail, mentioned in a letter that Mrs. Brittingham used to share with the friends this suggestion by the Master: “When you eat an orange eat a little of the peel.”

In a Tablet revealed for the dear, selfless Revell sisters, Jessie and Ethel, translated by Aziz Ullah S. Bahadur on December 20, 1920, the Master asked the sisters to give Mrs. Brittingham this message: “O thou harbinger of the Kingdom of God! If thou hast time and no obstacle exists, thou mayest take a trip to Philadelphia so that thou mayest impart joy to the friends and spread the breaths of God . . . .”

During one of her last visits to the Revell home in that city, Mrs. Brittingham gave a series of radio talks on the principles of perfect justice.

Without mentioning His Name, in a forceful address entitled “Progress,” she clearly explained the only way to establish the divine principles throughout the planet. In part she said: “Thou must be a Spiritual Wave to assuage the thirst of the hearts of humanity, sensitizing all to a higher Divine Law. This will create the ultimate foundation which, instead of dividing, will lift the denizens of this world to the standard of that reality which will forever discard all that separates! For separateness belongs to impermanent phases of material civilization, while the effulgence of and from God, shining in the hearts, burns away every barrier in that universal divine establishment which will make of this world another world and convey enduring happiness to all of humankind. It must be the institution of the Kingdom of God upon earth. . . . Nothing less will bring about the Most Great Peace.”

Late in the evening of January 28, 1924, she died at the Revell home. On this same evening she dictated 11 letters each one for a believer to Jessie Revell. She has written: “Those who have known Mrs. Brittingham have known her wonderful smile. But the night she went home her smile was one that did not belong to this earth.”

A few weeks afterwards a charming photograph of her appeared in Star of the West. “As she sits with hands folded resting on her knees, she looks directly in front of her. The calm, thoughtful expression on her kind, sensitive face, and her warm, penetrating eyes surely reflect a great and noble spirit.”

In January of 1908, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said to Helen S. Goodall and her daughter, Ella Goodall Cooper, while they were visiting Him in ‘Akka: “Give Mrs. Brittingham my best love and greetings and tell her that her services which she renders to this Cause are always before my eyes. They are written in the Book of the Kingdom, in the Heavenly Books and will never be forgotten; and before long they will be written in the pages of the world in glorified writing, which shall be read by all people.”

Her photograph hangs among those of some other eminent Bahá’ís in the Mansion of Bahá’u’lláh at Bahji.

Praised by the Master and the Guardian for her devoted service, Mrs. Brittingham’s photograph hangs among those of some other eminent Bahá’ís in the Mansion of Bahá’u’lláh at Bahji.
Solving the Christian enigma

By the Hand of the Cause of God George Townshend

The following article, reprinted from the August 1956 Bahá'í News, presents a point of view of interest to Bahá'ís in their work with Christian seekers. Mr. Townshend was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by the beloved Guardian in 1951. He passed away in 1959.

No Christian objection to the claims of Bahá'u'lláh is made more commonly or more confidently than the statement that the Revelation of Jesus Christ is final and absolute, that the Spirit of Truth came at Pentecost or that Christ is the "Promised One of All Ages", "the Lord of Hosts", and the object of all the great titles, "the mighty God", "the everlasting Father", "the Prince of Peace", and the rest in Isaiah ix, 6, and that therefore there is no need or room for a further revelation or a new prophet, whether Bahá'u'lláh or any other.

But no objection is more easily refuted from the pages of the Bible itself than is this. The followers of every world religion (except that of Bahá'u'lláh) claim finality: without being able to give any proof of it. Christ, however, says positively, "Other things I have to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," thus revealing in one breath that His teaching is neither final nor absolute, but is measured to the capacity of the hearer, and that more is to follow.

There is nothing in history to indicate either that the Spirit of Truth spoke to the disciples at Pentecost or that the Christian Churches have since then been guided unto all truth.

Christ Himself never made the assertion that He was the "Promised One of All Ages" or "the Lord of Hosts," nor did any of the apostles, nor indeed is it to be found in the Bible. Peter's mighty declaration of faith on which the Christian Church is built (Matthew xvi, 16) is simply that "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God".

Furthermore, Jesus expressly denied that He was the "Prince of Peace" when he said (Matthew x, 34), "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword". He denied that
"the government shall be upon His shoulder . . . to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever" (Isaiah ix, 6-7) when He said (John xvii, 36) "My kingdom is not of this world." He disclaimed that He was the "everlasting Father" when He said "my Father is greater than I" (John xiv, 28) or that He was "the mighty God" when He affirmed that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John iii, 16). Yet again, Moses' great prophecy in Deuteronomy xxviii, 63-68; xxx, 1-5 makes it plain that Jesus Christ is not to be identified with him whom Isaiah described in ix, 6-7, for when the Restorer of the Jews came to earth Moses predicted He would find that the kingdom of the Jews had been utterly destroyed in Palestine, that it had been plucked out of the land, and that the Jewish people for their sins and crimes had for long ages been scattered in misery and degradation among the nations of the earth. Then, Moses continued, the Lord would regather His ancient people in compassion, as soon as they had learned to believe in the one true God, would establish them in peace, prosperity and honor in the home of their forefathers for ever. But when Jesus Christ appeared in Palestine the Jews were still settled securely in the country. Their scattering did not begin till after the fall of Jerusalem in the year A.D. 70.

It is in the Bahá'í Era, not the Christian, that Moses' prophecy of the restoration of the Jews is being fulfilled. The year 1844 is an important date in the progress of the emancipation of the Jews and their regathering into Palestine. It is the date of the great "Declaration of Independence." The Jews ever since have been in the process of their restoration, which will be completed, as Moses foretold, when they have learned to accept Bahá'u'lláh as their true Messiah.

All these commonly made objections to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh are merely human traditions which it is impious to accept when they contradict the word of God itself.

From this fantastic delusion that Christ Jesus is not only the Son of God but also the Father in heaven has flowed another consequence, not the least mortal, perhaps, because it is often overlooked altogether by both pew and pulpit.

It has secularized human history for centuries past, and has materialized and demoralized the whole atmosphere of Western action.

The way in which such a result has come about is as follows:

**The role of God has disappeared from modern history**

The Old Testament reveals human history as being concerned not only with Man but with Man and God too; and with God as no secondary figure. God is the creator, man his creature; God is master and man his servant; God is all dominant, man has to learn to obey and submit.

Two these figures are bound together by the terms of an inescapable Covenant which really constitutes the shaping, directing, driving force of all history. It enshrines a promise that God will one day give to mankind the supreme blessedness of a redeemer who shall be the everlasting Father, the mighty God, on the performance of certain conditions.

We are shown through the prophets of Israel definite glimpses of what the Kingdom will be like—glimpses of something which has really already happened in the eternal world, but which has not taken form on earth yet. A Bible Prophecy (of, say, Isaiah's) is not merely a prediction; it is a true vision of something quite real which the prophet's seership enables him to oversee.

When Jesus, the Son of God, is identified with the Father the Covenant is fulfilled. The Great One promised is come. The Covenant has no longer a place in the progress of mankind. History begins to follow a new principle. In the time of Moses and of Christ there was among all true monotheists only one kind of history. God through His Covenant designed and carried out the destinies of man. Now in this Christian era there appears another kind of history. The dictionary distinguishes "sacred history," which deals with the events in the Bible narrative, from "secular history," which deals with the events in the Bible times. In "secular history" the Covenant is dropped. God is no longer dominant, acting the major part of the story as all-powerful, the judge and arbiter of men and kings and nations. God is no longer the omniscient, the omnipotent designer of events and of their outcome; He is no longer the jealous, watchful overlord, the King of kings who rewards or punishes his vassals, condemns them or acquits, deposes or exalts according to His own will and determination. On the contrary, events are estimated on a purely human basis. Kings, governments and statesmen no longer seek to act and live according to the Covenant. The fear of God has disappeared as a deterrent from wrong action. The historians of Christendom write on the same basis as did those of Greece and Rome; as Herodotus or Livy or Tacitus, Edward Gibbon or Macaulay, Grote and Lecky and the rest, with the world historians and the national historians and continental historians—all treat history as a merely secular affair. None of them is able to see any meaning or plot or progress in the pattern of human happenings. Some of them confess and comment on this inability. "I can see," says one of the most learned of them all, H. A. L. Fisher, in his History of Europe, "only one emergency following upon another as wave follows upon wave, only one great fact with respect to which there can be no generalizations, only one safe note for the historians; that he should recognize in the development of human destinies the play of the contingent and the unforeseen."

And religious history and church history—are they not from the Covenant point of view, secularized too?

The broad result has been that not only the Covenant but the role of God himself has disappeared from modern history. For all who read in schools and college the works of historians, life is secularized.

Meantime the Covenant of God proceeds upon its course as declared by the Bible. Mankind moves upon his appointed road towards the Kingdom. Unseen by the secular historian, and by every reader who accepts his point of view, Jesus Christ is succeeded by Muḥammad, Muḥammad by the Báb, the Báb by the Lord of Hosts, the Everlasting Father himself; and Christendom at last has come to a dead end and finds itself lost. No secular historian can explain the crisis or bring comfort. Sacred history alone can solve the enigma. The Bible holds the key. But the only people who can trace the real course of the Covenant are those who (as the Bahá'ís) have not misidentified Christ with the Father, but in simple Faith have regarded all history as sacred history, as ruled by the everlasting Covenant, as designed, directed and controlled by the changeless will of the one omniscient and omnipotent God who is the creator of all and the Master of all.
Australia

Local Spiritual Assembly Conference is held

A member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia, two Auxiliary Board members and three members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia participated in a Local Spiritual Assembly Conference in Malvern, Victoria.

About 35 Baha'is, most of them officers of Spiritual Assemblies, attended the Conference on July 27. Purpose was to discuss consultation, the roles of the chairman, vice chairman, secretary, and treasurer, and how to solve problems.

Counsellor Howard Harwood; Auxiliary Board members Mahvash Master, and Dr. John Davidson; and Dr. Iraj Master, Andrew Gash, and Grenville Kirton, members of the National Spiritual Assembly, addressed the Conference.

Traveling teaching team finds seekers

In 1974 there were two Baha'is in the Warnambool, Victoria, area. Now there are 13, thanks to teaching efforts.

This traveling teaching team went to the area recently in an effort to reach the Aboriginal people. Team members included Auxiliary Board member Mahvash Master, Philip Lanley, Katherina Lapp and Noel and Noan Comley.

Canada

Mr. Sears introduces new deepening approach

A deepening conference, unusually enjoyable in its methods and effective in its results, was held the first weekend of August at Port Hope, Ontario, Canada with the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears introducing a new approach to deepening.

Held at “The Gathering,” a spacious building on the property of Canadian Baha'is, Mr. and Mrs. David Hadden, the conference was highlighted by reports from all the major committees of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, following greetings from Ed Muttart, member of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Throughout the conference, Mr. Sears conducted question-and-answer sessions on Baha'í history, based on material from God Passes By.

In opening the conference, Mr. Sears cited three passages from The Tablets of the Divine Plan: “It has often happened that one blessed soul has become the cause of the guidance of a nation,” “One soul can be the cause of the spiritual illumination of a continent,” and “One soul of great capacity can set a continent ablaze.” He declared that the purpose of the conference was to search for one or more souls such as those quotations describe, to win the goals of the Five Year Plan.

Each Baha'í attending was given a number in sequence. All the even numbers then formed one team, and the odd numbers, the other. On each side of the room, elaborate geographical markings had been set up. Two Baha'ís were chosen to be the couriers for each side; whenever a correct answer was given, the courier would move forward from the beginning point to the next destination, with each side attempting to arrive at its final destination before the other.

Each participant rose when his number was called, and the Baha'í seated on either side also arose to assist in consultation for a correct answer. In the midst of serious questions, recalling the days of the Dawnbreakers, an occasional lighthearted question would be asked. For example, “What book would you offer to a disconsolate fisherman returning without having made a catch? Answer: 'Not Every Sea Hath Pearls.'”

Evening programs at the conference featured slide programs by Mr. Sears, one on his visits to Baha'í historic sites in Iran, and another on the Baha'í World Center, in Haifa. Mrs. Marguerite Sears spoke on “The Local Spiritual Assembly and the Individual,” and T. Finley Hollinger on “Radio and Mass Media.”

Each day of the conference stressed a particular aspect of the Five Year Plan. For the first day, it was “Hold All Prizes Won!”; for the second, “A Vast Expansion,” and for the third, “The Baha'í Life!”

The Hand of the Cause of God William Sears is shown (upper right) in the midst of Baha'ís attending a deepening conference at Port Hope, Ontario. Above, Mr. and Mrs. Sears are in the first row standing (third and fourth, respectively, from the left) in this picture taken between sessions.
Chile

Pioneers from California only Bahá'í group at Punta Arenas festival

The singing group of Chandler, Siegel, and Edwards performs at the Patagonia Music Festival in Punta Arenas recently. The trio was the only Bahá'í group to participate in the festival, one of the largest in Chile. The group, which is made up of three pioneers from California, also appeared for almost three hours on radio broadcasts.

Malawi

Training session held for traveling teachers

A group of Bahá'ís attended a special four-day training session in August to develop traveling teachers. The sessions were held at the Bahá'í Center in Blantyre and sponsored by the Teaching Committee of the Spiritual Assembly of Malawi. Purpose was to train the teachers to go to a Local Spiritual Assembly with a specific job to do for a set number of days.

Several of the classes concentrated on the use of visual aids, how to make them from simple materials, and how to use them for both teaching and deepening.

Netherlands

Women’s Year booth success at Emancipade

Visitors examine literature at a Bahá'í booth sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly at Emancipade, an exhibition devoted to the theme of International Women’s Year.

The National Assembly reported that the booth was successful in proclaiming the Faith.
Hand of the Cause Ugo Giachery speaks at first National Summer School

About 60 adult Baha’is attended the first week-long National Summer School August 10-16 in a small mountain mining town in north-central Portugal.

Highlight of the school was the appearance of the Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery who was accompanied by his wife, Angeline. Dr. Giachery gave inspiring talks on the Five Year Plan, the importance of unity, and his recollections of the beloved Guardian.

Many youth, children, and sympathizers of the Faith also attended the school. Many of the youth slept in rented tents and enjoyed the beautiful countryside.

Increase in proclamation activities has national, international benefit

"Worldwide proclamation, the unknown sea on which we must soon sail, will add another dimension to our work, a dimension which will, as it develops, complement and reinforce the twin processes of expansion and consolidation." Message of The Universal House of Justice, Ridván, 1967, Wellspring of Guidance, p. 112.

Headlines such as "Gentle Baha’i Faith Marks 50th Anniversary" and "Baha’i Faith Seeks Unity of Man and End of His Prejudice" have been appearing nationally and internationally this summer, following Associated Press and United Press International articles on the Baha’i Faith sent over their wires to more than 1,000 participating newspapers.

These articles are part of a recent increase in proclamation evident on all levels in the American news media, with the effect felt in many other countries. Baha’is in Ireland, Japan, Venezuela, and Mexico have reported seeing these articles in their major newspapers, with clippings still coming in from other countries, as well as hundreds of local communities within the United States.

Extensive proclamation of the Faith of Baha’u’llah, both internationally and nationally, has been steadily developing in the past year, with response evident both from persons of influence and unknown seekers. Materials used to assist in these proclamation efforts include the special issue of World Order magazine containing articles on the rights of women, (spring, 1975) the commemorative booklet published for the fiftieth anniversary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha’is of the United States, a pamphlet on ecology and the human environment, as well as a full-page color advertisement in the Bicentennial issue of Life magazine.

PROJECT FORWARD ’76, an ecumenical effort to gather representatives of almost 200 religions in Washington, D.C., to discuss participation in Bicentennial events across the nation during the coming year, provided an opportunity for Baha’i literature to be included in the package given to each delegate at the registration desk. The special issue of World Order magazine and the pamphlet on
A Token of our Highest Hope

When the French-Canadian architect Louis Bourgeois conceived the nine-sided Baha'i House of Worship, he dreamed of a new world order in which America would play a significant part. His dream was inspired by Baha'u'llah, founder of the Baha'i Faith, who proclaimed over a century ago the advent of the unity of mankind.

Rising on the shores of Lake Michigan in Wilmette, Illinois, amid exquisite formal gardens, the Baha'i House of Worship welcomes all people to a haven of unifying thought and experience within its nine doors. This unusual edifice, recognized worldwide as structurally unique, represents a major architectural achievement of America's two hundred years. Yet the ideal expression—the oneness of mankind—remains among the unfinished business of the democratic experiment which began in 1776. It stands, then, as a token of the highest hope of the peoples of the United States and the entire world—the hope for universal peace and unity.

The members of the Baha'i Faith in over 5,000 places throughout the Republic salute the nation on its Bicentennial and are proud and happy in sharing this worthy token of unity with all Americans.

All are especially invited during this Bicentennial year to visit the Baha'i House of Worship just north of Chicago in the heart of America.
Enthusiastic response greets teachers

Summer traveling teaching projects took 25 Bahá'ís to Brazil, Bolivia, and Africa.

The projecteurs reported an enthusiastic response everywhere they went. For example, seven youth declared at a Bahá'í exposition in Natal, Brazil. The projecteurs in Brazil (five adults and two youth) formed a singing group, “The Bahá'í Group,” which was an effective teaching tool. They used Bahá'í songs and American folk songs to carry a theme, quickly learning how to sing the Bahá'í songs in Portuguese.

Traveling teachers land at small village in Brazil

The projecteurs went to six major cities and many small villages and often appeared on television and radio. They were also front page news in the newspapers.

Similar success stories were reported by the projecteurs (seven adults and one youth) who went to Bolivia.

Ten Bahá'ís (seven adults and three youth) were on the Africa trip which took them to Togo, Dahomey, and Niger.

“The spirituality, the kindness, and the purity of the African people are truly an example for us all,” one projecteer said.

Brazilians gather for one of many conferences

The projecteurs were both reviewed and accepted by the conference officials and were referred to a number of times by church delegates at the meetings.

The International Women’s Year meeting in Mexico City provided a similar opportunity, with 2,000 copies of the special issue of World Order and other literature picked up so rapidly by delegates and visitors that the Bahá'í booth was constantly running short of printed material.

The same issue of World Order, sent to women’s editors of newspapers throughout the three goal states of the Five Year Plan—California, Illinois, and New York—attracted sufficient interest that some communities have reported being contacted for additional information for a newspaper story.

A special list of women in news media positions throughout the country was used for a mailing of this magazine. A number of letters came, praising the quality of the articles and asking for extra copies for friends.

The commemorative booklet about the National Spiritual Assembly was widely used as a gift to public officials in the Wilmette area and Cook County, Illinois; to all the black newspapers in the three goal states; to all the editors of Indian magazines and newspapers in the country, and to religion editors and writers of major newspapers throughout the country. Again, response far exceeded expectation, for many newspaper clippings of stories about the National Spiritual Assembly’s anniversary were sent in following these mailings. Both letters and phone calls were received from editors interested in doing stories. The top half-page of the religion page in the Amsterdam News, largest circulation black newspaper in New York, was devoted to this story, following requests for additional information from their religion editor, Zgamba Brown. A small weekly newspaper in Illinois expressed similar interest and a lengthy article appeared.

One editor of an Indian publication in Florida sent a congratulatory letter when he discovered the presence of a Navajo Indian on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States this year, with warm praise for the ethnic diversity of the body.

Perhaps most exciting to the Bahá'í community generally has been the appear-
ance of a full-page color advertisement featuring the House of Worship, in the Bicentennial issue of Life magazine. Since this magazine does not ordinarily carry religious advertising, it was essential that a low-keyed presentation of the Faith be made in this format. Letters from distant corners of the country are now arriving, requesting information about the Bahá'í Faith and mentioning this advertisement, which represents another “first” in the field of proclamation.

Since the advertisement also implemented an instruction from The Universal House of Justice that greater use be made of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette in proclamation activities, smaller versions of the Life advertisement were prepared in black and white for distribution to every Local Spiritual Assembly in the United States, with a request that, wherever possible, it be placed in a local newspaper during September.

The same advertisement was translated into Spanish, to appear in El Diario, the Spanish newspaper published in New York City with a large circulation nationally; into Estonian, to appear in Vabi Eesti Sona, the Estonian newspaper published in New York, as well as into Chinese, to appear in Sing Tao Jih Pao.

The New York Times ran a feature story July 30, on the visit of Dizzy Gillespie to Israel, mentioning several times his membership in the Bahá'í Faith and topped with a four-column headline declaring: “Gillespie, in Israel, is Performer and Pilgrim.” The article begins:

“With the single spotlight fused on his round, smiling face, Dizzy Gillespie stepped up to the microphone and whispered huskily: ‘This is for my Bahá’í brethren all over the world from the place where it all began.’”

In television and radio, as well, many interview shows have featured Bahá’ís, with a recent week-end news roundup show in Chicago inviting Glenford Mitchell, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States; Joan Bulkin, secretary of the National Teaching Committee, and Ernest Lopez, grounds supervisor, to appear on a half-hour segment. Another Chicago television program, “Issues Unlimited,” with Hurley Green as moderator, showed slides of the House of Worship in Wilmette, and the World Center in Haifa during an interview with Ray Collins, director of temple activities at the House of Worship, and Beth McKenty, national information officer.

Since increased news coverage tends to generate further coverage, it is hoped that this beginning wave of proclamation will grow, assisting the world community to fulfill its goals in the Five Year Plan.
The growth of the Faith in Ireland
Illuminated (decorated) Prayers and Passages of Baha’u’llah for teaching and deepening make welcome gifts, provide inspiring wall decoration and aid in memorization.

Illuminated Prayers and Passages of Baha’u’llah

Preservation and consolidation of the victories won: This is one of the three major objectives of the Five Year Plan as the Cause of God goes “from strength to strength” throughout the worldwide Baha’i community.

We can do this even in the face of rising global chaos if we use the strengthening serenity of our Sacred Texts, the Creative Word of God, to deepen and consolidate Baha’is. For this purpose several short, simple, powerful quotations of Baha’u’llah have been chosen and are now available in large type, illuminated by dignified artwork.

These attractive, brief prayers and meditations are suitable for framing or other kinds of display. Ten different quotations have been printed on 8.5 by 11-inch paper — large enough for wall or window display, yet small enough to be carried in a notebook.

Members of teaching, proclamation, conference, and consolidation committees might want to pay particular attention to this set for possible use at summer schools, institutes, and children’s classes. They are excellent for complementing normal teaching materials or for gifts to participating individuals at Baha’i gatherings.

The large type and easy-to-handle pages also make the material useful for persons with poor eyesight, or for beginning readers, either children or adults, who are not yet accustomed to Baha’i literature. In addition, these passages are generally brief enough so that students can memorize them without difficulty.

The entire set of ten can be bound into a new believers’ booklet either as they are or mounted artistically on colorful heavy paper. Further decorative illumination can then be added, limited only by the artist’s imagination. In this way home-made albums can be tailored to a variety of indigenous cultures. Other possible uses include mementos for friends on special Baha’i occasions, or gifts for the sick or shut-in.

These ten quotations by Baha’u’llah are available either in complete sets or as individual prayers and meditations in multiples of ten.

How to Get the Illuminated Prayers and Passages of Baha’u’llah

Your local Baha’i librarian or authorized Baha’i distributor may have them in stock, or may be able to supply you with prices and ordering information. If, however, you cannot find them in your area, you may send your inquiry to the International Baha’i Audio-Visual Centre, 1640 Holcomb Road, Victor, N.Y. 14564, U.S.A. for forwarding to the proper organization.
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On the cover: A member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Republic of Ireland checks on the progress of the Faith in his beautiful country.

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Ireland is a land of rare natural beauty with lakes and rolling emerald green hills. These pictures are typical of the landscape. Clockwise from top, they show a stream at dusk, an old castle at Limerick, a street in Clonmel, a castle at Kilkenny, a farmer at work on a quiet country lane, and Bahá'ís having fun at the Waterford Summer School.
Doris Holley surveyed the crowd at the Bahá'í Summer School at Waterford, Ireland, and smiled with delight. The majority were youth. “It’s the new Army of Bahá’u’lláh,” the 81-year-old widow of the Hand of the Cause of God Horace Holley said. “It’s a wonderful army, young and enthusiastic and deep in the Faith. And they love to pray.”

When Mrs. Holley arrived in Limerick, Ireland, four years ago, there were nine Bahá’í pioneers in the town. Since then, the Faith has grown fast in Limerick and at least 50 youth have pioneered from there to other areas of the Republic of Ireland.

The young pioneers, many of whom are married couples, have taken the Cause to such places as Donegal, Galway, Tralee, Cork, Clonmel, Kilkenny, Killarney, and Drogheda, amid the rare natural beauty of rolling emerald green hills and lakes.

The Irish people are sympathetic and warm, but tradition is strong. Ninety-five per cent of the church-going population is Roman Catholic and the church dominates society.

“She Irish have great spiritual talent and these young pioneers go into towns and fit in because they really love the people,” a spokesman for the National Spiritual Assembly of the Republic of Ireland explained.

But conditions are poor and jobs are difficult to find. A predominately agricultural land with mostly small farms, the three million people of Ireland live in an area slightly larger than the state of West Virginia. The Irish have not been spoiled; they come from large families, have very little money, and have not been given any real hope for the future. It is in this environment in which the Bahá’í youth are teaching the Cause with mounting success.

They chatted about it often at the Waterford Summer School, held in August. “We mostly go to small towns where everybody knows everybody else,” one young woman said. “People know when somebody new comes to town, and they’re watching to see if you’re going to church. When you’re not, they wonder what’s new with you. You have to be careful to get off to a good start, to be friendly with people, and to be extra helpful.”

All agreed that the most important factor is to live the life. “You have to teach the Faith by living the life,” a young man emphasized.

The youth talked about the growth of the Cause in Limerick and the increasing attacks upon the Faith.

“Many young people have been told not to have anything to do with the Bahá’ís,” one young man said. “Of course, the first thing they do is to have something to do with a Bahá’í. They want to know what this Bahá’í business is.” And they are told. At one time in Limerick, there were 30 Bahá’ís in one parish.

Limerick, the chief west coast port, is now the center of the tremendous upsurge in teaching. There have been 10 and 12 declarations in one night in this town of about 55,000 persons.

The Faith had been growing slowly despite a great deal of teaching work by Mrs. Holley and the other pioneers. A Bahá’í for 55 years, Mrs. Holley spent 20 years in Wilmette, Ill., when her late husband was secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States.

One pioneer told the story of one young man’s meeting a few years ago with the Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts.

The growth of the Faith in Ireland

By Paul Slaughter
in Limerick. He declared his faith and immediately set out to tell his young friends, convinced that the whole of Limerick could become ablaze with the Message of Baha'u'llah.

Mrs. Holley continued the story: "His friends came into the Cause and their friends followed. Soon we had 30 to 40 believers. We had wonderful meetings, often five times a week, in homes. Six to 70 people would attend. Youth were running up and down the stairs. It was wonderful."

Many of the youth dispersed to other areas of Ireland. They were aided by pioneers from Great Britain, the United States, and other countries. "Historically, the English have not been popular in Ireland," the National Spiritual Assembly spokesman said. "But Baha'u'llah has changed this and the English pioneers are loved by the Irish, both Baha'is and non-Baha'is."

There are now nine Local Spiritual Assemblies in the Republic of Ireland and the National Assembly intends to have at least 17 Local Assemblies by the end of the Five Year Plan.

The first Assembly was formed in Dublin, Ireland's largest city, in 1963, 23 years after Baha'u'llah's name was first mentioned publicly in Ireland by the Late Hand of the Cause of God George Townshend. "There is only one person who can heal the world of its present ills. His name is Baha'u'llah," Mr. Townshend said from the pulpit at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin in 1940, just after the fall of France.

Mr. Townshend was a canon in the church, a position he was to resign seven years later. He had accepted Baha'u'llah many years earlier, but thought at first that the new Revelation would reform the Christian Church from within. He wrote many papers and books, including Christ and Baha'u'llah, and was sent by Shoghi Effendi to London in 1936 to represent the Faith at an important religious conference. He was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God in 1951. On Mr. Townshend's gravestone at Enniskerry is written: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth."

The Baha'is of Ireland talk fondly of the contributions made by Mr. Townshend. His name was mentioned often at the Waterford Summer School which was attended by Baha'is from Ireland, England, Germany, Iran, New Zealand, Canada, the United States, and Holland.

They spent the mornings in study and devotion. In the afternoons, they went to nearby towns to teach and give out notices about public meetings to be held in Waterford during the evenings. Their effort was successful. The Hand of the Cause of God Paul Haney and Counsellor Betty Read of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe spent five days at the school to assist in the work.

Despite the recent expansion, teaching the Cause in Ireland is still difficult because of the entrenched values, traditions, and fears. The Irish emigrate to the United States and the overseas Commonwealth countries, and the population has been halved in modern times. Religious strife continues in Northern Ireland and bombings have occurred in Dublin. Northern Ireland is comprised of six counties which remained in the United Kingdom when Eire was established as a virtual but unproclaimed republic in 1937. Eire became the Republic of Ireland in 1949.

One goal of the Five Year Plan for the Irish Baha'is is to teach and consolidate in Northern Ireland. The time is ripe. As one youth put it: "Baha'u'llah is changing the hearts of the Irish."

Baha'is are beginning to make a noticeable contribution to the quality of life in the Republic of Ireland. Pictured clockwise from top are Mrs. Doris Holley, widow of the Hand of the Cause of God Horace Holley, with two other Baha'is at the Waterford Summer School; one of many firesides in progress in the home of a pioneer; young pioneers talk about their experiences; the marker at the grave of the Hand of the Cause of God George Townshend which reads: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth;" the believers enjoy a Feast at Cork; deepening in the Faith at the Summer School; the friends pray for the success of teaching in Waterford.
The green light expedition: part III

By Anthony Roy Worley

"Time is short," said Amatu'l-Bahá in one of her lectures to a Bahá'í audience. "It is straight mathematics. We are into the second century of the Bahá'í Era, which means we have 800 years left until we might have a new Manifestation of God. If, in over 100 years, we have only reached the present state of development, when will Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation come into being? We know that the majority of mankind will accept the Faith. How can it happen unless we have mass conversion? We must teach, teach, teach. The letters from The Universal House of Justice are foreshadowing tremendous changes. What are we going to do when instead of having five Bahá'ís in a community, we have 500? The Faith, as it grows, creates
problems and finds ways to solve them; with greater numbers will come problems but so will the solutions; when we have masses of Bahá’ís we can work with them."

She reached out and picked up a biscuit on a plate before her. Showing it to the friends she said: "Did the man who made this biscuit take a little flour and water, mix them together and bake only one? No, it would be impossible! He started out with a lot of flour and water, worked them together and made thousands of biscuits at one time. This is what must happen to the Cause. In other words, Bahá’u’lláh’s Teachings must be taught to the masses before we will begin to see a change in the world. The Master used to say ‘glad tidings, glad tidings.’ We must proclaim these glad tidings with intelligence and judgment."

At 2 a.m. on April 12, Rúhíyyih Khánum, accompanied by Counsellor Masud Khamsi of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South America, and the four other members of the Green Light Expedition, arrived at Belem International Airport, Brazil. The expedition, which began on February 4 in Venezuela, had already taken 68 days: 32 of them in a boat on the Orinoco and Ventuari rivers visiting the Indian peoples of the northern reaches of the Amazon basin, and 20 days in Surinam where we travelled deep into the jungles of the Guiana plateau, visiting the fascinating Bush Negros, living in their villages and having the privilege of being present at the formation of the first Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bush Negro village of Kamaloea.

Now we had arrived in Brazil, at Belem, the large city at the mouth of the mighty Amazon and Para rivers, here to begin a journey of intensive proclamation of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh. When Rúhíyyih Khánum had first envisioned this expedition, her plan had been to visit the primitive peoples of the Brazilian Amazon region. However, because of stringent government regulations introduced to protect the indigenous people from exploitation, as well as contamination from exposure to diseases imported from other environments, this plan had to be abandoned. Undaunted, she decided that the Brazilian part of the journey might well be given over to assisting in the spread of the Cause in the heart of Amazon region.

The pace would be intense; in the short time available — 15 days — she would visit three cities, covering 2,570 kilometers (1,607 miles); meet the governors of two states, the heads of universities and ministers of education, speak to Bahá’ís, give lectures at universities, technical colleges, and high schools as well as seven interviews on television. All these events...
Press, television enthusiastic as proclamation projects opens Amatu'l-Bahá met with the governors of two states during her 15-day visit to Brazil. Below, she chats with Artur de Azevedo Henning, governor of the Territory of Amapá, at a small village where she was his guest. At right, Rúhíyyih Khánum presents The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh in Portuguese to Henoch da Silva Reis, governor of the State of Amazonas, during a 45-minute interview.

culminated in a virtual spiritual assault on Manaus, the capital city of the Brazilian state of Amazonas, where a team of Brazilian Bahá'ís, aided by Counsellor Raúl Pavon of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South America from Ecuador, as well as three Auxiliary Board members, had arrived three weeks earlier to make preparations for a week-long proclamation program carefully planned by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Brazil.

It all began at 8:30 that same April 12 morning, when Mohiman Shafa (a pioneer working at an ore-mining complex near Macapa, a city which Rúhíyyih Khánum would visit in a few days) and two local Bahá'ís came to the hotel with flowers and a warm welcome to Brazil. After greetings, they presented her with a printed itinerary of her two day visit to Belem subject, of course, to her approval.

At 11:30 a.m. she gave a collective interview to members of the Belem press. The journalists were enthusiastic, a direct result of diligent work of the local Bahá'ís. Rúhíyyih Khánum later explained to us that, although one can never be sure what the press will publish, the main thing is to make every effort to gain the support and esteem of journalists so that they will always associate the word Bahá'í with something worthy of praise and admiration. To create this response she considered was almost more important than what they might publish, because that might soon be forgotten, but the impression they carried away from the press conference would be permanent. Over and over she pointed out to us that we must strive to establish in the minds of people that when they hear the word 'Bahá'í' their reaction will be, "that is something good."

At 8:30 p.m. Rúhíyyih Khánum was interviewed by one of Belem's largest television stations. Though relatively short, her interview came right after the national news-by-satellite program and was no doubt viewed by the peak evening audience. It was also the first time the Faith was given television coverage in Belem, the major city of northern Brazil. The owner of the television station, a prominent society woman, on hearing of Rúhíyyih Khánum's presence in the city, personally arranged for the interview.

As a direct result of this interview, a young lady who had accepted the Faith in another part of Brazil, tried to meet Rúhíyyih Khánum. For two days she called all the hotels, even contacting the United States Consulate, without any success. Though all the members of the expedition were staying at the same hotel, the registration was not in Rúhíyyih Khánum's name. On the last evening, as Rúhíyyih Khánum was about to leave the hotel, a young woman came up and in halting English said how happy she was to be able to meet her. Not satisfied with her apparent failure and knowing that Rúhíyyih Khánum was somewhere in the city, she had gone from hotel to hotel asking after the famous lady who had been on television. Might this not be a lesson in determination for all of us? It turned out that she had heard of the Faith from a travel-teacher and became enamored with the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. She had not read any books, only a pamphlet, before moving to a new job in Belem. She had the privilege of visiting with Rúhíyyih Khánum for half an hour after which she received a copy of Prescription for Living.
in Portuguese and was put in touch with the local believers.

The day after we arrived was a Sunday and the Bahá'í friends decided to show Rúhíyyih Khánum around the city, with a stop for lunch at a riverside restaurant where she was introduced to Amazonian cuisine. We also walked through the pleasant park of the local zoo where Rúhíyyih Khánum was delighted to at last see a manatee, a large fish-like mammal found in Amazonian waters which, because it rises up when suckling its young at its breast, is supposed to be the origin of the mermaid legend.

That afternoon Rúhíyyih Khánum met the Bahá'is and a few of their relatives and friends at our hotel. After an informal talk, she answered many questions, some of which dealt with the youth of today and their problems. Rúhíyyih Khánum stressed the importance of science and religion complementing each other. This, she said, had a great appeal to the youth. “All that science has revealed to us only serves to confirm my wonderment in the creation of God.” In answer to the question of how Bahá'ís regard reincarnation and the biblical reference to bodily resurrection on Judgment Day, Rúhíyyih Khánum explained that Bahá'ís do not accept the theory that man's soul should return to this material world over and over again; she then explained that the soul can progress and develop throughout the infinite worlds of God. As to Judgment Day, she referred to Bahá'u'lláh's Writings in the Kitáb-i-Íqán where He explains that this is an allegorical reference to the Day the new Messenger of God reveals Himself to mankind. Bodily resurrection has a symbolical meaning: a study of science shows the impossibility of the identical physical re-composition of something after it has decomposed.

The following morning, April 14, the schedule was a full one. At 10 a.m. Rúhíyyih Khánum met the director of the School of Education at the Federal University of the state of Para. He spoke to her in fluent English and then introduced her to his class of post-graduate teachers, comprised mostly of women, including some Catholic nuns.

All listened attentively when she told them that the power of the individual to effect change is greater than we think; history is made by individuals, the writer, the musician, the scientist, the leader in different fields of endeavor. She also stressed the importance of the teacher, whose character can never be hidden from his pupils, hence the responsibility of the educator is very great. She drew their attention to the fact that our society today is based primarily on science, with its emphasis on criticism and analysis, but that when we are dealing with the individual we are dealing with feelings and emotions. The greatest mistake society makes today is incurred when it applies the faculties of analysis and criticism to personal relationships, carrying the critical and analytical approach to the extreme, seeking out the individual’s mistakes instead of encouraging the individual’s good points. We should always stress the positive, not the negative. Then and only then will our personal relationships be happy ones.

Rúhíyyih Khánum explained that three quarters of the world’s population live in villages and she encouraged the teachers to reach these people, saying that difficult
concepts could be conveyed to them if simple, direct language were used. She gave as an example the unity of religion through progressive revelation and stated that the primitive people could readily grasp this truth if they were taught with broad, elevated, and reasonable concepts. She stressed the role of the teacher as an extremely important one and said that when speaking to primitive people one must remember that they are as a clean sheet of paper on which the teacher will make a lasting impression.

After a short question period, the class was adjourned, in order to enable the students to proceed to their other lectures, but most of those present crowded around Ruḥḥiyih Khánum to ask more questions. At this point the director of the school came to her and asked her if she had time to call upon the rector of the university as he had just spoken to him over the phone and the rector, whose office was in a different part of Belem, was anxious to meet her. Both the rector and vice rector of the Federal University of Para were waiting to receive her. The pleasant and informal interview lasted for about 30 minutes during which the rector was presented with a copy of Ruḥḥiyih Khánum's book Prescription for Living in Portuguese.

The Bahá'ís, in addition to articles in the press and the television interview, had arranged to have Prescription for Living on sale in four of Belem's largest bookstores, all available copies were sold out with requests for more.

Six a.m. April 15 found Ruḥḥiyih Khánum and all members of the expedition airborne, on the way to visit Macapa, capital of the federal territory of Amapa, located on the northern bank of the Amazon River. This city dates from 1782 when the Portuguese built a fort there to protect the mouth of the Amazon from English, French, and Dutch encroachment. We were soon flying over the island of Marajó, an Indian term which means "protection from the sea". It is situated in the Amazon's estuary with an area of 30,000 square miles and is larger than Belgium. Today the island is used for large cattle farms and wild water buffaloes roam where once existed the center of the mysterious Indian Marajoara civilization.

Of the two advanced Indian civilizations that are known to have flourished in the Amazon region it is believed that the Marajoara one flourished about 1000 A.D. They lived in city-like dwellings made of adobe, called "tesos," and nowhere in the Americas have similar constructions been found. Their pottery, with exquisite bas-relief of red and black geometric designs, is the only trace of their civilization that remains. Their origin as well as the exact cause of their extinction remain a mystery. Another fascinating people were the Tapajos, who lived along the banks of the Tapajo River not far from where its clear green waters meet the muddy Amazon, near the site of present day Santarem. At the time of the arrival of the first explorers from Europe, in the early part of the 16th century, the Tapajo population was estimated at 240,000. They must have been well versed in the martial arts, for after an attack with poisoned arrows the early Spaniards decided to go elsewhere! Among the cultural artifacts which still remain is the Tapajos pottery which, unlike that of the Marajoara, depicts Amazon animals, a virtual clay zoo. They were also road builders. Straight highways which connected their villages can still be seen today. The Tapajos also disappeared, leaving modern scholars and archaeologists with more questions than answers.

The Indian peoples living in the Amazon region today are divided into different groups, almost all of which belong to the great Tupi peoples. Some of these tribes have lived up to the present completely isolated in the jungles without any contact with the white man, but a great many have already contacted our civilization and some have tried to become part of it. Until the 19th century, in the state of Amazonas, the main language was not Portuguese but a modified dialect of Tupi-Guarani.

Rūḥḥiyih Khánum and the expedition members were received at the airport of Macapa by the pioneer family who had invited us to visit them for a few days in the beautiful residential compound of the manganese mining town of Santana, 30 kilometers southwest of Macapa, where we were lodged in a company guesthouse. During our five day visit it rained torrentially.

The evening of our arrival, Rūḥḥiyih Khánum and the other members of the expedition were driven in two cars over muddy roads to a small village of Negro fisherfolk where she was to be the guest of the governor of the territory at a traditional dance and song festival arranged in her honor. In spite of the wet weather, the governor of the territory of Amapa, Sr. Artur de Azevedo Henning and his wife, as well as other government dignatories, were there to welcome us. The festivities were held in a large thatched roof hut built on stilts with open sides. An old generator was put to work and supplied enough electricity to illuminate the one hut. Our team

**Expedition members land at Macapa**
was able to film the occasion, including a seldom performed traditional church liturgy consisting of African and Gregorian chants. At one point an old Negro lady, who was calling out the dance time, took Rúhíyyih Khánum by the hand and walked her around the room in time to the drum beat; after Rúhíyyih Khánum it was the governor’s turn to be danced around the room amid the applause of the villagers. During the show both the governor and his wife conversed with Rúhíyyih Khánum in French and when the presentation was over thanked her for honoring their territory with her visit.

In Macapa Rúhíyyih Khánum was interviewed for 30 minutes by a Catholic radio station; the program was so successful it was broadcast twice. She also taped a program for the government television station which lasted 25 minutes and included some photographs illustrating portions of the Venezuelan and Surinam trips. She was met at the TV station by its director and the governor’s officer of protocol, yet another demonstration of the high regard the government authorities afforded her visit.

After weeks of jungle travel the expedition had a lot of washing to do before the next jungle phase started; in between social appointments our bungalow was turned into a laundry — seven sets of hammocks, blankets, and large mosquito nets received our unanimous attention especially since it was pouring rain most of the time. Attempts were made to get things dry every time the rain stopped, but we finally resorted to an ingenious spider web of clothes lines all over the guesthouse.

On the afternoon of April 17, Rúhíyyih Khánum travelled 45 miles to visit the fishermen’s village, but the Bahá’í community had built its own Hazíratu’l-Quds, where we all gathered. It was a clean well-kept wooden house of one big room built on stilts. The adults were mostly away at work but the children were all eager to show Rúhíyyih Khánum how many Bahá’í songs they could sing. We all spent a very happy afternoon among these sincere believers. Rúhíyyih Khánum told them that she had specially come to Macapa because she had heard of them, otherwise she would never have made this part of the trip, but gone on direct to Manaus from Surinam. She showed them some black and white photographs of the expedition and told them stories about it. She also told them stories about Bahá’u’lláh and the Master, which made them very happy and encouraged them to be active in teaching the Faith and to make an effort to send a delegate to the National Convention.

That same night Rúhíyyih Khánum gave a public talk in the largest auditorium in town during another torrential rain storm. She was introduced, in very cordial terms, to the audience which turned out in spite of the weather, by the minister of education for the territory, Sr. Leonardo Leite. She spoke of the needs of the present-day world, the great advances in scientific discoveries which have been made, but the total lack of the necessary moral or spiritual responsibility to control the use to which these discoveries are put. No group, whether governmental or religious, would accept the suggested controls or tolerate the imposition of another peer group’s standards. “I believe,” she stated, “that all would listen to Divine Will if they could be sure that it was, indeed, from God.” With the advances made in the means of transportation and communication a man today lives much closer to his neighbor, but neither one likes this nor acts in a more neighborly manner. “God seems to be like a blacksmith. He is taking the separate bars of iron, putting them into the furnace until they become white hot, and when they are ready He will mould them together.”

She spoke of a new and devastating 20th century prejudice: that of the educated towards the uneducated or illiterate. This widespread prejudice might prove to be the worst of all, because the illiterate has not had the opportunity to be otherwise. He may be unlettered but he is not ignorant, since wisdom has nothing to do with knowing how to read and write. Rúhíyyih Khánum then referred to the education of the primitive peoples, saying that the Brazilian people have the great responsibility of bringing the Indian peoples into their civilization; there is nowhere else they can go; but great care should be taken as to how this is done.

In answer to a question about what form of government the Bahá’ís envision for the future, Rúhíyyih Khánum answered by relating a dream one of the early Bahá’ís had had: the world was submerged in an ever growing flood of water and mud and while some were fruitlessly trying to save helpless humanity, the dreamer had begun looking for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to obtain His assistance. Finally she found Him on a mountain top, bending over a machine He was working on. With great difficulty she attracted His attention and pleaded with Him to help save drowning humanity. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s answer was that He was busy perfecting a machine to make the

Hazíratu’l-Quds on stilts is visited

In the first meeting at Manaus, Rúhíyyih Khánum addressed a hall full of newly enrolled Bahá’ís and urged them to spread the Cause.

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A flight over the vast region of the Amazon

flood go down: “We Bahá’í believe,” Ruhiyyih Khanum said, “that by devoting our attention to the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh we are helping to perfect a Divine System that will solve the world’s many problems.” The rain had finally stopped, but her rapt audience seemed in no hurry to leave and stayed much longer than anticipated.

Ruhiyyih Khánum’s visit produced many opportunities for teaching all segments of Macapa society. The pioneer family who were our hosts gave a reception in her honor at which we met many officials of the mining company and friends of the family, amongst them the minister of education for the Territory of Amapá.

On April 19, Amatu’l-Bahá met with some of the Macapa believers, visiting the home of the first Bahá’í family there, built on stilts over mud flats beside the Amazon River. It was almost sundown, and time to prepare for the following day’s journey but there were a few minutes to spare, so on our way back to Santana we stopped at the marker which indicates the equator and sat down on it to have some photographs taken.

Macapa is becoming increasingly important; among many other projects the Brazilian government has already begun building a highway from Macapa which will stretch 1,895 miles across the north of the Amazon basin, linking Brazil to all its northern neighbors, the Guianas, Venezuela, Columbia, and Peru. This is but one of the seven major highways now under construction by the Brazilian government. This audacious program calls for the construction of 7,500 miles of road linking the east and south of Brazil with the entire Amazon region. For how much longer will the Amazon be an unspoiled wilderness?

The Amazon was discovered in 1539 by the Spanish explorer Francisco de Orellana who named it the “River of the Amazon” after an encounter with a group of Indians whom he mistook for women, associating them with mythological Greek female warriors of the same name. The Amazon basin today covers an area of approximately eight million square kilometers (five million square miles), five million kilometers of which are within Brazil’s borders. This largely forested area is said to be responsible for half of the earth’s oxygen renewal.

The source of the mighty Amazon river lies in the mountains of Peru and it is fed along its 6,750 kilometers (4,229 miles) journey to the Atlantic by thousands of springs in the Andean range and over 1,100 river tributaries whose northern sources are the Guiana plateau and its southern sources drain the Brazilian plateau. The Amazon enters the Atlantic Ocean along a 200 kilometer (125 mile) wide estuary between the island of Marajo to the south and the federal Territory of Amapa to the north. During the flood season it rushes into the Atlantic at the rate of 240 thousand cubic meters per second— which in a day is enough water to supply a city with a population of 10 million for nine years! It drives the salt water before it and at times makes waves 12 meters high. This phenomenon is known by the Indian name of “Pororoca,” an attempt to reproduce the sound of the thundering waves as they crash into each other, a sound which can be heard for many kilometers around.

The Amazon not only has the greatest volume of water but is the longest navigable river in the world, with 4,061 kilometers (2,538 miles) from its mouth to the junction with the Ucayali and Maranon rivers in Peru; of the 20 largest rivers in the world, 10 feed into the Amazon; three of its tributaries, the Madeira, Jurua, and the Purus, are many times larger than such famous rivers as the Danube, the Euphrates, the Seine, or the Thames. No wonder its basin is calculated to contain one fifth of all the world’s fresh water reserves.

The immensity that is the Amazon became evident to us when on April 20, at 6:30 a.m., we left Macapa, bidding our dear friends a fond farewell, and flew for more than 2 1/2 hours by jet over this huge waterway to Manaus, the capital of the state of Amazonas.

Our team, consisting now of Amatu’l-Bahá, Mr. Khamsi, David Walker, Mark Sadan, Rodney Charters, and myself, arrived in a tropical downpour to be met by a group of excited Brazilian Bahá’ís. Many of them had come from the south of Brazil some weeks earlier to inaugurate activities which were to culminate with Amatu’l-Bahá Ruhiyyih Khánum’s presence at the first Bahá’í Conference of the Amazon region. At the air terminal, in the pouring rain, more than 50 Bahá’í children from the mass teaching areas of Manaus greeted Ruhiyyih Khánum with flowers and a large welcoming banner. The secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, Auxiliary Board members, pioneers, and two new Bahá’ís from Manaus community were all there to shower her with the warmth of a Latin American welcome. In the VIP lounge she was greeted by the representative of the governor of the state of Amazonas and presented with an official
car for her personal use for the duration of her visit to Manaus, a further evidence of the courtesy and hospitality so typical of this part of the world.

The Brazilian National Spiritual Assembly, after hearing of Ruhiyyih Khánúm’s intended visit to the Amazon region, had, with the help of Counsellor Raul Pavon, been making plans for over six weeks for the Conference to be held in Manaus. An appeal for volunteer teachers to help with this spiritual adventure was made through the National Bahá’í Bulletin of Brazil, with an immediate response from the Bahá’ís of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Porto Alegre, and Salvador Bahia, many having travelled over 3,500 kilometers to reach Manaus. During the five weeks of intense preparation, articles were placed in the newspapers, visits were made to the governor, the radio and television stations, the secretary of education, and directors of many schools. Arrangements were made for the use of auditoriums and the municipal library was made available for a week-long Bahá’í exposition. This exposition was a great success, as the library is frequented by both young and old, students and teachers, and turned out to be the most fruitful method of teaching, producing over 200 inquiries for a correspondence course on the Bahá’í Faith. The majority of new enrollments during the week of proclamation also came as a result of this effort.

The friends, including many Bahá’í youth, divided into teams and with constant prayers and consultation undertook a mass teaching campaign during the weeks immediately preceding the Conference which resulted in 150 new believers who were now all eagerly awaiting the arrival of the beloved Hand of the Cause of God to their city. Mr. Khamsi, referring to all this activity, summed it up perfectly when he said: “This was unique in South American Bahá’í history; there has never been anything quite like it; 100 per cent results have been produced by 100 per cent effort.”

During the week of April 20-26 Ruhiyyih Khánúm gave innumerable talks to the believers and seven lectures to various groups of university and high school students; a press conference was held, she was twice on the news program of two different television stations and a 30 minute interview on the government television station took place. She met with both the governor of Amazonas state and the representative of the Brazilian Department of Indian Affairs, FUNAI. To those who were present, it was Ruhiyyih Khánúm’s inspiring words that will forever remain as the highlight of her unforgettable visit.

On the evening of April 20, addressing a hall full of newly enrolled believers during her first talk in Manaus, she told them of her experience some years previously in a meeting with some illiterate new Bahá’ís in Bolivia. She had said to them they should go and teach the Faith now they had accepted Bahá’u’lláh; one of them said “but we do not know anything; we have just become Bahá’ís; how can we teach when we know so little?” She had answered: “Now that you have become Bahá’ís you must go out and teach the Bahá’í Faith: You know that this is a message from God; you know that because you have accepted it, you are a Bahá’í; you know that it is a good thing, and that it will bring about the brotherhood of mankind and do away with war; these are four things you know about the Bahá’í Faith; now go and teach it!”

April 21 was to be a highlight of our visit to Brazil. At 3:30 p.m. the whole community of Manaus was present to greet Amatu’l-Bahá Ruhiyyih Khánúm, celebrate the Feast of Ridván and elect their first Local Spiritual Assembly. The gathering was held in a large hall of a district school in the area where most of the mass teaching had taken place. After the spiritual part of the Feast, Ruhiyyih Khánúm addressed the more than 50 Bahá’í children present and asked them to name the most important day of the year. Two little children answered: “Mother’s Day and Holy Friday.” She then explained the meaning of these two days. That Mother’s Day was celebrated to remember our mothers, who brought us into this world and educated us; and Holy Friday was remembered as the day Jesus Christ ascended to His Heavenly home and began His life for eternity near to His Father. “Today for us Bahá’ís,” she said, “this is the Holiest of all Bahá’í Festivals, because this is the Day that a Man who came from God said: ‘I have brought you a solution for all of your problems.’ His name was Bahá’u’lláh; He said: ‘I am the One that you have been waiting for.’

Some of the Bahá’ís who worked on the intensive proclamation program in Manaus dine with members of the Green Light Expedition below. At left, Auxiliary Board member Habib Rezivani expresses the appreciation of the Brazilian Bahá’ís for Ruhiyyih Khánúm’s presence at the Amazon Conference.
On this day 112 years ago He began to give His Message to the world, and it was the beginning of the solution to all our difficulties. That is why for the Bahá'ís today is the happiest day of the world." She went on to tell the children of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, His suffering, His exile, His humiliation and imprisonment.

Turning to the older Bahá'ís she then mentioned the Bahá'í elections which were to take place all over the world on this day. She explained Bahá'í administration by comparing the little children and the individual Bahá'ís present each to the light of an individual candle; she said that the elected Assemblies in each city were like the strongest electric lights and that National Spiritual Assemblies were like the brightest searchlights. "Then we have an International Assembly and it is called The Universal House of Justice — universal, because it is for all mankind and justice because justice is what we need most in the world. The light of that Assembly is like the light of the sun, while Bahá'u'lláh is the Light or Glory of God. Bahá'í means the follower of light."

After this talk the election of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Manaus took place. It comprised both the first pioneer to Manaus and his wife and a Chinese pioneer couple from Taiwan, as well as a number of the newly enrolled believers. The Feast of Ridván was concluded with the hall resounding with children's sweet voices singing Bahá'í songs.

In the afternoon of the following day (April 22) Rúhíyyih Khánum, accompanied by Mr. Khamsi, Auxiliary Board member Jairo Cerqueira, and myself, visited the regional representative of FUNAI, the government Department for Indian Affairs. It is FUNAI which is in charge of contacting those primitive Indian tribes which lie in the direct route of the projected northern highways. During the one hour interview, the FUNAI official showed much courtesy to Rúhíyyih Khánum, at one point introducing her to a member of an Indian tribe from the Upper Amazon who came in; and gave her a copy of the recently adopted governmental Indian Statutes. He took much pride in showing her the excellent textbooks which are being used to teach the Indian peoples their own language and Portuguese. On leaving, Rúhíyyih Khánum commented that every passing day makes our reaching the primitive peoples more difficult.

In the evening Rúhíyyih Khánum spoke to the combined classes at the Technical Federal College of Amazonas, with an attendance of about 500 students. The secretary of education had suspended all classes that night so that the students might attend her lecture. Our own film crew not only covered this event but two television stations filmed portions of the meeting which were later broadcast on the daily news programs. Following a general presentation of the tenets of the Faith and a few words about her expedition to the primitive peoples of South America, Rúhíyyih Khánum told her young audience that the Bahá'ís believe in unity in diversity. People today when they speak of unity really mean unity in uniformity, in other words, you be like me and everything will be all right. "Each religious group says, 'if all the others become like us then we will all be alike and everything will be fine.' Politically this philosophy is even stronger — what are the great powers saying to each other? 'You be like us and
"... One of the profound Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is unity in diversity," she continued, "that races, tribes, and nations should live their own lives, but not to sacrifice the whole for the part. That is why we Bahá'ís believe that eventually there will be a federated states of the world. It is going to take a long time; it will not come tomorrow, but it must come — because that is the way technology is taking us. If it can come about without much suffering, we do not know. When an ironsmith has a lot of bars of iron and he wants to forge them into a single piece, he puts them in the fire until they become white hot, and in many ways this is what we see happening to the world today. This world is burning, but eventually it will become one. How soon and how well depends on your generation."

She concluded with: "It is wonderful to be young; your life is in your own hands and you can do wonderful things with it if you want." Her presentation was so well received that many of the students stayed for at least an hour more for further explanations and the authorities who had been present (some of whom had been lukewarm in their attitudes) requested to be personally introduced to Ruḥíyyih Khánum and were present at her later talks as well.

On April 23 at 7 p.m., Ruḥíyyih Khánum addressed the students of the State University School of Technology. Once again her talk was well attended and as a result of the intense interest shown, the question period extended well beyond the time originally planned.

One of the crowning events of her visit took place the following day when, at 9 a.m. on April 24, she had a 45-minute interview with the governor of the State of Amazonas, Professor Henoch da Silva Reis, a gentleman in his late 60's who, before being appointed governor, was a much respected member of Brazil's Court of Appeals. In his opening remarks he said that he had been looking forward to this meeting ever since the Bahá'ís had presented him with a copy of her book *Prescription for Living*, and then quoted from memory some passages in it. The governor asked Ruḥíyyih Khánum a number of questions, most of which concerned the Bahá'í attitude toward different aspects of man's material and spiritual existence. He asked her to tell him in more detail about life after death. He was visibly impressed by her explanation of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings on this subject.

Before departing Ruḥíyyih Khánum presented him, on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly, with two books: *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh in Portuguese and Bahá'í World, Volume 14*. The governor was so pleased with her visit that he kept putting off his other appointments to be a few minutes longer with his honored guest. With regards to the Faith in Manaus, he told Ruḥíyyih Khánum that he hoped to hear more of the Bahá'ís in the future.

When we left the governor, his press secretary interviewed Ruḥíyyih Khánum and a very good press release reporting her visit was published in all the daily papers the following morning. The press secretary was astonished to learn that the Bahá'ís had not asked for any favors of the governor and Ruḥíyyih Khánum had to assure him more than once that her call had been made purely at the request of the Bahá'ís.
Youth told of their responsibilities for future

purely one of courtesy and made in a friendly spirit with no strings attached. This was to be a very busy day: at 4:30 p.m. Rúhíyyih Khánum addressed the students at the Instituto de Educacão where over 85 young women heard her speak on the great importance of woman's role in the new world. The emphasis was on education in the home and stressed that the mothers are the first educators of the human race and they should therefore receive an enlightened education themselves, that the mother's example and teaching sets the life-long standard for the child in moral conduct, cleanliness, truthfulness, etc. She spoke of the importance of a mother's advice to her daughter, stressing the purity women should maintain in order to safeguard their future homes; how women should help their husbands to develop their spiritual qualities and be morally strong in a most corrupt world, a veritable jungle of dishonesty and temptation.

At 8:30 that same night Rúhíyyih Khánum spoke to high school students at the Colegio Estadual de Amazonas in which she stated in no uncertain terms her views on the probable destruction of the present day civilization and the responsibility of the youth with regards to the future of the world. She first stressed the responsibilities of the individual. "There is a philosophy that has entered peoples minds which I think is ridiculous. Psychologists, to a great extent, have taught us that we are not responsible for our acts. They say: 'He came from a poor background, that's why he is a criminal.'; they say that the mother neglected the child or it suffered some shock in its childhood and therefore it became a criminal or drug addict. But all the religions of the world — all of them — believe that man is accountable for his own acts. What do we mean by sin and virtue? We mean that when we are virtuous, we did the right thing and when we sinned, we did the wrong thing. Young people have to be more conscious of their responsibilities. You cannot blame society or the world or your parents, because the facts do not support such a theory. There is another very strange concept in the world today: nobody ever believes that he can get bananas off an apple tree; you know perfectly well that all you will ever get from chicken eggs are chickens; then why is it that so often in the world today, people believe that if you have violence you will get peace; that out of hatred you will get love; that out of completely amoral conduct you will get virtue? It does not stand to reason; a complete contradiction of what one's mind tells one must be so; yet this kind of muddled thinking is going on all over the world."

Referring to the trend of Western civilization and its present decline, Rúhíyyih Khánum said: "People today seem to have to have their ideas canned; their emotions come already packaged, their human relationships seem to be determined by some kind of imaginary formula. I think this is one of the signs that indicate that Western civilization has gone to great extremes and it is no longer a healthy civilization. My late husband defined it as a 'cancerous materialism.' In other words, when material values become predominant over all moral and spiritual values, it is very unhealthy. We Bahá'ís believe that the destiny of man is to carry forward an ever advancing civilization, but a civilization that loses its spiritual and moral values is like a dead body. It is like a man, who, when he loses all his spiritual and moral values, becomes degenerate and even dangerous to society. One of the most encouraging things all over the world, including Europe, America, and Canada, are the youth. I admire the youth of today. I admire your generation. There is a reaction among the youth against this extreme materialism." She further added, "There is only one way for us to go and that is forward, but the great question facing everyone in the world today is how to go forward safely."

She spoke during this same lecture of Bahá'u'lláh's teaching on obedience to government; that the most terrible thing in the world is war, but one thing is worse than war — civil war. Referring to civil disobedience she said that some people today feel that it is their right to protest any measure that does not appeal to them without considering the rights of others to do likewise and that this attitude when carried to its logical conclusion can only produce chaos and anarchy. This is true even in the home, not only in civic matters. "If you carry liberty to extremes, you get nothing but chaos."

"Bahá'ís believe", she went on to say, "that everything should be conducted with moderation, neither too much nor too little liberty; neither too much spirituality nor too much materialism; neither too much poverty nor too much riches — in everything the middle of the way. Often this is difficult for young people because by nature they are full of energy; it is only natural. I remember when I was your age there was not anything that I felt I could not do! That is why the youth are so important. The future is in the hands of the
youth. If the youth are sensible, have good judgment, if they have good characters, if they have the balance between the body, the mind, and the soul, if they have the right ideas and ideals they can bring about world peace, can help build a world society, can be of wonderful service to their own nation, they can change the atmosphere of the city in which they live. But they will not be able to do it unless they have both vision and discipline!''

In answer to a students' question as to the possibility of a third world war, Ruhiyyih Khanum replied by telling them of Bahá'u'lláh's letters to the kings, and His exhortation to world leaders to join in preventing further wars; at this late date however, she felt it very difficult for a war to be completely avoided. She said: "It is as if someone who is travelling down a great river, suddenly comes to very dangerous rapids; it is too late to turn the boat around, the only thing he can do is try to survive the rapids." Her only hope was that the catastrophe might be on as small a scale as possible and that humanity should strive to come out of it. "My husband, Shoghi Effendi, used to say," she told them, "that the immediate future of the world is very dark, but that the distant future for humanity is very, very bright." I think that distant future depends a great deal on your generation!"

April 25 and 26 were the last days of Ruhiyyih Khanum's visit to the city of Manaus. On April 26 Governor Henoch Reis had kindly arranged for Ruhiyyih Khanum and the members of the expedition to be taken sightseeing on the river in the governor's speed boat as his guest; first to the spot where the muddy and dark brown waters of the Amazon and Negro rivers meet and then to a floating tourist hotel for refreshments of delicious tropical fruit and nuts followed by a side trip in a smaller boat through flooded Amazon jungles to see the giant Victoria Regia water lilies, the leaves of which can be over three feet in diameter.

On April 27 at 4:30 a.m., in the pitch dark, the members of the Green Light Expedition left Manaus, with all its exhausting and happy memories, for the airport, their destination Leticia in Colombia; in spite of the inconveniences involved, many of the Manaus Bahá'í friends came to see us off, even though it seemed only a few minutes ago since we had all been together during Ruhiyyih Khanum's last lecture in Brazil, the night before, which took place in the large auditorium of the municipal library and was her farewell meeting with the friends. She had begun by thanking all the Brazilian Bahá'ís for all the kindness and love they had shown her. Then she spoke about Manaus, how she felt here a youthful frontier spirit of comradeship, enthusiasm, and adventure. She said Manaus was the hub of a wheel and the wheel was the whole vast Amazon region, a region encompassing five countries, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia. "From here," she stated, "the whole of the Amazon region can be taught to the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh." Addressing some of the Bahá'ís from the south, especially the ladies, she said that she considered the new Bahá'í community of Manaus was like a newborn infant. Who, she asked, was going to look after her baby? She encouraged the friends to return, who had worked so hard there to prepare the way, to visit again and again this new community and to bring others to help from outside.

"Adopt Manaus in your hearts", she pleaded. "Manaus has been a very exceptional experience. I have been in places where there has been a great deal of publicity, a great many lectures, many of them in schools. I have been in places where I was received very cordially by the president or the governor and where the press has been very friendly, but I have very, very seldom, maybe once or twice in my life, ever had an experience which has had such a high percentage of successful events, as have been the activities this week in Manaus." She said she felt very strongly that all over the world there was a new receptivity to the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. One who observes animals, she said, can tell when a storm is about to come because they become nervous and restless; they sense the approaching storm and become much more alert. "Now it is my impression," she told us, "from these last years of travel that humanity senses the storm coming towards it and there is a new alertness, a restlessness, a seeking, that was not there 15 or 20 years ago. This is one reason that we Bahá'ís must spend more time telling others about the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. If you believe that this religion is from God, then there is always a mysterious quality in it and this mysterious quality helps us, inspires us, enables us to do things that by ourselves we can never do. 'Abdu'l-Bahá put it in very beautiful words; He said: 'There is a mysterious power in this Cause, far, far above the ken of men and of angels... I believe that this is the beginning of a new release of spiritual power in this whole Amazon region.'"

Ruhiyyih Khanum closed her address with the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "As ye have faith, so shall your powers and blessings be; this is the balance, this is the balance, this is the balance."
Around the World

Canada
Auxiliary Board member Fred Graham passes

Auxiliary Board member Fred Graham passed away on July 21, 1975. He died instantly of a heart attack in the sunny garden of his beloved summer home in Ontario, Canada. He had often expressed the wish that when it was his time to pass on, he would be at his family cottage, on the shores of Lake Huron, on a summer day. He is survived by his widow, Jean, and two sons, Brian and Barrie.

Counsellor Lloyd G. Gardner of the Continental Board of Counsellors for North America conducted a simple graveside service for Mr. Graham. He read cables and messages of sympathy from The Universal House of Justice, the International Teaching Center, and the Hand of the Cause of God Zikrullah Khadem. The Universal House of Justice cable said: "ASSURE FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBER FRED GRAHAM DEVOTED SERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH INSPIRING TEACHER CAUSE. EXTEND SYMPATHY WIFE FAMILY FRIENDS THROUGHOUT CANADA LOSS WARMHEARTED EXEMPLARY BELIEVER."

Mr. Graham's service to the Cause was characterized by a deep love of the administrative institutions. He was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada in 1954, and was appointed an Auxiliary Board member in 1964. Following a heart attack, he retired from business to devote all his time to his activities as an Auxiliary Board member.

"How thoroughly he understood the secret of communication," Counsellor Gardner said of him. "Fred's door, his telephone line, and his great loving heart have been wide open to the friends at every moment, day and night. Consequently, in a vast Auxiliary Board territory that at one time included all the provinces of Eastern Canada—Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland—Fred always seemed fully aware of everything that was going on. The friends came to him with their problems, large and small, and to seek his approval for their achievements. No one who came to him left empty-handed."

"A tribute to Fred would not be complete if it did not extend also to his devoted wife, Jean," Mr. Gardner continued. "If Fred were looking over my shoulder now he would be saying: 'Tell them about Jean.' . . . Jean has managed to combine an intensive service to her beloved Faith with her professional life as a teacher and school principal. They have been a superb team.'"

And in a letter to Mrs. Graham, Mr. Gardner wrote, "Such love was present at the service for Fred . . . I doubt if the town of Kincardine had previously witnessed anything like it. We all felt that great spirit of Fred, present, as always, loving—guiding—and strengthening us."

Germany
Summer vacationers hear about the Faith

These German youth spent 19 days of their summer distributing Bahá'í information to vacationers along the Baltic Sea coast.

The Regional Teaching Committee of Northern Germany planned this "Teach on the Beach" campaign to reach the many people who flock to the coast each summer. Response was generally positive, as the people, away from their rushed city homes, were relaxed and open to new ideas. A similar project will be launched next summer on the German North Sea coast.

Premier George Walters of Antigua, right, chats with a delegation of Bahá'ís from the Counsellors Conference. From left are Ellsworth Blackwell of Haiti, Mrs. Edie Holbert of Antigua, Counsellor Alfred Osborne, and Shamsi Sedaghat.

Leeward and Virgin Islands
Counsellors Conference cheers the islands

The Counsellors Conference, held August 15-16 on the island of Antigua, closed with a public meeting which included music and the film "Step by Step." One song, presented by two youth from St. Thomas and Saba, said that since they were so young, the only thing they could give to Bahá'u'lláh was their hearts. That night, Antigua was blessed with two new believers.

The conference was called by the Continental Board of Counsellors for Central America to "bring together for a few days the Bahá'ís from the Caribbean and neighboring areas, to further inform and deepen us all about present tasks and methods, opportunities and possibilities, in the achievement of the Five Year Plan goals."

Since it takes much time and money to travel through the Leeward and Virgin Islands, only 40 or 50 Bahá'ís were expected at the conference. But the conference attracted 115 believers, representing the French Antilles and nearly every island in the Leeward and Virgin chain, as well as the Windward Islands, New Hebrides, Alaska, Canada, the United States, England, El Salvador, Panama, and Mexico. All talks were translated into either English or French. Four members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Central America addressed the conference: Carmen de Burafato, Mexico; Rowland Es
More than 100 persons attended Counsellors Conference on the island of Antigua in August.

tall, Haiti; Artemus Lamb, El Salvador; and Alfred Osborne, Panama. Each Counsellor spoke on a topic related to winning the Five Year Plan goals: the distinctive character of Baha'i life, widespread expansion of the Baha'i community, understanding the role of the Institutions of the Faith, and the role of women.

Three Auxiliary Board members: Shirley Mather from St. Thomas, Shirley Yardbrough from Barbados, and newly appointed René Jean-Baptiste from Haiti, spoke on the development of Local Spiritual Assemblies, teaching experiences, and the aim of the Five Year Plan.

Other speakers came from the United States, Puerto Rico, Barbados and Martinique. Lively discussions followed each presentation.

Immediately after the conference, the first Baha'i Summer School in the Leeward and Virgin Islands began. Classes, presented in both English and French, concentrated on teaching. Hazel Lovelace, an Alaskan Indian, conducted a class on teacher training. Teams formed to teach the Faith in the town of St. John’s; the coordinator of the teams had only been a Baha’i for a few weeks.

The teams found 13 new Baha’is, among them the wife of the chief education officer in St. John’s, and a man who is one of the most respected broadcasters in the Caribbean.

As well as finding new Baha’is, the conference and summer school stimulated proclamation through courtesy calls to government officials and television and radio interviews.

The Universal House of Justice cabled the friends in Antigua: “DELIIGHTED HIGH SPIRIT VALUABLE RESULTS ANTIGUA CONFERENCE SUMMER SCHOOL OFFERING PRAYERS SUSTENANCE ALL ATTENDANTS AND CARIBBEAN ASSEMBLIES REAP RICH REWARDS EXPANSION CONSOLIDATION LOVE. THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE’.

Caribbean radio personality Julian Rogers enrolls in the Faith during Counsellors Conference.

Nigeria

Ikot-Ubo Baha’is proclaim the Faith

These Baha’is of Ikot-Ubo, southeastern state of Nigeria, are gathered for a proclamation meeting. In the center, back row, is Charles Leiche, pioneer to Nigeria who spent June and August travelling, aiding the teaching and deepening efforts of the friends in 18 communities. To the extreme right is Kingsley J. Umoh, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Nigeria.
Panama

House of Worship gets thorough cleaning

The Panama House of Worship was thoroughly cleaned this summer. The youth pictured above is using a high-powered hose to clean the dome and patterned wall. The inside of the Temple was also cleaned with high-powered hoses, and the Greatest Name plaque was lowered from the ceiling of the dome and its surface refinished and polished.

Besides helping to clean the Temple, the friend in these pictures visited the San Blas Islands and showed films to the Cuna Indians.

Another youth, visiting Panama from Nebraska, went on a teaching trip to the Darien Jungle where she and her companions showed movies and gave classes on Bahá’í administration.

Papua New Guinea

8 remote villages almost all Bahá’í

Nearly every person in eight villages in the Mt. Brown region of Eastern Papua New Guinea is a Bahá’í.

The Mt. Brown area is remote. To reach it, two Canadian pioneers wrote that they “drove as far as a regular car could go, then waited two and a half days for a passenger truck that would take us to the end of the road. From there we walked for three days up and down mountains and across six rivers until we reached Aireauka, where we received a welcome fit for royalty.”

In the village of Aireauka, the two pioneers attended the opening of the newly constructed Bahá’í Meeting Place, a building “meant to be a place for Bahá’ís to come together and worship rather than an office or administrative center.”

The most exciting thing about the growth of the Faith in the Mt. Brown region is that no outside Bahá’ís took the Message there. Some men, native to that region, learned of the Faith while traveling and brought the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh back to their people.

United States

Chicago announces own Five Year Plan

Bahá’ís of Illinois gathered at the Chicago Bahá’í Center on September 13 to learn of the Chicago Spiritual Assembly’s special Five Year Plan.

The plan requires major expansion of the Chicago Bahá’í community, the establishment of 10 college clubs with special emphasis on teaching the Faith to foreign students, sending six pioneers overseas, a 35 per cent increase in contributions to the Fund, increased minority teaching, and increased use of media, especially foreign language radio stations and newspapers.

So far, the Assembly reported, two pioneers have gone abroad, a summer youth project focused on Greek and Spanish-speaking neighborhoods resulted in 19 Spanish-speaking new Bahá’ís, and $5,000 has been contributed toward building a new Bahá’í Center in Chicago.

The Hand of the Cause of God Dhikr’u’lláh Khádem and Counsellor Edna True of the Continental Board of Counsellors for North America addressed the gathering. Miss True recalled that, in a cable sent to the young Bahá’í community

Togo

Members of first Togo National Assembly

The members of the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Togo assemble with the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláh Muhájjir, seated second from left.

The Togo National Spiritual Assembly was elected at the first National Convention last Rídván. The members are, from left, Kawku Negble Attigah, vice chairman; Mr. Muhájjir; Amevor Amematch-Iron; George Allen, secretary; and, standing, Yao Azikpati; Kodjo Honsou; Maylo Murday, treasurer; Komi Koussanta, assistant treasurer; Baban Soga Kamoe, assistant secretary; and Amru’lláh Khelghati, chairman.
of Chicago, 'Abdu'l-Bahá likened that city to a heart, saying, "Thank God Chicago is a strong heart."

Mr. Khādem said he would send a copy of Chicago's Five Year Plan to the Bahá'ís of Tíhrán, for it would uplift them, as they are not permitted to teach openly. He said that when he traveled in the East, the friends there asked him to tell the Bahá'ís of the West to teach, to win the goals of the Five Year Plan for them.

California teaching project a success

A teaching institute conducted by Auxiliary Board member Paul Pettit prepared a group of Bahá'ís for a special teaching effort in Watsonville, an agricultural community in Northern California.

For two weeks, Bahá'í teachers invited the people of Watsonville to meetings, both personally and through radio and TV. The nightly meetings were brief. A movie, songs, and a five-minute talk were followed by informal fellowship. The time of fellowship was most important, giving the seekers a chance to ask, on a one-to-one level, questions which they were too shy to ask in front of the whole audience.

The effort in Watsonville, sponsored by the Local Spiritual Assembly of Santa Cruz County North and the California Regional Teaching Committee, is now an ongoing project, for 69 people have become new Bahá'ís. Because they bring their friends to weekly deepening sessions, and their friends declare, the number is constantly growing.

Though all the people of Watsonville were invited to learn about the Faith, the major response was among Spanish-speaking people. Many of the new Bahá'ís are migrant workers, and are being trained as a valuable group of traveling teachers. Others, residents of Watsonville, are being prepared to consolidate the Faith in that area.

Teaching plans mapped in agricultural community in Northern California where 69 persons enrolled in the Faith in a short period.

Displays to mark Bicentennial year

In response to a recent request by The Universal House of Justice that the American Bahá'í community befittingly observe the U. S. Bicentennial, and suggesting efforts in New York City and Washington, D.C., the National Information Office is producing displays for use in those cities.

The displays, planned for Pennsylvania Station in New York and National Airport in Washington, will reinforce and complement the National Spiritual Assembly's advertisement in the special Life magazine Bicentennial issue, which appeared on newstands on Labor Day and will remain on sale through December.

During February, an estimated five million people will see the display in Pennsylvania Station; about two million will see it in the National Airport.

The displays, featuring backlit transparencies on eight two-foot-square modules, will also include a pamphlet rack.

This is a model of the displays which will be seen by an estimated seven million persons in New York City and Washington, D.C.

Some goals won in Youth Program

This September, midway through the Two Year Youth Program, the National Bahá'í Youth Committee announced that some goals of the Program have been won: 500 teaching trips have been completed, five youth pioneers have settled in posts which are goal areas of the Five Year Plan, and youth conferences have illumined every state and district.

Goals which need special attention from now until the end of the Two Year Youth Program in September, 1976, are: the formation of college clubs, homefront pioneering, increased contributions to the Bahá'í Fund, and dramatic expansion in the number of Bahá'í youth.

The Youth Committee is optimistic about the success of the Program, feeling that sustained, personal teaching efforts, with each Bahá'í youth guiding one soul into the Faith each year, will not only win the goals, but energize the entire Bahá'í community.
Impressions of Bahá'u'lláh
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The growth of the Faith and a gift of love
The voice of the Burning Bush is raised in the midmost heart of the world, and the Holy Spirit calleth aloud among the nations: ‘Lo, the Desired One is come with manifest dominion!’  

‘From childhood He was extremely kind and generous. He was a great lover of outdoor life, most of His time being spent in the garden or the fields. He had an extraordinary power of attraction, which was felt by all. People always crowded around Him. Ministers and people of the Court would surround Him, and the children also were devoted to Him. When He was only thirteen or fourteen years old He became renowned for His learning. He would converse on any subject and solve any problem presented to Him. In large gatherings He would discuss matters with the ‘ulamá (leading mullás) and would explain intricate religious questions. All of them used to listen to Him with the greatest interest.  

Impressions of Bahá’u’lláh  

By 'Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, the Hand of the Cause of God Tarázílláh Samandarí, Nabil-i-A’zam, and others. Compiled by Janet Schoen.

‘When Bahá’u’lláh was twenty-two years old, His father died, and the Government wished Him to succeed to His father’s position in the Ministry, as was customary in Persia, but Bahá’u’lláh did not accept the offer. Then the Prime Minister said: ‘Leave Him to Himself. Such a position is unworthy of Him. He has some higher aim in view. I cannot understand Him, but I am convinced that He is destined for some lofty career. His thoughts are not like ours. Let Him alone.’”

“‘If thine aim be to cherish thy life, approach not our court; but if sacrifice be thy heart’s desire, come and let others come with thee. For such is the way of Faith, if in thy heart thou seekest reunion with Bahá shouldst thou refuse to tread this path, why trouble us? Begone!’”

“... the former Mufti of ‘Akka... had been a bitter enemy of Bahá’u’lláh. Salah, caretaker at Bahji, told us the story of the two attempts on the life of Bahá’u’lláh made by this Mufti while Bahá’u’lláh was still in prison. Once with a hidden dagger, but Bahá’u’lláh before admitting him to His presence said, ‘Let him first cleanse his hands.’ A second time, the Mufti planned to strangle the Blessed Beauty, and Bahá’u’lláh said before admitting him, ‘First let him cleanse his heart.’ The Mufti became an ardent believer...”

The beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, describes the exalted Station of his Great-Grandfather, Bahá’u’lláh: “The Everlasting
The Shrine and Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahji on the plain of ‘Akka.

Father, the Lord of Hosts, the Most Great Name, the Ancient Beauty, the Pen of the Most High, the Hidden Name, the Preserved Treasure, the Most Great Light, the Most Great Ocean, the Supreme Heaven, the Pre-existent Root, the Day-Star of the Universe, the Judge, the Law-giver, the Redeemer of all mankind, the Organizer of the entire planet, the Unifier of the children of men, the Inaugurator of the long-awaited millennium, the Creator of a new World Order, the Establisher of the Most Great Peace, the Fountain of the Most Great Justice, the Proclaimer of the coming of age of the entire human race, the Inspirer and Founder of a world civilization.”

“The room of the Most Great House (in Baghdad) ... set apart for the reception of Bahá'u'lláh's visitors, though dilapidated, and having long since outgrown its usefulness, vied, through having been trodden by the blessed footsteps of the Well-Beloved, with the Most Exalted Paradise. Low-roofed, it yet seemed to reach to the stars, and though it boasted but a single couch, fashioned from the branches of palms whereon He Who is the King of Names was wont to sit, it drew to itself, even as a loadstone, the hearts of the princes.”

This reception room so charmed one prince that he planned to build one like it in his own house.

"He may well succeed," Bahá'u'lláh is reported to have smilingly remarked when apprised of this intention, "in reproducing outwardly the exact counterpart of this low-roofed room made of mud and straw with its diminutive garden. What of his ability to open onto it the spiritual doors leading to the hidden worlds of God?" "I know not how to explain it," another prince ... describing the atmosphere which pervaded that reception-room had affirmed, "were all the sorrows of the world to be crowded into my heart they would, I feel, all vanish, when in the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. It is as if I had entered Paradise itself." "

"So intoxicated where those who had quaffed from the cup of Bahá'u'lláh's presence ... that in their eyes the palaces of kings appeared more ephemeral than a spider's web ... "Many a night ... no less than ten persons subsisted on no more than a pennyworth of dates. No one knew to whom actually belonged the shoes, the cloaks, or the robes that were to be found in their houses. Whoever went to the bazaar could claim that the shoes upon his feet were his own, and each one who entered the presence of Bahá'u'lláh could affirm that the cloak and robe he then wore belonged to him. Their own names they had forgotten, their hearts were emptied of aught else except adoration for their Beloved ... O for the joy of those days, and the gladness and wonder of those hours!"

"It was late one afternoon, at sunset. I went to His presence. One of those who had emigrated to 'Akka, a greatly celebrated believer, was there, and the Blessed Beauty was conversing with him. Then the believer finished what he had to say, and the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh were at an end. Bahá'u'lláh had, under the couch which was in His room, a small tin box of dates. The Blessed Beauty was sitting on His heels; He ate one of the dates,
after which He gave the pita to that individual. 'See,' He said, 'how delicate it is.' Then He reached for a handful of the dates and gave them to me. I took them in my two cupped hands. When He reached for the tin a second time, I thought He wished once again to give some to me, and this time I held out the skirt of my garment. He smiled, and said 'This place is the Most Great Prison. If you eat too much you will come to grief.'

"I ... lived in a room which was devoid of furniture. Bahá'u'lláh entered it one day, and, looking about Him, remarked: 'Its emptiness pleases Me. In My estimation it is preferable to many a spacious palace, inasmuch as the beloved of God are occupied in it with the remembrance of the incomparable Friend, with hearts that are wholly emptied of the dross of this world.'

"... we were five people, the first group to come out (to the Mansion of Bahji) and pay our respects on the Ríqvan ..." When we arrived, we knelt before Bahá'u'lláh and remained seated on the floor in that position. The Blessed Beauty was seated on a chair. His room was carpeted with a mat woven of marsh reeds; there was nothing else in the room. He addressed us lovingly. After His expressions of loving-kindness, which I am no longer able to recall, He began to chant the ... Tablet to the Shah ... Truthfully, at that time I did not have sufficient capacity to experience those delights which were there to enjoy; but according to ... such capacity as I had, on that day I, too, from His chanting, from His ways (today, when I am at this age of ninety-two years, I feel it all) that day I witnessed Him in two states of being: one was His overwhelming meekness; and no meekness greater than His can be conceived. The other was the condition of might; of the power and authority of the Supreme Pen. When He would address the King, with what might He intoned, 'Ya Sultan!' At times He would gesture with His hand, at times He would move His foot, and with all majesty and power He would pronounce the words, 'O King!' When He came to: 'The invisible King standeth revealed in a visible temple and saith, "Fear not, Relate unto His Majesty the Shah that which befell Thee ... '" at that moment, as He unfolded the tale of His calamities and trials, He manifested in His Person the very essence and spirit of ineffable meekness. Then He brought the reading to a close and said, with that heavenly music of His voice: 'Taraz Effendi, stand up!' I stood up. They had brought a quantity of roses from Junayna, red roses, the kind for attar, for rose water; early roses, fresh from the bush, perhaps thirty or forty in all, placed on a mat or cushion in His room, on a white cloth. He said, 'Give a rose to each one present here.' I took them up and I gave one rose to each. Then I stood waiting. He said, 'And what about My share?' I took one and offered it to Him. Then He said, 'Take one yourself, as well.' I took one myself. And He dismissed us, saying 'Go in God's care.'"

That was during Bahá'u'lláh's last earthly Ríqván festival. Nabil, the historian, describes His first:

"Every day ere the hour of dawn, the gardeners would pick the roses which lined the four avenues of the garden, and would pile them in the center of the floor of His blessed tent. So great would be the heap that when His companions gathered to drink their ..."
morning tea in His presence, they would be unable to see each other across it. All these roses Bahá'u'lláh would, with His own hands, entrust to those whom He dismissed from His presence every morning to be delivered, on His behalf, to His Arab and Persian friends in the city... One night, the ninth night of the waxing moon, I happened to be one of those who watched beside His blessed tent. As the hour of midnight approached, I saw Him issue from His tent, pass by the places where some of His companions were sleeping, and begin to pace up and down the moonlit, flower-bordered avenues of the garden. So loud was the singing of the nightingales on every side that only those who were near Him could hear distinctly His voice. He continued to walk until, pausing in the midst of one of these avenues, He observed: ‘Consider these nightingales. So great is their love for these roses that sleepless from dusk till dawn, they warble their melodies and commune with burning passion with the object of their adoration.

*Shun disharmony. Strive that no discord should arise among the friends. Let the friends avoid contention.*—Bahá'u'lláh

How then can those who claim to be afire with the rose-like beauty of the Beloved choose to sleep?" ¹²

"Rise up in splendor! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you.

"See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples; but upon you the Lord shines, and over you appears His glory." ¹³

"The face of Him on Whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow; while the deep lines on the forehead and face implied an age which the jet black hair and beard flowing down in indistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in Whose presence I stood..." ¹⁴

"... the Greatest Holy Leaf... would sometimes take his (Shoghi Effendi's) hand in hers and say, 'These are like the hands of my Father.' They were what I call intellectual hands, more square than tapering, strong, nervous, the veins standing out, very expressive in their gestures, very assured in their motions." ¹⁵

"... The breezes of Revelation can never be confounded with other breezes. Now the Lote-Tree beyond which there is no passing standeth laden with countless fruits before thy face..." ¹⁶

"... Seven days before His ascension... in the afternoon... one of the servitors came down from upstairs in the Mansion, and announced: 'The Blessed Beauty directs whoever is in the Mansion to come upstairs...'

"The Blessed Beauty lay in His bed. Two were seated one to either side of Him, and He leaned against them; they... were fanning Him. Then, He Himself began to speak; He addressed gracious and loving words to those about Him, spoke of His indisposition and recited some verses from the Book of Aqdas: 'Be not dismayed, O peoples of the world, when the daystar 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.'

"Since He recited these verses it became clear to us that He would ascend. Following these utterances He vehemently counselled us to abstain from dissension and strife. Although His blessed body was feeble He voiced this with great power, distinctly measuring out the words: 'Shun disharmony. Strive that no discord should arise among the friends. Let the friends avoid contention'. And suddenly Jináb-i-'Andalib (the poet, whose name means the nightingale) could endure no more. He broke down and Bahá'u'lláh dismissed us saying, 'Go, in God's care.' 'Abdu'l-Bahá was present too; as I recall He was standing. He directed us to circumambulate the bed. Those of us in our group simply walked around Bahá'u'lláh's bed and He said to us, 'Go, in God's care..." ¹⁷

When Bahá'u'lláh was still a child, the Vazír, His father, dreamed a dream. Bahá'u'lláh appeared to him swimming in a vast, limitless ocean. His body shone upon the waters with a radiance that illumined the sea. Around His head, which could distinctly be seen above the waters, there radiated, in all directions, His long, jet-black locks, floating in great profusion above the waves. As he dreamed, a multitude of fishes gathered round Him, each holding fast to the extremity of one hair. Fascinated by the effulgence of His face, they followed Him in whatever direction He swam. Great as was their number, and however firmly they clung to His locks, not one single hair seemed to have been detached from His head, nor did the least injury affect His person. Free and unrestrained, He moved above the waters and they all followed Him.

"The Vazír, greatly impressed by this dream, summoned a soothsayer who had achieved fame in that region, and asked him to interpret it for him. This man, as if inspired by a premonition of the future glory of Bahá'u'lláh, declared: 'The limitless ocean that you have seen in your dream, O Vazír, is none other than the
world of being. Single-handed and alone, your son will achieve supreme ascendancy over it. Wherever He may please, He will proceed unhindered. No one will resist His march, no one will hinder His progress. The multitude of fishes signifies the turmoil which He will arouse amidst the peoples and kindreds of the earth. Around Him will they gather, and to Him will they cling. Assured of the unfailing protection of the Almighty, this tumult will never harm His person, nor will His loneliness upon the sea of life endanger His safety.” 18

“The Persian poet says:
This great disorder in the town
is my Beloved’s tangled hair,
and it’s my Darling’s curving brow –
this revolution everywhere…” 19

No one will resist His march, no one will hinder His progress.

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8. Words of Nabil, Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 137.
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Excavation continues at House of Justice seat

A bulldozer removes rock and earth from the slope of Mount Carmel as the excavation work continues on schedule at the site of the permanent seat of The Universal House of Justice.

The completed excavation, averaging a depth of 33 feet, will measure 492 feet by 820 feet and is expected to be finished early in 1976. More than 1.5 million cubic feet of stone and earth must be removed at a cost of about $200,000. The Universal House of Justice has invited all believers to contribute to the building fund to ensure uninterrupted progress of this historic undertaking.

The Universal House of Justice has called the entire project the greatest single undertaking of the Five Year Plan.

Holy Places attract 142,773 visitors

The golden-domed Shrine of the Báb and the beautiful gardens and monuments on Mount Carmel attracted a total of 142,773 non-Baha'i visitors between August 1974 and September 1975, the Baha'i Holy Places Department at the World Center reported.

Most people visit Mount Carmel during the summer. In August, 17,955 visitors were received. All guests at the Baha'i Holy Places are given introductory literature about the Faith. The literature is available in various languages.

Hands of Cause present at Summer Schools

Baha'is Summer Schools blossomed throughout Europe this year. All were blessed by the presence of one or more of the Hands of the Cause of God.

The Scandinavian Bahá'í Summer School at Evje, Norway, welcomed the Hand of the Cause of God 'Ali-Akbar Fard. That school also sponsored its first children's program and reported that "...In the beginning it was difficult to find teachers, but as the success of the program began to filter back...the posts were easily filled..." Toward the end of the session parents, unmarried youth, and grandparents had joyously taught the children. "Some of the children were so enthusiastic about the program that they actually complained when there were no classes because of other activities," the children's committee wrote, "and other children reminded their parents that they had to leave the beach in order to attend classes."

The Hands of the Cause of God Abu'l-Qásim Faizi, Paul Haney, and Rahmatulláh Muhájír taught at the Bahá'í Summer School of the United Kingdom at Tiverton, Devon, England. Forty children attending the school responded eagerly to three special sessions with Mr. Faizi, Mr. Haney, and Dr. Muhájír.

Sr. Haney also worked with 141 Bahá'ís from 16 countries at a summer Youth Conference in Switzerland. The conference cabled that it had "concluded week intensive deepening successful teaching unprecedented proclamation area blessed beloved Guardian's visits..." Mr. Faizi also visited the French Bahá'í Summer School in Normandy, the Luxembourg School and the twelfth Italian School which was also illumined by the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery. And Mr. Giachery inspired the friends at the historic first weekend Summer School of Greece which reported attendance by about 50 "elated, happy and united" Bahá'ís.

Around the World

Alaska
Guardian's secretary leads Summer School

Baha'is from Alaska and Canada gathered in Juneau, Alaska, August 2-6 for the Alaskan Bahá'í Summer School. They met in a setting approved by the beloved Guardian as the future site of the school and their love for the Guardian was kindled through classes led by Gladys Weeden. Mrs. Weeden served as Shoghi Effendi's secretary and was instructed by him to "always give the friends my deepest love."

Auxiliary Board member Eunice Braun presented the history of the Faith as the unfolding life of the Cause of God. Auxiliary Board member Javidukht Khadem challenged the Bahá'ís with the concept of Bahá'í family based on the development of spiritual qualities such as courtesy, self-discipline, and obedience through daily refining of these qualities within the family. Mrs. Khadem also presented a class on the protection of the Faith. Another class covered the history of the Faith in Alaska, and a class on the Fund was based on open discussions.

Public firesides were held every evening. Alaska's latest overseas pioneers were sent lovingly to Finland. Over 60 children attended the children's program, making notebooks which they took home with them, and enjoying music and arts and crafts.

Cameroon Republic
Mr. Olinga delighted with 10-day tour

The Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga has concluded a 10-day tour of Bahá'í communities in the Cameroon Republic.

Accompanied by E. O. Ayamba and Fondem Joseph, Mr. Olinga paid a courtesy visit to the senior divisional officer in Mamfe, J. N. Ngoh, who paid glowing tribute to the Bahá'í Faith for the role played by Bahá'ís in its work at the United Nations. Mr. Ngoh was reported to have said that the need to mold the morals and character of youth and to correct social and economic imbalance are questions to which answers could be found only in the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith. He expressed the hope that the Mamfe Bahá'ís would

Continued on Page 7, Col. 3
Canada

Proclamation, deepening activities highlight commemoration of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit

During the week of August 30-September 7, the Bahá'í community of Canada undertook a series of proclamation and deepening activities commemorating the 1912 visit to Canada of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The idea originated last year with the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears when he proposed to the National Spiritual Assembly that the anniversary of the Master's visit be commemorated through a series of annual teaching projects. He offered to spend the month of September in Canada each year of the Five Year Plan.

The Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts agreed to assist with a program in Vancouver to run simultaneously with one in Montreal. When the Hand of the Cause of God Dhu'bi'llah Khádem also accepted the National Spiritual Assembly's invitation to take part, it was then possible to expand the plans for the program in Montreal.

Since the first stage of the landscaping and interior decor at the new National Center would be completed in August, it was decided to also hold the official public opening of the Hazíratu'l-Quds in Toronto during commemoration week.

And it became apparent that the Maxwell home, Canada's National Bahá'í Shrine, would be ready and it was decided to schedule the formal reopening to coincide with the other events of commemoration week.

But the news arrived of an unexpected deterioration in Mr. Sears' health and it became clear that he would have to suspend all of his activities. At the personal request of Mr. Sears, however, The Universal House of Justice asked the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khanum, then winding up her Amazon trip, to replace Mr. Sears on the Montreal program. Rúhíyyih Khanum immediately accepted.

The week began with the formal reopening of the Maxwell home as a place for visitation and prayer. The Shrine had been closed because it lacked a fire escape. But a solution was finally worked out.

The heart of the commemoration week was Montreal where the program involved the re-creation of a number of events of the week which 'Abdu'l-Bahá had spent there 63 years ago. Three churches in the city had been especially associated with His visit: the Church of the Messiah where He had delivered the address at the morning service on September 1, St. James United Church where He had spoken later in the week, and the Cathedral of Notre Dame which He had visited.

At St. James United Church, Mr. Khádem delivered an address based on the themes of the Master's message.

That evening, at the Windsor Hotel where 'Abdu'l-Bahá had spent three or four days of His visit, Rúhíyyih Khanum spoke to a crowd of almost 700 persons. She spoke movingly of the early days of the Cause in Montreal and of the role which she sees the Canadian Bahá'í community increasingly playing around the world.

On Sunday morning, Amatu'l-Bahá spoke at the Church of the Messiah, discussing the themes which the Master had enunciated under that very roof in 1912. The architect for the Church of the Messiah, built over six years before 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit, had been the late Hand of the Cause of God W. Sutherland Maxwell, the father of Rúhíyyih Khanum.

Other public meetings were held in Montreal. In addition to the two Hands of the Cause, other participants in the events included Counsellor Lloyd Gardner and Auxiliary Board members Javidukht Khádem and Ted Oliver.

In Vancouver, approximately 500 believers came from the provinces of western Canada to commemorate the Master's visit. Mr. Robarts recounted warm and humorous anecdotes connected with this "very great occasion." Six of the early believers from the Vancouver area, Austin Collin, Mary Burroughs, Ruby France, Doris Skinner, Muriel Warnicker, and Kathy Moscrop, all shared brief vignettes of their early Bahá'í lives.

Later in the week, Mr. Robarts participated in the ceremonies formally opening the new Hazíratu'l-Quds and more than 200 persons attended.

Photographs on Page 8
Special events during the week of August 30-September 7 in Canada marked the 1912 visit of 'Abdu’l-Bahá. Two Hands of the Cause of God, Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum (1) and Dhikru’l-‘láh Khádem (2), spoke in Montreal. The friends gather (3) for the official public opening of the Hazíratu’l-Quds (4) in Toronto. The believers enter (5) the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Montreal for a program commemorating the Master’s visit to that church. Another event was at the Windsor Hotel where the friends (6) saw a performance by the Ballet Shayda (7).
El Salvador
Institute held for Auxiliary Board assistants

An institute was held in El Salvador October 11-12 for the newly appointed assistants to the Auxiliary Board.

From left to right are Auxiliary Board member Naomi Dreyer, Jose Francisco Oliva, Lidia Montecinos, Anna Hilda Rosales, Carlos Rodriguez, Counsellor Artemus Lamb of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Central America, and Antonio Reyes.

Subjects covered at the institute included the institutions of the Counsellors and the Auxiliary Boards, the role of the assistant Board members, the Local Spiritual Assembly, the Feast, and the Five Year Plan.

French Guiana
New Bahá’í assists in village teaching

Bahá’í teachers traveled by ferry and went inland along overgrown jungle trails to bring the Message to the Galibi Indian villages of French Guiana this summer.

The first to accept the Teachings was a youth, age 19, who, because he has attended school, serves as interpreter for the chief of his village. The teachers gave the youth literature, he obtained the chief’s permission for the Bahá’ís to explain the Faith in the village and show the filmstrip “Unity in Diversity,” and the next day the youth became a Bahá’í.

He asked the Bahá’í teachers to go with him to Aouara, another Galibi village where he used to be a school teacher. The Bahá’ís were warmly welcomed by the chief of Aouara who opened his home for a Bahá’í meeting.

“We had a wonderful evening,” the teachers reported. “About 50 adults and 30 youth and children heard the Message of Bahá’u’l-Ḥabhá’ for the first time. They even had the privilege of hearing a prayer of the Bab in their own dialect, because Eugene (the youth) had already translated it! He is not losing one moment of his time and is trying to find ways to help teach the Faith. What more could one ask after . . . such a wonderful time teaching? Probably another opportunity to do it again!”

Hawaiian Islands
Bahá’í float wins Aloha Parade prize

The Bahá’í float in the 1975 Aloha Week Parade in Honolulu took first place in its category.

An estimated 80,000 persons lined the parade route. The parade, held October 18, was broadcast by local television stations to hundreds of thousands.

The Bahá’í float was made up of 35,000 real flowers—mums, carnations, pumeria, and tea leaves. It took two weeks to build and during the building some 150 Bahá’ís participated in some way in helping with carpentry, plastering, pasting on flowers, painting, and other jobs. All islands in Hawaii had representation in the making of the float and all races were also represented. The Bahá’ís worked all night until the next morning the day before the parade to put on the final touches. The float was designed, built, manned, and driven by Bahá’ís.

The float consisted of a huge clam shell which was pulled by five dolphins. Four of the dolphin moved in a rocking motion and had youth on them as riders. In the shell were Bahá’ís of different races and nationalities. On the side of the float were the words: One Race—The Human Race. In the front and back were the words Bahá’í Faith.

This is the ninth time the Bahá’ís have had a float in the parade. In the past they won two first places, three second places and one third place. A large photo of the Bahá’í float was carried in the daily newspaper.
India

Mrs. Gandhi receives Bahá’í literature

Counsellor Hooper Dunbar of the International Teaching Center presents Bahá’í literature to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on October 3. Also pictured, from left, are Counsellors Zena Sorabjee and Shirin Boman of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South Central Asia.

Kerala State site of youth proclamation

The National Youth Committee sponsored a proclamation program in Kerala State this summer called the East-West Project.

The project was carried out by Bahá’í youth pioneers and traveling teachers and by about 20 youth from India. The youth worked “in an extremely systematic manner towards the expansion and consolidation of the Faith in Kerala State,” the committee reported. “They have organized adequate follow-up work so that every day, after teaching in universities and colleges, classes are held for those who express interest in order to increase their knowledge of the Faith and to inspire them with love of Bahá’u’lláh.” The youth also visited villages, spending time with Bahá’í families and seekers, establishing regular firesides.

A Victory Conference was held when the project was two-thirds completed. Over 200 youth participated in the conference, consulting about proclamation, teaching, and follow-up. The regenerating spirit of the conference inspired many to arise and help complete the project, which ended in September.

Project nets publicity in Uttar Pradesh

The Local Spiritual Assembly of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, sponsored a proclamation this summer which resulted in an unprecedented amount of publicity for the Faith in India. All four members of the Continental Board of Counsellors in South Central Asia participated in the proclamation; they are Counsellors Zena Sorabjee, Shirin Boman, Salisa Kermani and Dipchand Khianra. In addition to the Counsellors, Bahá’í speakers included Gloria Faizi, Charles MacDonald, Ray Johnson, and H.M. Munje.

The proclamation began with a tea and reception at Government House hosted by Chenna Reddy, governor of Uttar Pradesh. Dr. Reddy received a copy of The Bahá’í World, Vol. XIV. He chatted informally with the friends and asked many questions about the Faith, then chaired the first meeting of the proclamation, which was held in the Government House auditorium. Dr. Reddy spoke for 40 minutes on various aspects of the Faith, expressing the hope that the Bahá’í Faith would be able to create a new society based on the oneness of religion. “I am extremely happy to know that the Bahá’ís are taking this message of love and peace throughout the world,” he said.

The meeting was covered in the prestigious Times of India, a newspaper which has rarely printed anything about the Faith. It was televised and seen on the news. Extracts of the governor’s speech were recorded and broadcast on All India Radio. The broadcast was relayed three times, in English, Hindi, and various regional languages.

Jamaica

Jamaica broadcast features Mrs. Afnán

The Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation recently featured a 25-minute interview on the Bahá’í Faith with Shomais Afnán. Mrs. Afnán was on her way home after attending the Tribune for United Nations non-governmental organizations in Mexico City. The Tribune was a parallel activity with the United Nations International Women’s Year Conference in Mexico City. Mrs. Afnán was one of eight Bahá’ís who participated in the Tribune.

While in Jamaica, Mrs. Afnán also conducted a number of firesides and, in informal social settings, was able to discuss the Faith with some distinguished leaders. She spent two days at the Bahá’í Summer School of Jamaica, where she spoke on “The Pattern of Bahá’í Life” and “Teaching Methods and Public Relations Work.”

Mrs. Afnán was also interviewed on the largest television station in Mexico. She had also given talks in Yucatan, and had visited with Mayan believers.

New Zealand

New social event fun for Hastings

The Bahá’ís of Hastings, New Zealand, have a new idea for a Bahá’í social event. They called it a “Bahá’í-Family Home Entertainment Evening,” and invited Bahá’ís and friends to prepare an item, such as a song, a crafts project, jokes or a skit to share with everyone. The children participated, and loved it.

The Christchurch Bahá’ís received inquiries from many sincere seekers as a result of consistent advertisements in the local newspapers. Attendance at their firesides has increased. Each day, the Bahá’ís of Christchurch met for a prayer session and concentrated on the Remover of Difficulties prayer. The proclamation, held over a 19-day period was extended for
19 more days because of its success.

The Thames, New Zealand, Bahá'ís proclaimed the Faith during a dedication of a new band shell in Thames. They distributed pamphlets and presented Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era to the mayor of Thames, who praised the Faith. A Bahá'í recited the prayer "Blessed is the Spot" at the dedication.

In Manukau City, the Bahá'ís had a sale among themselves of old articles and of new things which some of them made especially for the sale. All proceeds went to the National Fund.

**Pakistan**

**Women's Year event held in Karachi**

The Bahá'í Youth Committee of Karachi recently sponsored a successful symposium on the subject of women's rights held in observance of the United Nations International Women's Year.

Shirin Fozdar presented the Bahá'í teachings relating to the role of women. Other participants in the panel were Faqiy Haq, editor of the women's page of the Daily Morning News; Rafiq Saifi of the Karachi Development Authority; and Masooda Jawad, a director of the All-Pakistan Women's Association.

The program opened with the reading of a Bahá'í prayer followed by a brief introduction to the Faith and an outline of its relationship to the United Nations, by a Bahá'í youth. Various dignitaries of Karachi attended the meeting. The audience consisted largely of professional people including teachers, advocates and social workers, and students.

Many persons left their names and addresses at the registration counter, requesting invitations to future public meetings under Bahá'í sponsorship.

**Paraguay**

**Governor cooperates in teaching Faith**

Pedro Juan Caballero, Paraguay, is the largest and fastest growing city in Paraguay, apart from the capital. When a new "Delegado de Gobierno" was appointed a few months ago, all organizations wishing to hold meetings were required to apply for police permission. The Bahá'ís presented The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh and other literature to the new governor, who offered his full cooperation to the Bahá'ís.

In July, Auxiliary Board member Natalia Caballero, her daughter Herminia, and Zia Vojdani, member of the National Bahá'í Teaching Committee of Argentina, spent several days in Pedro Juan. Their activities included visits with Bahá'ís and inquirers, a fireside with slides at the home of seekers, a 30 minute radio interview, an audience with the government delegate, and a brief consultation with members of the Local Spiritual Assembly.

In September, Auxiliary Board member Edmund Miessler of Brazil spoke before a large audience in Ponta Para, the twin city of Pedro Juan, at the invitation of the director of the "Centro Educacional." He also visited the government delegate, conducted firesides and visits and was interviewed on the radio.

Bahá'ís in Pedro Juan proclaim the Faith through newspaper ads, which quote from the Writings and offer free literature, and by slides of drawings illustrating basic Bahá'í principles. These slides are shown nightly on the movie theater screen.

**Philippines**

**Tutorial School resumes classes**

The Rogelio Onilla Tutorial School resumed classes on June 2 in Tablongan, Philippines, in the area of the Mangyan Hanunoo Tribe.

The school is named for the tribe's first Bahá'í who, in 1968, thought of erecting a school for his village. With the help of his fellow tribe members, he built a small house of cogon grass, rattan vines and bamboo trees. Since nearly everyone accepted the Faith, Mr. Onilla imparted fundamental concepts of the Cause together with basic reading skills, called abakada.

Many Bahá'í meetings were held in the school.

Mr. Onilla became ill and died at the age of 32. No one in the tribe could take over the school, but the spark of the Faith remained warm in their hearts. The National Spiritual Assembly of the Philippines, in response to the goal set by The Universal House of Justice that tutorial schools be established among tribes during the Five Year Plan, took steps to restore the effectiveness of the school.

Now, the school has classes for both youth and adults in the mornings and afternoons. The classes cover Bahá'í teachings, abakada, basic English, and arithmetic.

**Tanzania**

**Assistants appointed to Auxiliary Board**

The appointment of assistants to members of the Auxiliary Board has greatly reinforced the effectiveness of the Board's activities throughout the country and the assistants have commenced their services with hope, zeal and eagerness, pledging themselves to the rapid fulfillment of the goals of the Five Year Plan.

Auxiliary Board member Festus Sunjuti reported that the believers of one village, at a recent conference attended by an assistant to the Board, resolved to meet each morning for prayers and begin cultivating a plot of land which will become a means of increasing their local Bahá'í Fund.

The friends in a second village visited not long ago by another assistant are in process of baking bricks for the construction of their local Bahá'í Center. They have also organized classes for Bahá'í children. Bahá'í youth in that community are organizing a football club as a means of entertaining themselves and attracting other youth to the Faith.

In a third village the believers are busy beautifying their Bahá'í Center by planting flowers and trees, the visiting assistant reported, and are translating Bahá'í literature into two local indigenous dialects and have resolved to undertake extension teaching and deepening with a view to creating new Local Spiritual Assemblies in five nearby communities.

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Around the World

Turkey

Officials receive new Bahá’í book

A new Bahá’í book, Beklenen Cag, has been published in Turkey and presented to a number of high-ranking government officials and journalists. The Bahá’ís have received letters of appreciation, including one from a former prime minister of Turkey.

A Turkish organization that upholds the concept of world peace and unity recently invited one of the Bahá’ís to speak at a meeting. A few Bahá’ís attended the gathering, joining an audience of about 70 people, most of whom were young. The speaker briefly outlined the history and teachings of the Faith and showed slides of the Bahá’í Holy Places. The talk led to a lively discussion. Many seekers took literature and the meeting continued until midnight. The Turkish Bahá’í expect that the success of this meeting will give them opportunities to present the Bahá’í Message to other organizations whose aims are in harmony with the aims of the Faith.

United States

Law Conference hears words of Master

"Woman by nature is opposed to war; she is an advocate of peace. Children are reared and brought up by mothers who give them the first principles of education and labor assiduously in their behalf..." — 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, uttered before the Women’s Freedom League in England in 1913, were quoted by Dr. Dorothy Nelson, treasurer of the National Spiritual Assembly, when she presided at a session of the World Law Conference, held October 12-17 in Washington, D.C.

She was one of four Bahá’í lawyers participating in this worldwide meeting, held at three-year intervals since 1957, and was also recipient of the Pax Orbis Ex Jure medal, awarded by the Center Associates of the World Peace Through Law Center in Washington, for outstanding accomplishment in the field of international relations.

The conference was attended by 4,600 chief justices and lawyers from 131 countries.

Many significant opportunities occurred during the conference for proclamation of the Bahá’í Faith to persons of influence. One courtesy extended to the Bahá’ís was permission to have a booth in the exhibit hall, where literature concerning equality of men and women, human rights and loyalty to government attracted considerable attention.

Bahá’ís from the Washington-Baltimore area took turns manning the booth. One popular item with visitors was postcards of the House of Worship in Wilmette. Many mentioned Bahá’í pioneers living in their own country and showed a respectful attitude to the Faith.

An arrangement of fall flowers given by the Bahá’ís of the Washington area was the centerpiece for the head table at the luncheon where the Pax Orbis Ex Jure awards were presented, and one table near the front of the room was occupied by Bahá’í participants in the conference and their friends.

The following cable was sent to Dr. Nelson by the Continental Board of Counsellors for North America:

"The Continental Board of Counsellors for North America wishes to congratulate you on the occasion of your being a recipient of the Pax Orbis Ex Jure Award to be granted you on October 16th, 1975, from the Center Associates of the World Peace Through Law Center, Washington, D.C., in recognition of your distinguished record of notable contributions to world peace. "We share in the pride of all the Bahá’ís on this continent who rejoice and felicitate you.

"Loving Bahá’í greetings, (signed) Sarah Martin Pereira for the Continental Board of Counsellors for North America."

Amid the historic sites of Washington, including receptions at the Supreme Court and at the White House, Bahá’ís attending the conference had many encounters with legal experts interested in world peace. "Voice of America" interviewed Dr. Nelson for future broadcast, and two long articles appeared in the Afro-American newspaper chain. Interview material for a public affairs broadcast on WMIL radio was taped by Dr. Nelson for use in a series on juvenile justice.

The widely representative gathering, with many lawyers in the national dress of their countries pointed to the gradual penetration of the principle of the oneness of mankind into the consciousness of humanity today.

Speaking up in the cause of peace were many who had suffered through recent wars, including Helvi Sipila of Finland, assistant secretary-general of the United Nations and secretary-general of International Women’s Year. She told one session that she had been pregnant with her oldest
son when she was fighting in the underground during the World War II and had vowed at that time that if she lived through the war, she would devote her efforts to securing peace.

Sir Philip Noel-Baker of London, England, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1959, traced the history of his family with its participation on opposite sides of the American War of Independence. He emphasized that he did not believe peace can be won by rapidly increasing stockpiles of armaments and subordination of some national powers to the common good, so that governments negotiate internationally and protect their citizens from a nuclear holocaust. His concluding assurance that he deeply believed “government of the people, by the people and for the people will not perish” brought his audience of several thousand to their feet in prolonged applause.

Chief Justice of the United States Warren E. Burger struck a note of optimism about the ultimate outcome of present world tensions. After receiving an honorary Doctor of Laws from Howard University, he spoke of the increasing number of people in the world “who are committed to the rule of law” and expressed his feeling of honor on behalf of the judiciary to welcome such a diverse membership to this conference.

“We share common ideals or we would not be here,” he continued. “We share the concept that man was meant to be free and that the state was meant to be the servant of man, or we would not be here. We know that the foundation of any idea of justice and the rule of law between states requires that there first be justice and the rule of law within each state. That is, of course, the foundation.

“Sometimes people ask whether there is any purpose in a meeting of this kind, and in the trying period that we live in. This is not an unreasonable question.” Justice Burger then went on to cite important outcomes of earlier world law conferences, stressing the value of the demonstration trial held at each conference with an international tribunal set up to arbitrate a case involving a citizen suing his sovereign.

Referring to the Bicentennial, Justice Burger commented that the United States is a very young country. “In today’s terms, our people 200 years ago were 13 underdeveloped and underpopulated states, diverse in their attitudes, competing with each other, and it was only through the miracle of great leadership that we managed through the revolution to gain our independence. It was not until 11 years later, in 1787, that we shaped a form of government. But we can look back on that form of government now, in the light of history, as one in which 13 separate sovereign states, diverse in their interests and competing with each other, with a total of only three million people, managed to shape a legal and judicial system in which there was one law, supreme over all.”

That theme, of the possibility for harmonious association of world governments in the same way that states cooperate in a federal system of the United States, ran through the entire conference, with Bahá’í delegates utilizing a number of opportunities to speak to this question from the point of view of Bahá’í Writings.

In the session presided over by Dr. Nelson, matters relating to the rights of women were the primary concern. Participating on this panel were Dr. Lung-chu Chen of the Yale Law School, Emma Hill of Jamaica, Maria Luisa Fuster of Puerto Rico, Chief Justice A. R. Jiagge of Ghana, Rachel Mayanja of Uganda, and Aisa I. Mendoza of Mexico. Seated in the front row, as the working paper was read by Rachel Mayanja, was Sir Noel-Baker who expressed an interest in meeting Dr. Nelson and voiced his warm approval for her efforts in the field of international rights as well as world peace.

For the Bahá’í delegates at the conference, including Judge James Nelson of Los Angeles, Dr. Elsie Austin of Silver Spring, Maryland, and Kiser Barnes of Baltimore, it was an especially rare moment to hear the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá quoted by Dr. Nelson in this setting:

“Woman by nature is opposed to war; she is an advocate of peace. Children are reared and brought up by mothers who give them the first principles of education and labor assiduously in their behalf. Consider, for instance, a mother who has tenderly reared a son for twenty years to the age of maturity. Surely she will not consent to having that son torn asunder and killed in the field of battle. Therefore, as woman advances toward the degree of man in power and privilege, with the right of vote and control in human government, most assuredly war will cease, for woman is naturally the most devoted and staunch advocate of international peace.”

Dr. Nelson spoke of the necessity for concerted effort in the field of education, as well as extensive programs toward...
eliminating extreme poverty, racism, and ill health.

"I am excited and optimistic about the peace of the world," she continued, "because at the conference in Mexico City this year I found that men and women, whether from north or south, east or west, truly believe in the equality of men and women. It was clear at this conference that this alone will not be sufficient, however. For to achieve world peace and the oneness of humanity, we must have universal education, the abolition of poverty, and the abolition of racism.

In her summation, Dr. Nelson restated her conviction that it was important that men and women work together in achieving equal rights for men and women, concluding: "The discussion in our panel today should indicate the breadth of the movement toward equal rights and responsibilities for men and women and should cast in comparative perspective some of the problems encountered along the way."

The oneness of mankind, the equality of men and women, the need for world government, the need for an auxiliary universal language...these themes ran through the conference, providing many moments for the Bahá'í Writings to these critical issues facing mankind.

The international teaching work

Since Rídvan 1974, 261 pioneers have left the United States for international posts, 173 of whom are filling specific numerical goals of the Five Year Plan.

The International Goals Committee reported that of the remainder, 33 are overfilling goals, 34 went to non-goal areas, and 21 pioneers returned.

Since Rídvan 1975, almost 400 Bahá'ís have volunteered for pioneer service. However, various problems have not made it possible for all of them to depart. A total of 137 pioneers are required at specific locations by October 1976 to achieve the Five Year Plan goal of 310.

Since Rídvan 1975, a total of 186 international traveling teaching trips have been undertaken from the United States, 28 of these by youth. And the International Goals Committee reported that more Bahá'ís are being recruited for future trips to meet the traveling teaching commit-

m ents around the world. Almost 200 persons have volunteered for such service in the last six months.

Plans are under way for further work on the international scene. A total of 16 Bahá'ís have already volunteered for the traveling teaching project in India in December. Teaching teams from the United States will again assist the sister communities in Central America during Rídvan 1976, and teaching projects in South America are being planned for next summer.

Inquiries double in just one year

The number of inquiries received by the National Information Committee from persons interested in the Bahá'í Faith has doubled in the last year.

Figures compiled by the National Information Committee show that 1,697 persons seeking information about the Faith have written to the National Center since January.

One-third of the inquiries are from persons who have visited the House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, again demonstrating the power of the Temple as a silent teacher.

Record 1,200 attend Green Lake Institute

The 15th annual Green Lake Institute drew a record 1,200 persons to Green Lake, Wisconsin, on October 3-5.

The speakers included Auxiliary Board member Peter Khan; Daniel Jordan, vice-chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly; Janet Khan; Nancy Jordan; and representatives from the National Teaching Committee, the National Information Committee, and the National Treasurer's Office.

Dr. Khan said: "What we are aiming to achieve is priceless—it is setting the course of world events for the next thousand years, it is creating a structure in which millions of human beings will find happiness and security."

Dr. Jordan said that reconstructing human life on this planet "entails each individual struggling from the very depths of his being to transform himself spiritually, and then to work with others who are committed to the same thing to create a new civilization."

A special message from the National Spiritual Assembly emphasized the urgency for teaching as the Five Year Plan rapidly approaches its midway point.
A message from The Universal House of Justice assured the believers that prayers were said for the success of the Institute. Many people who attended said they left the Institute with fresh inspiration to speed the teaching work.

**Women is subject of Texas conference**

"Women: Striking the Balance" was the theme of a proclamation conference in Irving, Texas, October 17-19. About 150 people attended the conference, which was sponsored by 12 Bahá'í communities: Dallas, Fort Worth, Irving, Grand Prairie, Richardson, Plano, University Park, Denton, Arlington, Euless, Garland, and Mesquite.

The conference opened Friday evening with a talk by Winnie Davis of Plano, Texas, author of *Fantastic Womanhood*. Speakers at the Green Lake Institute included Auxiliary Board member Peter Khan (1), Daniel Jordan (2), Janet Khan (3), and Nancy Jordan (4). Dawn prayers (5) were held regularly and many of the sessions were videotaped (6).

"Our heroic foremothers are as important as our heroic forefathers . . ." Ms. Davis said. Helen Callaway, a Bahá'í from Edmond, Oklahoma, spoke on the history of women in the Bahá'í Faith, stressing the heroic examples of Táhirih, the Greatest Holy Leaf, and Lua Getsinger. Chris Miller of the Texas State Legislature spoke on the legal status of women and Sharon Klempke, a Bahá'í from Oklahoma, discussed job opportunities for women.

Six short workshops received enthusiastic participation. The highlight of the conference was a talk by Lisa Janti, a Bahá'í who is an administrative assistant to the mayor of Los Angeles, California. Following a slide presentation of the United Nations Women's Conference in Mexico City, which was presented by the Women for Change Center of Dallas, Ms. Janti spoke on "Women: Striking the Balance," stressing that the emancipation of women is part of a vast upheaval that is emancipating mankind from all its debilitating traditions and reshaping the earth into a worldwide civilization where peace and justice reign supreme."

**Zaire**

**Walking trio visits 40 communities**

Earlier this year Auxiliary Board member Ngindu-Ntambwe, accompanied by Biselele-Kapinga and Tshibasu-Kabundi, undertook a two-month teaching trip in western Kasai during which they organized seven institutes in collaboration with Bahá'ís in the villages they visited. An estimated 450 believers participated in the series of meetings.

During their trip the trio walked more than 350 kilometers and visited approximately 40 communities. Often they walked during the night to avoid sun and heat.

In the village of Bena Mukamba the sub-chief of the locality, the directors of a leading local organization, and representatives of various Christian and Islamic groups attended the initial meeting and expressed appreciation of the Bahá'í teachings on the unity of mankind and the abolition of prejudice.
Iceland is, in the words of the late Hand of the Cause of God Martha Root, a "land of jagged snowcapped mountain peaks, great glaciers, and ice fields, magnificent waterfalls, boiling hot springs, geysers and desolate lava fields...a climate of extraordinary clearness and purity;...a calm, too, a repose in the very atmosphere, and the almost celestial colors of sky and clouds, mountains and sea..."

The first country in the world to declare neutrality, to absolutely refuse to participate in any war, Iceland is mentioned by the Master in the Tablets of the Divine Plan, written during the devastation of World War I. "Show ye an effort," He says, "and after this war, spread ye the synopsis of these teachings in...Iceland, Faroe Islands,..." ICeland now has a National Spiritual Assembly, a victory of the Nine Year Plan, and that Assembly is responsible, during the Five Year Plan, for the growth of the Faith in the Faroe Islands.

Nobles and chieftains from Norway settled Iceland during the ninth century, and the Icelandic language is the original of all the Norse tongues, so pure that Icelanders can read, with no alterations, sagas of the twelfth century. Theirs is a tongue of almost magical grace, and theirs is the first country in the world to achieve total literacy.

The history of the Bahá'í Faith in Iceland also possesses great magic. It is a story of souls touching souls with infinite delicacy and gentleness.

The first Bahá'í to visit Iceland was the late Hand of the Cause of God Amelia Collins. During a cruise with her husband in 1924, she stopped in Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, for a few hours. There she went to the museum of Iceland's world famous sculptor, Einar Jonsson, who later told Martha Root, "Everything is from the Higher Plane. It is! The artist only makes it manifest; I am only a servant. The sculptor takes away the rough envelope which enwraps the spark of God." In that museum, Mrs. Collins befriended an Icelandic woman and discussed the Faith with her. Subsequently, she corresponded with her, sending her "The Bahá'í Magazine." Eleven years later, Mrs. Root, called by the beloved Shoghi Effendi the "archetype of Bahá'í itinerant teachers," spent one month in Iceland, from July 12 to August 8, 1935. Amelia Collins' friend opened many doors for Martha Root, who joyously announced, after her visit,...now...Icelandic people have heard Bahá'u'lláh's great Message for the first time in their newspapers, over their radios, from their public libraries and through lectures in...one short month..."

She was well-received by the Icelanders, who are noted for their hospitality. One distinguished man wrote in a Reykjavik newspaper, "our guest will give her last lecture here tonight...if people would go in great numbers it would make her memory of Iceland more intimate, and that is the kind of hospitality we should like to give to everyone who visits Iceland..."

Another man, after learning of the Faith from her, asked her, "Do you believe in dreams?" She replied that "Bahá'u'lláh said there may be many mysteries and wisdoms in dreams; there are occasions where it may happen that one witnesses outwardly in the world of time exactly the thing he had seen in his dream." "Well, said her host, "last night I dreamed that a bird came into this room, and resting on the sofa sang such a beautiful melody. I was so happy. This morning I said to myself, 'Who will come?' Then I met you in the street, you come...to our house, and you have taken the seat on the sofa where the bird sang the melody." In her great humility, Martha Root concludes her telling of this incident by saying, "He was one of the great souls of Iceland."

She gave copies of Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, in English, to the editors of all the newspapers, as most Icelanders speak English and Scandinavian.

A Reykjavik newspaper printed, on July 14, 1935, the first article on the Bahá'í Faith ever published in the Icelandic language. Martha Root reported, "The editor had said two days before, 'I'll read this book and these pamphlets and then I'll write.'"

One newspaper printed an article on the Faith that was so excellent that she had a thousand reprints made of it and gave them to people, "as there was yet," she said, "no Bahá'í booklets in Icelandic." Two years later, in 1937, Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era was translated into Icelandic.

She gave books to all the libraries, happily noting that "the number of books drawn out of the public libraries is extraordinary...packages containing 40 books each are lent regularly to the fishing trawlers when the men go out to sea to remain months at a time."

She lectured at the Theosophist Society several times, and spoke in Esperanto before the Esparantists of Reykjavik, who presented her with a book which mentioned an Esperanto magazine devoted to the Bahá'í Faith. This was the first time the words "Bahá'í Faith" were printed in Icelandic. She had corresponded with the author of that book, sending him Bahá'í books in Esperanto.

The broadcasting station of Iceland, on July 15, and again on July 23, 1935, aired interviews with Martha Root during the early evening news hour, when "at least 50,000 people all over Iceland," she reported, "listen in. If the farmers are working late in the fields in this summer weather...they always send some one from the family into the house to listen to the news, and come back to report it to the others."

No wonder that Iceland is one of the countries "specifically called upon" by The Universal House of Justice during the Five Year Plan "to expand the use of radio and/or television" in proclaiming the Faith.
In the summer of 1964, a traveling teacher of Icelandic background was sent by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada to visit the Icelandic Bahá'ís and try to open new centers to the Faith. At that time, the entire community consisted of a group in Reykjavik, numbering eight.

During the visit, the teacher found that one of the group, Jochum Eggertson, was in the habit of spending five months, from May to September, in a remote western area where he owned some property.

To fulfill her promise to the Canadian National Assembly that she would meet all of the Bahá'ís during her stay, the visiting Bahá'í went by bus to Bjarklunder to visit Mr. Eggertson, together with Asgeir Einarson, from the Reykjavik community. Here is her account of that visit.
It was a cold, windy Sunday morning when our bus left Reykjavik. We traveled northwest, through rocky farmland and high mountainous areas, with the bus sometimes having to stop while the driver measured the width of the bridge before gently easing the wide vehicle across it. After approximately five hours, the driver called us to the front of the bus and said we had reached our destination. When I looked out, there was no sign of a village and no buildings, but we got off and the bus drove on.

It was raining and very cold. Across the road from us, we saw a big, powerfully built man, who stared intently at us. He went up to Asgeir, embraced him and said, "'Allah-u-Abhá," then turned to me and said: "I have been expecting you for a long time." I was very surprised, for I had never met Jochum Eggertson before. He led us in silence a few yards down the road to a tiny wooden building, with one window facing the highway.

Inside, there was a bunk bed built into one wall, a tree stump in a corner for a chair, a small table with a heater on it, and a few tins of food on the shelf over the table. Jochum motioned to Asgeir to sit on the log, I sat on the bed, and Jochum then said very formally that today, since he was having his first visitors in his western home, he would begin by serving moølcafe. This is the traditional Icelandic gesture of friendship to guests; strong black coffee served with lump sugar, which you place on the tip of your tongue, drinking the coffee through it.

We waited in silence while Jochum prepared everything, noting his consternation when he was unable to find one item. "I have waited so long for Bahá'ís to come and ask what I am doing her," he said, "and now, today, I have no molle (sugar)." He stood shaking his head, looking very serious. I began hunting in my handbag, which was crammed with many things. In 1963, during a visit with Ali Kuli Khan in Washington, D.C., he had shown me a number of his gifts from 'Abdu'l-Bahá and had shared several of them with me, including a few pieces of rock sugar blessed by the Master. I found one of these pieces wrapped in a bit of paper, and held it out to Jochum, saying, "Today, the molle is from the Master." The three of us wept as we broke that piece of candy into three pieces and had our molle cafe together.

Then Jochum asked whether we would like to hear him chant the Tablet of Ahmad in Icelandic. He explained that in the evenings he polished semi-precious stones from his land, hoping they would one day be ring stones, and translated Writings of Bahá'u'lláh into Icelandic. He shouted the words of that prayer in the small room, in such a cadence that it was unforgettable.

After we sat in silence for some time, Jochum began speaking about his life. He said he came from a long line of writers; his father's brother was Matthias Jochumson, one of the foremost Icelandic literary figures of his time. It was Matthias Jochumson who traveled from Akureyri, Iceland, to Chicago in 1893 to attend the Parliament of World Religions at which the Bahá'í Faith was mentioned for the first time in the western world.

Jochum had won a number of short story prizes, and showed us a volume published in England in 1954 which contained one of his short stories. He said he had always lived to himself, but was deeply interested in people and in the world. When he was a young man, he had a dream, in which he saw a twin-peaked mountain, with a hand appearing over it, writing, "The Glory of God is come." In his middle age, he had the same dream once more, and again, some years later, while visiting in Reykjavik, he had the same dream. The next day, he was walking down the street and met a young man he knew. In their conversation, he mentioned the dream and described it in detail. The young man listened carefully, then explained that he believed the Glory of God had indeed come. This was Asgeir Einarson, who taught Jochum and witnessed his entrance into the Bahá'í Faith. From then on, there was no doubt in Jochum's heart that he was a
Baha’i, although he began a pattern of long absences from Reykjavik which he never explained to the Baha’is residing there. Now, he told us how his heart had felt a surge of joy when he entered the Baha’i Faith and his dream became more significant to him. He believed a twin-peaked mountain did exist in Iceland, and might one day be secured for the Faith of the Glory of God. With this in mind, he began a series of long walking trips through the interior of the country, looking for the mountain. After a number of years, he was up in the west country when he realized that the mountains facing a fjord looked like those in his dream. There was an unusual twin-peak formation and his search ended when he saw it.

What ensued was a long period of negotiation to obtain the property. It was owned by Cecelia Helgadottir, an old woman who had been the faithful servant of the couple who owned this land. Upon their death, since they had no children, they had left the land to her. Jochum arranged that she retain lifetime rights to live in her small home on the property, when she agreed to sell it to him, complete with mineral rights. He then looked at the land and felt it was not ready for its ultimate purpose.

“I wanted to beautify the land, by having it treed as it must have been in the earliest days of this country.” During one of the occupations of Iceland by another country, the land had been deforested and the topsoil blew away, making it extremely difficult now to grow trees. With the help of the government, which is encouraging reforestation of the country, Jochum was able to buy trees every spring and take them to Skogar, his new home, where he carefully planted them. When he visited him, trees nine years old were only slightly taller than he, so slowly do they grow in this windy area.

“Through every moment of this, I have felt God assisting me,” he said. “There is a huge rock on this property, with a cross carved into it, pointing east. It is my belief that when monks first settled the west coast of Iceland (from 870 on) this may have been one of their earliest settlements. The land feels to me as if many prayers have been said here and this rock confirms the belief of earlier inhabitants. When I say my Long Obligatory Prayer each day, I go early in the morning to this rock, face east, and chant it.”

When it was time for us to tour the property, Jochum gave me an extra sweater and scarf, saying this would be a long walk but he was sure I would never forget it. We followed a tiny stream, now surrounded on each side by fledgling pine trees. Each tree seemed like a friend of Jochum, as he described in detail the planting and the difficulties that he ensued trying to get the trees to grow. Then he led us to the small house where Cecelia Helgadottir lived, saying it was important to meet her.

Cecelia was short, bright-eyed and vibrant. She was wearing overalls and many sweaters, her white hair in the traditional Icelandic braid. After looking a long time into each of our faces, she stepped back from the door, saying in Icelandic that she was going to look in her trunk for special cups and saucers for our tea. Again, it was a long, formal occasion, with the china located, water boiled, and tea served in way deeply communicating her preferred friendship. Jochum explained that we had come to witness his work and the two looked at each other with deep understanding.

Cecelia’s spirituality was so evident that I couldn’t help asking if she would tell me about her family, and her life in Iceland. She replied, “Gladly. God has always taken care of me.” The story she recounted was full of suffering and difficulties, but not in her eyes. She had worked for a number of farm families, always caring for her mother. When her mother was so aged and ill that she needed almost constant care, the particular family Cecelia worked for could not keep her. She recalled that she carried her mother in her arms from that farm, looking for a new home. She found another family who fully accepted
her and whom she served to her utmost. Upon their death, she found she had inherited their property. Since she was very old when Jochum came, asking to buy it, she prayed what was the right thing to do and it came to her that Jochum would put it to the use of the Lord. So she sold it.

At this point, Jochum motioned to me to bundle up again in my sweater and raincoat, for we would take another walk. Cecelia put on a denim jacket, as she, Asgeir, Jochum and I set out. I was unaware what direction we were going, or even what the landscape looked like, because in a few minutes the wind had penetrated my clothing and I was aware only of the cold. Jochum moved to my side, holding up a mitted hand and motioning that I should put my hand inside his mitt. Cecelia did the same thing on my other side. We walked in step for a long distance, with the cold increasing until each of them put their hands in their jacket pockets, with my hands thus sheltered by the warmth of their hands, their mittens and their jackets. We walked in complete silence, in deep communion. When it felt impossible to take one more step, I looked at Jochum and he nodded his head as we halted.

"Now it is done! I dreamed that Bahá’ís would come to see my property, and walk full width of it. Here is the marker! Now we can stop a passing car and you can ride back to the hostel." As if called, a jeep appeared and gave me a lift, as Jochum and Asgeir walked back with Cecelia to her home.

That evening, Jochum came, with a small bundle of belongings, saying that he had decided to return to Reyjavik with Asgeir and me, to extend our visit a little longer. His English was beautiful, with an extensive vocabulary. He did not talk a great deal, but when he did, it was a choice of words so delicate and balanced. He spoke of his pleasure at the beauty of the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh and was insatiable in his eagerness to learn details of The Universal House of Justice and their messages to the Bahá’í world. He kept nodding his head as Asgeir spoke of the Jubilee in London, and the warm response of the friends to hearing an Icelandic prayer said at one of the sessions. When we arrived in Reykjavik, he told us he had made up his mind it was now time to make his will and testament. Since there was not yet a National Spiritual Assembly in Iceland, he felt it would be proper to leave his land in trust to The Universal House of Justice, to be used as the national endowment when the National Spiritual Assembly of Iceland was formed, and asked us to be present when he wrote this will.

The next day he came to the home of Asgeir, sat at the dining room table, and laboriously wrote out on long legal pages the terms of his will, which had to be witnessed by Icelandic citizens, but which later was executed as Jochum had wished. When this was completed, Jochum said he would like to say more of the Bahá’í prayers he had translated into Icelandic and our afternoon ended with molle café in Asgeir’s home. Asgeir’s wife, Hulda Bjarnadottir, who later became a Bahá’í, was a kind and loving hostess during the visit.

It was not long until Jochum’s death. The will took a long time to be probated but ultimately its terms were upheld, and the land where Jochum dreamed that some day a Bahá’í summer school might be held has already been blessed with that occurrence.

Truly, the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá come to mind when contemplating the life of Jochum Eggertson:

•••

Bestow upon us life everlasting and confer upon us never-ending honor. Unify mankind and illumine the world of humanity. May we all follow Thy pathway, long for Thy good pleasure and seek the mysteries of Thy Kingdom. O God! Unite us and connect our hearts with Thy indissoluble bond. Verily, Thou art the Giver, Thou art the Kind One and Thou art the Almighty."
Illuminated (decorated) Prayers and Passages of Bahá'u'lláh for teaching and deepening make welcome gifts, provide inspiring wall decoration and aid in memorization.

Illuminated Prayers and Passages of Bahá'u'lláh

Preservation and consolidation of the victories won: This is one of the three major objectives of the Five Year Plan as the Cause of God goes “from strength to strength” throughout the worldwide Bahá'í community.

We can do this even in the face of rising global chaos if we use the strengthening serenity of our Sacred Texts, the Creative Word of God, to deepen and consolidate Bahá'ís. For this purpose several short, simple, powerful quotations of Bahá'u'lláh have been chosen and are now available in large type, illuminated by dignified artwork.

These attractive, brief prayers and meditations are suitable for framing or other kinds of display. Ten different quotations have been printed on 8.5 by 11-inch paper — large enough for wall or window display, yet small enough to be carried in a notebook.

Members of teaching, proclamation, conference, and consolidation committees might want to pay particular attention to this set for possible use at summer schools, institutes, and children’s classes. They are excellent for complementing normal teaching materials or for gifts to participating individuals at Bahá'í gatherings.

The large type and easy-to-handle pages also make the material useful for persons with poor eyesight, or for beginning readers, either children or adults, who are not yet accustomed to Bahá'í literature. In addition, these passages are generally brief enough so that students can memorize them without difficulty.

The entire set of ten can be bound into a new believers’ booklet either as they are or mounted artistically on colorful heavy paper. Further decorative illumination can then be added, limited only by the artist’s imagination. In this way home-made albums can be tailored to a variety of indigenous cultures. Other possible uses include mementos for friends on special Bahá’í occasions, or gifts for the sick or shut-in.

These ten quotations by Bahá'u’lláh are available either in complete sets or as individual prayers and meditations in multiples of ten.

How to Get the Illuminated Prayers and Passages of Bahá'u'lláh

Your local Bahá'í librarian or authorized Bahá'í distributor may have them in stock, or may be able to supply you with prices and ordering information. If, however, you cannot find them in your area, you may send your inquiry to the International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Centre, 1640 Holcomb Road, Victor, N.Y. 14564, U.S.A. for forwarding to the proper organization.
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On the cover: Some Bahá'í youth of Burma. The Bahá'í youth are distinguished by their radiance and their love of knowledge from the mass of Burmese youth.

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One of the most dramatic and exciting features of the Five Year Plan is the great call raised by The Universal House of Justice for an army of pioneers and traveling teachers to forsake their homes for the propagation of the Cause of God.

The heroic services of these dedicated Bahá’ís release spiritual powers which have a far-reaching effect on the world. We may well speculate on the magnitude of this effect, which will only become evident with the passing of years. The present condition of the Burmese Bahá’í community offers a rare opportunity for a case study—to observe, nearly 100 years later, the effect of a pioneering teaching venture carried out in response to the Divine summons.

**Historical background**

In 1878, Siyyid Muṣtafa Rūmī settled in Rangoon, Burma, after nearly three years of travel in India and Burma in the company of Jamál Effendi, the eminent Bahá’í teacher sent to that region at the instruction of Bahá’u’lláh. Siyyid Muṣtafa had embraced the Faith in Madras, India, in 1875 as soon as he came in contact with Jamál Effendi. In Burma, groups established in Rangoon and Mandalay by Jamál Effendi were patiently and lovingly nurtured by Siyyid Muṣtafa as they developed into Spiritual Assemblies.

During the Ministry of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the fledgling Burmese Bahá’í community was the recipient of many blessings from the Master. A highlight in the life of Siyyid Muṣtafa was the occasion in 1899 when he was privileged to take to the World Center the marble sarcophagus which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá accepted as a gift from the Bahá’ís of Mandalay and which was destined to enshrine the sacred remains of the Bab. During the Ministry of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the fortunes of the Faith in Burma were suddenly and dramatically revolutionized. The headman of the Daidanaw village found himself involved in a legal case in Rangoon, 30 miles away. His application for bail was granted on condition that a citizen stand surety for him. The headman was pessimistic about being able to satisfy this condition when, to his amazement, a stranger in the courtroom offered himself. In response to the headman’s inquiry, the stranger identified himself as a Bahá’í. As a result the headman and his companions from Daidanaw were brought to the presence of Siyyid Muṣtafa, who succeeded in demonstrating to them the validity of the Cause. When the villagers reported the circumstances of their acceptance of the Faith, the elders of Daidanaw decided, after consultation, to invite Siyyid Muṣtafa to present the teachings in their village. Today, there are elderly Bahá’ís living in Daidanaw who remember the excitement associated with his arrival, the joy with which the mass of the villagers, some 800 in total, entered the shelter of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh.

Siyyid Muṣtafa settled down in Daidanaw, devoting his life to the deepening of his fellow-believers, to the extension of the teaching work to nearby villages, and to the translation of literature into Burmese. Even in his nineties, he would enthusiastically walk miles to meet an inquirer and share his belief.

During World War II, marauding gangs from adjoining villages, possibly inflamed by religious fanaticism, attacked Daidanaw, destroying the Hazíratu’l-Quds. Siyyid Muṣtafa, 99 years old, was murdered by these ruffians. The Guardian, in a memorable cable, designated Siyyid Muṣtafa as a Hand of the Cause of God, referred to him as “dearly loved staunch high-minded noble soul Siyyid Muṣtafa,” hailed the “long record of his superb services both teaching administrative fields,” and described him as “passing (to) supreme concourse.”

**The Burmese nation today**

Burma today is experiencing many difficulties as a result of social and economic conditions over the past several years. Its economy is struggling, so that consumer goods and travel facilities are very limited. Several provinces are experiencing instability resulting from political forces, with the central government undertaking military action to quell rebellions. The government policy is such that Burmese citizens can only rarely obtain visas for travel abroad; a consequence is that Burmese Bahá’ís have for several years been unable to go to the World Center on pilgrimage or for the International Conventions associated with the election of The Universal House of Justice. They have also been unable to attend great International Conferences at which Bahá’ís from many countries gather. For many years the government provided visitors to Burma with visas for no longer than 24 hours; now it is possible generally to obtain a seven-day visa. With rare exceptions pioneers are unable to settle in Burma. The isolation of the Burmese Bahá’ís is heightened by the uncertainties of the postal system.

Opposite page, upper left: the Hand of the Cause of God Siyyid Muṣtafa Rūmī: he taught an entire village. The building on the upper right is the Shrine of Siyyid Mustafa Rumi at Daidanaw. Below, some of the Bahá’ís of Daidanaw gather in front of the Shrine.
Burma: vibrant, unified with a strong thirst for deepening

The Burmese Bahá’í community today

During May 1975, we had the great privilege of visiting Burma, and meeting members of its stalwart Bahá’í community. It provided an opportunity not only to participate in the teaching work, but also to examine the effects of the teaching pioneering efforts of Jamál Effendi and Siyyid Muḥṣafá Rúmi, 100 years later.

We observed the following characteristics of the Burmese Bahá’í community:

1. The striking contrast between the Bahá’í community and the rest of the country. The mass of the people of Burma appear despondent, feeling little incentive to develop themselves, and are very isolated from the rest of the world. By contrast, the Bahá’í community is vibrant and dynamic, forward-looking and serene, despite its isolation. The Bahá’ís have an amazing sense of world-mindedness, thinking in global terms and interested in the condition of the entire world.

We visited the village of Daidanaw to observe an area where Bahá’í community life has been practiced for three generations. The contrast between this village and its surroundings is striking. A stranger, passing through unaware that this was a Bahá’í village, could not fail to be impressed by the difference between it and the surrounding villages. It is very neat, clean, and tidy. The demeanor of the people, their carriage and their bearing, the gentleness and dignity with which they relate to each other, distinguish them from the general population. The village is much more prosperous than surrounding villages because the cooperative attitudes fostered by the Bahá’í teachings promote agricultural efficiency and raise the prosperity of the entire community.

The rhythm of life in the village is such that in the early morning, at the first light of dawn, the villagers arise, observe their morning prayers and proceed to the fields. In the late afternoon they gather in the Bahá’í Center, which is lit by one kerosene lamp. The adults and the youth, the children and the grandparents, all gather, sitting on the floor, to pray together and discuss the Bahá’í teachings.

Walking in a village that is entirely Bahá’í is a unique feeling. You smile confidently at a stranger, each knowing that the other is a Bahá’í. He invites you into his house and insists on serving you food. With no common language, one resorts to frequent expression of Alláh’u’Abhá with smiles and ingenious hand gestures. In such circumstances the conversation is eloquent in the universal language of the spirit.

We were also privileged to participate in a five-day youth deepening conference held in Rangoon. The Bahá’ís at that conference had been selected by the Local Spiritual Assemblies around Rangoon and came to the National Center as guests of the National Spiritual Assembly for an intensive deepening program, preparatory to going out in traveling teaching teams. The deepening sessions typically occupied 10 hours each day. The dedication of the youth was evident in the diligence with which they took notes, asked questions, and studied the material. The Auxiliary Board members and National Spiritual Assembly members not only conducted classes, but also set a beautiful example in preparing and serving food for the youth so the youth could have the maximum amount of time to study. At the end of the five-day session, a three-hour examination provided a means for the youth to assess their knowledge.

On one occasion we were to meet several Bahá’í youth in the city. Since we found it difficult to identify the Bahá’í youth from their parents’ descriptions, we observed a group of young people in a store, knowing the Bahá’í youth to be among these young people. We tried to predict which ones among the group were Bahá’ís from their appearance and their behavior. To our pleasure, we found our prediction to be entirely correct; those youth distinguished by their bearing and manner proved to be the Bahá’ís who emerged to greet us.

2. Another contrast is the unity in the Bahá’í community, compared to the segmentation in Burmese society. Four religions co-exist in Burma, in addition to the Bahá’í Faith—the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, and Muslim religions. As a result, the people thirst increasingly for some meaning underlying the clash of differing religious practices. The Bahá’í teachings, uniting all religions, are a manifest haven of serenity and harmony.

The unity in the Burmese Bahá’í community is evident not only in the heterogeneity of its religious backgrounds, but also in the warmth characterizing the relationship between the youth and the adults. During several sessions of the Rangoon deepening conference, we shared news of Bahá’í activities in other parts of the world. Later, at Daidanaw, we saw the youth from the conference sitting with the older members of the community, sharing with them every item of news that they had obtained in Rangoon. In the face of the adversity and conflict in the Burmese nation, the Bahá’ís have learned to
treasure every morsel of knowledge, and to share it with their fellow Bahá'ís as a very precious gift.

Another example of the unity is found in the strength of the bonds we formed with the Bahá'í youth, despite the brevity of our visit and the inability to speak the Burmese language. Everybody was in tears when it came time to depart. Now, in the United States, we look back on those moments with wonder, recalling how we met the Burmese Bahá'ís, perfect strangers sharing no common language, but developed such a deep sense of love in so short a period of time that even now our hearts ache at our absence from them.

3. The insatiable thirst for deepening. The Burmese Bahá'ís have responded to the challenge of adversity and isolation by clinging resolutely to the teachings, mastering the Sacred Texts and becoming expertly versed in the writings of the Guardian. Although the deepening conference was designed for Bahá'í youth 15 years or older, we saw children, some very young, who had won the permission of the National Assembly to attend the conference. Small children, some no more than 10 years old, attended the sessions every day, taking notes and studying as hard as their older brothers and sisters, feeling highly privileged to be able to participate in such a deepening session.

Another example of this thirst for deepening is that the Faith is foremost in the conversation of the believers. They yearn for knowledge of the progress of the Faith in other parts of the world, and discussion is continually directed into areas which will benefit the progress of the Cause.

Repeatedly, they insisted that we take their love to the World Center of the Faith. Deprived of the bounty of physical pilgrimage to the Holy Places, they commissioned us to offer prayers on their behalf. Later in our journey, we were privileged to offer prayers on their behalf at the Holy Shrines of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. We visited the Holy House of the Báb and greeted the Bahá'ís of Shiráz in the name of the Burmese Bahá'í community. In turn, the Bahá'ís of Shiráz acknowledged the bond they share with Burma; from the soil of Shiráz the Báb arose, and from Burma came the sarcophagus which now enshrines His precious remains.

4. A striking feature is the ceaseless teaching activity of the Bahá'ís in the face of the hazards which are sweeping Burmese society. This is seen in the constant stream of traveling teachers journeying all over Burma, disregarding rebellions and warfare. We met elderly Bahá'ís who were preparing to travel to the remote areas of Burma, to expend their remaining energy in the promotion of the Cause. The youth use their vacations to carry out teaching assignments. In addition to their training in a trade or profession, the youth have adopted a special project to acquire sufficient proficiency in English that they can make an intensive study of the Guardian's writings and the messages of The Universal House of Justice.

The lesson of Burma

The story of Burma is unfinished and will not be finished within our lifetime. Undoubtedly the Burmese community will continue to expand and develop, year after year into the future. We look back with wonder at the progress of the last 100 years, witnessing the result from one traveling teacher, Jamál Effendi, who arose at the instruction of Bahá'u'lláh and opened this country to the Faith.

Today the voice of divine inspiration, speaking through The Universal House of Justice, calls us to arise and follow in the footsteps of the early heroes and heroines of the Cause. In one 100 years time, what will be the result of our exertions today in service to the Cause?

References
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
Matthew W. Bullock, reared in Bahá’í homes helped shape the Bahá’í community in the United States. His achievements had an impact on the Bahá’í community. He will be remembered as one who铭记 material and spiritual progress in keeping with the life on the course of high and constant commitment to the oneness of God and the unity of mankind.

Jesus and Amanda Bullock of Raleigh, North Carolina, first looked upon the face of their new son Matthew on September 11, 1884. They were not too long out of the scene of an exodus, struggling to raise their family in the poverty, hostility, and fear which accompanied the journey of emancipation in the Old South. To his parents, Matthew must have been a hope and a promise, for even in childhood he was distinguished by his strong, well-coordinated body, his incurable optimism, and his gentle voice and manner. Matthew was a friend.

Perhaps in the determination of that day, young Matthew, in his own words, felt that he had a mission to face the world and adjust his life to the conditions of the times. This was a time in which Bahá’í blacks, as well as Bahá’í blacks in the Old South, had to fight the prejudices of the Old South. Jessecue, the family to Boston in 1889, arriving at the door said, with seven children and a ten dollar bill.

Life in Massachusetts had its hardships, but for young Matt his first year in the state of education, which developed his talents. Completing his elementary training in 1884, he wanted to go to high school. His father, constantly seeking better employment opportunities, moved the family to Everett, Mass. Matt entered high school and, earnestly applying himself, discovered what had developed skills of mind and body could achieve. He graduated from Everett High School in 1900 with scholastic honors and with the historic distinction of being the first black to achieve a four-year diploma. Before he graduated from Everett High School, Matt had to work to keep the family from poverty. With a long track record and a stable academic record, Matt was able to realize his dream.

One has only to realize how much these things need the help of a working man to understand the depth of his love and the sacrifice made in giving Mathew freedom to choose and to strive on his own.

Matthew Bullock met the challenge. He entered Dartmouth. With a deference, he gave concerts in churches and hotels. He was billed as "the famous baritone singer of Dartmouth." He was a diligent student, and he joined the Dartmouth track team, excelling in the broad jump and high jump, and he became a football star. One sports historian, Edwin Henderson, evaluating Matt Bullock's performance on the Dartmouth football team, observed that "Bullock was one of the bravest backs of football ability the game has ever had."

Mr. Bullock completed his B.A. degree at Dartmouth in 1904 with scholastic honors and with fame for his athletic achievements. He then entered Harvard and supported himself by coaching Massachusett Agricultural College. In all, he became the first black to attend a Harvard Law School graduation, and he was honored by the Harvard Law School. He then attended a Boston University Law School, where he received his LL.B. degree in 1908. His academic record.

Matt Bullock was among the first
Church. Mr. Bullock was invited to a dinner for Mrs. Ludmilla Bechtold Van Sombeek, who was a Bahá’í traveling teacher. He asked her searching and challenging questions, and was especially interested in the racial attitudes of white Bahá’ís. Her answers stimulated him to read. He studied Some Answered Questions, and he and Mrs. Bullock visited Green Acre Bahá’í School.

Mr. Bullock investigated the Faith for many years, and the Bahá’ís taught him with great patience and kindness. Mrs. Van Sombeek, his first teacher, became his warm and understanding friend. She kept him continually reading the Teachings and afforded him contact with experiences and people that gave him an over-all picture of Bahá’í life. When Matthew Bullock became a Bahá’í in 1940, he said that Mrs. Van Sombeek was his spiritual mother. All his life, he expressed profound appreciation for her friendship.

Mrs. Katherine Bullock died in 1945. Though she had not formally accepted the Faith, she was impressed with the Teachings and never opposed her husband’s Bahá’í interests. Her death left a great gap in Matt Bullock’s life. However, in that year of grief and loneliness yet another honor came to him. The United States secretary of the Navy invited Mr. Bullock to join a special commission of distinguished citizens and participate in an inspection tour of Naval installations in the Pacific.

As a member of the Bahá’í community, Mr. Bullock gave unstintingly of his leadership skills and his devotion. He traveled extensively and frequently to promote the Faith, visiting Haiti, Costa Rica, and Mexico. His deep commitment attracted many people. He served as chairman of the Boston community and was appointed to many national committees, and in 1952 he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly.

He went to Africa in 1953 as one of the delegates from the U.S. National Assembly to the first Intercontinental Bahá’í Conference in Uganda, East Africa. He received permission from the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land before attending the conference.

The visit to the Holy Shrines and the cordial reception given him by the beloved Guardian had a profound spiritual impact on Matthew Bullock. “The Guardian has cleared up many things for me,” he said. “My visit to him and to the Holy Shrines are experiences beyond words. I don’t think I will ever be able to express what it meant to me. Nor do I think that any Bahá’í is the same after being with the Guardian. I wish every Bahá’í could have the bounty which has been mine.”

What words could not express, Matt Bullock’s life expressed thereafter. He was a careful observer of the African Conference and a deeply inspired participant. With a special radiance of spirit, he left the Conference and traveled to the Belgian Congo. Returning through West Africa, he visited Liberia, where he met the Liberian president and the American ambassador, both of whom had some mistaken ideas about the Faith. Mr. Bullock corrected these ideas, and the president was so touched that he invited Mr. Bullock to a special dinner and introduced him to 25 distinguished people from Liberia and other countries. Mr. Bullock spoke of the Bahá’í Faith and stated that he was in Africa as a representative of the United States National Assembly.

When Mr. Bullock returned home, he found that the American Bahá’ís had received increasingly stirring messages from the Guardian urging them to pioneer, to carry the Faith to other countries and win the victories of the World Crusade. Matthew Bullock was 72 years old, an established, prominent citizen, enjoying the fruits of a life of hard work and sacrifice. The Guardian’s messages and appeals shook him, leaving no doubt in his mind about the priority of pioneering.

Matthew Bullock was one of those Bahá’ís who rose to his feet at the 1953 American Bahá’í Convention, offering to pioneer. Overcoming the limitations of his age and the objections of those near to him, wrenching himself free from the home community and land, he was one of the five National Assembly members who resigned and went pioneering during that memorable year.

Mr. Bullock settled in Curacao, Dutch West Indies, and helped establish a new Assembly there. He was one of the pioneers to whom the Guardian gave the title “Knight of Bahá’u’lláh.” He taught and traveled and extended his services to other areas of the West Indies, helping to form and strengthen other Bahá’í Assemblies.

In 1960, feeling the disabilities of extreme age, Mr. Bullock returned to the United States. In Boston, he taught and served as best he could. Age and illness troubled him, and the Boston friends who had known him for so long treated him with much love and sympathy. Among them must be mentioned a long time Bahá’í friend, Bernice Ball, who with special love and compassion helped him through dark days of pain and incapacity. How grateful and humble with loving appreciation Mr. Bullock’s tired heart must have been.

Illness so weakened Mr. Bullock that in 1967 he moved to Detroit where his daughter lived. After a brief time, he entered a nursing home. He kept up his Bahá’í contacts and his contacts with Dartmouth and Harvard. The two colleges, equally committed to him, did not forget him.

Harvard conferred upon him an honorary degree and sent it to him in 1970. Dartmouth College called him back for the 1971 commencement and conferred upon him the honorary degree, Doctor of Laws. Matthew Bullock was then 90 years old. As he stood for the presentation and the reading of his citation he received a standing ovation from the audience of 5,000. What poignant memories must have been his on that day. How he must have rejoiced to hear his beloved Faith mentioned in the citation: “Concern for your fellow man continues to occupy your energies after retirement. You are a recognized leader of the Bahá’í Faith, and you have traveled all over the world at your own expense in the interest of that religion. You believe very deeply that the establishment of universal justice and freedom requires the spiritual and moral awakening of all people...”

Matthew Bullock returned to Detroit, strengthened by so many memories of the great moments of his life, and tranquilly awaited the opening of that door to other existence. Death came to him on December 17, 1972. He was 91.

With his customary orderliness, Mr. Bullock left a will in which he provided for a Bahá’í funeral, and he even selected the passages he wished read from the Writings at his service. And a very great honor and tribute came to him from the Faith he had so loved and served.

The Universal House of Justice cabled to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States: GRIEVED PASSING KNIGHT BAHÁ’U’LLÁH MATTHEW BULLOCK DISTINGUISHED PROMOTER FAITH CONVEY FAMILY ASSURANCES PRAYERS HOLY THRESHOLDS PROGRESS SOUL ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERING MASHRIQUL-ADHKKAR.

The National Assembly held that gathering on February 17, 1973. The music of a life so devoted to serving the principles of an eternal Faith was caught up and amplified in the chords of eternity.
Teaching the Faith in Togo

The people of Togo are “incredibly receptive” to the Faith, said Auxiliary Board member Thelma Khelghati. Mrs. Khelghati is the Auxiliary Board member for Togo, Dahomey, Ghana, and Niger, all in West Africa. She and her husband, Amru’l-hā, went to pioneer in Togo in March, 1973.

“In Togo, all the people, whether distinguished professionals or officials or simple tribesmen, are receptive to the Faith. They have a firm belief in God,” Mrs. Khelghati explained. “They have a deep faith, a sense of man’s dependence on God. They know that to do anything—to be healed, to get a job—you need help from a Superior Power, and they call on that Power. They love prayers. Almost always, the first question they ask the Baha’i teacher is, ‘Do you have prayers?’”

The Khelghatis have noticed this attitude all over West Africa. Western pioneers in that region learn the true meaning of humility, hospitality, and courtesy from the seekers.

French-speaking pioneers and traveling teachers are badly needed in Togo to find new Baha’is and help deepen them. And new Baha’is are easy to find. “Almost anybody you talk to is interested,” said Mrs. Khelghati. She said that in late October and early November a traveling teacher from Belgium found 70 new Baha’is in Togo, and these people were from all strata of society: a banker, an assistant to a government minister, a university student, a nurse, laborers, a rich businessman.

A few years ago, there were only four or five pioneers in Togo. Now there are 12, including two children. One of the children, 18-month-old Andalib Khelghati, was born in Togo.

The first National Spiritual Assembly of Togo was elected at Rîdván, 1975. Three of its members are pioneers and the rest are Togolese. And in the last few years, more deepened and active Togolese Baha’is have arisen to spread the Faith.

Last summer, two Togolese believers went from the city to their own native areas to teach the Faith. They opened the areas, and many people became Baha’is. One went to Sansané-Mango, a Moslem area inhabited by the Tchossi Tribe. Another went to Niamtougou and taught the Losso Tribe.

The Khelghatis said that, for the moment, western civilization and materialism have not penetrated very far in Togo, but nationalism is growing. Government permission is needed for the Baha’is to hold a public event. However, such permission often benefits the Baha’is.

In one place, the Baha’is asked the mayor if they could hold a public meeting in the market place. The mayor said he thought they should hold three public meetings, two in the town hall and one in the high school. The mayor chaired the first meeting and personally invited dignitaries to it. The assistant mayor chaired the second, which was announced by the town crier. And the third was held as suggested in the high school. In another place, the governor offered to chair a meeting, and did so. He called the meeting after the daily “animation,” which is a gathering of the people to sing songs and dance in praise of the government. This is a sign of the increasing Communist influence in Togo. Mrs. Khelghati quoted a Baha’i in Togo, who said, “How can we ever explain to Bahá’u’lláh that the Communists were more active and devoted than we were?”

Communism is a real temptation to the leaders of Africa’s impoverished, underdeveloped nations, though it contradicts their own deep religious faith. But education can remove such faith from a population in one generation. So the Baha’is have to move fast, now. And the people are hungry for the Message of Bahá’u’lláh. Their own spirit of faith, along with their new perception of the limitations of the church, brings them, in ever-increasing numbers, to the Baha’is. In one place this summer, about six Baha’is spent two hours inviting the public to a meeting and about 350 people showed up and sat and listened until the Baha’is were exhausted and had to end the meeting.

“West African countries are quickly becoming more difficult to get into,” said Mrs. Khelghati. In her opinion, foreigners within the country will, in a few years, have little mobility, will be unable to travel from village to village as the pioneers do now.

The Khelghatis visited their family in the United States during November and stopped at the House of Worship in Wilmette. They bought much needed books, pictures, and Baha’i jewelry in the Temple bookstore.

They love their pioneer life. Mrs. Khelghati said that she thinks “the bounty for the pioneers is that they learn more about themselves. In an unfamiliar environment, it’s easy to see yourself and get to know yourself. You stand out.”
How the use of radio is spreading the Faith

In its message to the Bahá’í world at Náy-Rúz, 1974, The Universal House of Justice called for the "use on an increasing scale of the facilities of mass communication," and 39 National Spiritual Assemblies were specifically directed to undertake radio programming for proclamation and teaching.

Eighteen Latin American Assemblies were given this assignment and many of these have made important progress towards mobilizing individual and community resources. Through the active assistance and professional stimulus of K. Dean Stephens, radio and television engineer of Puerto Rico who has designed several recording studios and developed plans for a number of National Assemblies, strides have been taken to develop national programs, to create regional centers of production in at least four countries, and to encourage cooperation in sharing scripts, tapes, and ideas.

Access to radio stations seems to be relatively easy in much of Latin America where both governmental and private commercial stations welcome the moderate and modern Bahá’í programs and where Bahá’ís are well received. The flow of Bahá’í travel teachers provides newsworthy persons for interview. Other free time may include inspirational spots, announcements of Bahá’í events and even some program series as in Belize, Nicaragua, Jamaica, and the Virgin Islands.

Time—even prime time during peak hours of audience reception—can often be purchased very inexpensively. In a few places it may be feasible, on the basis of Bahá’í need and opportunity, to own and run low-power local Bahá’í stations as possibly in Ecuador, Bolivia, or Panama. The opportunities are many, although the obstacles are abundant. What is obvious is that much can be achieved with initiative, cooperation and professionalism.

ECUADOR: Outstanding has been Ecuador’s experience with broadcasts from the small commercial station Radio Turismo in Otavalo. So useful have been the broadcasts, which are directed primarily to the Indian believers of the region, that steps have been taken to build equipment for a Bahá’í broadcasting studio at the Bahá’í Teaching Institute in that mountain city. Broadcasts hopefully will be undertaken in both short and medium wave frequencies. Programs in Spanish and Quechua are produced by a dedicated corps of indigenous believers and pioneers.

BOLIVIA: Bolivia, with the similar problem of a large Indian population speaking either Quechua or Aymara, has been constructing a simple recording studio in the Bahá’í Center in La Paz. Feasibility studies have been undertaken for a possible independent Bahá’í radio station. Meanwhile, radio broadcasts are carried on a local commercial station as funds permit.
PANAMA: Panama's House of Worship on the Cerro Sonsonate (Singing Mountain) offers singular natural advantages for a future radio station. The National Assembly has authorized the construction and equipping of a small recording studio as a part of the caretaker's house and appointed a committee for developing programs of suitable content.

EL SALVADOR: El Salvador, with its energetic community which includes several media-trained persons, has converted a room in its National Haziratu'l-Quds into a recording studio and is now completing its equipment. It hopes to produce its own regular programs and spots, and function as a regional center for radio productions.

PUERTO RICO: Puerto Rico on August 26, 1975, established in Mayaguez the first fully operational recording studio, dedicated on that date in the presence of Counsellor Carmen de Burafato. The Bahá'í radio committee of Puerto Rico has begun actively to produce, for island broadcasting, a series of deepening programs which hopefully will be of use as well in neighboring areas.

THE LEEWARD AND VIRGIN ISLANDS: This national community, with several radio professionals among its members, is hoping to develop a regional production center, possibly in their National Haziratu'l-Quds, for the English-speaking Caribbean and Belize. The Local Spiritual Assembly of St. Thomas has begun a weekly radio series based upon Sidney I. Dean's '52 Bahá'í Talks for All Occasions.' Three other Bahá'í programs are broadcast in the Leeward and Virgin Islands: in St. Maarten, St. Croix, and Saba. A committee in Martinique, French Antilles, is doing scripts in French.

JAMAICA: Jamaica, after its successful broadcast series of 20 half-hour programs in a five-week period in 1973, has now reactivated its committee for radio and television and will share its tapes with the English-speaking countries and islands. A recording studio is being planned for this island.

NICARAGUA: Nicaragua has purchased a tape recorder, has begun the systematic taping of programs and has recruited radio script writers. There is a regular weekly program of upgraded quality aired over "Radio Nacional" on the North Coast which is widely received in Honduras.

COSTA RICA: An active committee has been formed in Costa Rica for media utilization and scripts are being prepared for broadcast.

BELIZE: Belize has for some time conducted weekly radio programs, but these are now in the process of upgrading the program content.

CURACAO: Curacao, in the Dutch Antilles, reports that it has "a regular Sunday—morning program, using a different language each time—Dutch, English, Papiamento—but using the same text... then, after three weeks, we move to a new text..." Scripts are based on The Bahá'í Faith by Gloria Faizi and on Dr. Esslemont's Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO and GUYANA: Beginning with 5-minute weekly programs in Trinidad, and a similar series of 10-minute programs in Guyana, both communities are planning cooperation in the preparation and sharing of materials.

The goal of "expand the use of radio for Bahá'í broadcasts aimed at proclamation of the Faith by a greater number of listeners, as well as deepening the faith of the believers," is well under way in Central America, the Caribbean and northern South America. With the future development of effective cooperative procedures among the communities of the region the successful utilization of this powerful teaching tool will not only add to the prestige of the Cause but also make it familiar to the masses.

November 12 marked by intensive prayer

A wave of prayer was spread across the globe on November 12, the Birthday of Bahá'u'lláh.

The day of intensive prayer marked the beginning of a vigorous world-wide campaign to inspire individual believers to push forward with the vital work of the Five Year Plan.

The special day of intensive prayer was suggested by the International Teaching Center to the Continental Counsellors and Auxiliary Boards throughout the world. The Counsellors, in turn, asked the believers everywhere to join them.

Prayers went forth from the Holy Places at the World Center, from Houses of Worship, from cities, from remote villages, from homes. The purpose was to attract Divine confirmations to the sacred task and to quicken the spirit of sacrificial service in each and every follower of the Cause.

Hands of Cause return to Haifa

The Hands of the Cause of God 'Ali Akbar Furutan, Paul E. Haney, and Abu’l-Qasim Faizi have returned to their duties at the International Teaching Center in Haifa and are participating in the program of pilgrimage which resumed in late October.

Mr. Furutan's itinerary took him, during July, August and part of September, to Bahá'í centers and Summer Schools in Norway, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland.

The last part of September and part of October were spent with the believers in a number of centers in Turkey, where Mr. Furutan held meetings day and night, attended by the friends who came from local and outlying areas despite transportation difficulties. There was full participation by men and women, youth and children, and many penetrating questions about the Cause were answered by him. Mr. Furutan was particularly impressed with the enthusiasm of the Bahá'í youth — some of them former members of the 'Alavi sect — and spoke to them of the significant role the youth can play in the Cause.

Reporting on Mr. Furutan’s visit, the National Spiritual Assembly of Turkey wrote, 'The friends were delighted to have met Mr. Furutan... one could see great joy and happiness in their faces and feel the power of love which he showered upon them. The youth were very eager to learn — they would come with their note pads and take notes for later reference. We are grateful for the bounty of this visit...'

In addition to attending in August a number of Summer Schools and visiting Bahá'í communities in the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Europe, Mr. Haney was the honored guest at the Regional Youth Conferences held at Steenvensbeek, N. Brabant, The Netherlands, and at Arcegno, Switzerland.

"We were deeply grateful for the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God Paul Haney at part of each Conference,” the Continental Board of Counsellors in Europe reported. "His presentation of texts from the Guardian's letters played an especially significant part in the program, because to study the writings of the Faith..."
This photograph, taken in November, shows the progress of the excavation at the site of the permanent seat of The Universal House of Justice.

The Universal House of Justice Building will be constructed in front of the terraced area which will be beautified. The purpose of the terracing is to avoid placing the building against the side of Mount Carmel. Actual construction of the majestic 5½ story building is expected to begin early in 1976.

The believers have been invited to contribute to the building fund in order to ensure uninterrupted progress of the project, called by The Universal House of Justice the greatest single undertaking of the Five Year Plan.

was one of the objectives... youth came from a number of countries to each Conference, the Dutch being naturally in greatest number in Holland, and Swiss and Italian in Switzerland... the response of the youth to this opportunity for study was very positive and they appreciated it very much."

The general arrangements for each Conference were handled by a committee of youth, it was reported, and the youthful participants at the Conferences willingly lent assistance in cleaning duties. A period of proclamation was organized on conjunction with each Conference, as a pre-liminary to a public meeting. It was stated that there was good response to both proclamation programs and there were some enquirers at each public meeting.

In July, Mr. Faizí embarked on a lengthy journey which took him to The Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, the United Kingdom, France, Luxembourg, Italy, and Austria where he was able to meet with the Bahá'í friends and participate in nine Summer School programs. "We hereby express our deepest gratitude," the Danish National Spiritual Assembly wrote, "for the visit this summer of the precious and beloved Hand of the Cause... It was of invaluable significance for all of us to benefit from his profound and loving wisdom... the children in our community were especially blessed by having a couple of hours of their own in an unforgettable meeting with Mr. Faizí."

Mr. Faizí was pleased to witness a higher degree of consecration among the friends in Europe, a greater thirst on their part for knowledge about and understanding of the Teachings, and many welcome evidences of the interest and zeal of the youthful members of the Bahá'í communities he visited.
Bolivia

Declarations follow teaching project

One of the most notable successes of this summer's International Teaching Project in Bolivia was the declaration of 23 students at a rural teachers college in Paracaya.

A special deepening institute is planned for these new Bahá'í's, who will, when they complete college, be teachers for the public school system in rural areas of Bolivia. Rural teachers have much influence in their communities, and when they use that influence to further the aims of the Faith, the International Teaching Project will bear magnificent fruits.

Youth from the United States, Mexico, Argentina, Germany, and Bolivia worked together during the project, which began in July. The projectees joined pioneers and other traveling teachers for a pioneer institute August 15-17 at the Amelia Collins Bahá'í Institute, Cochabamba, Bolivia.

Brazil

Covenant is theme of Youth Congress

The fifth National Bahá'í Youth Congress of Brazil, recently gathered in Porto Feliz, was attended by 75 youth from nine communities.

The theme of the conference was "The Covenant." The theme was suggested by The Universal House of Justice and was studied through a paper written by Counsellor Leonora Armstrong of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South America.

Other topics were presented by youth who compiled material from the Writings and, in some cases, drew upon their own professional training. In the evening, youth presented original plays dramatizing Bahá'í teaching situations.

The youth surpassed their goal in contributing to the National Youth Fund and decided to revise a Portuguese Bahá'í pamphlet for youth.

Cameroon Republic

Bahá'í book displays very effective

In an effort to bring the Bahá'í Message to all strata of society, the National Spiritual Assembly encouraged Local Assemblies to sponsor Bahá'í book displays.
Around the World

The displays were publicized by posters, written invitations, and flyers. Attendance ranged from a handful to 400 inquirers. New believers were enrolled as a result of the exhibits.

The exhibits were announced on the radio, which also broadcast an interview with a member of a Local Assembly and which recorded and broadcast the talks given at the public meeting which concluded the display sessions. At the meeting, speakers from six different backgrounds spoke on the oneness of mankind.

Canada
Yukon Native Council issues action call

The Yukon Baha’i Native Council, the first of its kind in Canada, met in Carcross, Yukon Territory, to issue “a ringing call for action.”

Auxiliary Board members Howard Brown, Peggy Ross, and Ted Anderson, and Board assistants Fletcher Bennett and Loretta King represented the Continental Board of Counsellors at the conference. Ed Muttrart represented the Canadian National Assembly.

The Council of approximately 100 native and white Baha’is from Northern Canada and Alaska was chaired by a Tlingit Indian Baha’i youth who recently made his pilgrimage to the Holy Land and then went on a teaching trip to several centers in Europe and Greenland.

The consultation, centered on action that will consolidate the teaching work in the villages, was “impressive and the depth of understanding and commitment overwhelming,” one participant said. “A generous contribution to the Fund was made. The need for action was seen and plans made to visit and teach in the area’s goals. One such plan was successfully carried out the night the Council ended.”

Ethiopia
How Baha’is react in time of war

What happens to firm Baha’is in time of war? Excerpts from a letter by a believer in Asmara, Ethiopia, contain the thrilling answer:

“As on every other day, we had already heard shooting. And yet, filled with the desire of mentioning His blessed Name and calling more people to His court, there was a beautiful gathering, a fireside, at the home of one of the friends. Many friends were gathered, with seven seekers—boys, girls, Europeans, Africans—all happy, all attracted to Him, when suddenly the thunder of heavy shooting was heard, shaking all the windows. Cries and lamentations were heard from a large group of people who were the target of machine gun bullets fired into the very room below us. And then the flow of many wounded, terrified, bleeding people who sought refuge in the house where we were gathered. We rushed to their rescue, rendering whatever assistance we could, calling the ambulance, comforting them, stopping their bleeding, consoling the many frightened children, some of whom were praying, some weeping.

“After a few minutes, soldiers and policemen entered the house to investigate the source of the shooting and were astonished to find a religious meeting in progress.

Mention of Baha’u’llah produced a miracle! The chief of police knew about the Faith. He summoned his aides to help the wounded, apologetically made a purely ceremonial inspection of the house, and, to our astonishment and relief, gently and respectfully told us that we were free to go, explaining that there was no need to investigate the friends. He said he knew the Baha’is were not a source of danger and he entertained no doubts about them.

“The bystanders were astounded. ‘What is a Baha’i?’ they asked. And Baha’u’llah’s blessed Name passed from lip to lip, from heart to heart.

“None of the friends was agitated; none panicked. Everyone felt a sense of the presence of Baha’u’llah, of His power and assistance. Soon, all reached their homes. Although my automobile tire was punctured by a stray bullet, I, too, reached home in safety.

“This is a short account of a long story, of a day somewhat similar to many in the past and which may resemble many more days to come. But what is beautiful and heartening is the spirit of the believers who are firm, united, loving, daring and patient! We know that all this will pass, but the Faith of God will not. And we are helping one another to seek no shelter except His mighty Covenant and Stronghold. Please pray for all of us.”

Greenland
Danish settlement receives Message

Sukkertoppen is a Danish settlement on an island on the southwest coast of Greenland, north of Godthaab, and has an estimated population of 1,400. No Baha’is live there.

Mrs. Lotus Nielsen of Godthaab recently visited Sukkertoppen while on a teaching trip. She is an assistant to Auxiliary Board member Peggy Ross of Canada.

Mrs. Nielsen arranged a public showing of Baha’i slides in Sukkertoppen. While trying to find a place in which to give her program, she befriended many local people and gave them Baha’i literature. The town has no newspaper, so the meeting could only be advertised by a poster on the community bulletin board. The young man who made the poster discussed the Faith with Mrs. Nielsen for four hours. He took Baha’i literature, and consented to translate Mrs. Nielsen’s talk from Danish into Greenlandic.

Mrs. Nielsen reported that the poster attracted much attention, but she faced an empty room at the hour when the meeting was to have begun. “Fifteen minutes later,” she said, “Ferdinand, who made the poster, arrived, wearing a wool scarf and perspiring profusely. He had flu and a high fever and expressed regret that no one had come to the meeting. He did not realize that I considered his presence enough! He wanted to see the slides and we spent 1½ hours again discussing the Faith . . .” This man and his wife are now
studying the Faith.

In Holsteinsborg, Mrs. Nielsen was unable to arrange a public meeting. “I visited with people where I found them,” she stated, “outside their houses, in the street, in stores. Sometimes they accepted literature. The Greenlanders were friendly and helpful.”

Mrs. Nielsen also visited the widow of Hendrik Olsen, who was the first native Bahá’í of Greenland. He learned of the Faith through Mrs. Johanne Hoeg, the first Danish Bahá’í, and he was translating Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era into Greenlandic when he died in 1967.

Iceland

Faith proclaimed to Icelandic leaders

The Icelandic Bahá’í community recently proclaimed the Faith to the leaders of Iceland, presenting them with Bahá’í literature, including The Bahá’í World, Vol. XIV.

Auxiliary Board members Hádi Afshi and Svana Einarsdottir, and Erla Guomundsdóttir, vice-chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Iceland, had a 15-minute interview with the president of the Republic of Iceland.

They reported that “...the President was most congenial, received us warmly, and mentioned Eskil Ljungberg, Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for the Faeroe Islands, with whom the president had some associations while he was serving as director of the National Museum. It was evident that Eskil had made favorable impressions. The president was very friendly and asked interesting questions.”

The Bishop of Iceland also welcomed the Bahá’í delegation. Erla Guomundsdóttir thanked the Bishop for his effort in establishing a country-wide day of prayer for world peace, and explained that this was the main goal of the Bahá’í Faith. The Bishop seemed deeply moved, and said, “I thank you for these words. There are not many who appreciate what we try to do. The president was very friendly and asked interesting questions.”

India

Intensive teaching project is launched

A Bahá’í conference in Hyderabad, India, cabled the World Center: “Two hundred twenty-four Bahá’ís, including 125 representatives 42 villages, 60 volunteers teaching projects eager assist great new victories Five Year Plan.”

The Bahá’í community of India was stirred by Continental Counsellor Hooper Dunbar of the International Teaching Center in Haifa, who visited India at the request of The Universal House of Justice. A report from India states that Mr. Dunbar conveyed “an electrifying challenge to the Indian Bahá’í community from The Universal House of Justice.”

Consultation amonug the four South Central Asian Counsellors, Mr. Dunbar, and the National Spiritual Assembly gave birth to “a spirit of determination,” and an intensive teaching campaign was launched in October, with the goals of strengthening 1,000 Local Spiritual Assemblies, establishing 300 firmly-grounded Local Spiritual Assemblies, and opening 3,000 localities to the Faith.

Iran

Youth activities to be increased

Intensifying Bahá’í youth activities in Iran was the theme of the 26th annual Bahá’í Youth Convention of Iran. Recently gathered in Tehran, the Convention brought together 77 youth from 38 districts. Continental Counsellor Masih Farhangi of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Western Asia addressed the youth, emphasizing their importance as teachers.

The youth studied the goals of the Five Year Plan and discussed a report by 62 Persian youth who have been traveling teaching in Africa.

The youth made plans to increase individual teaching among university students; 26 of them offered to pioneer on the Persian homefront and 13 to foreign countries; 112 international traveling teaching trips were pledged.

All these pledges are to be carried out by next year, when the youth meet for their 27th annual Convention.

Italy

Bahá’í booth popular at Sardinia fair

Every year a large international trade fair is held in Cagliari, capital of Sardinia, Italy. This year, the Local Spiritual Assembly of Cagliari decided that, despite the expense, this would be an invaluable means of proclaiming the Faith.

They rented a booth at the fair. The booth was fortunately placed at the entrance of a very popular pavilion. The fair attracted 6,000 visitors, several thousand of whom stopped at the Bahá’í booth, which was open for the entire 10-day fair, and was manned by the Bahá’ís of Cagliari and the nearby town of Quartu. After about five days, the Bahá’ís were in the happy but embarrassing position of being almost out of free literature and the thousand visiting cards which they had printed.

One man entered the booth and, with evident excitement, picked up Paris Talks to show his wife. He told the Bahá’ís that he had worked for the printers of the book in Rome and that he had been responsible for its layout, but was transferred before its
Teaching emphasized at Summer School

The Hand of the Cause of God A.Q. Faizi, addressing students at the Italian Bahá'í Summer School, emphasized the need to arise and teach now because in the future it will take hundreds of years to attempt to do what can be done now.

He told of St. Peter who converted thousands to Christianity after he spoke for just a few minutes, and compared the fruits of his work to those of today's pioneers, who toil for years.

The Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery reminded the friends of the lives and sacrifices of some of the early Western believers.

Other special teachers at the school, which met at the Pizzomunno Hotel in Vieste, Italy, were Mrs. Giachery, three Auxiliary Board members, and Adib Taherzadeh of Ireland. Mr. Taherzadeh gave lessons on the importance of firmness in the Covenant and the role of the individual believer in helping to create Local Spiritual Assemblies.

Mr. Taherzadeh's book on the Local Spiritual Assembly, Trustees of the Merciful, has recently been translated into Italian and is almost ready for publication.
Liberia

Bahá'í featured at school event

A public school in Tubmanburg, Bomi Territory, Liberia, invited a Bahá'í pioneer, Elouise G. Sanders, to speak at its United Nations Day celebration on October 24. A Bahá'í who teaches math at the school introduced Mrs. Sanders, who addressed 200 students and 10 teachers. She stressed the equality of men and women and taught her audience a Bahá'í song.

The deputy principal thanked Mrs. Sanders for her service and requested a copy of the song for the school. The principal also told the students that the speech would be part of their exams, and said, "I am already a Bahá'í... I accepted all the teachings of all the religions, for I know one thing mankind is aiming at is getting to the dwelling-place of God in Heaven."

Liechtenstein

Dr. and Mrs. Giachery visit with Prince Franz Josef II.

The Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery and Mrs. Giachery recently visited the principality of Liechtenstein.

Dr. and Mrs. Giachery and Rudiger Wohlwend, who is the corresponding secretary of the Bahá'í Group of Vaduz, capital of Liechtenstein, were accorded an interview with Prince Franz Josef II.

Dr. Giachery reported that the visit with the Prince was lively, interesting, and friendly, and the Prince graciously accepted The Bahá'í World, vol. XIV. He asked a few questions about the Faith. Dr. Giachery answered the questions and stressed that the Faith is a divine force to bring humanity closer to God.

Malaysia

Inspiring Women’s Conference held

The first Bahá'í Women’s Conference of Malaysia, recently held in Kampong Temiang, was attended by 63 women from 11 communities.

Some traveled first by express boat, then by slow launch through the equatorial jungle. At each stop, Bahá'í women boarded the launch and, during the four-hour journey, they met and got to know each other. The women spent the last hour of their trip walking through the jungle to Kampong Temiang, balancing on neatly felled and placed tree trunks.

The Women’s Committee of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Kampong Temiang had arranged the conference, and a house was available for the tired but happy visitors.

The Local Assembly provided food, which was prepared by the men so the women could participate in the conference. The men also looked after the children.

Talks and workshops included the role of women, stories of famous Bahá'í women, activities of women in the local community, women and the goals of the Five Year Plan, moral conduct of a Bahá'í, the Bahá'í Fund, and health instructions. The session on health included a comparison of native and scientific methods of pre-natal and post-natal care. The native methods were demonstrated by two midwives from Kampong Temiang.

Slides were shown in the evening, and the women rejoiced to see the faces of the international Bahá'í community, the Holy Places at the World Center, and the Houses of Worship.

"Inspired by the devotion, unity and happiness which we experienced at the Conference," they reported, "we all returned home ready to serve Bahá'u'lláh and to build up women’s committees in all communities to train the women to take their equal place in society."

The following month, another Women’s Conference in Kampong Bulan Sebuyau attracted 75 women from 18 communities. The women made a contribution to the construction of the permanent seat of The Universal House of Justice. A resolution passed at the Conference states: “We resolve to assist to accomplish the goals of the Five Year Plan, particularly to develop the distinctive characteristics of Bahá’í life in the local community, support our Local Spiritual Assemblies, encourage our families to gather for dawn prayers, and contribute to the Fund. We will also strive to improve the health in our community."

The report of this conference concluded, "...we pray that more Women’s Conferences will be organized."

New Zealand

Teaching Conference stresses individual

The New Zealand National Teaching Conference, at Ngongotaha, New Zealand, on Labor weekend, attracted about 160 Bahá'ís. Special guests were Continental Counsellor Suhayl Ala'i and Auxiliary Board members Gina Garcia and Owen Battrick.

The Conference emphasized individual development. The New Zealand National Teaching Committee used lettered building blocks to demonstrate the effectiveness of individual striving. The blocks represented attributes such as obedience, self-discipline, and purity. When the 19 blocks were put together to form a building, the building proclaimed, “All Goals Fulfilled!”

Another session focused on the specific goals of the Five Year Plan with believers from various areas of New Zealand reporting on progress towards winning the goals in their communities.

Northwest Pacific Ocean

20th, 21st Local Assemblies formed

Two new Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed during September.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the North West Pacific Ocean announced that the formation of a Local Spiritual Assembly in Ngeremlengui, Palau District, Western Caroline Islands, and at Laura in the Marshall Islands, brings to 21 the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies.

This National Assembly has the goal of raising the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies in its area to 50 during the Five Year Plan.

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Pakistan

**Education is theme of public meeting**

A recent three-day proclamation in Pakistan, directed by the National Youth Committee of Pakistan, concluded with a public meeting in Karachi. The meeting was a seminar on “Education in Pakistan.”

Some outstanding local citizens were invited to the seminar, which was chaired by Bahá’í youth. Many of these distinguished guests addressed the gathering, noting that the Bahá’í community can help improve educational standards.

A Bahá’í gave the closing address and he emphasized that the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh is what is needed by the world today.

Papua New Guinea

**Bahá’ís participate in Independence Day**

The Bahá’ís of Papua New Guinea proclaimed the Faith on their country’s Independence Day in September. Their participation in Independence Day events was “inspired by the Bahá’ís of the Central African Republic who marched in the Independence Day celebrations in their country in December 1974,” the National Spiritual Assembly of Papua New Guinea reported.

In Lae, the Bahá’ís marched in the Independence Day Parade, wearing blue T-shirts and bright sarongs. On the front of the T-shirts was a dove in the form of praying hands and the words “Bahá’í Faith—Peace for Mankind.” On the back was a nine-pointed star surrounding a map of Papua New Guinea.

The lead marchers carried a large banner which said “Bahá’ís long to see the diverse peoples living in Papua New Guinea become united as one people.” The marching group consisted of nine women and 10 men who represented seven different provinces and included pioneers of Chinese and European descent. Behind the group, two Bahá’ís from the highlands marched, playing traditional bamboo flutes.

The only multi-racial group in the parade, the Bahá’í marchers attracted enthusiastic attention and applause, especially when they passed the official dais. The Bahá’ís feel their participation in the parade was “the most successful proclamation event ever held in Lae.”

The believers of Rabaul entered a float in Rabaul’s Independence Day Parade. The float was frequently photographed and attracted favorable comments. Its theme was “A New Nation United Under God.”

In Rabaul, just before the raising of the flag of Papua New Guinea on Independence Day, a Bahá’í recited, from the official grandstand and in Pidgin, the national language, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s “Prayer for Mankind.” The Bahá’í was one of the representatives of the major religions of the country, and the prayer was printed in the Independence Day Program in Pidgin and in English.

Bahá’ís of New Ireland held a special service commemorating Independence Day. About 1,000 people crowded to the service in the playground of a school. The Bahá’ís read from Bahá’í Writings and from the Bible, and the program concluded with songs by the Madina youth string band. This was the first public Bahá’í service in New Ireland.

Rhodesia

**Youth teachers go to Botswana**

Two Bahá’í youth from Rhodesia recently completed a teaching trip to Botswana, the first trip under a new plan for exchange traveling teachers.

The young women conducted a five-day institute in the village of Bobonong, holding classes for children and youth, for women, and the general community. The
village has regular Bahá’í children’s classes and the children were thrilled to welcome guest teachers. The traveling teachers demonstrated sewing and handcrafts and encouraged the women to start a Women’s Club. One of the Five Year Plan goals for Botswana is to organize more women’s activities.

In another area, plans for a meeting fell through, so the two youth taught in the villages and at cattle posts. “Most people were very friendly and very surprised to see us,” they reported. “We told them some of the Teachings of the Faith and gave them pamphlets. One man invited us back to his home to teach his family about the Bahá’í Faith.”

In Molepolole, three more teachers, including two local youth, joined the travelers, and they gave a fireside with a selection of Bahá’í songs.

United States

Each One Teach One conferences’ theme

Two United States National Teaching Conferences held in Brockport, New York, and Joliet, Illinois, on Nov. 1-2 were called Each One Teach One Conferences because they focused on the individual Bahá’i’s responsibility to teach the Faith.

Illinois and New York are special goal areas for the United States during the Five Year Plan, as are California and Washington, D.C., because the Master spent much time in these places during His visit to the U.S. in 1912.

Each conference was well-attended, with hundreds of participants. The Hand of the Cause of God Dhikru’lláh Khádem; Counsellor Edna True; Glenford Mitchell, secretary of the United States National Spiritual Assembly; and Charlotte Linfoot, assistant secretary, addressed the gathering in Illinois. In New York, the friends heard Counsellor Sarah Pereira; Auxiliary Board member Peter Khan; Firuz Kazemzadeh, chairman of the National Assembly; and Magdelene Carney, member of the National Assembly.

Speakers at the conferences mentioned the special blessings given to the American believers by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Bahá’ís living in New York state enjoy a special blessing in that New York City is the City of the Covenant,” Dr. Kazemzadeh pointed out. “New York City plays an important part in the life of the state and country, but to Bahá’ís it is its special significance is that it was here the Master announced Himself to be the Center of the Covenant: the blessing of His presence in this area will surround all our teaching efforts here.”

At the Illinois Conference, Miss True said that the Master, according to the beloved Guardian, endured the saddest period of His life when He was cut off from the believers during World War I. During this time He revealed the Tablets of the Divine Plan, outlining the missions of the Bahá’ís of the West.

“These missions are great; worldwide civilization, worldwide peace,” Miss True said. “The Guardian and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá saw the end in the beginning and once in awhile they would lift the curtain and let us look down the aisle and see the things which are going to happen. We have this in the Writings. The beloved Guardian brought into being the Administrative Order needed to carry out the Divine Plan of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.”

Citing the Guardian’s brilliant, global teaching Crusades, and the challenging Plans of The Universal House of Justice, she said that “we must look at all these plans as one and the same Plan, the Plan of God. At this time, The Universal House of Justice is concerned. The goals of the Plan are not where they should be. So this is a weighty moment.”

The two teaching conferences inspired the believers with a vision of the new World Order, and what that order really means.

“The planning is done,” said Mr. Mitchell when he addressed the Illinois Conference. “Our Assembly has done all it can do. If individuals don’t respond, plans don’t bear fruit. No teaching: no Local Spiritual Assemblies, no new World Order. The continued confusion of humanity, the continued corruption of humanity will not be stopped unless each arises to teach the Cause to somebody else.”

In New York, Dr. Khan, newly assigned to assist that state, said: “After visiting 20 countries during a six-month sabbatical leave this past year, I can assure you that there are many opportunities for the spread of the Faith now which may not exist in a few years’ time. The collapse of the old world and the building of the new World Order means that Bahá’ís are being called to transcend themselves and achieve a new response to the will of God.”

Dr. Khan pointed out that the Faith is becoming more significant to the people of the world. Bahá’ís are being observed. “The Bahá’í community is growing in strength far more than we know,” Dr. Khan said. “Until you go into a country and experience the ethos of the Bahá’í community, seeing how it is shining in contrast to the rest of society, statistics do not mean too much. In traveling, you can more and more predict who are Bahá’ís, when you look into the faces of crowds in airports and railway terminals. In many countries, statesmen, leaders and the judiciary are becoming deeply aware of the Faith, no longer regarding it as a Utopian organization.”

The conferences devoted Saturday afternoon to workshop sessions, stressing the Each One Teach One theme. Consultation during the workshops centered on individual teaching experiences, ways of meeting, teaching, and deepening friends.

Continued on Page 20, Col. 3
Some pictures of the Each One Teach One Conferences: 1. The Hand of the Cause of God Dhibru'lUla Khadem addresses the conference in Joliet, Illinois. 2. Friends share teaching methods in a workshop session. 3. Part of the audience at the Brockport, New York, conference. 4. An information booth in Illinois, showing the friends where their services are most needed. 5. Youth lead a conference sing-along. Some words of the "Each One Teach One" song, written especially for the conferences: "... if each would teach, we'd have one world for Bahá'u'lláh..."

Workshop leaders reported practical tips on teaching and these were summarized and presented to each conference.

Suggestions included: have Bahá'í decorations and literature displayed in your home, give Bahá'í literature and posters as gifts, listen to the seekers and find a way to mention the Faith by speaking to their interests, hold special children's parties on festive Holy Days, and make our homes centers of hospitality.

Speakers at both conferences stressed that the friends must realize their individual responsibility. Each must hold a fireside in his or her home once in 19 days where new people are invited and where some phase of the Faith is mentioned and discussed.

"Do we know the station of the believers?" asked Mr. Khadem as he addressed the Illinois Conference. "The beloved Guardian calls you the spiritual descendants of the Dawn-Breakers. And what did the Dawn-Breakers do? Your forefathers—and you have the same capacity—within three years, four years, five years, changed the whole of Persia—Iraq, every village, every town. Wherever you went there was the Light of the Báb; all classes, everybody heard and was moved. And friends, they had no freedom did they? They suffered so much. They had 20,000 people who gave their lives for this very purpose: to teach. Each one teach one? Each one teach more than one!"

Local Assembly Program praised

First reaction from Assemblies which have completed the Local Spiritual Assembly Development Program has been very enthusiastic.

A group of Bahá'ís who were trained at the National Center in August in turn trained 28 Local Assemblies in 12 states in October.

One Local Assembly which completed the program wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly that "the training will assist all mankind towards establishing the Kingdom of God on His earth." Another Assembly called the program fantastic and beautifully organized. This program "demonstrates again the powers of Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order and what can be accomplished when we arise
and serve His Cause,” another Assembly wrote.

The purpose of the program is to assist Local Assemblies in accomplishing one of the major goals of the Five Year Plan, the development of Bahá’í life, particularly in local communities.

“The program is one of the most significant developments in the history of the American Bahá’í community,” said John Berry, coordinator of the Local Spiritual Assembly Development Program. “It is the most comprehensive program ever developed to assist Local Assemblies in meshing the administrative and spiritual wings of the Faith into balance,” Mr. Berry said.

The persons trained at the National Center have broken into two-man teams and will now school 400 Bahá’ís in the details of the comprehensive materials used in 10 three-hour classes. The 400 will then divide into two-man teams and train more Local Assemblies. It is expected that more than 250 Assemblies will have completed the program by Ridván.

The purpose of the trainers is to assist Local Assemblies in making the most effective use of the materials developed for the program.

The materials consist of two new volumes and videotaped talks by Counsellors and members of the National Spiritual Assembly. The volumes—the 365-page Development of the Local Spiritual Assembly and the 154-page Guidelines for Local Spiritual Assemblies—were developed under the guidance of the National Assembly as part of the Bahá’í Comprehensive Deepening Program.

Indian Reservation Assembly formed

Another Local Spiritual Assembly has been formed on an Indian Reservation, bringing to 13 the total of new Local Assemblies on Indian Reservations since the beginning of the Five Year Plan. The goal of the Plan is the formation of 25 such Assemblies.

The latest was elected on October 19 on the Umatilla Indian Reservation in Oregon. The Umatilla Group had been assisted by the Local Spiritual Assembly of Pendleton, Oregon, to raise its number to 12 adults, several youth, and several children.

The Pendleton Bahá’ís were stimulated by a visit by Auxiliary Board member Paul Pettit who pointed out the importance of this Indian Assembly. They encouraged the Umatilla Group to begin working with the wife of one of the Bahá’ís on the Reservation. She is an Umatilla Indian. The Bahá’ís also worked more earnestly with other seekers and they located an Indian Bahá’í from Alaska who had just moved to the Reservation and who was eager to be active. Soon, some of the seekers declared, including the Umatilla Indian woman and an entire family.

Master’s Lake Mohonk visit commemorated

The visit of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to the Conference on Peace and International Arbitration in 1912 at Lake Mohonk, New Paltz, New York, was commemorated on October 20.

More than 200 Bahá’ís gathered for the program which was held in the same parlor where the Master had delivered a memorable address on “The Oneness of the Reality of Human Kind.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s talk, as recorded in the Mohonk records, was read.

Teaching stressed by Mr. Robarts

The Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts, Auxiliary Board members Peter Khan and Catherine McLaughlin, and Mrs. Audrey Robarts spent a weekend in October with the Bahá’ís of New York City. Friends came from surrounding areas; some even from Maine and Michigan.

The two Auxiliary Board members introduced Mr. Robarts. He emphasized the importance of teaching, stressing the value of obedience to our institutions and of trusting in God.

“God will assist all those who arise to serve Him,” said Mr. Robarts. “If I can get this point across, it will have been a good day.” Mr. Robarts and his wife, Audrey, told anecdotes of pioneers and dedicated homesteaders, drawing on their experiences in Canada and Africa.

New York state is a special goal area for the United States during the Five Year Plan. Mr. Robarts stressed the need for increased teaching “so that believers shall come into the Faith in droves.”

The New York City community is buying a building to use as a Bahá’í Center. The purchase of the new center fulfills one of their Five Year Plan goals. The friends saw a slide presentation of the new building on Saturday evening.

On Sunday, Dr. Khan, who was recently given the special assignment of assisting New York state, inspired the Bahá’ís by sharing his thoughts on the problems and bounties of spiritual development in the United States.

Windward Islands Faith proclaimed to Carib leader

The Carib Indian Chief, Mas Clam, recently received Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era and The Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh from a teaching team which traveled to the island of Dominica to meet him.

The team was sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Windward Islands. The teachers reported that Mas Clam heard a brief discussion of the Faith and told the teachers that he was happy they had come.

This proclamation of the Message to the Carib leader fills a goal of the Five Year Plan.
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On the cover: the House of Worship at Wilmette, Illinois, and the Hand of the Cause of God Corinne True, left, Mother of the Temple. At right is Mrs. Cecelia Harrison who helped Mrs. True locate the Temple site.

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A gentle breeze caressingly bent a rich carpet of grass toward the peaceful Ohio River while the sun danced between patches of fleecy clouds. From the river's edge the land rose slowly toward the crest of a distant hill which was crowned by the plantation's main house.

Corinne Knight bent forward and lovingly stroked the flowing mane of her horse. They both were anxious to be moving again, but they would wait patiently until her father finished inspecting the cotton. Corinne often accompanied her father on tours of the property: she was the eldest child and he frequently involved her in activities traditionally reserved for a son. Their love and affection for each other were intense.

Moses Green Knight had been a Presbyterian minister, but was forced to retire when quite young due to a threat of a mental illness. He fell in love with Martha Thomas, an only child who had inherited a plantation in Oldham County, just outside Louisville, Kentucky. She also inherited some 30 slaves, but being master of another person’s destiny was morally intolerable to Moses and he declared that the slaves must be given their liberty. Martha’s family, however, had always treated their slaves well and the majority did.

Mother of the Temple

The story of Hand of the Cause of God
Corinne Knight True

by Bruce Whitmore
not want to leave the plantation home. Finally Moses agreed they could remain in his employ as free people. He constructed several new houses, erected a school and hired a teacher to educate them. He provided for their every need.

Born on her father's birthday, November 1, 1861, Corinne was reared in an environment which reflected all of the culture and charm associated with the South. Her early education was provided by tutors and she was an excellent student. She developed extensive knowledge of the Bible, primarily because of her father’s demands that it be studied constantly. Due to his orthodox, ministerial background, Moses Knight was a very strict father, but the lives of his six children were filled with happiness and gaiety.

In the mid-1870s, when Corinne was in her early teens, life on the plantation ended abruptly when the family moved to Chicago, Illinois. A house on the city’s west side was purchased and the Knight family began a new way of life.

After completing high school, Corinne left the new house on Adams Street to attend a noted Southern finishing school. Thomas, the second oldest child, was enrolled in Williams College in Massachusetts. Two younger sisters (the other two children died) were sent later to Vassar College in New York, an opportunity available to very few women at that time. Both of these girls died of tuberculosis in their early twenties, leaving Corinne and Thomas the only surviving children. Their relationship remained intensely close throughout the years and, although he never became a Bahá’í, Thomas held immense respect for the Faith.

While Corinne was away at school, new neighbors from Maine moved into the house next door. She returned on holiday and heard nothing but praise for them. When she met the son, Moses Adams True, love blossomed instantly. At first her father did not object, but when Corinne returned home after graduating and it became apparent the romance was serious, he forbade Moses True to continue seeing his daughter. He remained adamant in his lifelong desire that his daughter marry into a Southern family.

The bond between Corinne and Moses True was very strong and, despite her father's wishes, they were married on June 24, 1882. Her father was deeply hurt and bewildered. Social standards, which designated the father as absolute master of the household, made Corinne's disobedient act intolerable and caused a grievous rift between father and daughter which lasted nearly 10 years, bringing both of them profound sorrow.

The young Trues remained in Chicago until the birth of their first daughter, Harriet Merrill, on August 20, 1883. Then they moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, hoping the distance might help ease family tensions. During the several years they remained in Michigan, Laurence Knight, Charles Gilbert Davis, Edna Miriam and Arna Corinne were born. One day Thomas, who had graduated from law school and opened a practice in Chicago, came to visit and told Corinne of the deep grief both parents felt over the loss of their daughter. They were very eager to make amends and wanted her to return. Corinne and Moses agreed and her father gave them the house on Adams Street where the True family spent the next several years.

Not long after they returned tragedy struck a devastating blow, altering Corinne's life forever. Harriet, a lovely girl who was nearly 10 and who constantly delighted her mother with her warm personality and intense love of life, fell down the basement stairs, dying shortly afterward from the injuries. Corinne was crushed. Her faith in God was shaken severely by an event for which she could find no reason, no purpose. Serious questions about the meaning of life haunted her and a search for answers was destined to lead her to the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh.

For almost seven years the search continued. She devoted considerable time to the Unity Movement and then to Christian Science. Her soul still restless, she became involved in an offshoot of Christian Science known as Divine Science. At first the spiritual chasm which had developed in her life was bridged, but when overwhelming misfortune again invaded the True household, that spiritual support vanished quickly. Nathaniel, her youngest son (who along with a set of twins, Kenneth and Katherine, had been born in the Adams Street house), contracted diphtheria late in 1898. He was near death when given an injection of a newly discovered drug which seemed to miraculously cure him. Suddenly, several weeks later, on May 3, 1899, he died of heart failure.

It was during this overwhelming period of grief when Corinne was trying to regain her perspective of life that a close friend told her of a lecture she had attended the previous evening and how she had been impressed with the knowledge and wisdom of the Persian speakers who described a new religion. Corinne agreed to attend a lecture and recognized almost instantly that Bahá’u’lláh is God’s Messenger for this age.*

It was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s first tablet to Corinne, written after He learned of the suffering this new believer had experienced, that finally brought peace and comfort to her troubled soul:

O thou who art tested with a great calamity!

Be not grieved nor troubled because of the loss which hath befallen thee—a loss which caused the tears to flow, sighs to be produced, sorrow to exist and hearts to burn in great agony; but know, this hath reference only to the physical body, and if thou considerest this matter with a discerning and intelligent eye,

* Corinne True and her youngest child, Nathaniel. This picture was taken a few weeks before Nathaniel was stricken by diphtheria in 1898. He died in 1899, one of four children that Mrs. True lost.
Death claims another son, but Corinne True’s faith was reinforced by another tablet from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Her attention was diverted effectively to teaching the Cause of God.

Corinne had great services to perform and the strength of her faith was to be further tested and galvanized. Within weeks of the arrival of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s tablet, Kenneth, one of the twins, also contracted diphtheria. Like his brother before him, he seemed to improve and then suddenly died of heart failure. Only after it was too late for the True family did scientists discover that the new medicine being used so widely had a side effect of weakening the heart and that the Master’s response (received by Corinne in which He consoled her over her loss. This time lapse allows for reasonable speculation that Corinne entered the Faith during the latter months of 1899 and that the Master’s response (received by Corinne in October of 1900) came as soon as He learned of the incident. Hopefully, future historians will be comforted and thank God for His favor upon thee.1

Corinne was calmed and peace again filled her soul. Her faith and courage allowed her to divert effectively her attention to many other demands.

At the turn of the century the Bahá’í community in Chicago was quite large. Although there is no present knowledge of the exact figures, there were at least 500 and most likely 700 to 800 members. Most of these people, attracted by a few of the basic principles, had little real concept of the Faith’s purpose. It was common for Bahá’ís to attend their various churches on Sunday morning and then gather in the afternoon for general conversation and contemplation about such subjects as world peace and unity.

Corinne, however, was constantly teaching, both in and away from her own home. Her scholarly knowledge of the Bible was of great assistance. Many of the people she taught were confused by the myriad prophecies and she could easily unravel numerous mysteries of the Bible, assisting them to gain insight and understanding.

Corinne was instrumental in bringing the Faith to many areas of Wisconsin and in helping the Kenosha (Wisconsin) community to develop strength. She also introduced the Faith to Michigan (where the family continued to reside each summer), establishing communities in Grand Rapids, Muskegon, Grand Haven, Fruitport, and elsewhere.

Even with the overpowering sadness of the loss of three children, the True family was one of the happiest imaginable. Corinne and Moses were devoted to the children and spent every spare moment with them. The house was like a magnet, drawing large numbers of neighborhood children and involving them in numerous and diverse activities. Corinne’s attitudes toward the rearing of children were influenced strongly by the Master, who wrote her:

It is incumbent upon thee to nurture them from the breast of the love of God, to urge them towards spiritual matters, to turn unto God and acquire good manners, best characteristics and praiseworthy virtues and qualities in the world of humanity, and to study sciences with the utmost diligence; so that they may become spiritual, heavenly and attracted to the fragrances of sanctity from their childhood and be reared in a religious, spiritual and heavenly training. Verily, I beg God to confirm them therein.3

In addition to teaching and rearing her children (Harlan Ober,
Master explains the equality of men and women and assigns to Corinne True a great responsibility in the early work toward the construction of that unifying edifice, the Mother Temple of the West.

one of the early Chicago believers, fondly recalled years later that “she and May Maxwell were two of the wisest mothers I have known”4), Corinne was continually studying and deepening her understanding of God’s infant Cause. From the time of her acceptance of Bahá’u’lláh until her first pilgrimage in 1907, she was slowly nurtured for the invaluable work she was to accomplish later through 19 tablets sent her by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (this number would rise to more than 50 by the time of His Ascension in 1921). One of His recurrent themes was firmness in the Covenant and her degree of understanding was later to prove vital to the solidarity of the American community. One beautiful example He provided is found in a tablet written in 1902 in which He addressed her as, “O thou loving torch, flaming by the fire of the Love of God!”:

How many souls advanced unto God, entered the shadow of the Word of God and became celebrated in the world, as Judas Iscariot. Then, when the tests became severe and trials great, their feet turned from the path; turned from confession to denial; changed from love and affection to severe enmity. Then the power of tests, whereby the foundations shake, were manifested.

Judas Iscariot was one of the greatest disciples, was called unto Jesus; he thought that Jesus increased his kindness to Peter, the disciple, when saying to him: “Thou art Peter, upon thee I shall build my church.” This speech affecting Peter with special impression whereby envy was created in the heart of Judas and, therefore, he turned after denouncing, denied after confessing, hated after loving, until he became the cause of the crucifixion of the Glorious Lord and Manifest Light. This is the end of envy which causes people to turn from the right path. Such has taken place and will occur in this Great Cause; but there is no difference between women and men. “The nearer we draw to God, the nearer He comes to us!” without regard to whether the person be a man or a woman. How many women, thus drawn to God, have surpassed men in the shadow of Bahá’í in bringing men under it—women famous throughout the world! . . . And as to you—you other maid-servants attracted by the perfume of God—establish spiritual gatherings (assemblies) and heavenly meetings. This work is the beginning of the diffusing of the perfume of God and the foundation of the elevating of the Word of God and the making known of the commandments of God. Is there a blessing greater than this? These spiritual gatherings (assemblies) are sustained (reinforced) by the Spirit of God, and their protector is Abdul-Baha, who spreads his wings (over) above them. Is there a blessing greater than this? These spiritual gatherings (assemblies) are glowing lamps and heavenly gardens which cast the light of knowledge upon the contingent world and cause the spirit of life to penetrate to every quarter. This, then, is the best means of the progress of the human race in all conditions and circumstances. Is there a greater blessing than this?6

In March 1903, the House of Spirituality addressed an appeal to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to allow them to construct a House of Worship. He sent them two tablets, accepting their request. Eight days after the second arrived, Corinne received a tablet. She had not been the least interested when learning of the House of Spirituality’s intentions and was greatly surprised by the tablet’s contents:

O maid-servant of God! Know thou that in the sight of God, the conduct of women is the same as that of men. All are the creatures of God and He has created them after His form and likeness; that is to say, after the form and likeness of the Manifestations of His names and His attributes. From the spiritual point of view, therefore, there is no difference between women and men. “The nearer we draw to God, the nearer He comes to us!” without regard to whether the person be a man or a woman. How many women, thus drawn to God, have surpassed men in the shadow of Bahá’í in bringing men under it—women famous throughout the world! . . . And as to you—you other maid-servants attracted by the perfume of God—establish spiritual gatherings (assemblies) and heavenly meetings. This work is the beginning of the diffusing of the perfume of God and the foundation of the elevating of the Word of God and the making known of the commandments of God. Is there a blessing greater than this? These spiritual gatherings (assemblies) are sustained (reinforced) by the Spirit of God, and their protector is Abdul-Baha, who spreads his wings (over) above them. Is there a blessing greater than this? These spiritual gatherings (assemblies) are glowing lamps and heavenly gardens which cast the light of knowledge upon the contingent world and cause the spirit of life to penetrate to every quarter. This, then, is the best means of the progress of the human race in all conditions and circumstances. Is there a greater blessing than this?6

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... He wrote me instructions about the Temple to my utter
astonishment that placed a great responsibility on my shoulders. So, being the President of our women's work, I took the matter before them and we raised a small sum of money, appointed a treasurer and held it in the bank . . .

That same tablet contained some of the most well-known statements of the Master regarding the Temple:

Now the day has arrived in which the edifice of God, the divine sanctuary, the spiritual temple, shall be erected in America! I entreat God to assist the confirmed believers in accomplishing this great service and with entire zeal to rear this mighty structure which shall be renowned throughout the world. The support of God will be with those believers in that district that they may be successful in their undertaking, for the Cause is great and great; because this is the first Mashrak-el-Azkar in that country and from it the praise of God shall ascend to the Kingdom of Mystery and the tumult of His exaltation and greetings from the whole world shall be heard!

Whosoever arises for the service of this building shall be assisted with a great power from His Supreme Kingdom and upon him spiritual and heavenly blessings shall descend, which shall fill his heart with wonderful consolation and enlighten his eyes by beholding the glorious and eternal God.

Although Corinne, the Women's Assembly of Teaching and even the House of Spirituality never lost interest in the Temple, relative inactivity marked the first four of the 50-year history of its raising. The Faith in America was still in its infancy, it had been embraced by relatively few adherents and its administrative structure, undefined and generally ineffective, was not prepared to direct such a monumental task. Compounding this situation was confusion regarding several of 'Abdu'l-Baha's statements concerning the building, plus a concentration by the majority of Baha'is on other activities.

Toward the end of this period, when the Temple was destined to emerge as the instrument for the unification of the American Baha'i community, a dying woman came to the Temple's Assembly of Teaching and pleaded with the believers to care for her two small children. The women voted to remove the money from the Temple bank account and to purchase a home for the children and their grandmother in Muskegon, Michigan. Consultation on this matter caused the women to center their interest once more on the Temple bank account and to purchase a home for the children.

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Do not grieve on account of the death of thy son, neither sigh nor lament. That nightingale soared upward to the divine rosegarden; that drop returned to the most great ocean of Truth; that foreigner hastened to his native abode; and that ill one found salvation and life eternal.

Why shouldst thou be sad and heartbroken? This separation is temporal; this remoteness and sorrow is counted only by days. Thou shalt find him in the Kingdom of God and thou wilt attain to the everlasting union. Physical companionship is ephemeral, but heavenly association is eternal. Whenever thou rememberest the eternal and never ending union, thou wilt be comforted and blissful.

Laurence's sudden death prompted Corinne to request permission to visit 'Akkâ. The Women's Assembly of Teaching decided to distribute a petition throughout the country calling for construction to begin.
To our Lord, Abdul Baha,

We, the undersigned, desire to arise for the erection of the first Mashrak-el-Azkar in America in compliance with the Tablets revealed in behalf of this great Spiritual Edifice.11

It was their intention that Corinne take the document to the Master. The simple sheets of notepaper soon bore hundreds of signatures from Bahá'ís in numerous communities. As they were returned, Moses True glued them together to form a long scroll which was rolled and placed in a tin cylinder.

The bond between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the early believers was very intense; they felt a close, personal relationship in which they looked upon Him as they would their own father and, simultaneously, they revered Him as their Lord. It is not surprising that, as the day of departure neared, many of the friends came to visit and asked Corinne to take to the Master small presents, such as pictures of their children, shawls, etc., as well as letters with numerous questions and requests for Him to give Persian names to their children. When Corinne departed from Chicago her luggage including a huge suitcase filled with gifts and letters.

The years 1905 and 1906 had witnessed a relaxation of the pressures exerted on 'Abdu'l-Bahá by the enemies of the Faith. Then early in 1907 a Commission of Enquiry, encouraged by those same enemies, arrived in 'Aká and life once again became difficult. "Spies" were once again planted around the house of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and once again people were kept away. Even the poor of 'Aká dared not come, as was their wont on Fridays, to receive alms.12 It was under these conditions that Corinne and her daughter Arna, now a young girl, arrived. They were required to land at Haifa and wait there until it was safe to go to the Master's house in 'Aká. Debarking at Haifa was a memorable experience in itself. Thornton Chase, whose party of pilgrims arrived shortly after Corinne departed, wrote of the adventure in his book, In Galilee:

. . . As the steamer anchored, a fleet of boats came racing toward the ship. . . . Each was manned by eight to ten swarthy sturdy, red-fezzed boatmen handling as many long, heavy, square-handled oars. . . . It was an exciting welcome, the crews rising and sinking, the boats lifting through the waves and almost in collision, the stirring cries keeping time and becoming louder and more intense as they approached.

When entering the boat the passenger has to submit entirely to the crew. One goes down the slippery steps on the ship's side to the little hanging platform and as the light boat rises on a wave to meet it, one or two of the Arab sailors seizes him (or her) in his arms, holds him as the boat sinks and bears him to a seat. The process is repeated at the landing place where each person is lifted by strong arms from the boat as it rises to the dock. So we entered Palestine.13

After Corinne and Arna had been deposited safely on the dock, they were escorted to the Hospice of the Little Child, an inn that was part of the German Templar colony, established in Haifa in 1843 in expectation of the return of Christ, an event the group had been convinced would occur on Mt. Carmel. Prior to her departure Corinne had received instructions to remain at the inn until she was contacted.

It was two days before a Persian appeared with a note from the Master directing Corinne and Arna to accompany him. The roads to 'Aká were very poor, so they were required to travel along the hard sands of the Mediterranean Sea, riding in a wagon with wooden benches for seats and a roof made of cloth.

Finally they reached the house of 'Abdu'llah Páshá where the Master had resided since 1897 and where Shoghi Effendi had been born. They entered the complex through an archway of red brick, crossed an open courtyard and ascended a long weatherbeaten flight of steps which opened into a smaller court surrounded by whitewashed walls. Their room contained two small beds, a wooden bench and a table which was always adorned with fresh flowers. Straw matting covered the stone floor. From the window they could see the old sea wall and the blue waters of the Mediterranean.

They had entered a prison in which every action of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the members of His household was monitored and controlled. Yet within those walls they were encircled by such an outpouring of love and a sense of peace and security that the anguish and suffering of a spiritually starved world seemed a universe away. Earlier, the Master had written a tender and loving tablet to Corinne in which He, noting "thy sorrow, the shedding of thy tears and the glowing of thy heart on account of the imprisonment of Abdul Baha," said:

O maid-servant of God! This prison is indeed more precious and sweet than a garden to me, this fetter is greater than any wilderness. Therefore, grieve not on this account. . . .14

At last Corinne understood.

Sometime during the late afternoon or early evening of that first day they were instructed to gather in the reception room where 'Abdu'l-Bahá customarily greeted the pilgrims. Since she had transported so many gifts, Corinne decided it would be practical
During those memorable days under ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s blessed roof, Corinne True is commanded to arise and totally dedicate her energies toward the House of Worship.

to begin delivering them as soon as possible. With arms filled, she and Arna entered the room, placed the packages and envelopes on a table, and sat down on one of the several divans that lined the walls. Corinne then carefully positioned the precious scroll, which contained nearly 1,000 signatures, behind her back to keep it secure until the right moment arrived for its presentation.

When the Master entered the room, He welcomed the pilgrims in a majestic and ringing voice and took a seat across the room from Corinne. After inquiring about each person’s journey, He asked her about the health and happiness of the friends in Chicago. She told Him of the many gifts she had and began to describe those in front of her, but before she could finish the Master arose and crossed the room. To her astonishment, He reached behind her, took the scroll and held it high, exclaiming:

“This...this is what gives me great joy.” “Go back...go back and work for the Temple; it is a great work.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá then picked up a pencil and paper and, while explaining that the structure’s basic design must include a dome, nine sides and nine entryways, drew a basic outline of the building.

Corinne was overwhelmed. The Master’s reaction was beyond her fondest expectations. His specific command for her to arise and totally dedicate her energies seemed, however, a mighty and impossible task. She found herself filled with doubt as to her own capabilities. A further conflict was that she and Moses longed to return to Grand Rapids and had already made plans to move. The children was to evolve into a major aspect of her life. In later years she devoted herself to rearing a marvelous family of her own and contributed to the training of many other young people.

The children of the Holy Household fell in love with Arna. It was not long before all of them, including 10-year-old Shoghi Effendi, knew every American game she could remember. The children of the Holy Household fell in love with Arna. It was not long before all of them, including 10-year-old Shoghi Effendi, knew every American game she could remember. The Master was enchanted when one afternoon he entered the courtyard and found Arna with an excited group of youngsters playing jump rope.

As was true of many Americans during their stay in ‘Akka, Corinne felt a certain discomfort because of differences in culture and language. This discomfort was most evident when the Master was absent and those present spoke no English. One particularly disquieting experience occurred one afternoon as Corinne sat in her room writing letters. Responding to a knock at the door, she opened it to find a veiled Persian girl. Smiling sweetly, she motioned the girl into the room and they sat down facing each other. As one minute faded another and the silence grew more pronounced, Corinne’s uneasiness increased steadily. Suddenly she experienced a series of rapid emotional changes ranging from shock to relief to a fury of which only a mother is capable as the girl, bursting into uncontrollable laughter, threw back her veil to reveal herself as Arna.

Another event that deeply moved Corinne, though in an en-
Within weeks friends from other parts of the country were sending money, inspired by numerous personal letters from Corinne describing her experiences in 'Akká. She concentrated on dispelling many of the misunderstandings and misgivings.

tirely different way, she later described in a letter:

As we were preparing to drive out to the Tomb (of Bahá'u'lláh) with the Holy Mother and two of the daughters . . . , the Blessed Master came to the door of our room . . . , standing there in deepest humility and sincerity. That Holy Man begged a favor of me and that was to kiss the Threshold of the Holy Tomb for Him as He had not been permitted to go to it for three or four years. Dear Sister, if ever in my life I felt broken-hearted it was at this.18

On the last afternoon of the visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá told Corinne that He wanted her to become a lover of humanity. This statement was very surprising for she already considered herself as one who readily loved and respected people. The Master, however, was talking about a love more vast than anything she had ever experienced; a love that embraced every living person rather than just a few personal friends; a love which would never be tarnished nor lessened by any outward considerations. The Master likened the soul to a letter from one's beloved upon which was engraved a message of priceless beauty. Although the letter might be in an envelope that was soiled, torn and nearly destroyed, that message could never be altered or diminished. In like manner the capacity of an individual's soul, irrespective of any outward conditions, can never be judged; and only through unbounded love for that individual can we fulfill our responsibility of supporting and encouraging that soul to attain its God-given potential.

Corinne loved being at home. The greatest enjoyment of her travels came when sitting amidst the comfort of familiar surroundings, contemplating her many adventures. Leaving the Master would be incredibly painful and she feared facing it; but once gone, she longed to reach home as quickly as possible. Imagine her surprise when, just prior to her departure, the Master said to her in deepest humility and sincerity. That Holy Man begged a favor of me and that was to kiss the Threshold of the Holy Tomb for Him as He had not been permitted to go to it for three or four years. Dear Sister, if ever in my life I felt broken-hearted it was at this.18

The incredible impact of that visit can be discerned partly from a letter she wrote a few weeks later:

People come to me almost every day to know if I found in Acca what I expected. I often reply to them "would to God I had the power to expect what I found in Acca." No mortal man has the capacity to comprehend the Master of Acca whom the Manifestation declared to be "The Mystery of God." Truly, truly, truly is that His Station. Every day, since that never to be forgotten visit, do things reveal themselves to me that at the time I saw and heard them they were not realized and this will continue throughout Eternity. Our Lord told me it was utterly impossible for me to realize what my visit meant but that it would bear fruits which would last through Eternity. I found Him so tremendously Powerful that I have not recovered from the astonishment yet. I really was not prepared for such a Manifestation of Power. I expected the Love but pictured Abdul Bahá as the Christian does the meek, humble Nazareen. I found Him to be a powerful Dynamo—a Lion—as well as the Most Majestic Personage I ever hope to see... 19

Leaving Haifa, Corinne and Arna journeyed to Naples where a letter from Moses informed them that Arthur Agnew, another early Chicago believer, and his family would be arriving shortly en route to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá. They decided to wait for the Agnew's ship, which docked two days later.

We jumped into a cab and went flying to the boat landing and there we had the surprise of our lives. Instead of just the Agnew family, we found also Charlie Scheffler and Mr. Chase. None of them knew we were in town either, so the surprise was equally great to both sides. After a few delays all secured rooms at our hotel and we were one happy family. I tell you... we see each other's faults tremendously when working closely together; but after a little separation these faults fade away and the noble qualities shine brighter and brighter. It was just as if the members of the party were one soul that we met that Easter Sunday. . . . We fulfilled literally Jesus' injunction: "Ye must become as little children." We ate cake and drank lemonade like a lot of boys and girls, some going to the Blessed Master and some returning from the Holy Visit! You can picture the feelings of us all.20

Several years later Carl Scheffler would write that as their group was preparing to leave 'Akká, Thornton Chase asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá what instructions He had concerning the Temple. He replied, "When you return consult with Mrs. True—I have given her complete instructions."21 This is a particularly interesting statement since all three men were members of the House of Spirituality.

Corinne traveled to Paris and London as directed, conveying the Master's love and initiating a kinship with believers from other lands that would grow at an astonishing rate as, faithful to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's command, she devoted her life to the raising of
God's mighty edifice. Some months after returning, Corinne wrote another believer who was leaving to visit several European centers. The following brief excerpts strongly reflect the close bonds Corinne had established:

I had a blessed week with the Bahais in London and found them in a perfectly beautiful condition . . . present my greetings and tell them I feel so a part of their Assembly that I am never away from them. I think of them night and day. . . . If I allow myself to go on I shall write pages and pages for the memories of the beloved of God whom I met in the cities I passed through are the next dearest to my heart to the memories of Acca and Haifa. 22

From the moment of her return, Corinne's preeminent goal was obvious. Moses lovingly agreed to remain in Chicago and they began looking for a larger house. Within weeks friends from other parts of the country were sending money, inspired by numerous personal letters from Corinne describing her experiences in 'Akka. Moses deposited each contribution in the Women's Assembly of Teaching Temple account while Corinne, who was then serving as the Assembly's secretary and treasurer, immediately communicated the amount to the House of Spirituality.

Corinne concentrated on dispelling many of the misunderstandings and misgivings which had developed since 1903. The following are typical comments from letters written within three months of her return:

It is an American Temple and not a Chicago Temple alone and therefore the responsibility rests at the door of every Bahai in this land to Arise with all the powers of his or her being to further this Work. 23

What an honor the Master has bestowed upon the Bahais of America to encourage us to Arise for the accomplishment of the Greatest Work ever accomplished in any Dispensation namely the building of a House of Worship during the Day of the Manifestation of the Spirit upon the earth. . . . Will you express to the Beloved of God the deep gratitude of the Chicago Assembly for this great help and encouragement (this refers to a contribution just received).

In some recent notes from Acca it was said that Jesus told His Disciples to build His Church and from that Word has come the outward manifestation of the multitudes of churches erected in His Name. Today Abdul Baha says build a Mashrak-el-Ascar in Chicago and it is coming most beautifully. 24

In another letter she expresses an overwhelming belief in the power of the Temple to unify the American Bahá'í community:

In reality this marks the beginning of our nationality. If Baha- Ollah does not raise up a people, followers of His Book with a national life created by following His Laws and Ordinances, then He is less than even Abraham or Moses. Shall we not push forward with untold energy to prove Baha-Ollah is the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings and show to the world the greatness of His Word? 25

In addition, her letters and a small booklet published shortly after the trip to 'Akka shared many lessons learned from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. One favorite subject was the Fast, four days of which she had celebrated with the Master. A letter written the following year reflects an intense love and devotion for the Bahá'í month of Loftiness:

The Bahai Fast began yesterday and we feel this is a most sacred time for the friends of God to prepare themselves as better fitted instruments for the influx of the Holy Spirit. It is a time of cleansing outwardly and inwardly—polishing both the lamp and the niche it stands in. A spring house cleaning time out and in. . . .

Since Abdul Baha made me understand why at this particular time we are Commanded to keep the Fast, it has become a living, exhilarating ordinance to me and I long for it. He showed me that it celebrates the time the Great Laws and Revelations were pouring out from God upon Baha'o'llah in such torrents that he was filled with the Heavenly meat and drink and needed not the material. So as we keep the Commemoration of this Mighty Outflow, we come closer into realization and our spirits are advanced. 26

When the House of Spirituality formed teams to look for a possible tract of land, Corinne was in the forefront of the effort. While other groups looked along the southern shoreline, she and Mrs. Cecelia Harrison searched the north. Every Saturday afternoon they donned heavy shoes, rode the trolley to the end of the line and systematically examined every possible location along the lake front. The search carried them through fields, over fences and across streams until finally they came to an outcropping of land known as Grosse Point. They returned several times to pray and became convinced it was the place where the Temple should stand.

Corinne's recounting of events involving the Temple was generally lengthy and detailed, unless a specific event reflected directly upon herself. In one letter written after she and Mrs. Harrison had found that spot, about which they were so thrilled,
two short lines describe the discovery. Even when, several years later, she wrote a history of the early years which was widely distributed, she failed to once mention her association with the project.

Nonetheless, it was not long before everyone considered her the focal point of the project and she became known lovingly throughout the Bahá’í world as Mother True. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had designated several of the women believers as “mothers” of various communities, but Corinne was the undisputed “mother” of the Temple. Albert Windust, editor of Star of the West magazine and one of Corinne’s closest friends, once received a letter from a reader on the east coast who complained about the seeming dominance of women in so many of the affairs of the Cause, pointing to Corinne as a typical example. His reply defines with marvelous insight the ordained role of women during those early years:

These are the days of test; of transition. Everywhere human-kind is in turmoil. Look at the social, industrial, political, national and religious map of the world today, and we behold a scene of strife. Although the Bahá’ís are the party of Peace and forbidden to wage war by sword or tongue; yet it is not to be wondered at if these tender plants of a newer order are swayed and blighted by the chilling blasts of passing events. . . .

The Cause of God needs women—especially spiritually poised women—free from “desire and hope.” Man is the seed sower; woman the seed grower. A glance at the growing institutions of the Cause reveals the especial devotion of some women. It is a sign that the Cause has taken root in America; that is is being “mothered” now.

It seems, therefore, that the Temple project has found a devoted “mother” in Mrs. True . . . . If this “mothering” is misinterpreted as “having control,” why then it must be admitted they have control.

It was some time before I saw this aspect of things. Man-like, I rebelled against the seeming open-handed kidnapping (pardon the expression) of the various institutions of the Cause by women; but now, I realize (being a father myself) that a man is more or less useless in the presence of an infant, and that a mother’s love and care are divinely appointed agencies to preserve the life of the child . . . 37

Mr. Windust commented on the self-sacrificing quality of a mother and concluded his analogy by noting that as a child grows the characteristics and capabilities of both parents are needed for its training; likewise, the same transition would occur as the Cause progressed.

On Thanksgiving Day, 1907, Corinne and eight others journeyed first to the most promising location south of the city and then, after a huge Thanksgiving dinner ("It was at first feared that such a feast of good things had incapacitated the delegates . . ."). they traveled north to Grosse Point which was unanimously selected. It was not until April of the following year, however, that the House of Spirituality acted upon the recommendation of this group, purchased two of the 14 lots comprising the tract and secured an option on the remaining 12.

Corinne wrote the Master the exciting news. She also expressed a deep concern about the capacity of the Chicago community to administer the project and questioned ‘Abdu’l-Bahá about the feasibility of broadening the administrative base. His answer initiated the laborious establishment of an institutional foundation upon which later would rest the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’í world:

Concerning the members of this spiritual meeting, you suggested that they be selected from all the spiritual meetings of the other cities in America. I quite approve and am very much pleased with this plan. This will become the cause of harmony in the Word in all America. Therefore, ask every spiritual meeting in the other cities that they will select one and send him, and from these selected ones and with those who are selected from the Chicago meetings, establish a new meeting for the provision of the needs of the Temple. If this be established with perfect fragrance and joy, it will produce great results. 39

The next line of the tablet was to mark a major turning point in the recognition of and adherence to another basic principle of the Faith:

In this new meeting, especially for the establishment of the Temple, ladies are also to be members. 40

Concerning the involvement of women, Corinne later commented:

Should not woman work her fingernails to the quick for the Mashrak-el-Azkar? For through its organization she is to take her stand side by side with man and both work as one soul to accomplish this mighty edifice . . . 51

To Be Continued

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Bahá'ís of Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia gathered in Cusco, Peru, for the Quechua Bahá’í Tandanakuy, the International Quechua Bahá’í Conference, August 20-24.

The entire conference was in the Quechua language, recently declared by the Peruvian government to be, with Spanish, an official language of Peru. The Bahá'ís were the first people in the Andean republics to organize a conference completely in Quechua, which is the ancient tongue of the Inca Empire.

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum was the featured guest at the conference. She was on her Green Light Expedition to the peoples of the Amazon.

Counsellor 'Azíz Yazdí of the International Teaching Center in Haifa was also a noted guest, along with members of the Continental Board of Counsellors in South America.

The Academia de la Lengua del Cuzco (The Academy of Languages of Cusco) not only supported the event, but participated in it. They gave workshops on the phonetics and writing of Quechua for the benefit of noted Quechua Bahá’í speakers from the three countries. And the Academy of Languages of the town of Puno sent authorized observers to all the conference sessions.

The National Spiritual Assemblies of Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador cooperated to prepare for the historic Bahá’í Quechua Tandanakuy by printing pamphlets in Quechua. The Incas called Quechua "Runa Shimi," the Tongue of Man, since it was their universal language. Currently, Quechua is spoken by over half the Andean population. One-third of Peru's population speaks nothing but Quechua. It is a lyrical language which easily expresses abstract thoughts and is beautifully
used in songs and poems.

Toward a collection of Bahá’í literature in Quechua, Peru contributed two introductory pamphlets, Bolivia a translation of the English pamphlet Bahá’í Teachings—Light for All Regions,” and Ecuador a translation of the book The New Garden and a selection of prayers. The National Assembly of Ecuador also translated Nosotros Aprendamos a Leer (We Learn to Read) into Quechua.

Taking advantage of the unique opportunities offered by the conference to proclamer the Faith, the Bahá’ís of Cusco spoke with people of all levels of society, including the government officials who permitted use of a dormitory for 250 conference participants and free access to the ancient ruins of Saqsayhuaman and Machu-Picchu, where major conference sessions were held. Announcements of the event were on Cusco radio and television and the city’s newspapers gave special coverage before, during, and after the conference. Parallel to the conference, meetings were held in cultural centers and teams taught in the streets. The very presence of the diverse Bahá’ís opened avenues for teaching, and a banquet, presided over by Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, in honor of authorities and dignitaries of Cusco, added a note of distinction.

The Ecuadorian delegation traveled to Cusco in a chartered bus. Those from northern Ecuador had attended weekly sessions in their National Institute at Otavalo to prepare for the conference by learning more about the history of the Faith. The Otavalo Indians are known as skilled weavers of ponchos, tweed-like cloth, and blankets, and the men, scrupulously clean in white clothes, with their long black hair hanging in braids down their backs, often travel as far as Venezuela, Colombia, and Brazil to sell their wares.

Bahá’ís of Southern Ecuador, in the coastal cities such as Guayaquil and Machala, and inland in Cuenca—where the Indians are known as fine hat-weavers—also made ready for the conference.

These well-prepared friends then traveled for eight days along hundreds of miles of desert coast and over the frigid highlands, or Altiplano. Their bus was not a luxury vehicle. Each row of seats held five passengers and the seats did not recline. They made only two overnight stops where most of them slept on floors, and had only two chances to bathe en route. The 40 travelers ranged from a six-month-old baby, another baby, and three children, to a 78-year-old campesino, and included other campesinos (country people), Indians from the cities, and North American pioneers. Until time became short, gas stoves, pots and pans, and other paraphernalia for cooking and serving were taken down from the roof of the bus three times a day and meals were made and served, once in the chill of dawn. At one point, crossing the Altiplano, the bus driver and others who were awake in the middle of the night were amazed to see ice forming on all the windows, a new experience for some Ecuadorians.

Despite the long and uncomfortable journey, the Ecuadorians arrived in Cusco in good spirits, manifesting the results of Bahá’u’lláh’s assistance. Another proof of His help was the fact that all the travelers obtained the myriad papers required to leave their country, even though some of them were not legally registered and did not have birth certificates.

No doubt another reason for their continued unity was their teaching effort. In two cities in Ecuador, portable expositions were set up and teaching was carried out during rest stops. In Cuenca, they taught on the main square. In Machala, where an isolated Persian pioneer couple lives, they taught in front of a secondary school from 5 a.m. until after midnight. In Chiclayo, Peru, they taught in the main plaza until threats of a political demonstration, and a long line of soldiers awaiting the demonstration with canisters of tear gas, made it seem wise for the Bahá’ís to leave.

A big sign about the Cusco conference, carried on the side of the bus, and the diversity of the travelers, attracted interest.

The Ecuadorians helped with the great proclamation in Cusco, where their three portable expositions were used in public squares and several thousand people received pamphlets. After the conference, an international team of three from Ecuador remained and taught with Cusco believers. They then went to Arequipa and on to spend three days in Lima.

The stalwart travelers from Ecuador joined their fellow Quecha-speaking Bahá’ís at the first session of the Quechua Bahá’í Tandanakuy, which met in Saq­sayhuaman, the ruins of an Inca fortress just outside Cusco. Its remnants are reminders of the magnificent Inca stonework. Incas hewed huge building blocks of granite, porphyryk, and limestone, and fitted them together so exactly that no cement or mortar was needed. A knife blade cannot penetrate between the perfectly fitted stones.

On a solar calendar made of stone, the
friends came from the four directions and congregated. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum addressed them, speaking of the natives of the Andes, the descendents of the Incas. At this meeting, the friends saw that communication was possible among speakers of the various Quechua dialects—those of Otavalo, Ecuador; and Cochabamba and Sucre, Bolivia; and the three dialects of Peru. For the first time in the Andean highlands, prayers of the Báb, Baha'u'llah, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá ascended in Runa Shimi, the tongue of man.

The Bahá'ís then returned to Cusco and met in the coliseum, called the Kusi-Kancha, or happy stadium, for the Feast of Asmá. Prayers and readings were shared and fellowship was crowned with happy music and dancing. Many of the participants wore their traditional colorful dress.

At dawn the next day, the Bahá'ís filled two cars of the train to Machu-Picchu, the ruins of a great Inca city 6,750 feet in the Andes, where remains of aqueducts and irrigation systems, suspension bridges and ancient roads can be seen along with the remnants of more than 100 acres of buildings—palaces, temples, military barracks and homes—fountains fed by aqueducts, and agricultural terraces cut into the steep slopes.

Bahá'í voices filled the two cars of the train as the friends found similar words in their Quechua dialects. Many of them had never seen Machu-Picchu. On Inti-Watana, the Clock of the Sun, Quechua representatives of Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador spoke of the Covenant of God, urging the friends to teach, to give their lives to the Cause of God.

The Inti-Watana is the highest point of Machu-Picchu. It is a rock which the Incas believed projected from the core of the earth. On that rock, the Most Holy Name was chanted. A poem by The Hand of the Cause of God Rúhíyyih Khánum, which was dedicated to the men of the Andes and had been translated into Quechua, was recited.

The next day, August 22, the principal part of the conference began in the Kusi-Kancha with the reading of a cable from The Universal House of Justice. All who spoke did so in Quechua, with the exception of Rúhíyyih Khánum and Counsellor Yazdí. In the afternoon, pamphlets were distributed, and a study was made to see how well the friends understood written Quechua. The participants were divided into groups of from four to six. In the pamphlets, they underlined in blue the words they understood easily, in red the words they understood with difficulty, and in black the words they did not understand. The majority of the friends spoke Quechua, were literate, and were enthusiastic about the work. Peruvians read Bolivian and Ecuadorian literature, Bolivians read that of Ecuador and Peru, and Ecuadorians read that of Peru and Bolivia.

The next day, young and old believers expressed their beliefs and related progress on their goals. The Ecuadorians shared the book on how to learn to read and write, and then gave a successful dramatic presentation.

The Quechua Bahá'í Tandanakuy closed with a reaffirmation of all the conference events and a resolution to carry forward the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, especially among the campesinos. Friends who did not speak Quechua, and friends who were not literate, were inspired by the conference and by the book prepared by the Ecuadorians, to learn.

The new spirit generated by the conference resulted in the suggestion to have two more conferences, one in Cochabamba, Bolivia, August 1976, and one in Otavalo, Ecuador, August 1977. The conference of Otavalo would give definite instructions that would establish norms for Bahá'í Quechua publications in Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador.

The results of the workshop studies of the pamphlets show a percentage of understanding of the various Quechua dialects which exceeded the hopes of the conference planners:

**Peruvian Quechua**
- Understood by Bolivians ...... 95%
- Understood by Ecuadorians ...... 75%

**Bolivian Quechua**
- Understood by Peruvians ...... 90%
- Understood by Ecuadorians ...... 65%

**Ecuadorian Quechua**
- Understood by Bolivians ...... 65%
- Understood by Peruvians ...... 90%

Plans are under way to use the new knowledge gained from the conference study by, for instance, an increase in traveling teachers who could share the various dialects.

Top, Bolivian Bahá'ís at Saqayhuaman, the site of an Inca fortress. Center, Auxiliary Board member Sabino Ortega of Bolivia talks about the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. Below, Segundo Curillo of Ecuador speaks during one of the sessions of the Quechua conference.

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Paris Conference site is selected

The Centre International de Paris will be the site of the International Bahá'í Teaching Conference in Paris August 3-6. Amatu'l-Bahá Ruhíyyih Khánum will represent The Universal House of Justice at the conference, one of eight International Teaching Conferences scheduled by The Universal House of Justice for 1976-1977, the middle part of the Five Year Plan.

The Centre International is the low, curved building attached to the tower in the foreground. The large white building to the left of the tower is the Hotel Meridien, where Bahá'í activities outside of the official program will take place.

Children will participate in classes and activities in the Hotel Meridien during the conference program. Bahá'í books will be sold in the hotel and information will be available there on the national conferences and teaching activities which will take place all over Europe after the Paris Conference. Evening social activities will be held in the hotel.

Bahá'ís wishing to attend the conference must fill out registration forms, available from their National Spiritual Assembly. To reserve hotel accommodations, a hotel reservation form must be filled out. Needs stated in that form will be met by the conference's official Paris travel agent.

When registered for the conference, each participant over 15 years of age will receive an identification card from his National Assembly.

Available accommodations range from the Hotel Meridien, a 4-star luxury hotel, to camp sites at Ermenonville, about 45 kilometers northeast of Paris.

The Paris International Bahá'í Conference Committee reports that "The Bahá'ís of France are honored to have such a large international gathering in France. We are sure that the excellent impression which Bahá'ís from many countries make upon the French people will be an important factor in the growth and prestige of our beloved Cause in France."

The other seven International Teaching Conferences will be held at Helsinki, Finland, July 6-8; Anchorage, Alaska, July 23-25; Nairobi, Kenya, October 15-17; Hong Kong, November 27-30; Auckland, New Zealand, January 19-22, 1977; Bahia, Brazil, January 28-30, 1977; and Mérida, Yucatan, Mexico, February 4-6, 1977.

Counsellor completes 60-day journey

"I often recall the sight of the friends—their smiles, their warm welcomes, the shining eyes of the children," reported Continental Counsellor Firaydun Mithaqiyan after a recent 60-day journey through North America, Central America, and Europe.

On facing page at top, Mr. Mithaqiyan talks with some Carib children in the village of Hopkins, Belize (British Honduras), Central America. Standing in back of the group is Elas Kent, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Mr. Mithaqiyan visited 20 Western countries. He is a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South-East Asia. In his Western travels he spoke to Bahá'ís and seekers, often sharing stories until late at night. He said that the Bahá'ís often questioned him about mass teaching, and he answered, "Mass teaching is different from mass enrollment. In the process of mass teaching, we share the Bahá'í Message with a large number of people.
Then the follow-up starts and the interested people are led to embrace the Faith and be enrolled. In this process they should believe in Bahá'u'lláh and know the purpose of His coming. They should know of the other Central Figures of the Faith. They should know that there are laws, principles, and teachings that they should gradually learn, and Bahá'í administrative bodies that they should obey.

“Our past experiences,” Mr. Mithaqiyan told the friends, “must be regarded as a lesson for our coming victories of leading masses of waiting souls into the Faith.” He expressed his belief that “in the countries where there is freedom to teach the Faith, it is time for mass teaching.

Mr. Mithaqiyan said that mass teaching will be most successful when it becomes a community project. He expressed his deep appreciation of the work of pioneers in Bahá'í communities where he saw that, now, administration is largely in the hands of native believers. He was grateful for the love and encouragement that he received from the pioneers and local believers in Central America and the Caribbean islands. “I felt a light of hope,” he said, “a generating spirit in these areas. I believe that by a more definite concentration and organization of the dedicated efforts of the believers, God willing, once again the flow of masses of people into the Faith will take place in this part of the world.”

Institution members meet in Germany

A European Institutions Conference was held in the Haziratu'l-Quds of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany October 31-November 2. The German National Center is near the House of Worship at Frankfurt.

Continental Counsellors Betty Reed, Louis Hénuzet, Anneliese Bopp, Erik Blementhal, and Dorothy Ferraby, all of Europe, attended the conference along with Counsellor Florence Mayberry of the International Teaching Center in Haifa.

The Counsellors met with representatives of 18 National Spiritual Assemblies of Europe and the Auxiliary Board members of Europe. Discussion topics included the strengthening of Local Spiritual Assemblies and the goals of each National Assembly for the Five Year Plan.

Conference participants were impressed with the spirit of love and unity manifest among the national institutions.
Alaska

Unified youth meet for first conference

The first Bahá’í Youth Conference in Alaska took place August 22-25 at the Matthew Kaszab Institute in Anchorage. About 25 youth attended.

A representative of the National Spiritual Assembly addressed the youth, bringing warm greetings from the Assembly and speaking of the importance of a close bond between parents and children, and the importance of teaching through example.

Auxiliary Board member Ray Hudson gave a talk on the Administrative Order of Baha’u’llah, and members of the Local Spiritual Assemblies of Anchorage, Spenard, Eagle River, and Palmer participated in a panel discussion and answered questions about Local Assemblies.

Classes were held on pioneering, outstanding achievements of youth in past teaching Plans, and on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. One youth commented that the presentation of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, which focused on things He did when He was young, “inspired us. I know it made me think about more things I should be doing for the Faith.”

Other topics covered were the Five Year Plan and international travel teaching, the role of Bahá’í youth in schools, and spirituality.

The conference “fun” event was a 1950’s sock hop. The youth dressed for the occasion, with grease-back hair and pony tails, and danced to 50’s tunes.

The conference closed with a summary of the talks and classes, and a unity circle which the youth formed while they sang the Alaskan Bahá’í song, “I Love You.”

One participant remarked that she enjoyed the conference sessions because “everyone was able to participate and speak in the discussions. As the hours went by, I could truly feel everyone becoming more unified.”

Parties score big with children

The Bahá’í children of Petersburg, Alaska, ages 10-13, have a teaching event once a month at the Petersburg Bahá’í Center. Three children host the parties which are attended by an average of 25 non-Bahá’í children each month. The parties are supervised by an adult Bahá’í, but the three children do all the inviting, teaching, and deepening of friendships.

The Bahá’í children and their guests say they have a “super good time” at the parties and have requested more than one party a month.

Argentina

‘Little Bahá’í friend’ joins the Matacos

The National Spiritual Assembly of Argentina recently asked pioneer Ken Roedell to move to a remote area on the Pilcomayo River in order to establish the Faith among the members of the Mataco Tribe. Mr. Roedell pioneered to Argentina during the Nine Year Plan.

Amatu’l-Baha’i Ruhiyih Khanum visited this remote region on the desolate Northern frontier of Argentina in 1967. She was accompanied by Continental Counsellor Hooper Dunbar (then an Auxiliary Board member) and several of the first Mataco believers who had been enrolled earlier in that year in the city of Embarkacion, Salta. Subsequent attempts to expand the Faith were blocked by strong missionary influences against the Faith, combined with the lack of sustained, loving Bahá’í contact. Now, with the settlement of a pioneer among the Matacos, these drawbacks have been overcome.

Mr. Roedell has built a home of native materials and tries as much as possible to adopt the lifestyle and living habits of the Matacos. By analyzing the needs of the people, he has established a small business that keeps him in constant contact with the community. Selling fishing gear, house-
hold wares, toiletries, and sweets; purchasing local handicrafts for resale in city markets; and offering simple herb medicines for minor ailments at no charge all combine to give Mr. Roedell an opportunity to serve and get to know the Matacos.

Every day he receives a constant stream of clients. They buy some small item, and stay to chat and drink mate, the national tea of Argentina. Some of the youth like to drop in and play chess. The Matacos call Mr. Roedell "el Bahá'í cito"—our little Bahá'í friend.

Faith introduced in Toba language

When two Toba Indian Bahá'ís of Chaco Province, Argentina, attended worship services at a church in the town of Comandante Fontana, they attracted favorable attention. Comandante Fontana is near the Toba Indian Reservation, Bartolome de las Casas.

“For so many years,” one church member commented, “Indian and white have accepted Jesus Christ, but not until you Bahá'ís came have we worshipped together.”

The church cordially invited the Bahá'ís to come and worship whenever they wished.

Then, a teaching team of three pioneers and four native believers, sponsored by the Regional Teaching Committee for the Chaco and Formosa provinces in Argentina, was denied permission to teach on the Toba reservation, so they arranged several meetings in Comandante Fontana. One meeting was held in the friendly church; it featured a slide show, The Bahá'ís and the Holy Land.

After the meetings in town, the Bahá'ís were invited onto the reservation and held meetings on three consecutive nights with a total attendance of 300. The Teachings were first introduced in the Toba language. A slide show was then presented in Spanish and translated into Toba. A small choir sang Bahá'í songs.

One youth became a Bahá'í and opened his home for a public meeting. He has offered to go with the Bahá'ís and bring the Message to other nearby Indian colonies.

La Leonesa forms Local Assembly

The first Local Spiritual Assembly of La Leonesa, Chaco, Argentina, was formed in September. The community began preparation for the formation with a weekend deepening institute in May, guided by Continental Counsellor Athos Costas.

Daily sessions at the institute covered the fulfillment of Bible prophecies, the true meaning of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the Local Spiritual Assembly. National Spiritual Assembly member Miguel Paniagua presented a special class on the documentation of the Faith by government agencies. On two evenings, Mr. Costas spoke to a local church group about the brotherhood of man under one God.

The Bahá'í community of La Leonesa was born when Modesto Giminez of La Leonesa met his friend Angel Machado, from a town 50 miles away, when they were both working on the cotton harvest. Mr. Machado, a Bahá'í, shared the Teachings with Mr. Giminez, who returned home and began to teach his neighbors.

Canada

Equality studied at 30 seminars

Believers in Canada studied the implications of Báb’s Teachings on the equality of men and women at 30 regional seminars across the country last autumn.

Resource materials for the seminars included compilations of references, tapes, and slides. A special newspaper, published by the National Spiritual Assembly in honor of International Women's Year, was distributed at the seminars.

The Newspaper, called The Bugle,
included information on such Bahá'í heroines as the Greatest Holy Leaf; Táhirih; the Hands of the Cause of God Martha Root, Dorothy Baker, Agnes Alexander. Essays in the paper dealt with the role of women in this age.

**Hawaiian Islands**

**Scholar on Buddha proclaims Faith**

The National Spiritual Assembly of Hawaii, in an effort toward establishing a close relationship with Hawaii's Buddhists, invited Jamshed Fozdar for an intensive three days of speaking engagements and press interviews November 11-13.

Mr. Fozdar is a scholar of ancient Buddhist scripture. His book, *The God of Buddha*, was published in 1973 and he recently completed a new book, *Buddha Maitreye-Amitabha Has Appeared*. He is a member of the Bahá'í community of El Cerrito, California, U.S.A.

The Honolulu Lion's Club invited Mr. Fozdar to speak on November 11. The topic of his address was “The Need for World Religion.” The club gave him the Lion's Club Certificate of Appreciation.

On the same day, Mr. Fozdar was the featured speaker at a public meeting at the Honolulu Bahá'í Center. On the Anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, November 12, he addressed an audience of 200 at the Honolulu International Center.

Mr. Fozdar also spoke to high school and college classes and was interviewed by the religion editor of the Honolulu *Star Bulletin*. The resulting article, published on November 15, gave Mr. Fozdar's view that it was the purpose of the Buddha to restore the pristine purity of the original Hindu Teachings, as Christ added to, but did not diminish, the original Jewish Teachings. Mr. Fozdar refutes the contemporary Buddhist theory that the Buddha did not believe in God, saying that “The founding of a major Faith would have been impossible had He preached andy kind of atheism and thus negated any reason at all for humanity to strive on the path of righteousness and renunciation.”

**National Assembly holds Mid-Year Conference**

Bahá'ís from the Hawaiian Islands gathered at the Mid-Year Bahá'í Conference at the National Bahá'í Center in Honolulu November 28-30.

Continental Counsellor Elena Marsella addressed the opening session, which began with a welcome from Tracey Hamilton, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly. Auxiliary Board member Healani Hamilton was also a featured speaker.

The conference was called by the National Spiritual Assembly and its sessions covered the goals and status of the Five Year Plan, pioneering and travel teaching, proclaiming through media, college teaching, progress on a Bahá'í school for Hawaii, and success stories on teaching.

The children enjoyed special classes.

**Italy**

**Faith is discussed on TV talk program**

An entire television talk program called “Ore Venti” was devoted to the Faith at peak viewing time on November 25 in Cagliari, Italy.

The interviewer opened the program with a reading from *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*. He then asked one of his Bahá'í guests, Alessandro Bausani, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, to speak about the history of the Faith and to explain the Administrative Order. He asked another guest, Manuela Fanti, to explain how and why she became a Bahá'í.

Many aspects of the Faith were discussed during the 25-minute interview. Mr. Bausani stressed the universality of the Faith by describing a Bahá'í school which he had recently attended in Bolivia. The interviewer concluded the program by reading from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

This reverent television presentation of the Faith resulted from a conference in Rimini, Italy, October 23, sponsored by the Bahá'ís in observance of International Women's Year. The program for the conference opened with a piano solo by Alfredo Speranza, a well-known concert pianist who is a Bahá'í, and continued with talks by a panel of three Bahá'ís: a university student, a gynecologist, and a housewife.
Two days later, the Italian national lunch-time television news showed a general view of the auditorium and the speakers, together with a few words of explanation about the Faith and a resumé of the talks. The national news is viewed by millions all over Italy. The local television station also showed the event.

The Faith had not been mentioned on Italian television since the Palermo Conference in 1968.

United States
New York, New Haven hear Amatu’l-Bahá

Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum spoke to over 500 Bahá’ís in New York City December 13, and to over 500 Bahá’ís in New Haven, Connecticut, November 9. The Hand of the Cause of God is in the United States to oversee the preparation of a film and slide shows of her recent Green Light Expedition to the people of the Amazon.

In New York, she spoke at a public school at a special meeting honoring the imminent opening of the new New York Bahá’í Center. The Bahá’ís of New York City will receive the title of ownership for their new center this month, thus filling a goal of the special Five Year Plan for New York State. The new center is in a residential area of the city near New York University.

Other guest at the New York meeting were Auxiliary Board members Peter Khan, Adrienne Reeves, and Albert James. Dr. Khan introduced Rúhíyyih Khánum, who told the friends that she was honored to be with them on such a special occasion, as an adequate Bahá’í Center for New York City is the fulfillment of longcherished dreams of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, and The Universal House of Justice. She mentioned that she is a New Yorker, having been born on 5th Avenue.

Speaking of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit to the United States, she emphasized His activities in New York, which He called the City of the Covenant. She pointed out that the Bahá’ís must try to emulate the unique attitude of love manifested by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá toward the leaders and prominent members of the community, as well as toward the poorer souls, such as those He met in the Bowery Mission.

She expressed her belief that the new Bahá’í Center for New York City can be a wonderful instrument for love and attrac-
**Around the World**

They found, she explained, that “far from coming in contact with savage tribes, not being able to buy things, and not being able to meet people, the whole river was like a vast village. Along the whole length of the river we could talk to the people in Spanish and somebody could translate that into the native dialect. There were towns where we could buy things. There were government outposts; there were people constantly going up and down the river, either in boats as large as ours or in tiny canoes. How easy the whole thing was, compared to what we had expected, was a revelation to us.”

Rúhíyyih Khánum calls her trip the Green Light Expedition because of the ease with which the way cleared for her to go. She was especially thankful for the approval, encouragement, and prayers of The Universal House of Justice. She stressed that the trip was not financed from the World Center, for she felt that money should go to goals of the Five Year Plan. It is her hope, and the hope of The Universal House of Justice, expressed to her in a recent letter, that the film of her voyage be ready by National Convention time, so that friends can see it and be inspired to arise and bring the Message to rural areas, whether of South America, Africa, or other parts of the world.

Amatu’l-Bahá said that many of the people whom she met on her trip asked her if they would ever see the film and she answered, “As soon as it comes back to this country, the Bahá’í will let you know and invite you to a showing of it.”

“Why shouldn’t everybody see it?” she added. “It is a fascinating and beautiful film, because the subject matter is so fascinating and beautiful.”

**Modern recording studio is opened**

Proclamation and deepening materials for radio and television will be produced in a recording studio which was recently installed in the basement of the Bahá’í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois. This new facility will help meet the goal of the Five Year Plan which calls for increased use of the media by Bahá’ís.

The Bahá’í National Properties Office designed and constructed the studio, following intensive research and planning. The studio is considered one of the best of its kind in the Chicago area, yet many ingenious shortcuts were used in building...
it. These shortcuts permitted costs to be reduced without sacrificing quality. For example, the doors to a recording studio must be specially designed and insulated to insure that no outside sounds leak into the studio. Contractors usually buy specially designed, insulated doors for about $600. However, the properties office designed a two-door system for $150 which blocks sound more efficiently than commercially manufactured doors.

The studio is about 24-feet square, and is completely sound-proofed and air-conditioned. Its corners are rounded, giving an illusion of spaciousness and depth to materials recorded for television.

Two control booths adjoin the studio, one for television and one for radio. Operators of both booths share the studio space, scheduling time according to their needs. While taping, they view the studio through wide windows.

The audio, or radio, facility uses a Tascam model 10 mixing console and two Crown 800 tape recorders in its production. The video, or television, facility uses two Sony 2850 recording and editing decks and two Sony DXC 1600 color cameras. The studio is lighted by 13 1,000-watt quartz lamps mounted on ceiling racks.

As long ago as 1937, a believer suggested to the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, that a radio station be built in the Temple, and he answered through his secretary that “there is no reason why the believers should not start now considering seriously the possibility of such a plan which, when carried out and perfected, can lend an unprecedented impetus to the expansion of the teaching work throughout America.”

Another letter, written on the Guardian’s behalf in 1945, and addressed to an individual believer, said, “He feels it would be excellent if the Cause could be introduced to more people through the medium of radio, as it reaches the masses, especially those who do not take an interest in lectures or attend any type of meeting.”

A recording studio for radio and television productions is in operation at the Bahá’í National Center. The studio includes two control booths and modern equipment.
The green light expedition, part IV
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On the cover: members of the Green Light Expedition traveled along the vast Amazon River. Rúhíyyih Khánum meets with one of the many Indian families she visited.
The S.S. Mutt, a boat 17 meters long powered by a noisy 16-horsepower inboard motor, was home for members of the Green Light Expedition. Above, Rūhiyyih Khánum is pictured in the boat at Leticia, Colombia. At left, members of the expedition go about their chores aboard the cramped boat.

Part IV: text by Ruth Pringle, photographs by Anthony Worley
The green light expedition

Providence had smiled upon the Green Light Expedition. From the time of its inception the green signal had flashed on at every turn. All along the Orinoco River in Venezuela, through the jungles Surinam, during the week in Manuas, Brazil, when the first Amazonian Baha‘i conference was held, the experiences had been thrilling and exhilarating. It was in this mood of exaltation and high expectation of new adventures to come that the members of the expedition arrived in Leticia, Colombia, April 27, along with their 45 pieces of equipment. To the six original members, the Hand of the Cause of God Amat‘u’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, Counsellor Masoud Khamsi of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South America, Mark Sadan, Rodney Charters, David Walker, and Anthony Worley, was now added Ruth Pringle, and Auxiliary Board member from Panama.

As nurse for the expedition and traveling companion for Rúhíyyih Khánum, I was on hand to greet them, replacing Nosrat Rabbani who had returned to her pioneer post in Curacao.

The Leticia airport was surprisingly modern and adequate for big jets—not the turf runway with thatched roof terminal building that one might expect to find in the heart of the Amazon jungles. There were many friends in the welcoming party: Fernando Schiantarelli, a Peruvian Auxiliary Board member; a non-Baha‘i Ticuna Indian who as chief of a village near Leticia; a long-time pioneer to Colombia, Joseph Tasnady, who had come from Bogota for this occasion and who was one of the first Baha‘is to visit Leticia nearly 20 years ago when there were no paved streets, no vehicles, and no Baha‘is. Now it is a pleasant, modern town rapidly growing into a small city with a steadily increasing Baha‘i community flourishing in its midst.

Rúhíyyih Khánum seemed radiantly happy but exhausted from the past months of strenuous travel. She was immediately caught up in a whirl of activities which included a press interview, the opening of the Ticuna chief’s village to the Baha‘i Faith that same night, meetings with the local Baha‘i community (about 30 friends), and a reception for some of the dignitaries of Leticia. Two members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Colombia had come to welcome Rúhíyyih Khánum and assist in the teaching activities being undertaken in conjunction with the arrival of the Green Light Expedition.

That night, standing on the porch of the chief’s home, Rúhíyyih Khánum addressed many of the Ticuna villagers with words of encouragement and comfort. She told them of their ancient heritage on this continent. She delighted them by saying that as a child she had wished that she had been born an Indian. She spoke of God’s love for his creation and the Messengers He sent to mankind. She then asked Mr. Khamsi to tell them of Bahá’u’lláh and His Teachings. On the following day some of the Baha‘is returned to this village and both the chief and his son accepted the Faith.

The town of Marco in Brazil is adjacent to Leticia and an evening meeting was held there. Of the 12 people present some had been Baha‘is for over 15 years; they were very simple, sincere people. Among them was a 70-year-old man who was exceedingly happy to be in Rúhíyyih Khánum’s presence. This night she was moved to speak of stories about Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá told to her by members of the family after she had married the Guardian and gone to live in Haifa. She also spoke of the Holy places in Haifa and encouraged the friends to save their money—even though a small amount weekly—so that eventually they might make the pilgrimage. She ended by saying everything depends upon making a plan and following it through.

By May 1 everything on our boat was in order and we moved into what would be home for the next 18 days.

Fernando Schiantarelli, at the request of Mr. Khamsi, had gone from Lima to Iquitos to hire a boat for the expedition. I came from Panama and met him there. Together we had traveled (with a full cargo load and 25 other passengers) down to Leticia on that boat. It was a shell, 17 meters long and about three and a half meters at its widest point, and was pow-

Open thatch houses were common on the banks of the flooded Amazon River. Because of the climate, these houses are very practical. On facing page, Rúhíyyih Khánum inspects one of the many mission crosses she discovered during the journey. Missionaries are very active in this part of the world.
Aboard the small boat S.S. Mutt, Rúhíyyih Khánum resumes her search for a ‘closed-canopy’ jungle along the Amazon River.

erated by a 16-horsepower inboard motor which shook everything into spastic convulsions and drowned out all hopes of normal conversation. Under the watchful eye of Mr. Khamsi it was thoroughly scrubbed down and shelves, benches, and a table were installed. The extreme end of the stern was closed in by a partition and door. To one side of this tiny space there was a small frame fitted with a fancy store-bought seat; we had a bathroom. With a little patience and skill we learned one could balance on the open cross boards that served as a floor, scoop water from the river with a small basin or gourd and presto!—the shower was ready even when the boat was in motion. Fatter members of our party had difficulty getting in and closing the door and all of us had to be careful that the rushing river, which flowed across the floorboards under our feet, did not snatch our scoop away—but oh, how cool and delicious those Amazon baths were! There was a raised platform running halfway the length of the boat through its mid-section, but the roof was too low to permit most of us to stand upright on this deck. Underneath was our hold, which sometimes leaked. The open space toward the stern became our kitchen and dining room; we cooked on a single-burner kerosene stove which belched great clouds of black smoke and flamed menacingly as Khanum’s kerosene stove which belched great clouds of black smoke and flamed menacingly as the shock of the constant vibrations when the boat was in motion, was taken down and our sleeping hammocks in cocoon-like mosquito nets were strung diagonally the length of the boat—seven for the expedition members, two for the crew, and one for our guide. Except for two large doors on either side, fore and aft, the boat was a closed shell with tiny portholes spaced at intervals along its length. This closed-in arrangement at first was viewed with misgivings because of the heat and high humidity, but it turned out to be a blessing affording some protection from the frequent rains which pelleted us, especially at night. On several occasions the hold was flooded, a cause of great concern for the precious film stored there. After the elegance of th S.S. Queen Mary in Venezuela, Rúhíyyih Khánum dubbed this boat the S.S. Mutt.

While the preparations for our departure were being made, a guest at the Parador Ticuna Inn, where the expedition was staying, recommended that we consult the most experienced man in the area—Mike Tsalicaks, a well-known dealer in wild animals who had lived in Leticia for nearly 25 years. This Rúhíyyih Khánum and Mr. Khamsi did, making arrangements for one of his guides to take us into Brazilian waters where Amatu’l-Bahá hoped to see a closed canopy jungle—one of the dreams of her life.

Shortly after mid-day, the S.S. Mutt was freed from its mooring and our five-day trip into the Brazilian Amazon started. We had not traveled far when Hipolito, our captain, discovered that the rudder was not working. We were stranded in midstream Amazon for several hours until repairs were completed. Moving on, we quickly reached the mouth of the Yavari River and directed our course upstream past the Brazilian town of Benjamin Constante where there is a Bahá’í community. We continued past Petropolis, a flooded sawmill town. By now it was dark. Meanwhile, for better ventilation, Rodney Charters had climbed to the roof and fallen asleep; the pilot also fell asleep. Suddenly there was a crash, the boat trembled, a cry from the roof and splash—Rodney was overboard! The boat had veered from its course, crashed into and splintered a tree jutting up from the flooded waters, and Rodney, trying to climb down, had slipped. We tied up for the night, grateful the day was over. It became our custom to retire to the roof every morning for prayers and to discuss our plans; inside, when the engine was running, we had to shout to be heard.

On May 3 we arrived at Sao Raimundo, where a small dugout canoe and its boatman were secured. Rúhíyyih Khánum, Mr. Khamsi, our guide, Rodney and his movie camera, and the boatman departed for a five-hour trip up a small branch stream and a jungle walk through swamp to a clearing in the jungle to view at last her much longed-for “closed-canopy” jungle. Greatly disillusioned, the party returned at dusk to report that someone had carved on a tree trunk, “Maria was here—1975.”

To prove he could do something, even if he did not know what a virgin jungle looks like, our guide spent the night hunting, returning in the early hours of the morning with a variety of large wild guinea pig, the only wild game we were to enjoy on the Amazon. We all regretted eating such a beautiful creature, but Mr. Khamsi proved his right to be considered the best cook with the expedition for the succulent meal he prepared with this meat.

I had been treating our captain for a bad
and painful eye infection and he decided to return home on foot via a connecting jungle path. He left us as we headed back toward Leticia, leaving his son as the provisional captain.

The downstream return to Leticia was rapid and, although at the time the trip was a sad disappointment, the photographs taken proved to be one of the most beautiful sequences in the Green Light Expedition film. In Leticia we said good-bye to our nice guide, who requested Bahá'í literature; he has an uncle in Manaus who is a Bahá'í.

Another interview with Mike Tsalickis produced a new guide who he said would be able to take us to primitive, untouched people if they still existed in the area we were in; it had been some time since Mike himself had been out in the "wilds."

The region of the Peruvian Amazon with its many tributaries accounts for about 60 per cent of the total area of the country. The rainfall is one of the heaviest in the world and the basin is covered by nearly impenetrable jungles. For the most part still unexplored, it remains silent, mysterious, and awesome. During the months of March to June the heaviest rains fall, flooding the lowland area. The bulk of the sparse population lives along the river banks and has made its adaption to the annual floods by the simple expedient of constructing their houses on high supporting posts and keeping a canoe moored to the steps, a sort of tropical Venice.

At first sight food seems scarce, as indeed it may be for city tourists. Investigation, however, reveals bountiful supplies of yucca (cassava), the staple food throughout the whole of this jungle region of South America; plantain (a green cooking banana), pihuaí (a type of palm nut), fruits which vary from one area to another, and paiche (a highly prized fish).

The majority population of this area is indigenous, estimated at approximately 120,000 Indians comprising some 50 tribes and speaking at least 31 different languages. Hence, it was impossible to find anyone who could serve as guide and interpreter throughout the whole region; we had a total of four different guides at various stages of our trip up river from Leticia to Iquitos, approximately 400 kilometers (240 miles). Except for Leticia, which had a Spiritual Assembly, and Iquitos, which had a Bahá'í Group, there were no Bahá'ís in this area of Peru.

Numerous villages are mushrooming up along the main rivers in this region of South America offering, for the most part, the worst aspects of a decadent civilization to a people who are being ruthlessly uprooted, stripped of their culture and generally made to feel inferior by religionists, educators, tradesmen and an ever-increasing flood of tourists. Little remains of the people's former ways except for their houses which are still of open thatch construction admirably suited to the hot, humid, tropical climate. However, small concrete block cracker-box houses, with zinc roofs are beginning to crop up here and there, far less healthful to live in than the old style Indian home. Both Protestant and Catholic missionaries are very active in this area. Nearly every village has its big cross and many have small churches.

Little did we realize that this would be the sad picture we would find as we chugged out of Leticia for the second time, on May 4, setting our course westward against the strong Amazon current in search of our next guide, Don Pedro Rodríguez, who lived in Vista Alegre, some six hours upstream.

Fortunately, Don Pedro was home and agreed to accompany us. He seemed very knowledgable about the area, was a mature man who had traveled widely in this section of the Amazon for many years and had learned a little of some of the languages. We liked him at once. He could give us no assurance we would find any primitive tribes because it had been nearly three years since his last trip and customs were changing rapidly.

Early the following day, we reached Puerto Narino, one of the innumerable check-points on the Amazon river, where members of the expedition went swimming in the flooded town square while Mr. Khamsi cleared the boats' papers with the officials. Then we proceeded up the Loreto-Yacu River to San Francisco and San Juan, neighboring Ticuna villages.

The Indians were warm and friendly.

At far left, Ruhiyyih Khánúm and Counsellor Masoud Khamsi, seated in center, meet with the residents of a Ticuna Indian village. At left, the members of the Green Light Expedition pose atop the S.S. Mut. They are, from left, front row: Auxiliary Board member Ruth Pringle, Ruhiyyih Khánúm, Rodney Charters; back row: Captain Hipolito, a crew member, David Walker, Counsellor Masoud Khamsi, guide Don Pedro Rodríguez, who became a Bahá'í during the trip, and Mark Sadan. Anthony Worley took the picture.
How long would it be before others would come to these people with the love of Bahá’u’lláh, come to stay and not just pass by?

Their typical dress had been lost but their language and houses were still preserved. At San Francisco, the people were Catholic and the school teacher was also the lay teacher for the church and conducted daily services. Sundays the priest came to offer mass. A large wooden cross stood in the middle of what seemed to be a shrine with the initials STA—standing for “Salva Tu Alma.” We encountered this same kind of shrine and cross in almost every village along the route up the Amazon. Sometimes it bore the date 1972, sometimes 1973, indicating how recently this area has been opened by missionaries.

In view of this we made no effort to teach the Faith; after eating dinner on our boat we had an informal meeting with the villagers. With radiant faces, men, women, and children clustered around Rúḥíyyih Khánum who was seated under the shadow of the cross, while Mark Sadan played his flute and taught them to sing “Alláh’u’Abhá.” This delighted them greatly. At Rúḥíyyih Khánum’s request both the women and the men sang for us and David Walker recored them. Their first songs were joyous ones followed by sad ones. They explained that the happy songs were about a boat that came to their village with a beautiful woman who brought with her great happiness and love. The sad songs spoke of a boat that was leaving their village, carrying away the light of this beautiful women who probably would never return. This saddened Rúḥíyyih Khánum, for how true it was and how long would it be before others would come to these people with the love of Bahá’u’lláh, come to stay and not just pass by?

We proceeded to Caballo Coche, where we enjoyed the special treat of a bottle of cold Coca-Cola and then went to the home of our captain, Hipolito, a little father up the river in a lovely lagoon. He knew of a Yagua village nearby which offered exactly what we wished to find: a primitive village untouched by the ravages of civilization, still adhering to its ancient customs.

We left in a small dugout canoe for a fascinating hour and a half trip up a small stream, winding and twisting thorough the jungle perfectly reflected on the still water.

The village, built on high ground and surrounded by felled trees to make way for the people’s plantations, boasted a well-ordered school, proudly displaying a neatly arranged exhibition of colored posters of people in different parts of the world. Everyone wore monotonous “city” dress except for one man who emerged from his hut regally attired in a rich copper-colored grass skirt and a large collar and arm bands of the same material. Around his neck was a lovely diamond-shaped pouch in which he carried small curare-tipped darts. He showed us how he used the arrows with his blow gun, which must have been at least eight feet long. The local school teacher—not of indigenous descent—told us this man was the only one in his village who still preserved the typical dress of his people.

Rúḥíyyih Khánum explained to the man and a group of people who had gathered around us that we were Bahá’ís and that we held the Indians in high esteem. She told them that similar darts and blow pipes are used by other people in faraway Malaysia.

The following morning, with Hipolito back as captain, we headed up the Tigre River and turned off into the Atacuary. All the villages and towns along the Amazon were so civilized as to be of little interest to us, so we turned into many of the tributaries and it was mainly on these we had such interesting and pleasant visits with various Indian tribes.

We reached an area where the flooding of the river had produced a lagoon with a few scattered houses emerging above the water. We took a small canoe over to one of the houses where a woman sat hunched on the floor cooking over an open fire. She was dressed in the characteristic costume of the Yaguas, a copper-brown brief fibre skirt and matching ruff around her neck—not at all immodest for her culture and environment, as Rúḥíyyih Khánum pointed out.

We continued upstream hoping to find more interesting tribespeople. On our way a friendly family called to us to join them for a “fiesta” they were having. People had already begun to gather for the party, which was being held in honor of a birth in the tribe, and the drinking was well under way. There was a large hollowed-out log which served as a vat; it was nearly filled with a very strong pink colored liquor made from fermented yucca (masato) and this was dipped up in large gourds and enamel bowls and passed generously to the guests who consumed it with great relish. Needless to say the Bahá’ís declined to partake of this drink.

The women and children sat around on the floor of the thatched house, laughing and chatting while the men milled around in groups on the outside. To our distress we discovered that even small children were drinking the highly intoxicating beverage. Already many of the men were becoming drunk. We had suspected the party would be like this, but Rúḥíyyih Khánum had felt we should accept the kindness the
The green light expedition

Indians had shown in spontaneously inviting us to join them.

The people were dressed in city clothes, but some of the men had painted their faces in the old way and wore makeshift caps of frayed palm leaves in place of what once would have been gorgeous feather head-dresses. There was flute playing and some dancing but it was quite evident the party was going to become very drunken so we left before dark. Although the South American Indians have always drunk liquor on special occasions, its use is steadily increasing, just as it is in our own society.

The following morning we returned to the Amazon and after 24 hours of uninterrupted travel, reached Chimbote. Don Pedro felt he had guided us to all that was available in the area short of a two to three day trip on foot through the jungle to the interior to search for remote villages which might no longer be there. He could guarantee nothing and Ruḥiyih Khánum, who was not feeling well, decided such a speculative venture was out of the question.

We gathered on the roof of the Mutt for pictures. As we were saying farewell to Don Pedro, he gave us a beautiful gift. He said, "I want to be a Baha'i." What a joyous moment! An assortment of the limited literature on hand, names and addresses of Baha'is in Leticia and Iquitos, and a photo of our group were given to him. Ruḥiyih Khánum spoke to him about the importance of sharing his newly found happiness with others and promised to send him some books, including a copy of her own book Prescription for Living in Portuguese as soon as possible. Hopefully, he has received the books she sent and is now spreading the Divine Fragrances and sowing the seeds of the Kingdom in this vast area where he is well known and highly respected.

With prayers of thanksgiving and for steadfastness, we watched Don Pedro until he was out of sight of our retreating boat. Sometime after dark we reached San Pablo de Loreto where we tied up for the night. Here there was a rather large Catholic mission hospital and school. We sought more information there as to where we might find more primitive tribes to film. The French Canadian nun who talked to Ruḥiyih Khánum was very sweet and friendly but had little more information to share than we already knew.

By now we were tired and discouraged, including Ruḥiyih Khánum, who sometimes asked herself out loud what had possessed her when she started out at the age of 64 to undertake a journey such as this and to make a film to stimulate pioneers to go forth all over the world! But the oft-repeated promise in the Teachings that if we have faith all our efforts will be fruitful encouraged her and we assured her that Shoghi Effendi must be well pleased that she had arisen to fulfill his wishes, traveling throughout the world to encourage the friends to arise and serve. "Yes", replied Ruḥiyih Khánum, "this is what I mean when I say that this enterprise is the greatest proof of my faith in God."

It was suggested we might take an excursion up the Ampiyacu River to visit several villages there where we might find Bora and Ocaína Indians. We came to a picturesque village, Pucarurquillo, located on a rather high bank, where Bora and Huitoto Indians lived side by side. It was a large village and neatly laid out. Most of the houses were of typical thatch construction and there were a few of rough lumber, but the focal point of the village for us was the enormous community house called cocamera, the first we had seen in the Amazon region. In one of the cocameras they had a pair of drums which had been fashioned out of oblong blocks of wood and placed over a hole in the ground which acted as a sounding box.

A small group of people gathered around us and Ruḥiyih Khánum spoke to them of their past, told them we were Baha'is and as such believed the Indian people had an important future. She also praised their culture and handicrafts and told them not to lose this knowledge. One of the Bora Indians who had been listening pleased Ruḥiyih Khánum by offering to play on the chime-like drums and chant in his native dialect. This was filmed and recorded. Everyone was delighted to hear this song and drumming played back by David. Later Ruḥiyih Khánum said to us,
Rúhíyyih Khánum encourages the people, praises their heritage and tells them:
‘People must not be ashamed of what God gave them.’

“Did you see how they just opened up when we praised their culture?”

A bright young Bora man accompanied us through the village and agreed to guide us to another one upstream where we would be able to see Boras living in the “old way.” The next day, in a driving rain that had begun the previous night, we slowly made our way up the Yaguasycu River to Brillo Nuevo. Fortunately, the rain stopped just as we arrived and the people guided us to their cocamera which, unlike the one we had seen on the previous day, was teeming with people relaxing in hammocks or going about their everyday chores. At one end of the house was a striking pair of drums called manhuaris. These drums are giant hollow cylinders made from a special tree of an exceptionally hard wood; they are about six feet long and 18 inches in diameter. We were told they were about 30 years old. The bottle-shaped drumsticks were covered with raw rubber. The manhuari constituted the old system of communication. By playing the two, the “male” drum with its rather high-pitched tone and the “female” drum with its deep penetrating notes, messages were sent from village to village along the river for distances of up to 12 miles where they were transmitted by another pair of drums and so on. Rúhíyyih Khánum was delighted by this find and told the people, “I have traveled to 109 countries and the only drums I have seen this size are in a far away place in Africa. And they are not as beautiful as these.” She continued, “These are things you must not lose. Long before the white man had the telephone, the red man had his drums.” She encouraged the people, praised their heritage and told them, “People must not be ashamed of what God gave them.” She said, “Our religion has great prophecies for the Indian people,” and asked Mr. Khamisi to explain what these prophecies are. Then they asked Rúhíyyih Khánum if she would tell the villagers about this religion if they called the people together for a meeting, an invitation which she readily accepted.

In the meeting Rúhíyyih Khánum spoke of the principle of unity. In characteristic fashion she drew her examples from the people’s own experiences. She described to them how they had gathered the materials and brought them together to produce their cocamera, how they had placed the supporting posts one by one in position. Then she pointed out that each post was different, but each was good and strong. “We accept them all because each post helps to support the building. These posts are like the different religions in the world. When each post is placed securely in position, then you put the roof on the house, and this roof is like the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh. Now we say today, as the world is changed, the time has come to put the roof on the house of all men.”

To reach any more tribes would have required three to four days of travel upstream and we had no assurance we would find the people, since they are semi-nomadic, frequently changing their villages from place to place in order to establish plantations on new soil. So it was decided to return to the Amazon. Furthermore, Rúhíyyih Khánum was fighting bronchitis.

On our way back we stopped in Puerto Isango, an Ocaina village, where we admired their hammocks which the people had made from jungle fibre. They were curious about us, so with the help of the school teacher, who is always a key person in villages, a meeting was called. Rúhíyyih Khánum asked Mr. Khamisi to speak. After he had presented the basic Bahá’í concepts in fluent Spanish, Rúhíyyih Khánum directed a few words to the people. She told them the culture of the Indians is very ancient and that long before the time of Christ, the Indians had a great culture. They had built wonderful civilizations. She said the Indians had a great past and have a great future. “So you must be proud of being Indians and you must not lose your tribal past because this is your root. When a tree is firmly rooted it is strong, but when its roots have been pulled up, a slight wind can blow it over. You should take the good things from the white people and be careful not to take the bad things, and always keep the good things from your Indian culture.”

As we left the meeting, the people followed us to our boat. There was one little old woman in the group. She walked
alongside Amatu'l-Bahá. Suddenly the little woman embraced Rúhíyyih Khánum who responded and kissed her warmly on both cheeks, a purely spontaneous reaction. Rúhíyyih Khánum often spoke of the tendency of Western Bahá'ís to greet everyone with a hug and a kiss and how much she detested this habit as being not only unsanitary but one which gave a very bad impression to others and was not in keeping with the dignity and high standards inculcated by Bahá'u'lláh. Her strong feelings on this subject made this gesture of affection all the more impressive.

Once in Iquitos an appraisal of our situation and investigation of possibilities to travel up the Napo River or the Marañon proved fruitless. Our propellor had been damaged and had to be removed for repairs, requiring several days. It was decided we would fly by commercial airline to Pucallpa, still in the Amazon basin on the Ucayali River halfway between Iquitos and Lima. By the evening of May 22 we had abandoned the S.S. Mutt forever, disposed of all unnecessary provisions and equipment, repacked, and were on our way.

Pucallpa is a center for agriculture and lumber, smaller than Iquitos, but with equal modern facilities. We liked it much better and longed to see pioneers settled in it. On the outskirts amid neatly trimmed lawns and beautiful gardens, high on an embankment above Lake Yarina Cocha, is the Summer Institute of Linguistics, central headquarters in Peru for a missionary group associated with the Wycliff Bible Society. It is a well equipped and well organized group, having private radio communications with its most remote outposts, and adequate private planes to service a wide area; we counted no less than six different types of planes at their air terminal. Nearby is the Peruvian Army airfield which maintains a special charter passenger service to the interior. Through arrangements with the government, the Summer Institute of Linguistics is permitted to contact Indian groups, ostensibly for the purpose of teaching them to read and write their own languages. This also includes translating the Bible into the various tongues with the subsequent conversion of the Indians to Christianity. They have made surveys of the tribes, taken censuses and are, quite admirably, establishing written forms of languages.

These were the people who had both the information and the facilities to enable the Green Light Expedition to contact and film a truly primitive tribe. Rúhíyyih Khánum, Mr. Khamsi, and I went to visit them. We were interviewed by a charming couple, second generation missionaries in the area, whose children were studying in the United States preparing themselves to return to carry on in the family tradition. On many occasions after this visit, Rúhíyyih Khánum pointed out that this was an example which Bahá'ís might well admire and strive to emulate.

Amatu'l-Bahá explained to them we were making a Bahá'í documentary film and expressed at the same time a genuine admiration for the wonderful work they
Survey is made to facilitate the settlement of future pioneers to the Amazon, but the sands of time are running out.

were doing, saying we would like to include in our film some of their own field activities if this was possible. They could not give us an immediate answer. We would have to return later.

Meanwhile, arrangements were made to visit the Shipibo Indian village of San Francisco on Lake Yarina Cocha, about an hour and a half from Pucallpa. We settled down in a covered boat for a pleasant outing. San Francisco turned out to be a rather untidy village, home of approximately 3,000 Shipibo Indians whose main income is derived from tourists. Their homes were built on low platforms, open on the sides and topped with a thatched roof. The women adhered to their typical dress, either a finely painted or beautifully embroidered short skirt worn like a sarong; they also wore many strings of beads. The village was rather uninteresting and the people aggressively commercial. Sadly we left.

Returning to the missionaries we learned what we had already anticipated: using a flimsy pretext, they advised us that they could not provide us with transportation. We then went to the Army. For the astronomical sum of $1,600 for two two-hour flights—one to take us in and one to bring us out—arrangements could be made. This was definitely out of the question, not solely because of the expense but because we had no contacts in the interior, no guarantee of success. All doors had now tightly closed; the long journey was at an end. We took the plane for Lima, capital city of Peru.

From the beginning of the expedition to this point a survey had been made which would facilitate the settlement of future pioneers to the vast Amazon region. But in addition to this we had seen first-hand that the sands of time are quickly running out. Will the Bahá'ís arise to the challenge before it is too late?

Rúhiyyih Khánum, by her example, in spite of her age, lack of comfort and in the face of illness, had shown us that we can do it. She had also been true to the oft-expressed wish of the Master: “Oh, that I could travel, even though on foot and in the utmost poverty, to these regions, and raising the call of ‘Ya Bahá'u'l-Abhá’ in cities, villages, mountains, deserts and oceans, promote the Divine teachings. This, alas, I cannot do. How intensely I deplore it. Please God, ye may achieve it.”

Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum, at right center, consults with the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States on January 9 concerning distribution of films, filmstrips, and slides of her Green Light Expedition. Pictured, clockwise from top, are Glenford E. Mitchell; Richard D. Betts; Rúhiyyih Khánum; Violette Nakhjavání, Amatu’l-Bahá’s traveling companion; William Maxwell Jr.; Firuz Kazemzadeh; Daniel Jordan; Franklin Kahn; Dorothy W. Nelson; and Magdalene Carney. That evening, Rúhiyyih Khánum addressed an overflow audience in Foundation Hall at the House of Worship. The Hand of the Cause of God discussed the Green Light Expedition, and the importance of pioneering.
Alaska

Center dedicated, conference is held

The dedication of a new National \(\text{Hazratu'l}-Quds\) in Anchorage, Alaska, and a simultaneous deepening conference offered by the Continental Board of Counsellors for North America, evoked two cables from The Universal House of Justice. One, addressed to the conference, read in part: “Fervently praying great impetus your endeavors advance Faith all strata Alaska.”

All four members of the Continental Board of Counsellors in North America spoke to over 200 Bahá'ís at the conference November 8, and attended the dedication of the \(\text{Hazratu'l}-Quds\).

One of the sessions at the conference was sponsored by the Bahá'í Interracial Teaching Committee to stimulate teaching among Alaskan minorities: blacks, Eskimos, Aleuts, and Orientals. Counsellor Velma Sherrill addressed that session, saying that Bahá'ís must rise above the lesser unities which are represented in families, tribes, and clans, and must attain the wider unity which embraces the entire human race.

Counsellor Sarah Pereira was the key speaker for another session, saying that Bahá'ís should fill their daily lives with the expression of the real oneness of humankind. Counsellor Lloyd C. Gardner led a study of Divine Institutions, and Counsellor Edna True spoke on the meaning of the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The Universal House of Justice also cabled assurance of its prayers on the occasion of the dedication of the National \(\text{Hazratu'l}-Quds\): “Supplicating holy Shrines guidance strengthening National Assembly entire community Alaska Deepest love.”

The newly built Alaskan Bahá'í Center is a modern building in Anchorage with rooms for meetings of the National Assembly and offices for the Secretariat and national committees.

National conference on teaching held

During the Five Year Plan, Alaskan Bahá'ís are required to have at least one National Teaching Conference a year. Bahá'ís from Alaska and Canada attended the second of these conferences September 26-28 in Haines.

The conference opened with a reading of a letter by the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears, assuring the 106 friends present that he was praying for the success of the conference.

On Friday evening the Bahá'ís celebrated the Feast of Mashiyyat, creating a unity which illumined the weekend.

The conference agenda included addresses by National Spiritual Assembly members Georgia Haisler and Auxiliary Board members Howard Brown and Fletcher Bennett. Reports were given by the National Assembly and by members of Goals Committees on the status of Alaska's Five Year Plan goals.

Talks included one on the history of the Faith in Alaska, given by Verne Stout, who was the first man to pioneer to Alaska. The country was opened to the Faith in 1915 by Margaret Green, who worked there as a librarian until 1918. In response to the Guardian's first Seven Year Crusade, Honor Kerpton went to Alaska in 1939 and began establishing the Bahá'í community there.

Other sessions covered the development and strengthening of Local Spiritual Assemblies; pioneering; international and national teaching; the Fund. The youth of Haines presented a play about universal participation.

Several talks were given on pioneering. One was by Gail Davis, who filled the pioneer post of Sitka on Baranof Island during the Ten Year Crusade, and has been there for 20 years.

Bahamas

Land acquired for Bahamas Temple site

A 20-acre tract on the island of New Providence, Bahamas, has been acquired for a future Temple, completing another goal of the Five Year Plan.

Purchase of the land by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States was finalized in November.

The Temple site is on the north side of New Providence Island and is west of Nassau and east of Nassau International Airport. The site overlooks Lake Cunningham and can be seen from the major highway between the airport and Nassau.

The land, 117 feet above sea level, is one of the highest points on the island.

Earlier, the National Assembly of the U.S. purchased a building in downtown Nassau for a National \(\text{Hazratu'l}-Quds\) and acquired as a national endowment for the Bahamas an acre of land on Great Exuma Island, two other goals of the Five Year Plan.

India

Children sparkle at Panchgani sessions

The Third Annual Children's Conference in Panchgani, India, December 26-28, was held simultaneously with the Panchgani Winter School. Both gatherings were held at New Era High School.
Baha'is of various Indian states attended the school, with guests from Iran, Muscat, Zambia, and England. Ninety-five children, ages 5-14, participated in the children's conference and over 150 youth and adults attended the school.

Every one gathered each morning for dawn prayers before breakfast, and songs and devotions after breakfast. The children met in the Baha'i Bhavan, where they had classes on sacrifice, prejudice, and purity.

The Winter School sessions covered teaching, the role of children and youth, The Universal House of Justice, the role of women in the new World Order, and the role of the Baha'i Faith. There were special workshops on marriage and on Baha'i elections.

Gloria Faizi was a special guest at the school. The children sat spell-bound while she told them stories of 'Abdu'l-Baha. The children were also impressed with a couple from Zambia who told them of the customs and culture of that African nation. A six-year-old commented that they were a real example of the Baha'i Faith.

With the loving help of some of the Baha'i youth the children prepared two skits and several songs which they presented on the last evening. One of the children gave a report in which she expressed the feeling of all the children that such conferences should be held more frequently.

The friends then gathered around a bonfire for a sing-along.

United States
New teaching projects begin

"Now is the time of the harvest," said the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'llah Muhajir, speaking in Foundation Hall at the Baha'i House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois. Dr. Muhajir will assist with important teaching projects in the United States during coming months.

Dr. Muhajir consulted twice with the National Spiritual Assembly during January. He has consented to help with a new Southern teaching program and other projects and with recruiting pioneers and traveling teachers.

The Hand of the Cause of God spoke at two teaching Conferences in California Dec. 27-28; visited the Louis Gregory Institute in South Carolina and toured the Southern states; visited Oregon, Washington, and Michigan; and made trips to Alaska and Canada.

Southern Baha'is will begin the new teaching program, designed to reach large numbers of people in and near Atlanta, Georgia; College Station, Texas; and Columbia, South Carolina; immediately following their Each One Teach One District Conference on March 27. Regular teaching activities, proclamations, and conferences will be sustained in those areas during the remaining years of the Five Year Plan. Activities will be coordinated by the Baha'i National Teaching Committee, the newly appointed Southern Teaching Committee, Local Spiritual Assemblies, and District Teaching Committees. Those who volunteer for the exciting work at the March 27 teaching conferences will be trained and their activities scheduled.

The goal of the Southern teaching plan is to reach all strata of society and the foundation of the teaching efforts will be firesides.

Baha'is throughout the country will launch their own efforts in their districts at 88 teaching conferences March 27. Each District Teaching Committee will involve the friends in special teaching projects to begin March 28. The National Teaching Committee and Regional Teaching Committees will work with the District Teaching Committees to open new localities and form strong Groups and firm Local Spiritual Assemblies.

Soon after these concentrated efforts begin, a special project on the U.S.-Mexican border will start with a training program in Mexicali, Mexico, April 2. The plan for border teaching, with the goal of raising Local Spiritual Assemblies in Mexicali and Tijuana, Mexico; and El Centro and Chula Vista, California, is under the direction of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Mexico and the United States and their appropriate national committees.

Almost 2,000 Baha'is attended the teaching conferences in California in December.
"Now wouldn't it be marvelous if no matter what the world asked you, you had the answers? Well, you do have the answers," said the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears at the conference in Long Beach, California.

About 800 friends heard Mr. Sears in Long Beach, and over 1,000 attended the sister conference in San Jose. Both conferences were addressed by Dr. Muhajir and members of the National Spiritual Assembly and the Auxiliary Board.

"Do you believe that this is the time of the coming of troops to the Faith?" Dr. Muhajir asked the friends. "Say, 'yes,' because it is."

Teaching emphasized by Dr. Muhajir

"How do we prepare ourselves for teaching on a daily basis?" This question, one of many asked the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'llah Muhajir during a video-taping session in the House of Worship at Wilmette, Illinois, early in January, brought a firm response.

"Preparation for teaching is teaching itself." He pointed out that when we learn to swim, we go into the water and begin swimming. "Even if you are a newly enrolled Bahá'í, you must teach, and in teaching you will learn more and become better able to teach. You will begin developing the qualities of kindness, of being human, of wanting to understand your fellowman."

"The ultimate goal of all the institutions is teaching," he continued.

He cited areas where planning at the "grass-roots" level had taken place, showing how continuous teaching and consolidation carried out through local plans have often produced astonishing results. "Feast is an opportunity for each individual believer to assist in the planning, by giving his ideas in the consultative portion. The Local Spiritual Assemblies should also invite the friends to give their ideas and suggestions."

Dr. Muhajir visualizes planning as a long-term necessity, one which implemented now could reap harvests of thousands and hundreds of thousands of believers in one generation. "Good planning must be long-term planning," he declared.

Pioneers both on the homefront and in foreign areas should try to teach families, urged Dr. Muhajir. "In mass teaching, when we bring a family into the Faith we have truly opened a locality. It is better to teach families than to concentrate on individuals. If the grandmothers in an area are looked up to by their families, and we teach these grandmothers the Faith, their families will follow. If we teach the children and the grandmothers disapprove, the children may fall away from the Faith. The foundation of any society is the family. Let us think of teaching families."

When questioned about the importance of prayer for effective teaching Dr. Muhajir agreed that prayer is essential, but said that unless it is followed by action, it is not enough. "We must pray, be sincere, and act. The bounty of God is hovering between heaven and earth, waiting to shower upon any soul who arises in this way. In every period of your life, you can take action which will attract those bounties."

Questioned about ways to reach all strata of society, Dr. Muhajir replied: "There are really two aspects to this question. We must reach all strata of society with the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, but we cannot guarantee that all of them will accept the Faith. Every religion has started with the lowly," he continued. "These believers disperse through foreign lands, and their children become the professional class and leaders in their respective fields. I teach everybody. I do not know who will accept. But from those who do accept, Bahá'u'lláh will raise up whatever people he needs to change future society."

Speaking of the powerful effect on each individual when he accepts Bahá'u'lláh, Dr. Muhajir said, "The moment a person says, 'I am a Bahá'í,' he has begun to change. That declaration has an effect on him. Similarly, when we address an audience, the moment we mention the name of Bahá'u'lláh, we help to change that audience, to attract them to this Message."

Above all, Dr. Muhajir stressed the necessity for growing "consciousness of pioneering" on the part of the American Bahá'í community. "We must be sure we can do it. We must make the plans now that will permit us to pioneer, if not this year, then whenever it becomes possible. But we must plan toward this goal, not just hope that it will somehow happen."

"Waiting to know more of the teachings is not necessary, for we sometimes learn so much that we teach in a complicated way. We should be simple and direct, helping our hearers to learn the fundamental truths and, if they are literate, to turn themselves to the Writings. It is important to know something of the customs of the area in which we teach, but this can be quickly accomplished if we are sincere and arise to serve Bahá'u'lláh. If we are humble and truthful, the goals will be won."
Mother of the Temple

The Story of Hand of the Cause of God  Corinne Knight True, Part II

by Bruce Whitmore

The Chicago House of Spirituality scheduled a convention for March 22-23, 1939, and invited numerous communities throughout the United States and Canada to send delegates. Corinne True was elated at the prospects of this event.

What prepared souls these delegates will be coming together for so great a work just after the nineteen days of fasting, cleansing their hearts and lives of all impurities, bringing purified souls and bodies to be used for the Master's purpose.

Can you not see, my dear Sister, what a noble ambition that will be when the souls come together after they have been associating with the fragrances of Holiness and have been sanctified from everything but the mention of God? There is a very great wisdom in the convention being held at this particular time, for their souls will have gone through a preparation so that as they gather together in one place, in one accord, in great bonds
Corinne True becomes the first woman ever elected to serve as an officer of a Bahá'í national institution in the United States.

Dr. Zia Bagdadi turns the earth on September 24, 1920, prior to the beginning of the borings to locate bedrock. Corinne True is the first person on the right with the book at her feet. At far right, Louis Bourgeois holds a drawing of the Temple during boring operations.

will be produced as Abdul Baha promises. And to think, what a glorious New Year in the Bahá'í world with all these lovely brothers and sisters here to celebrate the Feast of the Naw Ruz with us. As I write about it I can scarcely wait until the time comes. It will be so very glorious. It fairly thrills one's soul to meditate upon that meeting.

I do hope every Assembly will realize the great importance of this convention and send us their delegates, for it is the laying of the foundation of the Mashrak-el-Azkar. We must become a united band in order to do so stupendous a work and this convention, our Lord says, will be "the cause of harmony in the Word in all America." And too, only to think of the importance of the matter which our Lord says will not only have an effect upon those who bear the Mashrak-el-Azkar, but upon the whole world. Is it not well that we go through a season of prayer and fasting before coming together to consult and take action in a matter that will affect the entire world? God's mercy be upon us in the days that are before us. Great are our blessings, but equally great are our responsibilities.

Thirty-six delegates representing 39 communities (some delegates represented more than one community) gathered at the Trues' newly acquired home on Kenmore Avenue, where the convention was held in a huge billiard room which occupied the attic. The Bahá'í Temple Unity was formed and an Executive Board, the first national administrative agency of the Faith, was elected. Corinne was one of three women elected to the nine-member board and was the first woman ever elected to serve as an officer of a Bahá'í national institution. The post of financial secretary, which she held for 13 consecutive years until the election of the first National Spiritual Assembly in 1922, was a natural extension of the work she already had been doing. In that capacity she expanded even further her correspondence. Each letter and receipt continued to reflect her unbending belief that national and even global unity would be achieved through the Temple:

We look for the greatest awakening of the entire world through the accomplishment of the Mashrakel Azkar and the greatest
strength to the Cause because Abdul Baha says the organization of the Kingdom is in the inception of the Mashrakel Azkar. It is the day of organization and systematic work.²

In another letter of June, 1909, she wrote:

Our Executive Meeting was not productive of very much fruit—everything now seems to be in the becoming state. Much is going on in the different departments. The architectural department is planning a meeting in Chicago August 1st and asking numerous architects to submit drawings. . . .³

She continued by telling of a person who had donated 3,500 blessing boxes to be distributed throughout the country to each Assembly to help in the collection of funds. She also noted the numerous contributions received from such distant places as India and 'Akká:

These are the most sacred of offerings and as they come and I receive and receipt for them my soul is thrilled and thrilled and I see the marvelous work of union of the whole world being done by the Mashrakel Azkar.⁴

Again she commented:

How wonderful to receive these contributions from Parsee believers of Bombay, India. Men and women who have refused all Manifestations since Zoroaster and through Baha'Ullah accepting all.

I feel like mounting the housetops and shouting to the people to Arise for the Temple—because if you do this Abdul Baha will bless the land of America with His Holy Presence. What an opportunity for people to become immortal . . . .⁵

Activities at the Kenmore Avenue house intensified after the election. It became the headquarters for the Baha'i Temple Unity and countless meetings were held there, including the first display of potential architectural designs, presented in the latter part of 1909. In one letter describing each of these early designs, Corinne noted recent comments from the Master, including the fact that the convention “was only the beginning of many far more wonderful Conventions where great power would be manifest . . . .”⁶ She then commented that, “The Mashrakel Azkar looks to me as if it were in reality the Peace Conference instead of La Hague.”⁷

Moses True had a marvelous sense of humor and loved to play pranks on people, especially his wife. One afternoon she was riding home on the trolley, enjoying the evening newspaper. She became aware that the person who had just seated himself next to her was craning his head over her shoulder to read the newspaper. She moved away and he moved even closer, blocking her view of the pages. Highly incensed, she turned to scold his rude actions and discovered it was Moses, who had boarded the same car.

From the time of his son Laurence's death, however, Mr. True often seemed somewhat sad and lonely. His relationship with Laurence had been very close and his son's death nearly caused a complete collapse. In addition, he and his wife traditionally had done most everything together, but since her visit to 'Akká the time they spent together had been decreasing steadily. Moses did not resent Corinne's involvement; he loved the Baha'is and showed them the greatest courtesy and kindness. Throughout this several month period he apparently drew very close to accepting Bahá'u'lláh. On November 26, 1909, he and his three daughters served the friends gathered in their home to celebrate 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Day, now known as the Day of the Covenant. One of the Baha'ís, Percy Woodcock of New York, had a long conversation with Moses, at the end of which he declared, “If the Revelation is as you say it is, Mr. Woodcock, then I am a Bahai.”⁸ Even if this was a formal declaration, he had little opportunity to make it known. Sixteen days later, on December 10, he collapsed while running for one of Chicago's elevated trains, dying instantly from a heart attack.

Several hundred letters of condolence poured in from around the world. One of Corinne's replies, written two weeks later, brings to light the depth of serenity and submission to the Will of God which she had achieved:

Really dear Sister, the great wave of sympathy and condolence
and grief which sweeps against one at such a crisis is almost enough to take you off your feet, but the Presence of the Great Spirit of Abdul Baha holds one fast.

As this is the Springtime in the Cause great thunderstorms must attend to its establishment and each soul will be able to find just how deep down into the Work it has thrust the tendrils of his or her heart, and if they are deeply, firmly rooted, the storms will only make them stronger. Pray dear Sister that I may not be shaken by this catastrophe. God was very present and merciful and I was able to be very calm. If we are too calm the people feel we are inhuman, therefore it is really best for them to see us express tenderness of heart. Before these four children I am trying to hold up the banner of the Immortality of the Soul and I tell them constantly to think of the great progress and gain of the soul of their father instead of dwelling on their own loss. They are doing remarkably well and such a peace and calm reigns in the home. If one feels the loss he or she quietly sheds a few tears and soon the sun is shining again brightly.

Another letter declared:

Baha’Ullah said that every destruction was followed by a construction. So although my earthly family is so rapidly devastated, yet through the Word of Baha’Ullah and Abdul Baha the spiritual family of Abba is growing and growing and I find myself with brothers and sisters all over the world who love with that pure spiritual love. . . .

Again Corinne’s involvement with the Faith increased. By this time the list of people who had entered the Cause because of her efforts was quite long. One of the earliest of these was a poor woman from Chicago, Ester “Nettie” Tobin. Nettie’s husband had died in 1892 while the family was living in Detroit. Nettie, her two sons, her half-sister, and brother moved to Chicago. She was a seamstress by trade and barely supported the family on the meager income she managed to acquire. Oftentimes the money she earned during the day would buy the groceries for that evening’s dinner.

Nettie met one of the early believers, Paul K. Dealy, and soon found herself at firesides in the True home where she finally declared her belief in Bahá’u’lláh, most likely during 1903. She also found herself in Corinne’s employ, traveling to the house one or two times a week to make dresses, alter and mend clothes, etc.

Nettie had never attended school and had great difficulty with English. She had a particular habit of using words out of context, the results of which frequently sent the True children and herself into fits of laughter. She was a warm, loving, and humble individual, finding beauty everywhere, even in the ghetto near which she lived. She was continually helping anyone who needed it and bestowed kindness on everyone with whom she came in contact.

Nettie was greatly troubled at not having the means with which to contribute to the Temple fund and prayed continually that God might allow her some small gift to offer. It has been reported that one day while busy making a dress in the home of a believer, she heard a voice telling her to find a stone. It is quite possible that the stone was Corinne’s and that, indeed, Nettie’s inspiration came from Corinne, for at approximately the same time one of Corinne’s financial secretary reports in Star of the West (November 23, 1910) stated:

. . . this Mashrak-el-Azkar will, perhaps, be the only one built in America during the remaining years of Abdul-Baha’s earthly mission and it behooves us to bring this project to a point of completion that its corner stone may be laid in the event of his coming to America next spring. If we do not awake to this golden opportunity, future generations will point to us and say: “Why did the early Bahais of America sleep so long and let this, one of the most glorious of privileges of the ages, slip by unheeded?” Stop and meditate, friends, upon the necessary part a Mashrak-el-Azkar, dedicated by his holy presence, will play in the future history and development of the world. Will it not become a visiting point for all nations and people throughout centuries and cycles? The inflow thus produced will return an outflow of vitalizing spiritual influence and its accessories will shed the light of the highest sciences, arts and crafts and the most magnanimous works of charity and hospitality.

Whether or not the real source of Nettie’s inspiration has been clouded by the intervening years, she was, nonetheless, truly inspired. Without telling anyone, she journeyed to a construction site near her home. She spied a small pile of stones near one of the walls of the new building and asked the foreman if she might have one. He said she could since those particular stones were unfit for use.

Nettie returned home and sought the assistance of Mirzá Mazlúm, an elderly Persian Bahá’í. Securing an old baby carriage from her basement, they wheeled it to the building site, placed one of the rejected stones inside and then traveled to the car line. Despite the protests of the conductor as he gazed down on the strange pair, they succeeded in getting the carriage onto the trolley’s rear platform.

They made two transfers during the long trip from Chicago to northern Evanston. Shortly after leaving the last trolley the carriage collapsed; but Nettie was not to be prevented from reaching her goal. She sighted a young boy pulling a wagon and quickly persuaded him to help. They placed the stone in the wagon and pulled it several blocks to the future site of the House of Worship.

As they struggled to reach the center of the tract, the wagon tipped over and the stone fell to the ground where it would remain for many months.*

Another drama that unfolded during 1910 involved Corinne’s only surviving son, Davis. A star athlete at Michigan University in baseball, football, and track, he was the envy of all his friends. Shortly after his father’s death, Davis injured his knee while pole vaulting. For several months the knee bothered him and, at the invitation of one of his classmates, Davis decided to spend the summer at a lumber camp in Oregon where he hoped his knee would have a chance to heal. Rather than live at the camp’s main house with the rest of the family, the two boys decided to reside in one of the workers’ cabins. Several weeks later they learned that one of the former occupants of the cabin had since contracted tuberculosis and died. By the time Davis returned to school he was not feeling well and in November his doctor determined that he had contracted the disease.

It was felt the attack was mild, so Davis was sent east to a sanitarium; however, his condition soon began to deteriorate. In April of 1911, Corinne took him to a sanitarium in Denver, Colorado, where the doctors hoped the climate would be of benefit. That Corinne has attained a state of absolute trust in God

* Several years later, around the end of the 1920s, the Tnes moved out of the Kenmore Avenue house. During that move Corinne attempted to empty the old sewing machine cabinet Nettie had used years before. The middle drawer stuck and had to be pried loose. When it was opened it revealed dozens and dozens of receipts made out by Corinne for nickels, dimes and quarters which Nettie had contributed to the Fund whenever possible.
is reflected by the following comments:

It is a fiery ordeal to fight that awful disease tuberculosis. For almost a year now I have tried doing the things advised by the most skilled physicians and nurses. God alone knows how the battle will result. Through these hot fires our souls are to be refined. 11

As the summer months passed Davis seemed to improve, but by the end of the year his condition was again worsening. By March of 1912 the doctors knew it would be only a matter of weeks before his death. Davis returned home and two weeks later the Master arrived in Chicago.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's first morning was occupied with greeting visitors at his suite in the Plaza Hotel; but when He learned of Davis' illness, He quickly left with Dr. Zia Bagdadi and traveled to the True home, arriving shortly after noon. Corinne was overjoyed to see Him. She had determined not to leave the house due to Davis' condition and feared she would not meet Him at all during the visit. The Master went to Davis, who was still a Christian Scientist, and visited with him for some time. He then came downstairs and told Corinne that Davis was a wonderful young man and that He found him much better than expected. Corinne was overjoyed; she was sure the Master's presence meant Davis would recover. Persuaded by her three daughters, she

How Nettie Tobin and an elderly Persian Bahá'í brought a discarded stone to the future site of the House of Worshihp.

Nettie Tobin at the cornerstone which she brought to the Temple site sometime during the early months of 1911. This picture was taken in the late 1930s.
'Abdu'l-Bahá dedicates the Temple site in a moving ceremony attended by more than 300 people.

A group of Chicago women in front of the newly completed superstructure. From left, seated: Mary Lesch, Mrs. Robinson, Corinne True, Nettie Tobin, Mrs. Leoding. Standing: Mrs. Lundburg, Gertrude Buikema, Louise Waite, Fannie Lesch, unknown, Elizabeth Greenleaf, and Mrs. Ioas.

agreed to accompany 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the three lectures He was scheduled to give that afternoon, the last of which was an address to more than 2,000 people assembled at the fourth Bahá’í Temple Unity Convention.

Shortly after they left, Davis, whose last words expressed his happiness that the Master was there to comfort his mother, died peacefully. Only later did Corinne realize that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had been referring to Davis' spiritual condition rather than his physical condition. Within a period of 19 years this valiant woman had endured the heartbreak of losing her beloved husband and five of her eight children.

The next afternoon, May 1, 1912, more than 300 people awaited the Master's arrival at the corner of Linden Avenue and Sheridan Road. Behind them stood a large tent with a seating capacity of nearly 500. When the taxi finally appeared and came to a stop, the window was rolled down and one of the Persians asked if Mrs. True was present. Corinne, despite her overwhelming anguish, felt duty-bound to be present at this historic dedication ceremony for the Temple. She stepped forward and was directed to enter the vehicle. The Master then instructed the driver to continue north on Sheridan Road and stop at the bridge. One account of this event stated that He wanted to see the newly built locks at the end of Wilmette Harbor. Another indicated He wanted to inspect the boundaries of the property. More probably the loving and compassionate Master wanted but a few more minutes in which to comfort His grief-stricken daughter.

The gathering was greatly confused, particularly since the trees prevented them from seeing where the taxi had gone. Then some of the children spotted the Master and Corinne on the other side of the property and went running through the tall spring grass. Surrounded by this happy group of youngsters, 'Abdu'l-Bahá walked toward the back entrance to the tent. Just as He was about to enter, He saw amidst the grass a stone which, unknown to anyone, had been left there many months before as the humble offering of Nettie Tobin.

After addressing the gathering, He emerged from the tent and moved to a nearby clearing where the exact center of the land had been marked. He directed two of the Persians to fetch the stone and, at the conclusion of a moving ceremony, He bent over and
rolled the stone into a hole which had been dug by peoples of
many national and racial backgrounds. 'Abdu'l-Baha then stood
up and declared that the Temple was already complete.

Three months later Corinne visited 'Abdu'l-Baha in New York
where, to her delight, she was asked to take care of His household
for a five-day period:

... Through this experience I was given to know the reality of
the truth Jesus taught about the station of the one who is the
servant. As Abdul Baha said, the servant is always with his
Master and being a servant in this household I found many
times a day we heard the most wonderful lessons given by
Abdul Baha which could not have been ours had we not been
serving in the capacity we were. Where else could one be an
invited guest and crave the privilege of washing dishes, sweep­
ing, dusting and making beds but in this Sacred Household?12

It was during this visit to New York that the Master told her the
Chicago community must henceforth allow women to be eligible
for election to the House of Spirituality. 'Abdu'l-Baha sent Ho­
dward MacNutt of New York as His representative to guide the
believers in the election, held during the latter part of July.

'Abdu'l-Baha also visited the True home on two additional
occasions prior to departing from America. During the first of
these, September 12-16, 1912, He remained at the house as a
guest. On the morning after His arrival, Corinne served a type of
tea which the Persians accompanying the Master found displeas­
ing. They encouraged Him to refuse the drink but He replied,
"This is the best tea of all, because it has been prepared with
love."13

The meetings held at the True home attracted immense crowds.
At one lecture three huge rooms were filled and people crowded
the staircase. Corinne later reported:

One evening Abdul Baha addressed the Chicago friends in our
parlor and He told us this, "It is stated in certain Prophecies in
the East, that when the Standard of God appears in the East, its
Tokens will become evident in the West. This is truly good
news—this is great glad-tidings for you. I hope that you may be
able to fulfill this Prophecy. Thus may all testify to the veracity
of this Prophecy, saying, 'Verily, the Standard of God did
appear in the West.'"

Could there be a more resplendent Token in the West than
the Mashrakel Azkar? He says "Its building is the most impor­
tant of all things. This is the spiritual foundation. For that
reason it is the most important of all foundations. From that
spiritual foundation will come forth all manner of advancement
and progress in the world of humanity. Therefore, how great is
its importance."

When the sleeping are awakened, and can realize the won­
ders of this Mashrakel Azkar will not the people of wealth long
to promote it, will not (they) come forth and dedicate their
fortunes to this Token of resplendence in the West, proclam­
ing so loudly that the Standard of God has appeared in the
East?14

It was midway during this visit that 'Abdu'l-Bahá, accompa­
nied by several believers including Corinne, journeyed to
Kenosha, Wisconsin, to deliver a lecture. Despite careful plan­
ing, the group missed the train. The Master counseled them not
to be upset since undoubtedly there was wisdom in what had
happened. Later, aboard another train, they came upon the first
train which had been involved in a collision in which many people
had been injured.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit inspired Corinne to strive even harder to
promote the Temple. Concerning the building's actual construc­
tion, He had stipulated, "Avoid contracting any debt."15 The
main section of the land was already paid for and only small
sections along the lake were left to acquire; but some $200,000
would be needed before any type of construction could begin, and
Corinne was determined to bring about the realization of that
goal. In one letter she wrote:

... I have just sent a supplication to Abdul Baha about the
sinking of the great cessions for the Dome to rest upon. I asked
Him how wide and how high the Dome should be and if we
should begin calling for funds to do that work as soon as we
have raised the last $6000 on the Lake Shore tract. In every
letter I shall urge the believers of America not to let the year
1913 close upon us without having wiped out that sum so that
1914 rises radiant as the year for actual activities.16

When 1914 did arrive, Corinne was near a state of exhaustion.
She took a short trip west, but quickly returned and refused
further rest. Later that year her daughter, Arna, appealed to
'Abdu'l-Bahá to grant permission for Corinne to visit the Holy
Land, but He refused, saying her condition was too delicate and
that "it will be much better if for the present she could travel
through the United States and live in those places where the air is
pure and the weather temperate. In this way she will have a
change of weather and at the same time she will have oppor­
tunities to guide the people. When she has found strength enough
to journey eastward I will specially send for her."17

Just prior to the arrival of this tablet, Arna, who had been
married to Leo Perron in the latter part of 1912, accompanied her
husband on a visit to his parents' home in Berlin. It appeared that
tragedy might again invade Corinne's life, for while they were in

* It would be six and one-half years before the Bourgeois design would be
selected. Corinne's idea that 'Abdu'l-Baha could designate the height and width of
the building and that the foundation could be laid before a design was selected
demonstrates a lack of understanding of architecture and engineering, but also
points out her eagerness and determination to push forward despite all obstacles.
Berlin World War I erupted and they were unable to leave the city. For several weeks Corinne anxiously awaited word of their fate and then she received news that they had escaped to Rotterdam and secured passage on a ship. In a letter relating the incident, Corinne commented on the outcome of the war:

It is all so dreadful to contemplate on one hand but so glorious on the other hand because it marks the Rise of the Sun of Truth. Universal Peace will come out of all of this destruction although the birth pains are most severe.18

The trauma of Arna’s encounter further affected Corinne’s health and she agreed finally to take an extended rest. She traveled leisurely to the west and continued to Honolulu. While there she had an audience with the Queen and corresponded with her after returning home. She sailed next to San Francisco where she attended the 1915 Bahá’í Temple Unity Convention and the first International Bahá’í Congress which was held as part of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. The magnitude of that event was truly remarkable for the Bahá’ís at that time. Noted Bahá’í speakers from throughout the country, including Howard Colby Ives, Ali Kuli Khan, Mary Hanford Ford, Albert Windust, William H. Randall, Alfred E. Lunt, Harlan Foster Ober, and Dr. Frederick W. D’Evelyn, addressed large gatherings. On April 24, in a special ceremony, the Exposition Directorate awarded a special medallion to the Congress for the Bahá’í program of Universal Peace.

Corinne’s greatest sadness during the war years came from being severed from the beloved Master. Only one letter, written by one of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s secretaries shortly after the Master and His household were able to return to Haifa after residing many months in the Druze village of Abú-Sinán, was received by her, arriving in the latter half of 1915:

The spirit suggests to me to write you a letter and convey to you the news of the good health of the Beloved and those who moth-like fly around this divine Candle. For the last ten months we have received not one letter from America nor under the present circumstances have I been able to mail to the Bahá’í world the spiritual words and advice as well as the description of the selfless deeds and divine actions of the Master. Thus from an external and superficial standpoint we have been separated from each other but from the ideal standpoint our relations were not interrupted in the least. There is no separation for those who are engaged in the services of the Cause. . . .

He often remembers his many trips to and through Chicago and reviews for the benefit of the friends the many meetings held in your house and other places. The memory of his tour in the United States, the devotion and sincerity of the friends, the reception given him by the churches and meetings, the inspiration and satisfaction of the services rendered at the Threshold of the Almighty form a great consolation in these days of inactivity. He often prays for the spiritual success and prosperity of the believers and hopes they will embody in their lives the ideal principles of Truth.19

The end of the war found Corinne still busy motivating the believers. She was convinced that when the initial $200,000 building fund was achieved the Master would return to America and guide them in the selection of a design. With communications restored, the Master’s tablets again began to arrive. His praise and encouragement of Corinne’s continuing efforts were as abundant as always:

Your letter dated Nov. 23rd, 1918, was received. Its contents indicated that praise be to God, you were engaged in the service of the Mashrek ol Azkar; that this Universal Edifice may be erected. Indeed you spare no effort in this respect, and I entertain the hope that this endeavor may grow day by day. Deeds are like unto trees, for to plant a shrub is no difficult matter, while the care necessary for its growth and yielding fruit is hard and difficult. So far effort was expended to lay the foundation of the Temple, but now its erection and completion is a difficult matter. My hope is that the friends of God may be therein assisted.20

A transformation, however, began to take place. From the very beginning ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had drawn upon Corinne’s intense interest, devotion, and tenacity to move the project forward. This article has quoted only a few of the numerous directives which He channeled through her. The war years, however, had witnessed a great strengthening in the Bahá’í Temple Unity and its Executive Board and apparently the time was appropriate for placing greater responsibility within that developing agency.

Corinne and her daughter, Edna, traveled to Haifa in the latter half of 1919. This was the last time Corinne was to be with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. For the first time, the messages she returned with did not center directly on the Temple; instead, the Master had her urge the believers to concentrate on becoming more unified, remaining steadfast and turning continually toward the Kingdom of God.

Only once during this slow and deliberate process of modifying Corinne’s level of involvement did He communicate instructions through her. The convention of 1920 had selected Louis Bourgeois’ design and soon after Mr. Bourgeois had traveled to Haifa with a set of plans. The Master felt the designed called for too large a structure and requested that a reduction in size, which would limit construction to $1 million, be considered. He informed the Executive Board of His opinion in a tablet addressed to Corinne.

The final phase of the transition is recorded in a small portion of a tablet dated December 8, 1920:

. . . In every respect all the affairs relative to the Mashreko’l Azkar are to be referred to the annual Convention. Whatever the Convention with a majority of opinions decides, must be accepted and executed.21

Apparently Corinne did not fully grasp the implications of this statement, and must have addressed other questions to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá early in 1921, because a cablegram sent on February 15 left no further question:

ALL AFFAIRS CONCERNING UNIVERSAL TEMPLE REFERRED GENERAL CONVENTION. I CANNOT INTERFERE. SUBMIT EVERYTHING CONVENTION.

ABBAS22

In The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh, the Guardian, in 1934, wrote concerning the final days of the Master:

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who incarnates an institution for which we can find no parallel whatsoever in any of the world’s recognized religious systems, may be said to have closed the Age to which He Himself belonged and opened the one in which we are now laboring. His Will and Testament should thus be regarded as the perpetual, the indissoluble link which the mind of Him
In another of the Guardian’s letters, “America and the Most Great Peace,” written in 1933, he reflected on the impact of that Will and Testament:

Out of the pangs of anguish which His bereaved followers have suffered, amid the heat and dust which the attacks launched by a sleepless enemy had precipitated, the Administration of Bahá’u’lláh’s invincible Faith was born. The potent energies released through the ascension of the Center of His Covenant crystallized into this supreme, this infallible Organ for the accomplishment of a Divine Purpose. The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá unveiled its character, reaffirmed its basis, supplemented its principles, asserted its indispensability, and enumerated its chief institutions. With that self-same spontaneity which had characterized her response to the Message proclaimed by Bahá’u’lláh America had now arisen to espouse the cause of the Administration which the Will and Testament of His Son had unmistakably established. It was given to her, and to her alone, in the turbulent years following the revelation of so momentous a Document, to become the fearless champion of that Administration, the pivot of its new-born institutions and the leading promoter of its influence. . . .

That mighty Document, the “Founding Charter of the Administrative Order of Bahá’u’lláh,” was concealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during the final perilous months prior to the Young Turks Revolution within that same metal cylinder in which Corinne had carried another document to the Holy Land in 1907, a document which gave life to a project destined to provide the unifying pivot for bringing that same Administrative Order into reality.

The first stage occurred when the Guardian, shortly after ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Ascension, summoned to Haifa several believers from both the east and the west. To Corinne, Mountford Mills, Roy C. Wilhelm, and others from America, Shoghi Effendi gave instructions for the formation of the first National Spiritual Assembly and directed that the election be held during Ridván. At
that convention Corinne received 55 votes, the highest of any of those elected.

Although the institution assumed the title of the "National Spiritual Assembly," there was little difference initially between it and the former Executive Board. The election was far removed from today's Bahá'í elections; nominating and electioneering were commonplace as was the taking of a straw vote to narrow the field of eligible candidates. Even the stationary reflected a period of transition, for the letterhead read: "Bahá'í Temple Unity —National Spiritual Assembly."

It would require three years for this transition to be completed. Thus the Guardian, in his book God Passes By, has designated 1925 as the year of the formation of the first National Spiritual Assembly which was elected according to Bahá'í principles and which assumed "... the powers, responsibilities, rights, privileges and obligations reposed in the Assembly by Bahá'u'lláh, Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, its Interpreter and Exemplar, and by Shoghi Effendi, its Guardian..."26

The first years of the Guardianship witnessed the affliction of severe trials upon the Bahá'í world. The Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá shattered the faith of many believers while others foolishly challenged the authority of Shoghi Effendi. It was Corinne's remarkable understanding of the Covenant that assisted countless Bahá'ís in this country to overcome this heartbreaking period in the Faith's history.

Corinne returned to Haifa late in 1927 and learned of the Guardian's earnest desire "... that the interior of the Foundation Hall be made suitable for regular gatherings of the believers and worthy to hold those exquisite tokens of 'Abdu'l-Bahá—three rugs which for some years have lain in the Holy Tomb on Mount Carmel."27 Two of the rugs had been sent by the Guardian in the care of Mrs. Schopflocher and the third was transported by Dr. and Mrs. Slater, who had accompanied Corinne to Haifa.

The 20th Annual Convention of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada opened on Thursday evening, April 26, 1928, with an "Inauguration Ceremony," marking the first convention to be held in the Temple. Extensive work, including the laying of permanent floors, the construction of wash rooms and temporary walls, and the installation of electric lighting, had been carried out since January. As the delegates entered the circular, inner hall for the first time, they were greeted by banks of green palms and flowering plants. The three Persian rugs, bathed in soft light, lined the walls. At the front of the hall was a large Greatest Name flanked by baskets filled with roses. One of the delegates wrote that "... one felt upon entering it that its Holy atmosphere and beauty must effect and inspire all who attended this great Convention."28

Several tablets and prayers of Bahá'u'lláh were read and chanted. The Slaters related their experiences in bringing the one rug back to America and then Corinne stepped forward. The Greatest Holy Leaf had given her a large package of tea and a bottle of attar of roses just before she left Haifa. Obeying instructions, Corinne conveyed the love of Bahá'u'lláh's daughter to all the assembled believers and then served each a cup of the special tea. Parvene Bagdadi, daughter of Dr. Zia Bagdadi, anointed each with the attar of roses, the rare fragrance of which soon filled the huge room. "Words cannot describe the spiritual radiance which illumined the faces of all, nor the happiness that was manifested as old friends met in this Holy Spot."29

Eighteen months later work began on the superstructure. The task of ornamenting the building commenced in 1933 and spanned nearly 19 years, not reaching completion until mid-1951.
During those years our national community successfully achieved the goals of two Seven Year plans and held an historic Centennial Celebration in 1944, marking the 100th year since the inception of the Faith and the completion of the exterior ornamentation of the Temple.

At the beginning of this period (1929-1930), Corinne left the house on Kenmore Avenue and built a home in Wilmette five blocks from the Temple, whose graceful dome could be seen from her bedroom window. Nearly 70 years old and no longer directly involved, her enthusiasm for the Temple, nonetheless, never wavered. She was a frequent speaker at the public meetings held in Foundation Hall, often delivering addresses monthly. She was active in the Wilmette community, serving on the Local Spiritual Assembly for many years. Her home was a mecca for Baha’is travelers and her teaching and deepening activities are still warmly remembered by those who experienced her gentle and kind nature, her warm and loving hospitality, and her unique quality of “continuously doing little things at a telling moment which made the act live forever in the heart of the recipient.” A heartwarming example of this quality is revealed in a letter written by another early believer, Gertrude Buikema. The letter was written on November 2, 1941, the day after Corinne’s 80th birthday:

... When Ella came to the door of my room and said: “Edna True is here”, I wish you could have seen the light in her face... It was so kind of you to share your birthday flowers and cake with us. The chrysanthemum plant is beautiful and rest assured Ella will take good care of it. It will be a constant reminder of your love and kindness... We had looked forward to your birthday for such a long time and I hoped to be well enough to be with you on that happy occasion, but being still in bed—now a year and four months—I could be there in spirit only but rest assured I was there all the time, greeting you with hearty congratulations and rejoicing with the friends.

Corinne traveled to Copenhagen in 1950 to address the European Teaching Conference. Volume XIII of The Baha’i World states:

... it was an unforgettable experience to have heard Mother True’s words as she spoke at the Unity Banquet at Elsinore. The friends listened, spellbound. The atmosphere was charged with light and spirit. Mother True was transfigured and the words fell from her lips like jewels. Asked afterwards where she gleaned such wisdom, she replied: “It was ‘Abdu’l-Baha speaking, not I. He told me when I said I could not speak, ‘Get yourself out of the way and I will come through,’ so I did just that.”

Corinne’s ninth and final pilgrimage was one of the greatest experiences of her life. Having reached the 90th year of her life, she longed to make one final visit to the heart of the Baha’i world and requested permission from the Guardian. Shoghi Effendi’s answer arrived by telegram on February 4, 1952. He directed her tocome in October and said she would be his only guest, a rare and unique privilege. She was not destined, however, to arrive in Haifa merely as a pilgrim; 24 days later, on February 28, Corinne was astonished as she read the words of a second telegram from the Guardian, announcing her elevation to a station of which she never would have considered herself worthy:

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 BAHAILLAH

The trip would be arduous for Corinne; two of her daughters, Katherine and Edna, cabled the Guardian requesting permission to accompany their mother and provide for her care. They made the trip in stages, spending a week in Paris and in Switzerland. The Guardian was also in Switzerland, returning to Haifa only one day prior to their arrival. With him were the newly completed plans for the Ten Year Crusade and when Corinne arrived she found him on fire with anticipation of the great victories that would be won through this glorious campaign.

The Guardian devoted his time and love almost solely to Corinne. They spent endless hours conversing and he constantly took delight in her incredibly accurate memories of the early days of the Faith in America. As was often his custom, he placed Corinne at the head of the dinner table and sat on her right. Even during dinner they were often oblivious to the rest of those present. Leroy Ioas, who was living at the International Center at the time, remarked he had never seen the Guardian respond to anyone the way he did with Corinne.

One evening the Guardian arrived at dinner early, causing considerable confusion among the Trues as they rushed to finish dressing. When Corinne entered the dining room he approached her with a radiant and somewhat impish smile. He said he recalled that she had worked a great deal for the realization of the Temple project and asked her if this was correct. Thinking he was perfectly serious, Corinne responded affirmatively. He then stated he thought she had been involved with raising money for the Temple and wondered if this was also correct. Somewhat puzzled, Corinne again responded affirmatively. The smile on his face broadening even further, the Guardian held forth an object and said that, under the circumstances, he felt she should have a small gift.

Corinne reached forward and tenderly grasped the purse which the Master had used throughout His visit to the United States in 1912. Tears streamed down her cheeks as she reverently touched the worn leather to her forehead. The Guardian, hovering about her, his eyes filled with love and admiration, impatiently urged her to open one of the pockets. Inside she found a five dollar gold piece bearing the date 1907, the year of her first pilgrimage. That coin was one of 10 she had brought with her as a gift to the Master from the Women’s Assembly of Teaching.

Six months later the Mother Temple of the West was dedicated. In the span of a few hours a dream of half a century became a reality. It was almost more than Corinne’s indomitable spirit could endure. As she walked toward the Temple her head was bowed. People continually stopped her, wishing but a few moments in which to converse, but she was unable to utter a word. As she sat beneath that majestic dome and the voices of the choir floated through the air, the memories that flooded her consciousness must have been overwhelming. For 50 years she had shouldered that mighty trust given her by ‘Abdu’l-Baha; and now, at 91 years of age, God lifted that overwhelming responsibility from her shoulders. The greatest achievement of the American Baha’i community in the first century of the Faith was completed and, for millions of people destined to enter the Temple’s doors and...
Corinne True and her daughters at the time of the dedication of the House of Worship, May 1, 1953. From left, Dr. Katherine True, Arna True Perron (recently deceased), Mrs. True, and Edna True. Both Katherine and Edna were members of the experience the power and majesty of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, that precious moment could never be theirs had it not been for this valiant lady.

In April of 1957 Corinne made a final trip outside the country, representing the Guardian at the formation of the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Greater Antilles. Even though quite frail because of her advanced age, Corinne delivered a stirring address, marveling at the miracle of Bahá'í being in that part of the world "under the shade of the Guardian's name." She also lovingly anointed all present with attar of roses, recalling countless memories for all of those who had been in the Holy Land.

It was on November 5 of that same year that the beloved Guardian passed away. A telephone call from Rúhíyyih Khánum at 2:30 a.m. conveyed the tragic and unexpected news to Edna. When the transatlantic conversation ended some 45 minutes later, Edna and Katherine sat facing each other, both wishing desperately they would awake and discover they had been dreaming. They began considering how they could tell Corinne, fearing the shock might be too much for her delicate health. Finally they agreed to wait until after they had given her breakfast.

They entered the room and sat down on each side of the bed. As Edna conveyed the crushing news, Corinne's eyes lowered. Suddenly, she raised her head; her eyes were burning with an immovable firmness and resolve. She instantly comforted both her daughters by declaring emphatically, "You must know that this is the will of God." Corinne was unable to travel to Haifa to join her 26 fellow Hands of the Cause of God, who would guide and nurture the Bahá'í world until the election of the incomparable Universal House of Justice in 1963. Nonetheless, her signature is one of the 27 affixed to that mighty document, "Proclamation by the Hands of the Cause to the Bahá'ís of East and West," which gave direction and continuity at that dark hour to Bahá'u'lláh's mighty Cause and brought reassurance to thousands of troubled souls. Corinne also collaborated with her fellow Hands of the Cause in America, encouraging the believers to continue their forward thrust and win the victories of the Ten Year Crusade.

Although Corinne remained in bed most of the time during the last months of her life, she daily immersed herself in the Holy Writings, and continued to inspire everyone who met her. Finally, on April 3, 1961, at the age of 99, she passed away quietly.

Later that month, at the 53rd National Convention, a memorial service was held at the request of the Hands of the Cause at the World Center. Foundation Hall, adorned with beautiful red roses and huge baskets of pink and white carnations, was filled to capacity. The Hand of the Cause of God Paul Haney read messages from "the two Hands of the Cause in the Western Hemisphere, Mr. Khádem and Mr. Sears, from the Asian Hands of the Cause gathered in Teherán, from the National Spiritual Assemblies of Persia, of the Arabian Peninsula, and of Scandinavia and Finland." The most beautiful of these messages, eulogizing this great heroine of Bahá'u'lláh, came from the Hands of the Cause at the World Center:

Grieved loss distinguished disciple 'Abdu'l-Bahá Hand Cause Corinne True. Her long association early history Faith in America raising Mother Temple West, staunch, unfailing championship Covenant steadfast support beloved Guardian every stage unfoldment World Order unforgettable enrich annals Faith western world. In one of the earliest tablets to her, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had commanded:

Rest not a moment and breathe not a breath of repose until thou becomest a sign of God's love and a banner of God's favor. Corinne Knight True, whom the Guardian had regarded as "the most venerable figure among the veteran pioneers of the Faith in the West," had obeyed.
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The ‘most venerable figure among the veteran pioneers of the Faith in the West’ passed away quietly on April 3, 1961.
Bahá'u'lláh and His Most Holy Shrine

O ye dwellers in the highest paradise!

Proclaim unto the children of assurance that within the realms of holiness, nigh unto the celestial paradise, a new garden hath appeared, round which circle the denizens of the realm on high and the immortal dwellers of the exalted paradise. Strive, then, that ye may attain that station, that ye may unravel the mysteries of love from its wind-flowers and learn the secret of divine and consummate wisdom from its eternal fruits. Solaced are the eyes of them that enter and abide therein.¹

* * *

But for Him* (Bahá'u'lláh) no Divine Messenger would have been invested with the robe of prophethood, nor would any of the sacred scriptures have been revealed. To this bear witness all created things.³

“When the friends speak of the Blessed Beauty,” said the beloved of all hearts, Shoghi Effendi, to the pilgrims, “it is not enough for them to merely say that Bahá'u'lláh is the Great Educator of mankind; let them rather say that He is 'the Most Great Revelation,' the Promised One of all Holy Books and Scriptures, the Dawning-place of Revelation, and the Source of Inspiration. There is a difference between revelation and inspiration. He is also the ‘Heavenly Father’.⁴

Ever since that moment I heard the beloved Guardian emphasize this, when I approach a seeker I quote the following from Isaiah, the greatest prophet of Israel:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.⁵

In the Kittib-i-Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh proclaims His Station and the great Significance of His Day, to the kings:

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...⁶

This is the Day in which He Who held converse with God (Moses) hath attained the light of the Ancient of Days, and quaffed the pure waters of reunion from this Cup that hath caused the seas to swell. Say: By the one true God! Sinai is circling round the Day Sprin of Revelation, while from the heights of the Kingdom the Voice of the Spirit of God (Jesus

* In all the Bahá’í Writings it is emphasized: “Let no one meditating... on the nature of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, mistake its character or misconstrue the intent of its Author. The divinity attributed to so great a Being and the complete incarnation of the names and attributes of God in so exalted a Person should, under no circumstances, be misconceived or misinterpreted. The human temple that has been made the vehicle of so overpowering a Revelation must, if we be faithful to the tenets of the Faith, ever remain entirely distinguished from that 'innermost Spirit of Spirits' and 'eternal Essence of Essences'—that invisible yet rational God...²

³ March 1976/Bahá’í News 1
Christ is heard proclaiming: "Bestir yourselves, ye proud ones of the earth, and hasten ye unto Him." Carmel hath, in this Day, hastened in longing adoration to attain His court, whilst from the heart of Zion there cometh the cry: "The promise is fulfilled. That which had been announced in the holy Writ of God, the most Exalted, the Almighty, the Best-Beloved, is made manifest."\(^6\)

Bahá'u'lláh proclaims: "All the Divine Books and Scriptures have predicted and announced unto men the advent of the Most Great Revelation."\(^7\)

The Divine Messengers of the past had a mission to prepare the people for this Day and give them glad tidings of the coming of Bahá'u'lláh.

Of old did we send Moses with our signs; and said to him, "Bring forth thy people from the darkness into the light, and remind them of the days of God."\(^8\)

Then gave We the Book to Moses—complete for Him who should do right, and a decision for all matters, and a guidance, and a mercy, that they might believe in the Presence of their Lord.\(^9\)

All the Prophets from the seed of Abraham received their mantles in the Holy Land and its vicinity, the Court and Sanctuary of Bahá'u'lláh. Zoroaster also visited the Holy Land and "held converse with some of the Prophets of Israel."\(^10\)

The Greatest Name of Bahá'u'lláh

The Holy Books start with \(B\) (the first letter of the name of Bahá'u'lláh), as with the first letter of the first word of Genesis, "Brishit" (Hebrew: beginning or in the beginning), which starts with the letter \(B\).\(^11\)

This large wooden plaque inscribed by Bahá'u'lláh's beloved father hangs over the mansion he built in Tákur. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said the poem on the plaque is proof that Bahá'u'lláh's father recognized the Station of His Son as the Manifestation of God.
Hundreds of verses and traditions had been revealed by the Prophets in praise of the name of Bahá'u'lláh.

The same is true of the beginning of the Glorious Qur'án and of each of the 114 Súrihs (chapters) which all begin with B: BISM'I'LLÁH. The ninth Súrih also begins with a B, but with a different word, Bára'.

The Muslims repeat the first chapter beginning with BISM'I'LLÁH, five times a day in their obligatory prayers. They are also urged to repeat the word, BISM'I'LLÁH, as many times as they can in their daily lives as a blessing, evidently a reminder of the coming of Bahá'u'lláh.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá, in His commentary13 of BISM'I'LLÁH, quotes from Imám Ja'far-i-Sádiq (the sixth Imám) that "El-Bá Bahá'u'lláh" (B means Bahá'u'lláh). Siyyid Kážim-i-Rashtí, in one of his works (Sharí'í-Qásidih), quotes from the same Imám on several occasions, "El-Bá, Bahá'u'lláh, val-Sín, Saná'u'lláh" (B means Bahá'u'lláh and S Saná'u'lláh). In Arabic, the i between B and S is not written, thus B is the first letter and S the second letter and Saná'u'lláh again means Bahá'u'lláh. The inscription, "El-Bá, Bahá'u'lláh" (the beginning of this analysis in Arabic), adorns the margins of some of the Latin editions of the Qur'án published in Turkey.

The Imám 'Alí explains that the Qur'án is the essence of all Holy Books and the essence of the Qur'án is contained in its first chapter. Further, the essence of the first chapter is in the first verse and the essence of the first verse is in the first letter, B, to which is added in the commentary of the Khuṭbí-i-Tútunjíyíih, "El-Bá, Bahá'u'lláh val-Sín, Saná'u'lláh..."14

Hundreds of verses and traditions had been revealed by the Prophets in praise of the name of Bahá'u'lláh. Some of them, together with some of His titles, appear in the majestic work of the beloved Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, Chapter XI, and others.

Ezekiel said, "the glory of the God of Israel (Bahá'u'lláh) came from the way of the East."15

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A group of pilgrims stands beneath the windows of the hall of the Mansion of Tákur, a home built by the father of Bahá'u'lláh. The water is from a natural spring which flows from beneath the hall into a pool in the gardens.

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*BISM'I'LLÁH is the first word of the first verse of every Surih of the Qur'án except the ninth. The verse is composed of 19 letters, in honor of each letter six chapters were revealed, totaling 114 chapters.12 The translation of the first verse is: "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful."
Isaiah said, “Arise, shine; for the light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.”

Isaiah said, “Arise, shine; for the light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.”'16 Not only does “the glory of the Lord” refer to the name of Bahá'u'lláh, but since Bahá also means shining,* “Arise, shine” may be considered an exhortation to be a Bahá’í!18

The followers of Krishna also have many references to the name of Bahá'u'lláh. In the prayer, “the Mother of the Vedas,” the Hindus stand with great reverence and beseech guidance from the “GLORY OF GOD” (Bahá'u'lláh). Also in Gita, XI:30, it is said, “Thine Blazing BHAH, O Vishnu (the Omnipotent God), doth glow intensely.”19

AMITABHA (Infinite Glory), the name of the promised Buddha, is inscribed in the 42-foot statue sitting in eternal meditation at Kamakura, Japan, accompanied by the words, “Long ear lobes denote aristocratic birth. Mark on forehead is symbol of spiritual insight.”

One of the most explicit references appears in the 11th chapter of Şáms’ul-Ma'áni written by Shaykh-i-Búní**: “Ere long God will shine from the face of Bahíyú'l-Abhá (the Glory, the Most Glorious) with the name of Bahá on the Day of Absolute (the Promised Day), in the plain of ‘Akka.”20

The well-known scholar, the illustrious and learned man, Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Amílí, was the first in the Muslim Faith to

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*”Bahá'u'lláh, . . . signifying at once the glory, the light and the splendor of God.”17

**He passed on in the year 622 A.H. (774 years ago).

The Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí as it appeared during the time of the first pilgrimages of the Western believers in the early 1900s.
discover the name of Bahá'u'lláh. He was inspired by the gui­dance of the fifth and sixth Imáms* who swore that the Greatest Name of God could be found in either of two specific prayers. ** In one of these, *** recited at dawn during the month of Fasting, the name, 'BAHÁ' is repeated four times in the first verse, a verse that Bahá'u'lláh commanded the ‘Son of the Wolf’ recite with absolute sincerity while facing the Kaaba of God: “O my God! I beseech Thee by Thy most glorious light, and all Thy lights are verily glorious.”

How significant that during the 30 days of Ramadán this prayer echoes melodiously from the minarets at dawn, awakening the populace with the name of Bahá'u'lláh.

In order to attest to his faith in Bahá'u'lláh, he (Shaykh Ámilí) assumed the title ‘Báhi’i’ over three centuries ago, **** and is now known as Shaykh-i-Báhi'. He composed a most moving and eloquent poem in praise of his Beloved, some verses of which are:

How long will this torrent of tears flood from each lash in my longing to meet Thee, O, the Unique One, my Beloved?
Will the night of Thy separation ever end
O, Thou, Whose agony and tribulations have, as an arrow, pierced the hearts of Thy lovers?
Multitudes are occupied in Thy praise whilst Thou art hidden from them.
To the abode of the pious and the religious I went;
Before Thy Countenance, I found all bowing and prostrating.

Of a time I was a hermit of the hermitage,
Another, a refugee in the monastery
And again, a resident in the mosque.
Verily, O Beloved, house to house ‘tis Thee I have sought.

Upon whichever door I knock, I find the Master of the house is Thee, Thee alone.
In Pagan temple, in monastery, Thou art the Beloved, Thee, Thee alone.
My goal in the Kaaba and the temple is Thee, Thee alone.
Thou art my purpose; Kaaba and temple are but excuses.

Helpless Bahá'i, whose heart is rent by Thy sorrows, However sinful he may be, is one among the multitudes of Thy servants.

* Imám Muhammad-i-Báqír and Imám Ja'far-i-Sádiq.
** Du'áy-i-Sáhar and Du'áy-i-Umm-i-Davúd (See commentary of Ash'ár-i-Ná'im by Isfárá'í-Khávarí pp. 469-70.
 ***Du'áy-i-Sáhar. The first verse, transliterated, reads: “Alláhumma inni as 'aluqá min 'Alá wá kullá Bahá' ika Bahá'” The illustrious Bahá'i poet, Na'im has pointed out that the Dawn-prayer begins with the name of Bahá (Splendor) and ends with the name of 'Alá (Loftiness), the latter the exalted name of the Bab, the two names of the 1st and 19th month of the Badí Calendar.
 ****He passed on in the year 1030 A.H., which corresponds to the early part of the 16th Century A.D. He was 78. He is buried in Mashhad.
His hope is Thy perpetual compassion,
His sins anticipate Thy mercifulness.
Surely, no better excuse has one for sins. 22

In the Qur'an, Moses was addressed by "the Speaker on Sinai" (one of the titles of Bahá'u'lláh) in the following words:

O Moses! Verily, I am thy Lord: therefore pull off thy shoes: for thou art in the holy valley of Towa. . . .

Verily I am God: there is no God but Me: therefore worship me, and observe prayer for a remembrance of me. Verily the hour is coming:—I all but manifest it—That every soul may be recompensed for its labors. 23

And when Moses came at our set time and his Lord spake with him, he said, "O Lord, shew thyself to me, that I may look upon thee." He said, "Thou shalt not see Me; but look towards the mount, and if it abide firm in its place, then shalt thou see Me." And when God manifested Himself to the mountain he turned it to dust! and Moses fell in a swoon.

And when he came to himself, he said, "Glory be to thee! To thee do I turn in penitence, and I am the first of them that believe." 24

Baha'u'llah confirms in His Epistle to the Son of the Wolf that He is "the Speaker on Sinai" anticipated by Imam 'Ali:

The Commander of the Faithful (Imam 'Ali)—peace be upon him—moreover saith in the Khuṭbiy-i-Tutunjiyyih: "Anticipate ye the Revelation of Him Who conversed with Moses from the Burning Bush on Sinai." 25

One of the most moving recognitions of the station of Bahá'u'lláh appears in a beautiful poem inscribed by His beloved father in exquisite handwriting on a large wooden plaque. This plaque was given a place of honor over the kingly mansion he built in Tákur, where Bahá'u'lláh spent most of His summers. This gesture, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is proof that he recognized the Station of His Son as the Manifestation of God. This plaque is still in existence in Tákur. It reads:

When thou attainest the threshold of thy Beloved

Say yea, for this is not the place to exchange Saláam (peace) and Alayk (upon thee be peace).
This is the valley of love, mind thy step.
This is the Holy Land, pull off thy shoes. 26

Muhammad, the Apostle of God, received His revelation almost 1,400 years ago, in His one-night journey (according to the Muslims, "a journey equal to seventy thousand years") to Jerusalem and was shown there, in 'the circuit of Jerusalem (Ákká and Haifa) some of the signs of God:

Praise be unto him who transported his servant (Muhammad) by night from the sacred temple of Mecca to the farther temple of Jerusalem, the circuit of which we have blessed, that we might show him some of our signs. 27

The Koran is no other than a revelation revealed to him (Muhammad):
Endued with wisdom. With even balance stood he. . . .
Then came he nearer and approached. . . .
And he (God) revealed to his servant what he revealed. . . .
He (Muhammad) had seen him also another time,* Near the Sidrah-tree, which marks the boundary. 28

In the Conference of Badasht, Bahá'u'lláh, the Hidden Treasure, Who 'loved to be known,' revealed His "Hidden Name" and appeared with His Most Great Name: BAHÁ; He Who "But for Him no Divine Messenger would have been invested with the robe of prophethood, nor would any of the sacred scriptures have been revealed." 29

The Exalted Báb, Who declared "that He had 'sacrificed' Himself 'wholly' for Him (Bahá'u'lláh), that He had 'consented to be cursed' for His sake, and to have 'yearned for naught but martyrdom in the path of His love,' " 30 in all His Writings and in between the lines, praises Bahá'u'lláh and mentions His name with great exaltation. In His formulation of the Badí' Calendar, He adorned the first day and first month of the year with the name "Bahá." He "alluded to Him (Bahá'u'lláh) as the 'Abhá Horizon' wherein He Himself lived and dwelt," 31 called the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the Qayyum-i-Asmá, "companions of the Crimson Ark—the Ark which God hath prepared for the people of

* This refers to the twin Revelations of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.
The golden star of  Khá Bahá'ú'l-Abá adorns the top of the entrance of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh as well as the top of the entrance of the Holy of Holies.

Bahá’í32 He heralded the order of Bahá'u'lláh in these words: “Well is it with him who fixeth his gaze upon the Order of Bahá'u'lláh.”33 Prior to His departure from Chihri'q, He had penned on a scroll “no less than three hundred and sixty derivations of the word Bahá” and instructed that the scroll together with His documents, “His pen-case, His seals, and agate rings” be delivered to His Beloved, Bahá'u'lláh.34 In the ninth Váhid of the Arabic Bayán, the Bab also sends His greetings to Bahá'u'lláh, in the most touching, and delicate way, unprecedented in the annals of all religions, wishing the remembrance and praise of all creation rest upon Him at all times. He addresses Him in that passage:

O Bahá'u'lláh!

What hast Thou done? O Bahá'u'lláh! May my life be sacrificial 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!35

“‘Abdu'l-Bahá ... was heard to exclaim” the above passages “one evening as He was being swiftly driven to fulfill His third engagement of the day in Washington.”

One day, as He (‘Abdu'l-Bahá) was strolling, the beloved Guardian further recounts: “He called to remembrance the days of the Blessed Beauty, referring with sadness to His sojourn in Sulaymáníyyih, to His loneliness and to the wrongs inflicted upon Him. Though He had often recounted that episode, that day He was so overcome with emotion that He sobbed aloud in His grief. ... All His attendants wept with Him, and were plunged into sorrow as they heard the tale of the woeful trials endured by the Ancient Beauty, and witnessed the tenderness of heart manifested by His Son.”36

The Sufferings of Bahá'u'lláh

I am moved to share with you my dear readers, further heart-breaking passages from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh; and, from the writings of the beloved Guardian, a moving story related by 'Abdu'l-Bahá; and, finally, touching accounts of the Siyáh-Chál by Dr. Yúnis Kháñ, one of the amanuenses of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

they, ... from Niyyávarán, which was then the residence of His Majesty, conducted Us, on foot and in chains, with bared head and bare feet, to the dungeon of Tbrán. A brutal man, accompanying Us on horseback, snatched off Our hat, whilst We were being hurried along by a troop of executioners and officials. 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. Upon Our arrival We were first conducted along a pitch-black corridor, from whence We descended three steep flights of stairs to the place of confinement assigned to Us. 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 ... 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!37

Shouldst thou at sometime happen to visit the dungeon of His Majesty the Sháh, ask the director and chief jailer to show thee those two chains, one of which is known as Qárá-Guhar, and the other as Salásil. I swear by the Day-Star of Justice that for four months this Wronged One was tormented and chained by one or the other of them. “My grief exceedeth all the woes to which Jacob gave vent, and all the afflictions of Job are but a part of My sorrows!”38

“‘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, and the sight made a never-to-be-forgotten impression on the mind of the sensitive boy.”39

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Baha'u'llah praises God, "Who has adorned the Strong Prison with the presence of his holiness 'Ali-Kabli-Akbar and his holiness Ameen... The Glory of God and the glory of all in heaven and earth be upon both of them! "Light and glory, greetings and praise, be upon the hands of His Cause..."

(from the Tablet of the World, Bahá'í World Faith, p. 172, in honor of Jinábi Nured-Din Ḥasan Afnán of Shiráz)

Dr. Yunis Khan recounts: "All traces of the terrifying dungeon and the chains, the two 'wild dragons', have now been effaced from the surface of Tihcin, just as gigantic wild animals became extinct after Noah's Flood. However, we should preserve their memories in the museum of our minds." He proceeds to give some of the details of the Siyáh-Chál which will be left unquoted since Baha'u'llah testified that, "No pen can depict that place, nor any tongue describe its loathsome smell." 40

"As for Qara-Guhar," Dr. Yunis Khan writes, "this is the name of a particular chain which belongs to this subterranean,
The Wronged One of the world suffered under the weight of the terrible chains in the Siyáh-Chál

Above left is a view of the Siyáh-Chál, showing what was the original corridor leading to the entrance. The dungeon was filled-in in 1868 and the Tikyih Dowlat, a canvas-covered center for royal mourning for the Imám Husayn, was built over it. Above right is a reproduction of a painting of the Tikyih Dowlat showing a ceremony for the Imám Husayn. The ground floor accommodated 4,000 women. The surrounding rooms were for the Shah, his family, and dignitaries. The site was used for a convocation of national representatives (Majlis-i-Mu'assásan) in 1925 at which the fall of the Qajar dynasty was announced. Below are the officers of that historic gathering. A Bábí, 'Izzatu'lláh Bakhsháyish, fifth from left in front row, was the chief stenographer recording the event. Thus the downfall of the Qajar dynasty was announced through the will of the promised Husayn (Báb'ulláh) at the very site of His prison. Believers at the time kept recalling that the Exalted Báb predicted that the Qajar dynasty would fall 1,000 (lunar) months from His Revelation. However, research must be made to find the source.
The Blessed Beauty was laid to rest in the northernmost room of the Mansion of Bahjí.

dungeon. However it was not an ordinary chain but is referred to by this title because of its thickness and heavy weight. . . . It was over 10 meters in length and had five to seven thick steel collars, each with a heavy lock to which the jailers held keys. The chain took seven prisoners in a row. Each prisoner was given a piece of wood shaped like a "Y" (like a cane with two heads). One end was used to carry part of the weight of the collar, while the other end was held or placed on the damp brick floor of the dungeon should the prisoner prefer to sit. Of course not even a man of great strength could stand or walk with this chain. There was no choice for the prisoner but to sit on his knees, hold fast on to the end of the cane with his two hands, lay his chin on the "Y", rest his eyes on the dark ceiling of this foul, loathsome-smelling prison, and await his fate."

Dr. Yúnís Kháń continues: "This is a brief account of the Siyáh-Chál. Why should the believers know the description of the Siyáh-Chál and the chains? Because the 'Wronged One of the world', the Æbhá Beauty, suffered under their weight for a certain period of time. Years later some of His lovers and followers attained the glory of being imprisoned in the Siyáh-Chál and experienced the same burdens of those heavy chains. You might wonder how I know these details, being unworthy to enter the prison of Bábá'u'lláh, and undeserving to win the glory of bearing the weight of the chain. Fifty-three lunar years ago, when I was a boy, I went to meet my father, Múshádí Husayn, who was one of the prisoners in the Siyáh-Chál. Then I witnessed this terrifying scene and the unhealthy conditions of the prisoners. This impressed me so much that it has left its agonizing memory on me all these years and will remain with me for the rest of my life. It is a comfort to recall that in spite of all the terrifying scenes, the imprisoned believers, frail and weak, were joyous that their imprisonment was in the path of their Beloved. It was also comforting to see their suffering was somewhat alleviated when His Majesty Násír'í-Dín Sháh had mercy on them, permitting the prisoners two hours of sunshine in the middle of that cold winter so that they might inhale fresh air after 30 days of deprivation. In addition, their spirits were uplifted to hear from me that their families were safe especially since they had heard from the jailers that the mobs in Tihríh had attacked the Bábás and murdered all the women and children. . . .

"On my visit* to the 100-square-meter courtyard, I found the prisoners weak and sickly, sitting before the sun. My father was so weak, thin, and yellow in color that initially I did not recognize him, although he called me by name. The late Múllá 'Alí-Akbar Sháhmírzádí, known as Khájí Akhúnd (Hand of the Cause of God) was chained to my father. . . . Finally, I recognized my father and sat on his trembling knees while the jailers surrounded us and stared. We conversed briefly. I gave the good news of the safety of the Bábá'í families, looked at and touched the collar of the Qará-Guhar chain which, due to the dampness of the prison, had rusted.

"Fortunately, after six to seven weeks, the prisoners** were transferred to a common prison close to the Siyáh-Chál. In this prison they were allowed to sit on platforms along the corridor at night with every seven prisoners chained together and their legs locked in what is called a Khalíl. The prisoners were permitted light at night. The Bábá'í prisoners among them had secretly taught the Faith to their fellow prisoners (formerly thieves, highwaymen, and assassins) and deepened them in the Cause. After the jailers retired, they chanted prayers and Tablets they had committed to memory and rejoiced in remembrance of their Beloved. . . .

"O, how I envied the nightly celebrations of the prisoners whose sweets consisted of the stories of the chains that bore them down!" 41

Thus it was in the Siyáh-Chál and under these circumstances that the birth of the Revelation of Bábá'u'lláh took place—"a Revelation which (according to the beloved Guardian), flowing out, in that extremely perilous hour, from His travelling soul, pierced the gloom that had settled upon that pestilential pit, and, bursting through its walls, and propagating itself as far as the ends of the earth, infused into the entire body of mankind its boundless potentialities, and is now under our very eyes, shaping the course of human society." 42

The Ascension of Bábá'u'lláh

The Blessed Beauty's 'spirit . . . winged its flight to His 'other dominions,' dominions 'whereon the eyes of the people of names have never fallen.' 43

"The news of His ascension was instantly communicated to . . .

* The meeting between Dr. Yúnís Kháń and the prisoners took place outside the prison, during one of the two-hour periods that the prisoners enjoyed the outdoor air.

** His father and others.
As we reach the bend of the road, the Mansion of Bahji comes into full view, "a dwelling place which He (Bahá'u'lláh) characterized as the 'lofty mansion', the spot which 'God hath ordained as the most sublime vision of mankind.'"51 We are moved to recall the touching stories told by dearly loved Hand of the Cause of God ʻÁbrís'ú'lláh Samandarí,*** about 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Bahá'u'lláh shortly before His passing, also confirmed by Hájí Mírzá Háydar 'Alí.

"On His walk from 'Akká to Bahjí, the moment 'Abdu'l-Bahá approached the bend of the road, He prostrated Himself and laid His forehead on the earth. Bahá'u'lláh turned to those in His presence and told them: 'The Master is coming. Hasten, go to meet and escort Him.'"

Hájí Mirza Háydar 'Alí recounts this story in his marvelous book: "Bahá'u'lláh was sitting in His Mansion. As soon as the light of the beauty of His Branch ('Abdu'l-Bahá) shone from the garden of Jammá'l (the bend of the road already referred to) Bahá'u'lláh's Face beamed with great joy and fragrance. He bade all to hasten to the garden and its vicinity and welcome the Master."52

Dr. Yúnís Khan writes: "Pilgrimages to the Holy Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh started the very first year of His Ascension... Twice on Fridays and Sundays the pilgrims and resident Bahá'ís would go to the Shrine in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá Who chanted the Tablet of Visitation.

"On the second and third year after the Ascension there were celebrations during the Bahá'í Holy Days which attracted the attention of the populace, whether friend or foe, particularly of the military and civil authorities, the Judge, and the Muftí. They were all so impressed with the spirit that surrounded visitation of the Shrine that they longed to accompany the friends on these occasions.

"Outside the House of the Master there was an open area where the coach house was situated. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had two carriages: a big one called 'American cab' that carried nine people and another one that carried four. For weekly visits to the Shrine, Isfandiyár, the cabman of the Master, would prepare the carriage for the pilgrims and resident Bahá'ís, the pilgrims being given priority. Isfandiyár would drive the carriage to Bahjí and come back to take another group. However, the Master would walk alone, sometimes with two believers escorting Him. Upon His arrival at Bahjí, He would rest briefly in a room adjacent to the Shrine of

Súltán ʻAbdu'l-Hamíd in a telegram which began with the words, 'the Sun of Bahá has set' and in which the monarch was advised of the intention of interring the sacred remains within the precincts of the Mansion, an arrangement to which He readily assented. Bahá'u'lláh was accordingly laid to rest in the northernmost room of the house which served as a dwelling-place for His son-in-law, the most northerly of the three houses lying to the west of, and adjacent to, the Mansion. His interment took place shortly after sunset, on the very day of His ascension." (May 29, 1892)44

The Exalted Báb had already anticipated in the eighth 'Ádíyíd of the Arabic Bayán that the Qiblih would be wherever 'He Whom God shall make Manifest'45 (Bahá'u'lláh) is. The Blessed Beauty had fixed the Qiblih in the Book of Aqdas.46

'Abdu'l-Bahá singled out "the inconsolable Nabil to select those passages (from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh) which constitute the text of the Tablet of Visitation now recited in the Most Holy Tomb."47

He ('Abdu'l-Bahá) also arranged for construction of the Shrine. "Then the supreme ordeal, the great desolation, came upon us. Qulám-ʻAlí* took on the carpentry work of the Holy Tomb, exerting all his sure powers. To this day, the glass roof which is over the inner courtyard of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh remains as the product of his skill."48

** The Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, the Qiblih of the Bahá'í World

Let us now prepare to make a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, the most precious dust that this planet holds in its bosom; let us fulfill our hearts' desire which is none other then "the Desire of the Divine Messengers."50

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Visits

'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the Holy Shrine is very moving. Evidently He approached the Shrine from the former road** which passes by the Mansion.

As we reach the bend of the road, the Mansion of Bahjí comes into full view, "a dwelling which He (Bahá'u'lláh) characterized as the 'lofty mansion', the spot which 'God hath ordained as the most sublime vision of mankind.'"51 We are moved to recall the touching stories told by dearly loved Hand of the Cause of God ʻÁbrís'ú'lláh Samandarí,*** about 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Bahá'u'lláh shortly before His passing, also confirmed by Hájí Mírzá Háydar 'Alí.

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3. A resident Bahá'í, "a carpenter and a master craftsman" from Kháhán.
4. Before The Universal House of Justice, in their negotiations with the authorities, succeeded in procuring the present access to the main highway.
5. He often shared this story with the Hands of the Cause on that spot, as well as with the beloved friends in America.
Baha'u'llah. After summoning the pilgrims and anointing each with rose water in a heavenly manner and with silence, He would chant the Tablet of Visitation with His glorious voice. "During the Feasts, outside the inner court of the House of the Master, beautiful pots of varied colored flowers were ready to be carried to the Holy Shrine. All the pilgrims and residents, dressed in their best attire, would gather in the House of the Master two hours before sunset, or perhaps earlier if the exceeding heat of the mid-day sun had subsided. Each would shoulder a pot and, two by two, they set out for the Holy Shrine. During my pilgrimage the believers would not start from the House of the Master, owing to the tense atmosphere created by the rebellious Covenant-breakers. Rather they would pick up the pots from outside the Gate of Akka, where the pots were ready for them. 'Abdu'l-Baha, like the Commander of an Army, while Himself carrying a pot, would pace on their flank or ahead of them, monitoring and controlling their march and commanding two or three whose voices were melodious to chant from the Mathnavi of Bahá'u'lláh, from 'Saqi' az Ghiybi Baqa', or from the poems recited by Bahá'í poets. This band of flower-bearers would walk slowly and majestically to the Shrine. As soon as the Shrine came into full view 'Abdu'l-Baha bade them to stop, take the pots from their shoulders and put them on their heads while a moving prayer from Bahá'u'lláh was chanted. . . . "To be brief, the pots were delivered to the Shrine. Another prayer was chanted. All would go for a little rest and after having had tea, some sweets and making ablutions, 'Abdu'l-Baha would chant the Tablet of Visitation and bid them to sit and chant the appropriate passages for the Feasts with melodious voices. Often times, they would chant some of the exhilarating poems of Bahá'u'lláh such as 'Halih Halih yá Bishárat'.

"On the night of the (fifth anniversary Ascension) we had a vigil night in the House of the Master, praying and chanting the whole night. At dawn early we were called by 'Abdu'l-Baha to head to the Holy Shrine. Each was given a bottle of rose water and a lit candle. We left the gate of Akka at dawn heading for the Shrine with the same ceremony already mentioned. Upon our arrival in the Holy Shrine, following 'Abdu'l-Baha's instructions, the rose water was poured at the base of the flowers inside the inner court of the Shrine and the burning candles planted inside the earth of the inner garden. We all stood in great reverence. 'Abdu'l-Baha chanted the Tablet of Visitation. It was unbearable for us to see 'Abdu'l-Baha's agony, especially the noticeable tears in His eyes.

"The Feast of Ridván was at hand and again, with the same ceremony as before, we went on pilgrimage to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. . . . The garden was full of flowers. . . ." 54

"In addition to the vases of flowers which had been brought for the commemoration from Akka, it was necessary to tend the flower gardens around the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. One of the ceremonies which developed consisted of watering this flower garden around the Shrine. About 100 copper pots (called Arabian Jarrih) were secured. During the Feast the pilgrims and residents would fill them from neighboring wells and chant poems and verses from the Writings while watering the flowers. The rapture and devotion with which this task was carried out so deeply impressed Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís, especially when 'Abdu'l-Baha, Himself, would put a copper pot on His shoulder and face the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, that every one would be moved to tears. All the friends would stand with great reverence. Some of the visitors would ask to be given a copper pot so that they too could water the flowers.

"After chanting the Tablets of the Feasts and other appropriate passages for Ridván, we would all return together to Akka." 55

Hájí Mirzá Haydar 'Ali recounts: "After 'Abdu'l-Baha gained His freedom, He resumed visiting the Holy Dust of Bahá'u'lláh and watering the flowers of the garden as was His custom. "In spite of His frailty and illness, every Friday and Sunday in the presence of the notables of the government, the dignitaries, and some of the inhabitants, He carried on His shoulders 60 to 70 Jarrih of water. While watering, He was attacked by fever several times and became ill. With this illness, His fever was worse than ever. The pilgrims and Bahá'í residents asked His permission to attain His presence. When permission was granted, they all assembled, threw themselves at the knees of 'Abdu'l-Baha, took the hem of His robe, and in tears beseeched Him, for the sake of His precious health, to stop watering the flowers of the Holy Shrine and leave this job to those devoted believers who longed to be given the bounty of watering the flowers on His behalf. He agreed. However, the grief in His face was so apparent that those who had begged Him to give up this job regretted their act and blamed themselves for having dared to ask 'Abdu'l-Baha for this. After two weeks, He invited all the Bahá'ís, showered His bounties upon them, served them tea and sweets, and gave them heavenly food. Then in the most loving and affectionate manner He said, 'I have agreed to your request and refrained from watering the flowers of the Holy Shrine, but my comfort and the happiness of my heart is in watering these flowers. My physical body and health is not important. The main thing is the happiness of my heart and the healthiness of my spirit. . . . Now please agree with me, from the bottom of your hearts, to water the flowers of the Shrine. All of you may participate in this service to the Abhá Beauty.' (Here Hájí Mirzá Haydar 'Ali is moved to express his great admiration, praises the exemplary modesty of the Master and offers to give his life for Him). In response all bowed and joyfully assented. Thus the watering, His permanent custom, was once again resumed."

Dr. Habib Mu'ayyad writes similar moving accounts of the early years. The following concerns his visits to the Holy Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh on October 28 and 30, 1914: "We went to make our pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. When arriving there our eyes were illumined by gazing on the beautiful countenance of 'Abdu'l-Baha Who was there in the garden. His beauty surpasses the beauty and fragrance of the flowers. The beloved Master, In His heavenly radiance, was dressed from head to toe in white, and was working in the midst of the white jasmine and white lillies. We bowed, and He answered, 'Marhabá'. After a little while 'Abdu'l-Baha went to the well (a water well with a hand pump) and started to pump for 19 minutes. The water was to be held in reserve for the gardens to water the trees and flowers. Incidentally, one of the friends, Badi' Bush'úri, counted carefully on his watch. It came to 361 pumps, which came to 19 times 19. Formerly there was no well there and water for irrigation was very scarce. The gardens around the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh had recently been started and needed continuous watering. . . 'Abdu'l-Baha would pump twice a day each time for 19 minutes. . . . 'Abdu'l-Baha said, 'I, with the help of a group of believers, carried the soil (for the gardens of the Shrine) on our shoulders and watered the flowers. . . ."

* In which Bahá'u'lláh in a most glorious, astounding way praises the Glad tidings of His Revelation. The above phrase is repeated in each ode of the poem.
"Abdu'l-Bâhânointed us with pure attar on our heads and faces, and said, 'I want to anoint your head and face even as in old times when the prophets did so, so that you will succeed in your services and activities.' "

"At night, when we are accommodated in the guest house, with a wall between our room and the Master’s, we hear the melody of the voice of 'Abdu'l-Bâhâ in His prayers. The melody of His voice when He chants the Tablet of Visitation, together with the mood of His reverence and rapture, affects everything, even the stones." 

"Many nights when we walked slowly around the room of the Master, we heard the murmur of His voice, but we did not recognize all the words. Those we could recognize were, 'O my God, O my Beloved.'" 

Mary L. Lucas shared with us the experience of her pilgrimage to the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh in the early years: "We got out of the carriage and gathered the flowers, and then proceeded on our way to the Tomb, with the flowers we had plucked. As we entered this Holy Precinct we took off our shoes. The silence here was like nothing I have ever experienced. As we advanced toward the door no one spoke, but we all prayed. I remembered the Master’s wish, and sang part of Gounod’s Sanctus, Holy, Holy, Holy! It was the first thing that came to my mind. It seemed as though I was not singing, but the voice of itself was soaring, and had left my body." 

And of later years we read in an article written in Haifa in July 1922, by G.L.C. under the heading of "The Plain of Acca": "After we had rested a little while, Fugeta and I went into the Tomb. It was dark by that time, and the lights in the Tomb were lighted. The thing which seemed to me most beautiful about the lighting was that the lights were so placed that they shone out from under a fern in the center of the little inner garden. The light came out soft and green through the fronds of fern. The lights were not all on when we first went in, and I liked it better with the softer light. We stayed there in prayer for perhaps half an hour. . . . Afterward, . . . turned on all the lights, so that I might see them. They turn into a blaze of light, and made me think of 'Abdu'l-Bâhâ’s comment, when he was in America, that Bahá’u’lláh always loved light; that they might be economical about everything else, but that he always told them to have much light about Him. Fugeta also drew my attention to the vase that the American Bahá’ís had sent in memory of the Master’s visit to America. The vase was made by Tiffany, and is very beautiful. It is of bronze, with insets of jewels and cloisonné work. The latter is of a most exquisite blue, shading off into yellow, as it curves up the slender neck of the vase. It is a very, very lovely thing, as is worthy of such a place." 

What a glory for the North American Bahá’ís to be so close to Bahá’u’lláh and to His inner Shrine, "The Holy of Holies!"

Dr. Yúnis Khán, commenting further on his visit, in the company of 'Abdu'l-Bâhâ, to the Holy Shrine, shares with us in a moving way his impressions. He feels inadequate to convey the heavenly experience he had of hearing the melodious voice of 'Abdu'l-Bâhâ:极为 owners the Tablet of Visitation, he said:

"Dear Reader, if you are touched by reading these lines, if you are moved with a burning desire for such a visit to the Holy Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh, do not feel sad, do not be depressed. In the presence of the beloved Shoghi Effendi, who stands in the place of 'Abdu'l-Bâhâ chanting the Tablet of Visitation, you will feel the rare heavenly experience. Hasten! Hasten! Grasp the opportunity!"
The day of Bahá'u'lláh. It was on February 10, 1940 (Muharram 2nd 1359), the lunar anniversary of the birth of the Blessed Beauty, that in the morning, the beloved Shoghi Effendi sent all of us pilgrims in two cars to the Mansion of Bahji, after we had visited the monument gardens on Mount Carmel. In the afternoon there was a big gathering of all the Bahá'ís, pilgrims and residents, where prayers were chanted in the open space on the ground floor of the Mansion. Everyone waited impatiently for the arrival of the beloved Shoghi Effendi. When the beloved Guardian arrived, he had Ismá'íl Áqá in his presence in the car, as was his custom on such occasions.

A message from the beloved Guardian extended an invitation to all to go to the garden facing the Holy Shrine and hold a big gathering in celebration of the Anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh.

Everyone hastened to attain the presence of the beloved Shoghi Effendi of whom 'Abdu'l-Bahá said:

Salutation and praise, blessing and glory rest upon that primal branch of the Divine and Sacred Lote-Tree, grown out, blest, tender, verdant and flourishing from the Twin Holy Trees; the most wondrous, unique and priceless pearl that doth gleam from out the Twin surging Seas; . . . Well is it with him that seeketh the shelter of his shade that shadoweth all mankind. 65

Some, because of the greatness of the gathering, sat on the lawn, others carried wicker chairs. The beloved Shoghi Effendi was seated on a wicker chair in the corner of the garden facing the Most Holy Shrine. His majesty and deportment is beyond us. He bade everyone to sit as he showed each pilgrim where to sit. All were seated in a J shape in the small garden surrounding Bahá'u'lláh's resting place. (The entire property was 4,000 meters at that time and is now, according to the beloved Guardian's cable dated November 12, 1952, 155,000 square meters.) This J shape started from the outer patio of the entrance of the Shrine, leading to the pilgrim house nearby.

The beloved Shoghi Effendi greeted all: "May this Feast be a blessing to you all. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has called these twin Great Feasts (the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh and the Birth of the Báb) because in the lunar calendar they follow one another." A day earlier, the Birth of the Báb had been celebrated on Mount Carmel. "The Blessed Beauty has referred to the Báb as His former Manifestation and Forerunner of His Beauty. He had also referred to Himself as the Báb's Beloved and the Báb as Bahá'u'lláh's Beloved. The twin Feasts are identical, yet the believers must celebrate both." As to the station of the Báb, the beloved Guardian quoted: "Point round Whom the realities of the Prophets and Messengers revolve." He continued: "In America the Assemblies exchange greetings by telegram. In Bombay, India, the Bahá'ís invite the government authorities to their celebrations. I have received a greeting from America." The beloved Guardian spoke in detail on the significance of the Mansion of Bahji, its past history, the different stages that the Faith has to pass through before it reaches to the Bahá'í Commonwealth. Gems of knowledge and guidance poured from the lips of the Sign of God on Earth. He assured us that the promises of Bahá'u'lláh will surely be fulfilled. I was overwhelmed when he bade me to chant a prayer. To be brief, this was truly a heavenly reunion.

The beloved Guardian requested that the Tablet of the Feast be chanted and urged that on such occasions the specific prayers and Tablets are to be recited. Then he quoted from Bahá'u'lláh a passage on the significance of the night journey of Muhammad and the station of Bahá'u'lláh already referred to. The passage explains that Muhammad, in His flight, took 70 thousand years (as the Muslims believe) until He reached the Threshold of Bahá'u'lláh. After repeating that passage, He waved his hand, pointing to the Shrine and said, "This is the exalted station of this Holy of Holies, which signifies the glory of this Manifestation.

The beloved Guardian then proceeded to the Holy Shrine. When I entered I found him in the entrance way, now the inner court. From a vial of attar of roses, he anointed each one who entered. While being anointed, he said to me in a low voice: "Chant prayer." The beloved Shoghi Effendi proceeded directly along the inner garden of the Shrine, walking around it until he reached the door of the Holy Tomb, where he placed his forehead on the Holy Threshold and bade everyone to sit and directed me to chant. I chanted a prayer in praise and thanksgiving to God that the light of His Sun of Mercy had shed over the world of creation and His blessings are pouring forth their rain. I also chanted a prayer from the beloved Guardian himself. The beloved Shoghi Effendi then rose on his knees. His voice, resonant and haunting, was lifted in the Tablet of Visitation.

The praise which hath dawned from Thy most august Self, and the glory which hath shone forth from Thy most effulgent Beauty, rest upon Thee. . . 68

He continued chanting the Tablet of Visitation as far as:

Waft, then, unto me, O my God and my Beloved, from the right hand of Thy mercy and Thy loving kindness, the holy breaths of Thy favors, that they may draw me away from myself and from the world unto the courts of Thy nearness and Thy presence. 69

whereupon he paused. He again continued until:

The remembrance of God and His praise, and the glory of God and His splendor, rest upon Thee, O Thou who art His Beauty! 70

when he paused again, as if overwhelmed and entranced. After the completion of the Tablet of Visitation, he remained silent for a few moments, proceeded to the Holy Threshold, bent his blessed knees and placed his forehead on the Threshold. Only a few moments passed with the believers standing and witnessing that memorable, precious commemoration.

Then the beloved Shoghi Effendi, without removing his eyes from the Holy Threshold, walked backwards to the door. This completed a circumambulation around the inner court of the Shrine.

Only Bahá'u'lláh knows what passed between Him and His beloved Guardian on these occasions. However, one could feel, within the Shrine in the presence of the beloved Shoghi Effendi, that because of his intercession, every prayer would be answered. How sweet, how very sweet the melody of his voice which rings in the ears till the last breath of life! May we attain his good pleasure! May he ever look compassionately upon us with his exhilarating glance and cheer our hearts!

The Ocean of Light

"The Ancient Beauty" Who "hath consented to be bound with
chains that mankind may be released from its bondage, and hath
accepted to be made a prisoner within the most mighty Stronghold
that the whole world may attain unto true liberty"; is no longer
"subjected to the abasement of a dungeon". He rests in the
Haram-i-Aqdas (the Most Holy Sanctuary) in the midst of
Jannat-i-Abhá (Abhá paradise) as designated by the beloved
Guardian. God has already fulfilled His promise, the promise
Bahá'u'lláh heard in the Siyáh-Chál:

Verily, We shall render Thee victorious by Thyself and by Thy
pen. Grieve Thou not for that which hath befallen Thee . . . Ere
long will God raise up the treasures of the earth—men who will
aid Thee through Thyself and through Thy Name. . . .

Bahá'u'lláh was from Núr* (i.e. Light) and “Bahá” signifies
Light; thus, “Light upon light” in the Súrih of Núr in the Qur'án
fulfilled in Bahá'u'lláh from Núr.**

His Holy Shrine, the Holy of Holies, is the Ocean of Light
(Dáryá-yi-Núr),*** so designated by the beloved Shoghi Effendi,
which floods the light over the whole creation. “God is the
LIGHT of the Heavens and of the
Earth.”

This Ocean of Light has taken the Mountain of Light
(Kúh-i-Núr*** the Shrine of the Báb), under Its shadow. The Queen of Carmel, facing this Ocean, is seated on Her throne of
majesty and dignity in the midst of Supreme Paradise (Firdaws-i-A'la)****, the spot blessed and designated by Bahá'u'lláh Himself. Her face is toward the Qiblih that the Báb Himself anticipated. Her breast is ornamented with the Greatest
Holy Name.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Mystery of God, Whose Station is unique
and unparalleled in the annals of all religions, rests by the side of
the Báb and faces the Ocean of Light (the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh).

Missing in that vicinity is the resting place of the beloved
Shoghi Effendi, who, for an unknown wisdom, or perhaps be-
cause of his utmost modesty, has rested since his passing in 1957
in London, far, far away from the Holy Land. However, it seems
as if Bahá'u'lláh rewarded His beloved Guardian, since the
Centenary Jubilee was held there under his shadow in 1963, right
after The Universal House of Justice came into existence, as one
of the choicest fruits of his labors and of his Ten Year Crusade.

Again, facing the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, His beloved daughter,
the Greatest Holy Leaf; His martyred Son “created of the light of
Bahá”, the Purest Branch; and His dearly-loved Consort, who is
“His companion in every one of His worlds”, the Nawáb, rest in peace and praise in the Monument gardens created in their
honor by the beloved Shoghi Effendi fulfilling the promise of
God.

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh is shaking “the world's
equilibrium” before our very eyes. His Ark has set sail on God's
Holy Mountain and His Laws are beginning to flow to the whole
world. The Seat of Legislation is in process of construction
around the Ark already prepared by the beloved Shoghi Effendi
and the “people of Bahá” (House of Justice), the dwellers of
the Ark mentioned in the Tablet of Carmel are calling “the people of
Bahá” to participate in that glorious project.

Beloved friends: We are living in the Most Glorious Day, the
Day in which the kingdom of God on earth, long ago prophesied
by Jesus Christ is taking shape. The vibration of the Revelation of

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* The native land of Bahá'u'lláh.
** Istídáliyyih Ná'im p. 68. See also Psalms 36:9.
*** Dáryá-yi-Núr and Kúh-i-Núr, the Twin Shrines of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb
as designated by the beloved Guardian (also the titles of the two biggest diamonds
in the world).
**** Designated by the beloved Guardian.
† Isaiah, Chapter 54.
‡ The dwellers of the Crimson Ark “which God hist ordained in the
Qayyum-i-Asmá for the people of Bahá.”

The Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, clearly showing the windows all
around it just under the roof which was constructed by
Qulám-Áli.
Baha'u'llah "has pierced the gloom" of the walls of "that pestilential pit" and has reached to all corners of the world. His love is penetrating deep into the hearts of men from amongst all nations, classes, races, colors and religious backgrounds and "soon will all that dwell on earth be enlisted under" His banner. This is the Day about which 'Abdu'l-Baha writes:

The holy realities of the Concourse on high yearn, in this day, in the Most Exalted Paradise, to return unto this world, so that they may be aided to render some service to the threshold of the Abha Beauty, and arise to demonstrate their servitude to His sacred Threshold.

What a glory to serve Baha'u'llah!

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Around the World

Australia

Mr. Featherstone speaks at teaching conference

The Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone illumined a teaching conference in Melbourne October 18-19 with highlights of his visit to Gilbert and Ellice (Tuvalu) Islands and the Solomons.

Four Counsellors from the Australasian zone were also at the conference with members of the Auxiliary Board and representatives of the National Spiritual Assembly. Total attendance was 278. The conference theme was how to gain spiritual strength in a declining world.

Mr. Featherstone directed the attention of the friends to a recent letter from The Universal House of Justice concerning protection of the Cause and the need to strengthen understanding of the Covenant.

The conference concluded with the announcement of the appointment of additional assistants to the Auxiliary Board members in Australia.

Burma

600 attend joyful, loving gatherings

A Bahá’í Women’s Teaching Conference in Daidanaw October 19 was attended by over 500 women and children. The following week more than 100 adults and youth participated in a five-day Winter School.

The National Spiritual Assembly was pleased with the happy, joyful, loving atmosphere of both gatherings.

Canada

Public school includes course on Faith

A secondary school teacher in Saanich, British Columbia, contacted the Local Spiritual Assembly of Saanich recently and requested a week-long course on the Bahá’í Faith for his comparative religion class.

In consultation with him, the Assembly planned six 65-minute sessions, beginning with one on progressive Revelation. Other classes presented a brief introduction to Islam; Bahá’í social and spiritual teachings; and Bahá’í history. The last session was devoted to questions and answers. The teacher requested books on the Faith for the school library.

In Calgary, Alberta, the Local Assembly launched an unprecedented proclamation of the Faith through media. Thirty-second spot announcements were used by two radio stations and ads were published in two newspapers. Posters were placed and invitations to firesides mailed to leaders of thought.

The Bahá’ís of Winnipeg, Manitoba, have produced nine cable television shows in color. Directed toward Bahá’ís to be used in deepening, the first three shows broadcast were “Happily Ever After”, on Bahá’í marriage; “Getting Your Feet Wet,” on the Bahá’í Writings; and “Spirituality and the Construction Worker,” an illustration of the principle that work in the spirit of service is worship.

Dominican Republic

Puerto Plata hosts national teaching conference

The Bahá’ís of the Dominican Republic gathered on October 18-19 for the first of two national teaching conferences planned for the current Bahá’í year. Site of the conference was the small town of Puerto Plata where believers from various parts of the country met to hear talks about meeting the Five Year Plan goals.

Auxiliary Board member Regino Pepin opened the conference with a talk on the effective use of prayer. Members of the National Spiritual Assembly and other Bahá’ís addressed the friends on various aspects of living the Bahá’í life, a Bahá’í psychologist gave advice on the education and discipline of children in the home, and members of the National Teaching Committee surveyed the progress of the Dominican Republic in the Plan.

The local children’s class, sponsored by the Bahá’ís and attended by 25 non-Bahá’í children, presented a delightful program at the Unity Feast.

Canary Islands

Persian singers proclaim Faith

Two Bahá’í Youth from Iran who are studying in England recently took a successful traveling teaching trip through the Canary Islands. Shâdî Kûchîk-zâdîh and Shîrîn Chûbînîh proclaimed the Faith through music and song and awakened much interest although they don’t speak Spanish.

They appeared on television, sang over three radio stations, before three university groups, in the old people’s home, the Girls’ and Boys’ Reformatory, at several homes, and in the Bahá’í Center. At the newspaper office, they spoke with a most receptive woman reporter. When Shâdî and Shirin played and sang for her, other
newspaper workers appeared and invited them to sing on “Radio Popular” that night, a station which is heard all over the archipelago. They sang a song called “Listen to Me, My Brother” which tells the story of Bahá’u’lláh and names Him, and also “See the New People” which tells about the Bahá’í’s all over the world and ends with a chorus of the Greatest Name.

At the university, as Shírín and Shádí began to sing, about 80 young women joined in. They asked many questions and invited the two teachers to return two days later. They did, and talked to more students, many of whom had not been there the first time. About 110 young men attended a subsequent meeting.

Ethiopia

10 teaching trips offered at meeting

A National Teaching Conference held in Addis Ababa in January was attended by Continental Counsellor Húshang ‘Ahdíyyih, two Auxiliary Board members, and over 60 other believers. During animated discussions, the friends offered 10 traveling teaching trips and 25 deportations.

The Women’s Committee of Addis Ababa has introduced a program of weekly visits to mass conversion areas. With the assistance and cooperation of pioneers, their first visit was to Awassa. They held a meeting which was attended by about 50 people, and they returned with glowing spirits, delighted with the success of their initial effort.

How a child of 5 teaches the Cause

Anyone can teach the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh. To emphasize this point, the following incident is being shared by the believers in Ethiopia:

Five-year-old Netsanet Kahsai, child of a Bahá’í family of Addis Ababa, was asked by her school teacher to say a prayer. She recited a prayer for children revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. The teacher was amazed at her fluency and at the content of the prayer.

On another occasion, he again asked her to pray. She said the same prayer. The teacher then asked her to have her mother write down the words of the prayer. The mother did, indicating ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Author. The teacher then asked Netsanet who ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was. The child explained that He is the Son of Bahá’u’lláh. “But who is Bahá’u’lláh?” asked the teacher.

Surprised, the little girl exclaimed, “You don’t even know who Bahá’u’lláh is? Then you’d better ask my mother!”

France

Media campaign has good results

In collaboration with the National Teaching Committee, the Bahá’í Information Bureau of the National Spiritual Assembly sent all Local Assemblies a brief set of guidelines concerning contact with press, radio, and television, and preparation of material for media.

Press releases for each Bahá’í Holy Day, special events days, and observances such as United Nations Day, were also sent to the Assemblies and to national newspapers in Paris.

Most local papers printed the releases, and a release presented to a radio station in Toulouse resulted in the 20-minute broadcast of an interview with members of the Toulouse Assembly. “This must be the longest interview on the Faith in the history of French radio,” the Information Bureau commented.

The Bureau has also distributed a press kit which will be supplemented with material about the International Teaching Conference to be held in Paris this August.

Gilbert Islands

Mr. Featherstone tours island communities

The Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone, accompanied by Mrs. Featherstone, recently visited Bahá’í communities in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands (the latter now called Tuvalu), the Solomon Islands, the New Hebrides, and New Caledonia.

The Featherstones’ travel was facilitated by a 24-foot catamaran built by pioneer John Thurston to help transport traveling teachers and pioneers across the vast stretches of open sea which separate the islands. Mr. Thurston is currently planning a larger catamaran which will handle commercial as well as Bahá’í traffic.

Mr. Featherstone addressed a reception held in his honor and attended by the governor, deputy governor, and government ministers and secretaries. The Bahá’í World, Vol. XIV, was presented to the governor for the House of Assembly library. A 20-minute radio interview with Mr. and Mrs. Featherstone was broadcast after the 6 p.m. news, and the next day after the 1 p.m. news over Radio Tarawa.

The Featherstones, National Assembly chairman Moten Naari, and Auxiliary Board member Sam Tranter officiated at the dedication of the local Ḥażíratu’l-Quds of Betio.

In the Solomon Islands, the Hand of the Cause addressed public meetings, firesides, and deepenings. “At Auki, I was...”
given the bounty of declaring the National Teaching Institute open," he wrote. "It is a fine concrete building 46' x 48' with a vinyl tile floor." In Honiara, Mr. Featherstone was interviewed by the press and Mrs. Featherstone spoke on a radio program designed for women.

The Featherstones then went to New Hebrides. In Port-Vila, Mr. Featherstone met with the believers and was interviewed on radio. The interview was summarized in Pidgin and two different versions were broadcast on two different days.

With two members of the Spiritual Assembly of Port-Vila, Martine Dahl and Palene Hnaloane, Mr. Featherstone met the French resident commissioner and gave him The Bahá'í World, Vol. XIV. The Featherstones also visited Noumea. In all of his meetings with the Bahá'ís, Mr. Featherstone stressed the urgency of completing the goals of the Five Year Plan and encouraged the believers to teach.

Guatemala

Bahá'ís safe after massive earthquake

The National Hájíratu'l-Quds in Guatemala City was damaged by a massive earthquake which struck Guatemala on February 4. There were no known casualties among the Bahá'ís and all pioneers were reported safe.

However, thousands of persons were killed and injured in one of the most destructive natural disasters of the century. The earthquake also hit Honduras, El Salvador, and parts of Mexico, but no deaths were reported there.

In Guatemala City, entire blocks were wiped out and hundreds of thousands of persons were homeless. Many small towns in the interior were destroyed, and others were temporarily cut off by fallen power lines, collapsed bridges, and roads blocked by landslides.

Aid for Guatemalans was being coordinated by the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization.

Guyana, Surinam, French Guiana

Happy Bahá'ís march in Surinam parade

After a one-week intensive teaching effort in Surinam all Counsellors in South America met there December 13-14 to receive the joyful news that three new Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed, seven new localities were opened, one land endowment was secured, and one local Hájíratu'l-Quds would be built.

A total of 95 new Bahá'ís were enrolled. Most of the new friends are of East-Indian background, fulfilling one of the goals set by The Universal House of Justice for

Bahá'ís of Kamaloea clear the site for the first local Hájíratu'l-Quds in Surinam. The formation of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Kamaloea was guided by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥiyih Khánum and completed in March. Many new believers were enrolled in December following a teaching project.

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Surinam. Also present at this gathering was Counsellor Hooper Dunbar, of the International Teaching Center in Haifa.

The teaching project had been launched during a conference in which the goals of the Five Year Plan were reviewed and six teaching teams were formed. Three of the teams traveled through the interior, which is mostly jungle.

The teachers that went to the Bushnegro village of Kamaloea were received with great joy. There, beloved Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum guided the formation of the first Local Spiritual Assembly in March, during her historic Green Light Expedition. Many new believers were enrolled in Kamaloea in December, and the Local Spiritual Assembly acquired a local endowment and additional property for the construction of their local Hájíratu'l-Quds. The land is scheduled to be cleared by April. Two more Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed in nearby villages.

Teachers who visited the Nickerie District on the western border were warmly welcomed by East Indian villagers, who came out of their houses and down the road to meet the Bahá'ís. They eagerly read the pamphlets in Hindi and enjoyed seeing photographs of the Bahá'ís of India. One young girl approached the teachers and invited them to her house with the simple greeting, “Come.” She and her whole family became Bahá'ís. A Local Spiritual Assembly was elected in a home which the host family had decorated with bright red flowers called “Feir Lobie” (Fire of Love).

Three other teams stayed in the coastal city of Paramaribo and taught during evenings and afternoons in the city and its environs. Children shared the teaching work, and babies were carried along; no one wanted to miss the chance to participate.

At the meeting at the end of the week were a captain of the Aucaner Bushnegro tribe, his daughter, and two other members of the tribe. He said that the Bahá'ís had stolen his heart, and they should not wait to teach the others in his tribe. The captain of the Arawak Indian tribe was also there, with his wife. He said that he and his daughter were preparing to accept the Faith.

Counsellors Peter McLaren, Leonora Armstrong, and Mr. Dunbar appeared on television with a translator. Mr. McLaren delighted listeners by speaking in the popular dialect of Surinam, Taki-Taki. Some Bahá'ís of Surinam, researching materials for their national archives, have found newspaper articles on the Faith dating from October, 1927. The articles were placed by Mrs. Armstrong, who was the first Bahá'í to bring the Faith to Surinam, Guyana, and Trinidad. She has pioneered for 54 years in Brazil. Though she went to South America with no financial means and no knowledge of Spanish or Portuguese, she now speaks both languages fluently.

Mrs. Armstrong shared her experiences with large gatherings of Bahá'ís and showed them visiting cards from her 1927 visit: names of newspaper reporters, educators, and other prominent citizens she had met. In many cases it was possible to contact these people or their children, a happy experience for Mrs. Armstrong and the Bahá'ís.

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One seeker immediately visited the Bahá'í Center in Paramaribo and there met four Continental Counsellors: Leonora Armstrong, Peter McLaren, Donald Witzel, and Mas'úd Khamá. He is now a Bahá'í.

**Surinam campaign nets many victories**

For the first time, Bahá'ís had a booth at the annual fair in the town square of Cayenne, French Guiana. The fair lasted for five days in October, and many people visited the booth, which had literature available in French and other languages. This fair is one of the largest events of the year and is attended by people from all over the country.

A traveling teacher from the United States, Benjamin Levy, was present in Cayenne for the construction and opening of the booth. He also attended a conference for Local Spiritual Assemblies October 9-12, met with the press, and visited Bahá'ís in Cayenne and Remire.

**French Guiana fair includes Bahá'í booth**

Bahá'ís of Paramaribo marched for three hours in Surinam's Independence Parade November 26. The parade was viewed by 100,000 people, which is about a third of the entire population, and was the largest in Surinam's history.

Through a torrential rain, the Bahá'ís marched with their banner: “Bahá'í Community” (in Dutch). They were a mixed group among other separately marching groups of Japanese, Chinese, East Indians, Bushnegroes, and American Indians. Three East Indian youth spontaneously joined the Bahá'ís and marched with them to the finish. They arrived in the town square cold and numb, but happy.

The Local Spiritual Assembly of Paramaribo also sponsored a booth in the Surinade (trade fair) November 19-December 6. The booth was colorfully decorated and fragrant with flowers, and visitors were welcome to all the pamphlets they wanted. The pamphlets were in various languages, as Surinam has a diverse population of East-Indians, Javanese, Chinese, American Indians, blacks and whites. Dutch is the official language, and the supply of Dutch pamphlets was soon exhausted. About 1,500 pamphlets were distributed.

One group of three students asked for pamphlets and explained that their sociology teacher had instructed them to write a report on the Bahá'í Faith.
Local Assembly formed at Eccles-Ramsburg, Guyana

The first Local Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Eccles-Ramsburg, East Bank Demerara, Guyana was formed on November 25. This picture was published in the Chronicle, the only daily newspaper in Guyana.

Honduras

Counsellors meet with chief of state


During the week, the Counsellors filled Honduras' goal to present The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh to the chief of state. He has usually refused to grant interviews to representatives of religious organizations. However, Colonel Juan Alberto Melgar Castro received the Counsellors, as did the minister of defense, Colonel Chinchilla, who was presented with a Bahá'í statement on loyalty to government. The Counsellors also met with the minister of culture, tourism, and information, Colonel Efrain.

Colonel Melgar Castro (second from left), chief of state of Honduras, shakes hands with Counsellor Alfred Osborne of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Central America during a meeting with Bahá'ís in November. Also pictured, from left, are Priscilla Banks de Tavora, Counsellor Artemus Lamb, and Counsellor Pablo Lucas.

From left to right, seated: Frank Sheffey, E. Stevens, and M. Brummell; standing: Agnes Sheffey, B. Stevens, M. Thomas, M. Alleyne, M. Henry. Missing from the photograph is B. Medouce.
Gonzales, who received a basic fact sheet about the Faith. All three officials were cordial and expressed respect and admiration for the Bahá'ís and their attitude toward government.

A major newspaper printed two pictures of and a brief article on the interview with the chief of state.

A special committee of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tegucigalpa planned other events during the week. Among these were a welcoming banquet; a Saturday morning coffee given by the Bahá'í Women's Club for prominent women of Tegucigalpa, at which Mrs. de Burafato spoke; and an all-day deepening institute at the Bahá'í Center.

A public meeting was held at the National Library and attended by 50 non-Bahá'ís and 30 Bahá'ís. The Counsellors spoke on “Steps to a Lasting World Peace.” Four thousand flyers had been passed out during the week; ads were published in four major papers, and four radio stations used spot announcements.

A farewell party for the Counsellors featured Honduran folk dances by six local Bahá'í youth.

Iran

Institution members meet on Plan goals

The Hands of the Cause of God Shu'ú'lláh 'Alá'i, 'Alí-Muhammad Varqá, and Abu'l-Qásim Faizi inaugurated a successful Inter-Assembly Conference sponsored by the Continental Board of Counsellors in Western Asia December 11-13. Regrettably, The Hand of the Cause of God Ja'll Kházeh was ill and could not attend, but he sent a much appreciated message of love.

At the Temple land in Tíhrán, in a hall built for the Summer School, 42 representatives of 10 National Spiritual Assemblies, 12 Auxiliary Board members and a number of their assistants, and 29 representatives of national committees conferred.

The purpose of the conference was to formulate means for the rapid completion of the goals of the Five Year Plan. Participants made commitments to support pioneers and traveling teachers, and, though few in number, made a significant contribution to various Bahá'í funds. Some gave their entire savings.

Some sessions were devoted to youth and children. Audio-visual aids were displayed and films shown. It was resolved to hold two conferences during 1976, in Iran and Pakistan, one before and one after the International Teaching Conferences.

The guidance and inspiration of the Hands of the Cause was much appreciated. In one session, Mr. Faizi said that a man lost in the desert and dying of thirst would give all he owned for a cup of water. But for the second cup, he wouldn't give a dime. The dying world is in need of the first cup, the water of life. This is the time for the Bahá'ís to inform the people of the world that the pure crystal water of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is flowing.

Tíhrán conference nets many pledges

Believers from more than 11 nations gathered at a National Teaching Conference in Tíhrán October 23-24 and pledged 235 traveling-teaching trips. Inspired by the Hands of the Cause of God Shá'u'lláh 'Alá'i, Ugo Giachery, and 'Alí-Muhammad Varqá, the friends resolved to bring the Faith to the attention of at least 5,000 people through individual firesides.

Borrha Kavelin, member of The Universal House of Justice, was also present, along with all three Continental Counsellors in Western Asia, members of the National Spiritual Assembly, and representatives of more than 100 Local Spiritual Assemblies.

Six regional teaching plans were made.

Ireland

Trapee becomes 10th Local Spiritual Assembly

The first Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Tralee was formed December 14. The total number of Local Assemblies in Ireland is now 10, and the Bahá'ís of Ireland are working toward formation of two more Assemblies by Ridván. The formation of the Tralee Assembly was the result of a teaching conference held in Dunlaoghaire where 19 friends arose to pioneer on the Irish homefront. The Bahá'ís of Ireland are finding increased receptiveness to the Faith in their country. Youth are active teachers and settlers.

Kenya

Holy Day marked by teaching trek

Some Kenyan Bahá'ís walked 15 miles to observe a celebration for the Anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh. As they walked through the villages, they announced that they were going to celebrate the Bahá'í Holy Day, thus impressing their neighbors with the fact that the Faith is an independent religion.

The celebration, held in Givogi Bahá'í Center, South Tíriki, Kakamega District, was attended by Auxiliary Board member Festus Shayo, an assistant to the Auxiliary Board, and about 200 other Bahá'ís. The center had been decorated with flowers by the host Local Spiritual Assembly.

After devotions, a period of consultation stressed the importance of the International Teaching Conference to be held in Nairobi in October. The friends returned home with an increased commitment to help strengthen Assemblies and Groups.

Laos

Crops are planted at Bahá'í properties

The spacious backyard of the Hazíratu'l-Quds of Vientiane is now a vegetable and fruit garden, in accordance with a government order that property be used to facilitate the “green revolution.” This widespread cultivation of food is helping the economy of Laos.

Youth of Vientiane, under the supervision of the National Youth and Children Committee, have re-cleared the Temple site outside of Vientiane, surrounded it with barbed wire, and are preparing to plant a garden there. A team of youths works on the land every Saturday. When project is finished, a well will be built to supply water for the crops.

Youth are taking an increasingly active part in Bahá'í community life in Laos, especially since the first Youth Training Institute last summer. They conduct youth deepenings and children's classes at the National Hazíratu'l-Quds each Sunday. Non-Bahá'í children also attend the classes.

The youth survey teaching progress, plan expansion programs, and visit inactive youth. The generosity of a local believer has helped the Youth Committee
hire a vehicle to transport the young teachers.

Teaching has also been stimulated by a three-member team which visits Local Spiritual Assemblies, helping them implement the deepening program of the National Teaching Committee. Meetings for women and children have also been launched by the team, especially in villages with no regular children’s classes, and the National Assembly reports that women are becoming more and more active.

Leeward, Virgin Islands

Gregory Award presented to St. Croix citizen

The Local Spiritual Assembly of Christiansted, St. Croix, honored a beloved citizen of St. Croix, Randall James, with the presentation of a Louis G. Gregory Human Rights Day Award December 10. Doc James, as he is affectionately called, is a selfless general practitioner who also sponsors a youth talent group and a radio show which fosters unity.

The St. Croix Assembly honored Doc James at a dinner to which 120 political, civic, and business leaders were invited. At the dinner, Doc James received a mahogany plaque made by a St. Croix craftsman, and his wife was presented with flowers.

The banquet program included tributes to Doc James by the distinguished guests. Praising him were the chairman of the St. Croix Board of Education, a former senator, the assistant commissioner of health, a noted writer, a Catholic priest, the director of the new airport, and many other prominent people. Bahá’í prayers were read and a brief statement on the Faith was given. Some of the guests requested prayer books, and Doc James requested literature.

The week after the banquet, Doc James’ brother, filling in on the doctor’s radio show, spent the full half-hour describing the event. “These are some of the Bahá’ís of Christiansted,” he said, listing names. “You may know some of them.”

Other radio stations read press releases about the banquet. A disc jockey in Frederiksted broadcast a story on the event at least twice, with soft jazz music in the background.

A photographer from one of the newspapers covered the banquet, and his paper published a long story with pictures. In all four St. Croix papers, the event received double coverage because one of the guests released his own news story; a clarifying letter from the Bahá’ís resulted in other stories.

Traveling teachers find warm response

Beneath a street light on the island of Montsarat, five Bahá’í teachers were singing; children appeared out of the darkness, followed by adults who came down from their mountain homes to learn of the Faith. The next evening, the Bahá’ís were teaching in another part of the island. This was a new experience for traveling teachers Ray and Edna Fechtner from Libertyville, Illinois, who traveled through the Leeward Islands during November and December. They followed an itinerary planned by the National Teaching Committee of the Leeward and Virgin Islands.

Neighbors of Bahá’í pioneers on Montsarat were especially friendly. The Fechtners played with, read to, and talked with the children. The pioneers, Craig and Elizabeth Owens, live in an impoverished area. Yet the neighbors came every day bringing treats from their own meager food supply.

At the Galley Bay Surf Club in Antigua, which is owned by a Bahá’í, Edee Holbert, the Fechtners mingled with the guests and encouraged them to read the Bahá’í literature which the owner places in all the rooms. They later saw guests relaxing on the beach and reading Bahá’í books.

The traveling teachers found that the natives were pleased that they had traveled so far just to tell them of the Bahá’í Faith. The Fechtners found that it is hard to secure work permits in the islands, so retired people with incomes would make excellent pioneers.

The beauty of the islands, with their multi-colored bougainvillea blossoms, red, 12-foot high poinsettias, brilliant sunshine, and warm sea, is a fitting background to the gentle ways of the natives whose hearts and minds are open and waiting.
Barbara Joyce, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Leeward and Virgin Islands, interviews Roy Massey, a traveling teacher from Dallas, Texas, on the first regularly scheduled Bahá'í television show in the West Indies.

Titled “The Bahá’í Television Program,” the show had its premier on December 7 and is scheduled every Sunday afternoon. The show has been so successful that the station asked the Bahá'ís to extend the time from 15 to 30 minutes each week. The format varies from week to week, sometimes using films or slides and sometimes being a talk show or interview.

Mr. Massey was on an extended teaching trip throughout the French Antilles and appeared on two television shows and five radio programs. There were articles and photographs about his trip for the Faith in six major newspapers of the area.

**Article by Bahá’í printed in St. Kitts**

An article titled “I Found the Bahá’í Faith,” by a young West Indian Bahá’í, appeared in *The Democrat*, a newspaper at Basseterre, St. Kitts, Leeward Islands, November 1.

Albert N. Millington’s article described his first encounter with the Faith and his acceptance of it as the fulfillment of his spiritual longing. It included passages from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh.

“As a Bahá’í I have learned to respect all mankind,” Mr. Millington wrote. “I learn to love other religions. The Bahá’í Faith makes me feel that I am one of God’s children and that . . . I am wanted and useful in the world. It gives the sense of wholeness and it makes me just one proud and happy person . . . It gives me courage to face the problems of the world.”

**Malawia**

Young traveling teachers join in new project

The International Traveling Teaching Project in Malawi, newly-developed by the International Teaching Center in Haifa, is going forward with great success. Several youth from other countries assisted in Malawi, and a youth from Malawi went to Zambia for several months.

Jergen Aiff of South Africa spent three weeks in Malawi deepening many Assemblies in villages and assisting with the elections for delegates to Malawi’s National Convention. Michael Servina of the Seychelles Islands visited Malawi for a week, helping his efforts with his guitar. Richard Hainsworth of England was in Malawi during January and February. He spent most of his time in the bush, assisting with delegate elections.

George Mpyaila went from Malawi to Zambia and assisted with the formation of several new Assemblies. He also helped open new localities to the Faith.

**Malaysia**

National Assembly sets 1976 Plan deadline

After conferring with the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’l-láh Muhájir, the National Spiritual Assembly announced that all Five Year Plan Goals for Malaysia should be accomplished by November 1976. Dr. Muhájir met with the Bahá’ís at the Bahá’í Center November 17 and the stirring new teaching plan began.

Goals for Malaysian Bahá’ís are: send pioneers to Thailand, Bangladesh, and the Philippines; increase teaching among Chinese-speaking people; increase the number of believers by 2,000; and buy five district Hádíratu’l-Quds and five local Hádíratu’l-Quds, large enough for conferences.

**Mauritius**

Forum on Women shown on television

The National Women’s Committee of the Bahá’ís of Mauritius sponsored a forum on the status of women on Sep-
tember 6 in Quatre-Bornes. Speakers were R. Poonoosamy, minister for women’s affairs; H. Tirvengadum, chairman of the Administrative Commission of the municipality of Quatre-Bornes; and Léa Nys, Bahá’í international traveling teacher.

The forum was advertised in the newspaper and personal invitations were sent to government officials, diplomats, leading citizens of Mauritius, and the press. One day before the event, Mrs. Nys was interviewed on television.

Television cameras recorded the forum, and it was shown as a news item. About 250 people attended. Mrs. Poonoosamy praised the Faith; described the United Nations conference on women in Mexico City, stressing its diversity; and mentioned plans for women in Mauritius during the decade of Women and Development, 1975-1985, which was proclaimed by the conference.

Mrs. Nys then spoke of the immortal heroine, Táhirih, and her own recent travels in Africa. She explained how the African women are participating in all levels of Bahá’í life, and showed the impact of the Faith on the emancipation of women. Mr. Tirvengadum then gave an address on the social evolution of women. At left, Mrs. Nys speaks at one of the public meetings while she was in Mauritius.

Lea Nys (right), Bahá’í international traveling teacher, is pictured above with R. Poonoosamy, minister for women’s affairs, and H. Tirvengadum, chairman of the Administrative Commission of Quatre-Bornes, at a forum on the status of women. At left, Mrs. Nys speaks at one of the public meetings while she was in Mauritius.

also speaking were the director of the Board of Education and a professor from the University of Sind. All three were broadcast by Radio Pakistan.

A gala party celebrated the opening of the newly-built Bahá’í Center in New Karachi. Construction of the center achieved a goal of the Five Year Plan. Mr. Joshi cut the ribbon to officially open the center, and his fellow Auxiliary Board member, Mehrban Jamshed, addressed the Bahá’ís.

Panama

Mr. Dunbar speaks at Center, hotel

Counsellor Hooper Dunbar of the International Teaching Center in Haifa spent time in Panama during his recent two-month teaching trip.

Bahá’ís gathered for a session with Mr. Dunbar at the Hazíratu’ll-Quds December 18. He explained how The Universal House of Justice deliberates, consults, and makes decisions. At times the individual members do not know why they made a certain decision, but they know that the decisions they make as a body come from God. All of their meetings are tremendous acts of faith. And all messages from The Universal House of Justice are from God.

He also stressed the need to form, educate, and deepen Local Spiritual Assemblies. A weekly prayer session is a good initial activity for a new Assembly, he said.

Mr. Dunbar also addressed nearly 100 Bahá’ís and guests in the Salon Washington of El Panama Hotel December 16. He emphasized the world’s need for guidance, saying that materialism without spiritual understanding has damaged individuals and nations. The remedy, he said, is the love of God and the recognition of the immortality of the soul.

Philippines

Four-month teaching plan is launched

Inspired by advice from the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláh Muháhir, the National Spiritual Assembly initiated a four-month teaching plan with 14 regional conferences in December. The January-April plan calls for special teaching work in 32 localities, with major

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goals of bringing entire families into the Faith and increasing teaching in tribal areas. The great gains anticipated during this plan will carry the Philippines toward a joyous completion of the Five Year Plan.

Dr. Muhajir visited the islands in November during a national conference. He stressed the concept of family teaching; when one member of a family becomes a Baha'i, the entire family should be lovingly informed.

Baha'is gathered for the first conferences of the four-month plan in the Benguet area, Debebe, Occidental Mindoro, Los Banos, Kiangan, Isabela, Balungao, Davao, Kitapawan, Cagayan de Oro City, Appari, Bacolod, Cebu City, and Tacloban City.

Puerto Rico

Radio-TV workshop on Caribbean held

The Baha'i Radio and Television Committee of Puerto Rico sponsored the first Caribbean Radio and Television Workshop for Baha'is in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, December 25-28.

Thirty-four believers from 13 countries and islands, representing nine National Spiritual Assemblies, attended the sessions which lasted from early morning until late at night.

Objectives of the workshop were to share ideas and concepts of Baha'i programming; to cultivate production techniques for radio and television; to foster acquaintance with the media; and to develop international collaboration.

The sessions were filled with a spirit of comradeship that grew out of the shared experience of similar professions. This feeling, with the ever-growing Baha'í unity, resulted in a wonderful exchange of diverse points of view.

Samoa

Many cultures present at women's congress

Baha'is women of the South Pacific met for a Women's Congress organized by the Local Spiritual Assembly of Maré December 20-21. Representatives from various island communities arrived on Friday, December 19. Women from the Yate community were assisted in paying their expenses by youth traveling teachers and Yatian friends who, in a work project, gathered and sold dry coconuts.

Maréan seekers were welcome, and they came bringing contributions of names, sugar, and other vegetables, in accordance with their custom. They attended classes and ate with the Baha'is. On Saturday night the whole village saw "It's Just the Beginning."

The classes were short and were presented by women from different cultures.

French-speaking Baha'is noticed that explanations of the Faith in the local language was invaluable.

Mr. Tehrani meets with Noumea Baha'is

The Baha'is of Noumea met with traveling teacher Mr. Tehrani during December. After pioneering for 16 years in Japan, Mr. Tehrani is now settled in Samoa.

The friends enjoyed an evening of interesting stories about the early days of the Faith in Iran. Mr. Tehrani's father became a Baha'i in the days of Baha'u'llah. He was a wrestler who could not read or write. When he heard someone read the Hidden Words he immediately became a Baha'i and told his family and friends of his new Faith. Then he had to leave his village under threat of death; he went to Tihran.

An outstanding Baha'i then asked Mr. Tehrani's father to take a letter to Baha'u'llah. He set out immediately. At the Persian border, he was stopped and questioned by custom officials. He evaded their questions; if they asked where he was going, he told them where he was coming from. Finally, they decided he must be a fool and let him pass. He traveled to the Holy Land and spent three months in the presence of Baha'u'llah and the Master.

Switzerland

300 share inspiring Swiss Winter School

The presences of the Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery, members of many European National Spiritual Assemblies, Auxiliary Board members, and Mrs. Giachery, inspired the 300 friends at the Swiss Winter School in December.

Dedicated to the memory of the beloved Guardian, the school was the gathering place for Baha'is from five continents, who met in the shadow of the mountains which were cherished places of peace and beauty for Shoghi Effendi.

The school was blessed with four declarations and supported by newspaper articles, radio publicity, public meetings, and an interview with the mayor of Lausanne.

A copy of The Baha'i World, Vol. XIV, was recently presented to another disting-
Taiwan

Family life subject of women's institute

A Women’s Institute was held on December 25 at the Tainan Bahá’í Center to provide an opportunity for a discussion of the place of the Faith in family life. Most of the communities in Southern Taiwan were represented; 26 adults and 12 children attended.

Beneath a banner reading “Heroes of the Past and Future” the youth gathered to study the lives of youthful heroes and martyrs. About 17 youth adopted specific individual goals to be achieved by Ridván.

Participants also enjoyed swimming in the ocean, outdoor games, a talent night, and frequent singing. “The love and spirit of unity prevailing throughout this conference was truly remarkable,” reported Auxiliary Board member Laurence Coward. “There was full participation by all.”

Uganda

Ms. Olinga tours Western Province

The Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga, with Mrs. Olinga and Auxiliary Board member Peter Mutabazi, recently visited the Bunyoro and Semuliki districts of the Western Province of Uganda.

The numerous meetings addressed by Mr. Olinga attracted audiences of from 100 to 800 Bahá’ís and friends. Within three days, approximately 52 new believers were enrolled in Semuliki; 35 of whom are youth. Another 150 persons declared later.

One heartwarming highlight of the journey was a visit to the Pygmy village at Nandi. The Pygmy Bahá’ís warmly greeted the guests, and after a meeting, six more Pygmies became Bahá’ís. One young woman signed the declaration form with her thumb-print. As she walked proudly from the hut, she smiled at Mr. and Mrs. Olinga and said in Swahili: “We like the Bahá’ís.”

The journey of Mr. and Mrs. Olinga and Mr. Mutabazi was covered by radio announcements in English and in vernacular languages. A letter from the governor informed tribal chiefs about Mr. Olinga and his companions, and the chiefs assisted in organizing the meetings.

As well as seizing every chance to proclaim the Faith to the public, Mr. Olinga met with many government officials. Most of them had visited the Bahá’í Temple at Kikaya Hill, Kampala, Uganda, but they were basically uninformed about the Faith. The Hand of the Cause briefed them
on the Faith and answered their questions, and gave them Bahá’í books.

The Uganda Broadcasting Corporation also carried, in English and in the principle vernacular languages, free announcements of local observances of the Anniversary of the Birth of Bahá’u’l-áth. And a Bahá’í exhibition and literature display in the Uganda Museum in Kampala, which was scheduled to last two weeks, remained on view for three weeks at the request of the exhibition officer of the Museum.

About 2,000 people visited the exhibit each day, and on Sundays the number grew to between 4,000 and 5,000.

The book display, which was officially opened by the commissioner for community development, Philip Wabulya, was the subject of two long articles in The Voice of Uganda newspaper. One article quoted Mr. Wabulya: “The Bahá’ís have assisted through social services, teaching, and education . . . The Ministry pays great tribute to religious organizations like the Bahá’í Faith which endeavor to bring all sects together to work for the unity of all.”

The second article, by Zulf Khallan, stated: “Bahá’u’lláth’s religion, in my opinion, is the answer to the philosophical argument that religion is a divisive force in this world. The Bahá’í Faith is mainly concerned with the elimination of contradictions which appear to divide the world along religious, political, racial, and linguistic lines.”

United Kingdom

24-hour prayer vigil held in goal town

“The Destiny of Bahá’í Youth” and “The Authority of Bahá’u’lláth” were the titles of keynote addresses by Continental Counsellor Betty Reed at the Winter Bahá’í Youth Institute in Oakham, United Kingdom.

The institute took place near a goal town, Melton Mowbray, and the 46 participants visited the town and conducted a 24-hour prayer vigil there. They also toured the offices of the British Bahá’í Publishing Trust.

United States

Teaching program launched in South

Messages from The Universal House of Justice and the National Spiritual Assembly heightened the enthusiasm of the friends for the new Southern teaching program announced at the Louis Gregory Institute in Hemingway, South Carolina, January 24.

“Supplicating Bahá’u’lláth guide inspire their endeavors awaken spirit service hearts mass of believers so recently won His cause,” The Universal House of Justice cabled. The new teaching plan was launched with the help of the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláth Muhájhír who traveled through the South during January and February. “We are prepared for greater victories than have yet been recorded,” wrote the National Assembly.

The new program calls for special projects in states with nine or more Local Assemblies: South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, Florida, Oklahoma, Texas, Maryland, Virginia, and Georgia. States with the goal of raising their number of Assemblies to nine are: Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Delaware.

Dr. Muhájhír visited 12 cities and the Cherokee Indian Reservation. After a meeting in Columbia, South Carolina, a group of Bahá’ís went to Rock Hill, which was a mass-teaching area in 1970. There, a declaration completed the enrollment of Rock Hill’s first all-Bahá’í family.

After the meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, there were seven declarations in one weekend.

Dr. Muhájhír came to the South from a tour of California, Oregon, Washington, New Mexico, Michigan, Canada, and Alaska. He then went to Washington, D.C., New York City, Philadelphia, Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

His visit to the United States was the continuation of an extensive global circuit. In Bangladesh, regular firesides were held every evening of his stay in November and in just one evening 10 people declared. Dr. Muhájhír also visited refugee camps, telling the homeless ones of the sufferings of Bahá’u’lláth.

In Indonesia, he greeted pioneers and native believers; in Korea he met with the National Spiritual Assembly and helped

Lancaster Local Spiritual Assembly is formed

The first Local Spiritual Assembly of the District of Lancaster, England, was formed on November 6. Left to right, seated: Lyn Holmes, Robert Parry, Gerd Conrad-Armes, and Madeline Hellaby; standing: David Conrad-Armes, Robina Hodgson, Peter Smith, Bill Hellaby, and Sannireh Smith.
The Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'lláh Muhájjir, at right in picture above, meets with some of the believers at the Louis Gregory Institute as a new Southern teaching program was launched.

them draw up a plan of action. "Winter in Korea is a paradise for Bahá'í teachers," he said, "because all the farmers and students have three to four months' holiday."

In Hong Kong, Dr. Muhájjir encouraged shared teaching efforts with Malaysian Bahá'ís, and in Hawaii 10 Bahá'ís volunteered for traveling teaching continuously until Ridván.

Displays set up at transportation centers

The National Spiritual Assembly of the United States continued the largest advertising campaign it has ever undertaken with exhibits and dioramas in five airports and a large train station. The displays were set up February 1 and remained in place all month.

Exhibits were in O'Hare Airport in Chicago, Penn Central Station in New York City, and Dulles International Airport in Washington, D.C. Dioramas were in New York's La Guardia, and airports in Dallas, Texas, and Atlanta, Georgia. A toll-free number was provided with each display so inquirers could immediately call the Bahá'í National Center for information.

The displays were intended to inform business people of the Faith, as they make up the mass of daily travelers. However, the two Bahá'ís from the National Center
who erected the exhibits in New York and Washington noticed that many of the workers were interested in and grateful for the colorful, pleasing appearance of the modules. They said that many of the people they greeted had heard of the Faith.

In New York, a man from Panama was surprised to learn of the strength of the Faith in this country. He had seen the Panama House of Worship and had known a pioneer in Panama for 10 years, but didn't realize that the Faith was so well-established in the United States.

In Dulles Airport, which serves many tour groups, the exhibits were frequently photographed by tourists. In O'Hare, the exhibits were in a wing which serves Southern, Delta, and American Airlines. The planes are frequented by travelers to and from the South, so the displays in Chicago supported the newly-launched Southern Teaching project.

The advertising campaign began with an ad in the Bicentennial issue of Life magazine, honoring the 200th birthday of the United States. The magazine had a circulation of one million. Many more than a million people saw the exhibits; it is estimated that combined monthly traffic at O'Hare and Penn Central is at least six million.

The exhibits, which have the same color-scheme and tone of presentation as the ad, are emerald green rectangular modules with color transparencies, including one of the House of Worship, and introductory text. Even in display space with dim lighting, such as Penn Central Station, the exhibits were easily and attractively visible, because they are lighted within to illumine the transparencies.

The dioramas are 42 x 60 inch transparencies. A new edition of Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, which has an emerald green cover with a color picture of the Temple, shares this visual theme.

The exhibits will be used again in May in Washington, D.C., and at a major Eucharistic gathering in Philadelphia, Pa. The dioramas will be displayed in May at 10 regional airports. After the Bicentennial year, the displays will be modified for continued proclamation.

Centers acquired by New York, San Francisco

Five Year Plan goals for New York City, New York, and San Francisco, California, were filled when those cities purchased Bahá'í Centers. The sale of the New York City center was finalized January 12; San Francisco Bahá'ís finalized their purchase December 1.

Both cities occupy important positions in the early history of the Faith in the United States. New York has been a major Bahá'í community since the turn of the century. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá toured the United States in 1912, He spent much of His time in New York and named it the city of the Covenant, for there He established for the United States believers an understanding of the significance of the Covenant.

San Francisco was one of the first Bahá'í communities of the western U.S. In fact, the historic acquisition of the San Francisco Center was made possible by a trust fund left by Ella Goodall Cooper, who, with her mother Helen Goodall, was instrumental in building a firm foundation for the Faith in San Francisco. The Bahá'ís of San Francisco call the center "A Gift of Love," in honor of Mrs. Cooper. Located at 170 Valencia Street, the center is in the city's Mission District, near the Mission Dolores, the Spanish settlement which grew into San Francisco. The neighborhood is largely Spanish-speaking, but other cultures are well-represented.

New York's center is also ideally located. It is near the home of Juliet Thompson where 'Abdu'l-Bahá first revealed for Miss Thompson and Lua Getsinger the power of His station as the Center of the Covenant, and where He named Lua the Herald of the Covenant. Around the corner from that home is the Church of the Ascension, where 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a moving talk. And the neighborhood of the center, which is at 53 East 11th Street, is in the heart of Manhattan, New York's central borough. It is a hub of cultural activity, near New York University, with a large population of youth from all backgrounds and nations.

The New York Center is fully equipped to present programs which will attract its neighbors. It has a theater with a fully equipped stage, including facilities for slide and movie projection. It has ample space for offices, classes, and recreational activities.

The National Spiritual Assembly will be using some of the office space in the New York Center to facilitate its work with the press, radio, and television in New York.

The San Francisco Center will also be well able to meet teaching and consolidation needs. It has an auditorium which seats 500, classroom and office space, recreation space, and a dining room and kitchen. Bahá'ís and friends in San Fran-
Cisco began activities in their “Gift of Love” with a joyous open house December 2.

**Pioneers to fill 19 more Plan goals**

Pioneers headed for Sierra Leone, Portugal, the Falkland Islands, the Bahamas, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Tanzania, Colombia, Uruguay, Japan, Ecuador, Guyana, Tonga, Guatemala, Trinidad, and the Philippines met at a Pioneering Institute in Wilmette, Illinois, January 22-25. They were addressed by the Hands of the Cause of God Dhikru'lláh Khádem and Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir, Continental Counsellor Edna True, and other distinguished speakers.

When these Baha'is arrive at their posts they will have completed Five Year Plan pioneering goals in seven countries; they will fill a total of 19 goals. Dr. Muhájir asked some of them, “Don’t I know you?” He had met them in Japan, Africa, and South America. He has circled the globe many times on teaching trips, and he always remembers the faces of the pioneers.

He had met Beth and Frederick Laws in Africa. After nearly 20 years in the Faith, the Laws pioneered to Nairobi during the 10 Year Crusade. When the Guardian requested that believers in cities with more than 15 Baha'is disperse, Mr. and Mrs. Laws went to Basutoland. They were adopted into a tribe there and given a name which means “Lovers of Mankind.” Their granddaughter is now a homefront settler on an Indian Reservation in Wapato, Washington. The Laws will fill a pioneering post in Tanzania.

The radiance of the pioneers increased as the institute progressed. The inspiring classes, the opportunity to pray in the Holiest House of Worship, and the practical information available gave them support and encouragement.

**Windward Islands**

**Carib India chief receives Baha'i literature**

Carib Indian Chief Mas Clam receives *The Proclamation of Baha'u'llah* from a teaching team under the direction of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Windward Islands. Left to right are Evette Clark, Erith Elcock, Patricia Paccassi, Anthony Providence, Mas Clam, Mrs. Clam, Mona George, and Auxiliary Board member Shirley Yarbrough. The picture was taken in August. The proclamation completed a goal of the Five Year Plan.
Mr. Balyúzi’s book on Muḥammad, İslám will be published

_Muḥammad and the Course of İslám_ by the Hand of the Cause of God Ḥasan Balyúzi, an important one-volume work which comprises a full biography of the Prophet and a history of İslám from the years of His mission to the nineteenth century, will be published in March.

Bahá’ís will find in it, the publisher says, the authentic material they need to identify persons, realize the circumstances in which various sûrah of the Qur’án were revealed, and understand the many references to Islám in Bahá’í Writings.

In a letter written by the Guardian’s secretary on his behalf to an American Bahá’í Summer School Committee on August 24, 1939, it was stressed that a study of Islám “is absolutely indispensable” in order to attain “a proper and sound understanding of the Cause.”

In succeeding years, study courses were devised, chapters about Muḥammad and Islám were included in several books, articles appeared in Bahá’í publications, and Stawood Cobb wrote his useful _Islamic Contributions to Civilization_.

But it is only now that a full-scale biography of Muḥammad, together with a history of Islám, has become available in one 480-page volume. The book includes 16 pages of illustrations and maps.

It comes from the pen of a Bahá’í who is equipped, by virtue of his immersion in the cultures of East and West, to give the student the right approach toward the proper understanding and evaluation of Islám.

Mr. Balyúzi spent about a decade in writing, not continuously but at intervals. His other works include _The Báb, Bahá’u’lláh, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá_.

The Hand of the Cause of God Abul-Qasim Faizi, who saw a draft of the new book last year, said: “The welcome news of the publication of the book written by Mr. Balyúzi on the Prophet Muḥammad and Islám was a source of great happiness for me. I have felt the need of such a publication for a very long time, because there is a great need for accurate knowledge of the fundamental verities, history, and laws of the religion of Islám. . . . I whole-heartedly congratulate the writer and the publishers for providing us with such a long awaited treasure-house of knowledge on a subject which has never really received from Western scholars and writers the objective and accurate treatment it deserves.”

The book will be available soon through many Bahá’í Publishing Trusts. It may also be ordered from the publisher, George Ronald, 46 High Street, Kidlington, Oxford OX5 2DN, England. Cost of the book is $14.75.
An artist, a mechanic, a field laborer, an accounting manager, a policeman, a hospital administrator — what have these people in common? They’re Bahá’ís and they appear in a new Bahá’í film, *Paso a Paso*, produced by Kiva Films.

The film, which is titled *Step by Step* in English, depicts the growth of the Bahá’í Faith among Indians, blacks and Latins in Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador and Panama. Unified by their common belief in Bahá’u’lláh and His Message, these persons comment on their faith and what it means to them.

These native teachers share their views on such widely varying topics as prophecy, the unity of mankind, world peace, universal governing institutions and a divine civilization. Simply, clearly and directly they discuss how the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh is unifying all mankind, step by step, through the infusion of Divine Love.

Feasts, the local spiritual Assembly, elections and other aspects of Bahá’í administration are explained.

In addition, the 29-minute, color-and-sound film mentions ancient Mayan prophecies concerning world peace, the Return and a spiritual revival, and relates these to the newest Bahá’í House of Worship in Panama. It complements two earlier films, *El Alba* and *The Dedication*. Designed for television use, this new film is also suited to public meetings and other proclamation events. The film is also universally suitable for teaching and deepening.

**How to Get the Film**

To obtain rental information and purchase prices, write to your publishing trust or national Bahá’í distributor. If you do not know the name and address of the one serving your area, you may send your inquiry to the International Bahá’í Audio-Visual Centre, 1640 Holcomb Road, Victor, N.Y. 14564, U.S.A. for forwarding to the proper organization.

Specify *Step by Step*, Product Number 20672, for the English edition, or *Paso a Paso*, Product Number 20671, for the Spanish version.
The passing of dedicated pioneer Edward Bode

SADDENED PASSING DEDICATED BELIEVER EDWARD BODE HIS FIRM DETERMINATION REMAIN POST MADEIRA EXEMPLIFIED SPIRIT DEVOTION CAUSE HE SERVED FOR MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS AS PIONEER AMERICAS EUROPE. OFFERING PRAYERS HOLY THRESHOLD PROGRESS HIS SOUL.

March 15, 1976

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
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On the cover: A dedicated band of workers who spread the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. From left to right, top row: Keith Ransom-Kehler, Lua Getsinger, and Martha Root; middle row: Dorothy Baker, Hyde and Clara Dunn, and Susan Moody; bottom row: ELLA Bailey, May Maxwell, and Marion Jack.

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A Love Which Does
When pioneer Marion Jack died in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1954, the beloved Guardian cabled, “This triumphant soul now, gathered distinguished band co-workers in the Abha Kingdom: Martha Root, Lua Getsinger, May Maxwell, Hyde Dunn, Susan Moody, Keith Ransom-Kehler, Ella Bailey, Dorothy Baker, whose remains, lying in such widely scattered areas globe as Honolulu, Cairo, Buenos Aires, Sidney, Tifhan, Tihran, Isfahan, Tripoli, depths of Mediterranean attest the magnificent pioneer services rendered North American Bahá’í Community Apostolic Formative Ages Bahá’í Dispensation.”

What was the triumph of these souls, and who were they? Each of them, except Dorothy Baker, whose body was lost in the sea, have memorials erected by the Guardian. How did they attain such honor?

The great-hearted apostle

Martha Root, Shoghi Effendi said, was the “foremost Hand which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s will has raised up” in the first Bahá’í century.

She was a school-teacher turned journalist who learned of the Faith in a restaurant in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Subsequently, she arranged a press conference for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá when He stopped in Pittsburgh during his 1912 Western journey. After reading the Tablets of the Divine Plan in 1918, Martha arose. She was moved by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s own yearning: “O that I could travel, even though on foot and in the utmost poverty, to these regions, and, raising the call of ‘Ya-Bahá’u’l-Abhá’ in cities, villages, mountains, deserts and oceans, promote the Divine teachings! This, alas, I cannot do. How intensely I deplore it! Please God, ye may achieve it.”

She wrote to Him of her desire to sow the seeds of His own love, and He answered that she would witness “wide-reaching consequences” and “extraordinary confirmations,” and that much as He desired that she visit Him in the Holy Land, “teaching stands above everything else, and if thou deemest it advisable, engage thou in the spreading of it throughout the regions of the world.”

She began with a journey to South America in 1919 and for the next 20 years traveled and taught continuously, circling the globe four times. Riding on trains, ships, mules; in cars and carriages; and on foot, she toured China, India, Australia, Africa, Europe, Iran, Turkey, Japan, Hawaii, South America, and the United States. She took the Message to kings, queens, presidents, prime ministers, newspaper editors and reporters, priests, poets, artists, dervishes, maharajahs, scholars, farmers, merchants, laborers, princes and princesses. She exemplified the universal, non-
If you want to give the Message to anyone, love them, and if you love them, they will listen.’ — Martha Root.

The grave of Martha Root in Honolulu, Hawaii.
then went to Australia, and, hastening to the United States to assist the unfoldment of the first Seven Year Plan, passed away in Honolulu. Her last year had been one of burning physical pain. "I am so near the shore of eternity . . . ." she wrote in September 1939. "I thank you each and every one for all that you will do to help me, and I thank you for your love."

The shining example

Marion Jack, said the Guardian, was surpassed in "constancy, dedication, self-abnegation, fearlessness" by none except the "incomparable Martha Root.""15 Her open, joyous nature caused 'friends to call her "Jackie;" her steadfast constancy endeared her to the Master, who called her "General Jack."" She was a Canadian who became a Bahá'í while studying art in Paris. Continental Counsellor Edna True, who, as a child, knew Marion, recalls: "We all thought she was so much fun." She taught English to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's grandchildren in the Holy Land in 1908; she accompanied Martha Root to Adrianople in 1933, and Martha wrote that there the children loved to gather around Marion and watch her paint and sketch, while their mothers would pat her on the shoulders and say "Aferin! Aferin!" ("Bravo! Bravo!")

When the Divine Plan was revealed, Marion Jack pioneered to Alaska. She also taught in various parts of Canada; and at Green Acre Bahá'í School in Eliot, Maine, she taught and painted. The friends loved to visit her studio there; welcomed by her luminous eyes and beautiful smile, they talked with her and admired her paintings of Green Acre and the Holy Land.

Marion pioneered to Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1930. One of her spiritual children, who met her in Sofia in 1938, recalled that her room "was a museum, full of pictures, books and papers all over. We sat wherever there was someplace — on the chair, the bed, on the floor, and she always had some refreshments for her guests . . ."16 She had no literature in Bulgarian, and, because of the political situation, had to teach cautiously.

World War II began, and the Guardian wired her: "Advise return Canada." She replied, "How about Switzerland," and assured him of her obedience. But when he wired "Approve Switzerland,"17 she wired back her plea that he allow her to stay at her post, for "her one desire was to remain with her spiritual children."18 He granted her request.

She was not rich, and when the leaden walls of war closed around Bulgaria, her small pension did not reach her. She had an enlarged heart and other ailments, and she suffered cold, hunger, and homelessness. When Sofia was bombed, she went with other refugees to the country. After the war, she returned. All but one of her spiritual children had survived. Marion Jack was nearly 80 when she wrote friends in the states, "Interest in the Cause continues in spite of our inability to reorganize."19 The Guardian instructed the National Spiritual Assembly to send her funds: "She is a heroic soul," his secretary wrote on November 8, 1949, "the finest example of the pioneer spirit which we have anywhere in the world, and the Guardian feels deeply indebted to her, and loves her very dearly."20

She died and was buried in Sofia. The Guardian said that her tomb will one day be a national shrine. He cabled that she was a "shining example pioneers of present and future generations East West,"21 and a letter written on his behalf said "He thinks that every Bahá'í, and most particularly those who left their homes and gone to serve in foreign fields, should know of, and turn their gaze to, Marion Jack."22
Lua Getsinger was in the first group of Western Baha'is to visit the Master; they touched the shore of 'Akkâ, December 10, 1898. That was the beginning of Lua's life. She had been an actress, studying in Chicago, when she became one of the first Baha'is of the West. Her passionate, dramatic nature made her incomprehensible to many of the friends, but the Master trained her in the passion of Divine love. "I have given you the power to speak and loosened your tongue," He told her. May Maxwell, one of Lua's many spiritual children, wrote that Lua "broke the path through the untrod forest; she cast her soul and body into the stream and perished making the bridge by which we cross."

Lua inhaled the fragrance of the martyr-spirit from the Master. He told her to be like Tahirih, who, He said, "had chosen her path, and knew her goal." Lua must pierce "the impenetrable darkness of the night, the howling winds, the raging storms." and see "the glorious Light" beckoning her forward. He sent her on a delicate mission to Muzaffar'd-Din Shâh of Iran, which caused some decrease in the persecution of Persian Baha'is. He sent her teaching throughout the United States, Europe, Africa, and India. He called her Livá, the Banner, and named her the Herald of the Covenant; like a flame, her love for Him, the Center of the Covenant, consumed her. Her candle-self softened and melted away. Her husband, with her on some of her travels, wrote, "... she never spared herself. Time and time again, I have seen her in a state of utter exhaustion, yet she would pull herself together by sheer willpower in order to keep her appointments... She knew but little rest, for 'Abdu'l-Baha said, "Day and night thou must engage in spreading the Message. Nothing else will avail thee." When Lua suffered a severe heart attack, the Master said, "I told the angel of death to stay away." But after her service in India, as she traveled, following His instructions, to America, her health collapsed. She died in Cairo, Egypt, May 1, 1916, at the age of 45. She had written, during that last year on earth, "Please say to all the friends that I love them all, and I am ready to meet them in the spirit of the Center of God's holy Covenant which is naught save pure, spiritual divine love! I wish everybody success in the service of His Great Cause, and ask them to pray for me—the least and most unworthy of all His faithful servants..."

The Guardian had the remains of the great Baha'i teacher of the East, Mirza Abu'l-Fadl, interred with Lua's in two adjoining tombs, one facing East and one facing West, at the Baha'i cemetery in Cairo in 1946. "The immortal Lua," he called her, "mother-teacher of the American Baha'i community, herald of the dawn of the Day of the Covenant..." She took the gift of eloquence that the Master gave her and lost herself in teaching.

May Maxwell learned of the Faith through Lua in Paris, and she accompanied that first group of pilgrims to 'Akkâ. She told of their exalting meeting with the Master in her book *An Early Pilgrimage*. She had been an invalid for much of her life, but when she met the Master, He told her, "Now your troubles are ended and you must wipe away your tears." He wrote to her mother in Paris, "She has been human, but now she is divine; earthly, but now heavenly;" and He sent her back to Paris to establish the Baha'i community there.

From 1899 to 1902, many were drawn to the Faith through her
May Maxwell was a wonderful teacher of the Faith because she inspired love.

May became engaged to Sutherland Maxwell, a young architecture student, in Paris; but when he returned to his home in Montreal, she, ever obedient to the Master, remained in Paris for two more years. Then she was married in London in 1902 and moved to Montreal, where her husband became the first Canadian Bahá’í. He was followed by many others. The Maxwell home was a center of love; it was blessed with the presence of the Master in 1912. The Maxwell’s daughter became Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, the wife of the beloved Guardian and a Hand of the Cause of God. Sutherland Maxwell designed the superstructure of the Shrine of the Báb and was also made a Hand of the Cause; and May, with her selfless devotion, won a martyr’s crown.

“I have not two lives but one,” she wrote in 1934, “the inner life of the Cause to which every outer thing and circumstance must adjust itself.”32 She saw the hidden virtues of every person and radiated an unquenchable joy. She was a wonderful teacher of the Faith because she inspired love. To her friends, she seemed ephemeral, unattached to earth. “The mortal cage is nothing;” she wrote, “the soul’s motion in relation to the Beloved is the unfoldment of all the meaning of life.”33

After establishing the Cause in Paris and Canada; serving on the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, the Spiritual Assembly of Montreal, and numerous national committees; leading many civic activities in Montreal and starting a Montessori school in her home; traveling teaching in Canada, the United States, and Europe; and seeing the marriage of her only child with the beloved Guardian of the Cause of God; May Maxwell undertook, at the age of 70, a teaching trip to Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Fired by her unfailing love for the Cause, quickened by her devotion to the Guardian, and captivated with the possibilities of spiritual harvest in South America, she hastened to Argentina. Accompanied by her niece, she taught constantly. Arriving in Buenos Aires, her niece said, May “leaned out of the taxi and exclaimed words of delight.”34 The next morning she suffered a severe pain in her heart; that afternoon, she passed away.

“To sacred tie her signal services had forged,” cabled the Guardian, alluding to His own marriage, “priceless honor martyr’s death now added.”35 Her tomb in Quilmes, Argentina, was designed by her husband and erected by the Guardian, who said it would become a historic center for Bahá’í activity. The precious recording of the Master’s voice was played at her interment. She was “‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s beloved handmaid, distinguished disciple,”36 of whom He wrote, “May Maxwell is really a Bahá’í... Her company uplifts and develops the soul.”37

Spiritual conquerors of a continent

“It was all very simple—a wave that came into our lives, possessing us and satisfying every desire to serve our beloved Cause, the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh and His glorious Covenant,” wrote Hyde Dunn of his and Clara Dunn’s decision to pioneer to Australia in 1918. “Mother (he always called his wife Mother, and she called him Father, and thus they were known to the friends) was reading ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s... call to the United States and Canada, and His appeal was so penetrating and thrilling, it
pierced our hearts... Mother looked up and said, ‘Shall we go Father?’ ‘Yes,’ was my reply... after a few months, my resignation to my firm was sent, everything given up, and arrangements made for our prompt sailing.’

On board ship to Australia, Mrs. Dunn met a man who had been the manager of a firm in the United States which she had represented. He offered her a job in Australia. This was a wonderful blessing, especially because Mr. Dunn was ill when they arrived. After about six months, he found a job which required him to travel all over Australia and New Zealand. Mrs. Dunn left her job and traveled with him. She set up house in the capital cities. During the week she met people and arranged weekend meetings, and Mr. Dunn addressed the meetings. “Interest in the Cause continually increased and people... came at all times to see us. There was no breathing space at all. It was an incessant plowing ahead,” wrote the Dunns.

Mrs. Dunn often recalled her first meeting with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in California. She had learned of the Faith from Father, but they were not considering marriage when she sat at the dinner table with the Master and He told a wonderful story. His voice ringing with laughter. “Oh, His smile was so beautiful,” said Mrs. Dunn. And it was not until she and Mr. Dunn reached Australia that she realized the Master had been telling their story, their glorious destiny.

Mr. Dunn saw the formation of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand before his death in 1941, when the Guardian cabled that “beloved Father Dunn,” was a “veteran warrior” of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh whose “magnificent career” reflected the “purest luster world historic mission conferred American community by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.”

Mrs. Dunn lived until 1960. The Guardian named her a Hand of the Cause of God in 1952, when Mr. Dunn was posthumously elevated to the same station. She saw the formation of separate National Assemblies for Australia and New Zealand. She saw pioneers go forth from Australia and witnessed the fruit of their efforts in the establishment of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific Islands. And at the Guardian’s request she placed plaster from one of the Báb’s prisons, the Castle of Mách-Kú, in the foundation of the Mother Temple of the Antipodes during the Australian Intercontinental Conference in 1958.

In the Dunns’ tomb in Sidney lies the mingled dust of two Hands of the Cause of God, spiritual conquerors of a continent.

The handmaid of the Most High

Susan I. Moody had studied art in Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and Paris, But an irresistible urge impelled her to study medicine in Chicago. There, she became a Bahá’í in 1903 and taught Bahá’í children’s classes. Then, in 1908, word came from the Master: would Dr. Moody go to Iran to help her oppressed sisters there? “I knew then,” she later remarked, “why I felt the urge so strongly to study medicine.”

On her way to Iran, she spent three days in the Holy Land with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Those three days, she said, were her whole life. She made a vow: “All that I have, and all that I hope to have, I dedicate to Thee, O God.” The Master named her ‘Amatu’l-A’lám, the Handmaid of the Most High.

For 15 years she served in Iran, often praying for the patience advised her by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and remembering his promise that, whether living or dead, He would always be with her. She became fluent in Persian and established a medical practice. She helped start a Bahá’í hospital and a school for girls. “I cannot describe to
Susan Moody forged the first link in uniting the spiritual destinies of the cradle of the Faith and the defenders of the Cause.

And during a disastrous famine and influenza epidemic she wrote, “Oh what a mercy that we are alive and awakened and trying to serve in the Kingdom of Abha.”

She was in the United States from 1925 to 1928, and she poured her energy into traveling teaching. She also raised funds for the girls’ school and lauded the services of other Bahá’í women who had served with her in Iran: Elizabeth Stewart; Sarah A. Clock; and Lillian Kappes, who died there.

At the Guardian’s request, she returned to Iran at the age of 77. During her last years she received many visitors and spoke Persian by preference, even to American friends. Asked for some statement regarding her meritorious life she only said, “Let it go, let it pass into the infinite.”

But when she died in Tihrah in October, 1934, the Guardian cabled that “through her indomitable spirit, ceaseless services,” she “forged first link chain uniting spiritual destinies cradle of our Faith and community stalwart defenders in great American Republic.”

The first American martyr

‘Abdu’l-Bahá raised Susan Moody to aid the Persian friends. Shoghi Effendi, during another bleak time for the Faith in Iran, sent Keith Ransom-Kehler to cheer and defend them.

Keith had been part of Chicago’s elite society world when she became a Bahá’í. She had also been a Christian minister, and was an excellent speaker. She taught all over the United States, Europe, India, and Australia, where she met the chief of the Maoris.

Keith gave up her social station for the Cause, and she must have suffered. In 1923, probably in the early part of her life as a Bahá’í, she wrote to May Maxwell, “Pray for me, May, it is my only refuge... Through this bitter storm of trial in which every attribute of light is obscure or withdrawn, you still stand, a
dazzling presence on the further shore toward which I struggle, a
gift and evidence lent me by the Master..."148

The suffering of the Guardian deeply touched her. She was in
Haifa in 1926, only five years after the passing of the blessed
Master. She wrote about the Guardian to the 18th Annual United
States Baha'i Convention: "... this youth under thirty, laboring
day and night for us, sacrificing every human desire and tendency
to further our efforts... with no more personal life than a graven
image, no more thought of self than a breeze or a flower, just a
hollow reed for the divine melody. Any one of us is ready to die
for him, but can we conscientiously number ourselves among
those who are willing to live for him?"49

In 1932, Keith was again in Haifa, where the Guardian person­
ally trained her. The Guardian's secretary informed the National
Spiritual Assembly that "she rendered wonderful services in both
Australia and India and Shoghi Effendi trusts that she will do the
same in Persia."50 He asked her to obtain permission from the
authorities to bring Baha'i literature into Persia.

The heartbreak of this task, which seemed a constant round of
meetings with suave, pleasant, but hypocritical officials, was
somewhat softened by her many meetings with the Persian
Baha'is, who dearly loved her, and whom she was able to encour­
age and strengthen. For a year, she pursued her mission. "How
strange the ways of God," she wrote, "that I, a poor, feeble old
woman from the distant west, should be pleading for liberty and
justice in the land of Baha'u'llah..."51

Exhausted by her work, she died during a smallpox epidemic in
October 1933. A month before her death, she had addressed a
gathering in honor of the Anniversary of the Declaration of the
Bab, pointing out that the teachings of Baha'u'llah are the only
solution to the world's problems.

"Keith's precious life," cabled the Guardian, "offered up in
sacrifice to beloved Cause in Baha'u'llah's native land." He
named her a Hand of the Cause of God, and the first American
martyr, and mourned his "earthly separation" from her, his
"invaluable collaborator," "unfailing counsellor," and "es­
teeemed and faithful friend."52

"... I have fallen," Keith wrote during that year of trial,
"through I never faltered. Months of effort with nothing accom­
plished 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 body fell. The smoke
and din of battle are today too dense for me to ascertain whether I
moved forward or was slain in my tracks.

"Nothing in the world is meaningless, suffering least of all.
Sacrifice with its attendant agony is a germ, an organism. Man
cannot blight its fruition as he can the seeds of earth. Once sown it
blooms, I think forever, in the sweet fields of eternity. Mine will
be a very modest flower, perhaps like the single, tiny forget-me­
not, watered by the blood of Quddus, that I plucked in the
Sabz-i-Maydán of Bârfurúsh; should it ever catch the eye, may
one who seems to be struggling in vain garner it in the name of
Shoghi Effendi and cherish it for his dear remembrance."53

Valiant, exemplary pioneer

Another whose flower of sacrifice must be cherished for
Shoghi Effendi's sake was the pioneer Ella Bailey. She pioneered
in Tripoli from July 20, 1953, to August 26, 1953. She left the
United States at the age of 89, following a bout with pneumonia
that had necessitated her entering a nursing home. "I do not find it
such a great sacrifice,” she smiled, “to give up living in a rest home.”

Ella Bailey heard the Baha’i Message from Lua Getsinger. She met the Master in Chicago in 1912; He looked off into space and kept repeating her name: “Oh, Ella Bailey, Ella Bailey!...” And, she explained, “He put into my name every possible emotion. That was the wonder of it.” She felt that during those moments He gave her “all the emotions of a lifetime. He gave me suffering but with it He gave me faith and strength. This made me feel His spiritual power and His truth.”

Ella taught school in Berkeley, California, until she retired in 1924, at the age of 60, because of ill health. At that time, the principal wrote her a special letter of appreciation for her “courage and faith.”

She was the first chairman of the Berkeley Spiritual Assembly, and she was elected annually to that body for over 20 years. She constantly taught, but preferred anonymity; a long-time friend had never seen her on a public platform. She gave fireside-dinners for people who did not realize that she herself often had little more to eat than tea and toast. Her small room in the Berkeley Woman’s Club was a haven for many distressed souls.

In her 88th year, when the Guardian asked her friends, Robert and Bahá’u’l- Khálib, to pioneer in Africa, Ella secretly wished that she could go with them. But she did not speak of it. How happy she was then, when they invited her to come! However, she was afraid she would be a burden; the Gulicks cabled the Guardian, who replied: “Approve Bailey accompany you.”

The Gulicks planned to go to Africa after the Jubilee celebration and dedication of the Mother Temple of the West in May, 1953. So Ella went to Wilmette. There she saw the Temple of Light which had been built on the bare ground she had seen in 1912. She became ill after returning to Berkeley, but in July she left. She was ill when she arrived in Tripoli, and her condition worsened; she was gently nursed by the friends, and was always happy to have the Gulicks’ son, then two years old, in her room. When she died, friends gathered at her bedside and prayed in Arabic and English. An Egyptian Baha’i, weeping, kissed her forehead saying “Good-bye, Miss Bailey.”

She was buried on the shores of Tripoli. Her memorial was a gift of the Guardian, who cabled that her death sanctified the irresistibly unfolding 10 Year Crusade, elevated her to the ranks of the martyrs of the Faith, shed further luster on the American Baha’i, community, and consecrated the soil of the fast awakening African continent. And on one of his maps, he put a gold star on the place where Ella Bailey died.

The martyr pilgrim

The heroine who has no tomb, no epitaph carved in stone, is Dorothy Baker.

Her grandmother took her to see ‘Abdu’l-Baha in New York in 1912; Dorothy was 14 years old. Too shy to speak, she sat beside Him as He invited her to do, and she prayed He would not speak to her. He smiled, and continued addressing others. She never could recall what He said that day, but she became a Baha’i. His image was permanently engraved on her mind. She wrote to him, saying she wished to serve the Faith. He answered that He would pray God grant her desire. She did not know then that He had called her grandmother to Him and told her, “... your grand-daughter is My own daughter. You must train her for Me.”

The girl who was too shy to speak grew into one of the most eloquent Baha’i teachers that ever lived. She steeped herself in the teachings as if her life depended “on her being filled to overflowing with the Revelation of Baha’u’llah.” She felt sure that her duty was to give forth “thoughts that breathe.” She gave her first public talk during a Ridiyán celebration in 1929, in Foundation Hall of the Baha’i House of Worship. Miss True, who served with Dorothy Baker on the National Spiritual Assembly, recalls that Dorothy was a natural speaker who, after long preparation for each talk, never used notes. She remembers how beautiful Dorothy looked in a long white gown as she spoke during the Baha’i Centenary observance in 1944. Another who knew Dorothy said that hers was the only radiance she ever saw which compared with that of Lua Getsinger.

Dorothy relied on prayer and taught its worth to others. She had immense gifts as an administrator, and served as the first woman chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly. She also was on many national committees and taught throughout the country; in one two-year period she spoke at over 90 colleges. She loved working with youth, and was a tender wife and mother. She visited Latin America several times on assignments from the National Spiritual Assembly, and the people called her “Sumamente sympatica y muy querida” (Full of grace — or understanding — and much beloved). She often said, “My heart is in Latin America.”

When the first European teaching campaign began, she assisted there. “Dorothy was good for people,” said Miss True, “Always optimistic, joyous; there was no negativism in Dorothy.” In Europe, she was a European; in Latin America, an Indian; she did not impose her own experiences upon others. In reports written by her of her work during her travels, she says nothing of herself but praises the cleverness of others. And the reports written by the others speak of nothing but Mrs. Baker, and how much she helped them.

The Guardian named Dorothy Baker a Hand of the Cause of God in 1951; she traveled at his bidding to Intercontinental Conferences in Africa, India, and Europe during the Year of the Most Great Jubilee, 1953. That last year of her life was also illumined by a pilgrimage.

“Welcome, a thousand welcomes my martyr pilgrim,” were the Guardian’s first words to her. “Why martyr, beloved Guardian?” she asked; her voice, which the Hand of the Cause of God A.Q. Faizi describes as soft and penetrating, must have sounded more poignant than ever. “Because you asked three times to come on pilgrimage, and three times I sent you to different fields of teaching and you accepted the missions with radiant acquiescence,” the Guardian explained.

Of her pilgrimage, she wrote, “I would not attempt to write the real things, the things of the heart, but I can say this, that the Glory of the Cause, its grandeur, shines like the sun; and as for our beloved Guardian; he is at times a servant, and again a king; and he is at once the point of all joy and again the nerve center of suffering. One does not accept part of him and refuse part. He is, alas, a ransom; we are his beneficiaries. He suffers the grief of the Prophets, and yet is the ‘true brother.’ And as he casts himself into the sea of sacrifice, he is willing to cast us, one and all, into that shining sea also. America is the lead horse. He drives a chariot that must win over the combined forces of the world. He cracks the whip over the lead horse, not the others. Do not the friends realize this? The pilgrimage begins when you take his hand, and ends when you last look upon his face, and in between you kneel at the Shrines and ask for divine direction to serve him. And when your prayer is answered, there is no doubt about it at all; a thousand mercies circle around such an answer, and the Guardian is in the center of them all.”

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At the Guardian’s request, she toured India for two months, teaching, after the New Delhi Conference. She then left for Grenada, to join her husband, Frank, at their pioneering post. Her plane burst into flames over the Isle of Elba and plummeted into the Mediterranean Sea. The news of the explosion flashed around the world, with much publicity given to the Baha’i Faith and Dorothy Baker. The Guardian, when he heard the news, could not believe it. He felt it must be a mistake. Then he sent a cable, honoring her long record of outstanding service which, he said, “enriched annals concluding years heroic opening epoch Formative Age Baha’i Dispensation.” She was, he said, an “eloquent exponent” of the Teachings of the Faith, “indesatigable supporter its institutions, valiant defender its precepts.” She had rendered “impeasurable services.”

“I want you to see Him as a person slight of build, fine of feature,” she once said, in address about the Bab, “He bore a tranquility and kinglyness unlike common men and was recognized wherever He went as One Who was different. Through His mild influence, raising His hand in quiet and natural worship He seems to send forth an almost worldless power at first that, like a sea of light, begins to transform His native land . . .”46 She spoke as if she had seen Him. That was her gift. “Her influence in Central America is most powerful, and at the same time mysterious,” wrote Counsellor Artemus Lamb, who was then a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Central America, “for in reality she spent only a few days here on several occasions; yet all loved her deeply and feel dependent on her like children to a mother. After her passing, many have written to say that the influence is seen and felt more powerfully than ever . . .”47

On January 18, 1954, Baha’u’llah is read prayers for Dorothy from the Dispensation.”

That company of chosen angels is the essence of such as Martha Root, Marion Jack, Lua Getsinger, May Maxwell, Hyde and Clara Dunn, Susan Moody, Keith Ransom-Kehler, Ella Bailey, Dorothy Baker. It is the essence of those martyrs, the Almighty, the All-Wise.”46

That company of chosen angels is the essence of such as Martha Root, Marion Jack, Lua Getsinger, May Maxwell, Hyde and Clara Dunn, Susan Moody, Keith Ransom-Kehler, Ella Bailey, Dorothy Baker. It is the essence of those martyrs, the Dawn-breakers, who wrote “with that crimson ink . . .”46

“Look at Me and be as I am; ye must die to yourselves and to the world, so shall ye be born again and enter the Kingdom of Heaven.”46 That is what the Master told them, and that is what they did. And that is God’s gift of immortality to each soul who takes it and goes forth with a love which does not wait.

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Around the world

Alaska

Assembly formed in land of Eskimos

The northernmost Local Spiritual Assembly in the Bahá'í world was formed in Barrow, Alaska, January 10. ASSURE PRAYERS SHRINES THEIR GUIDANCE CONFIRMATIONS TEACHING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, cabled The Universal House of Justice. The majority of Barrow Assembly members are Eskimos, natives of Barrow.

Nell Golden, a staff member at the World Center and who visited Barrow with Amatu’l-Bahá Ruhiyyih Khánum in 1973, sent a copy of Wellspring of Guidance which was signed by the members of The Universal House of Justice.

Ruhiyyih Khánum's visit was the first by a Hand of the Cause of God to Barrow. She addressed about 20 seekers and enjoyed food brought by them: pickled mak-tak and dried seal meat in seal oil.

Many other traveling teachers have assisted in Barrow since Frances Wells introduced the Faith there in 1955. She had moved from California to establish the first Assembly of Alaska in Anchorage. When the Guardian told the Anchorage Bahá'ís in 1954 that Barrow was a "highly meritorious field" and that there was a "great significance to having believers serving so far north," Miss Wells decided to go. She was a fastidious, fashionable woman who took a job as a clerk in a coal mine office and lived under primitive conditions in the harsh climate for nearly three years until she was able to buy a house. Her first opportunity to teach openly came in 1956 when she was asked, in a store about her religious work. As a result, she was able to give literature to an Eskimo leader. When she bought her house, an Eskimo girl lived with her; the girl declared in 1960. The Eskimos called Miss Wells' house Kounmatikavik, which means the house from which comes the Power of the Light. They honored Miss Wells by asking her to vote in an Eskimo council meeting, which she was attending as an observer.

The first Barrow Bahá'í Group was formed in 1957 when Margaret Pirkey settled there. But Miss Pirkey died that same year. Mable Amidon then left her home in Fairbanks and settled in Barrow. She had pioneered in Alaska at the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade, and helped establish the first Local Spiritual Assembly of the Tanana Valley in 1955.

Miss Wells and Mrs. Amidon established a Bahá’í Center in Barrow with a library that contained 67 books and pamphlets. Soon after, Miss Wells had to leave because of poor health. She subsequently pioneered to Luxembourg and died at her post in 1960.

Mrs. Amidon remained in Barrow, running Sunday morning devotional services and children’s classes. Tom and Dottie Baumgartner answered a call for a married couple to pioneer to Barrow in 1959, and Mrs. Amidon settled in a goal area of the U.S. The Baumgartners stayed in Barrow for a year, when inadequate schooling for their four sons forced them to leave. However, two people declared during their stay.

Ten years later, David Baumgartner, one of their sons, returned with his wife, Carolyn. They are now members of the first Spiritual Assembly of Barrow.

Teaching encouraged by Dr. Muhájir

The Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir conferred with the National Spiritual Assembly and spent an evening with Alaskan believers January 4. He encouraged energetic teaching before the International Conference in Anchorage July 23-25 so that a mass of new believers could take part in the exciting teaching activities during and after the conference.

The National Assembly reported that Dr. Muhájir encouraged the Alaskan Bahá'ís to form teams that would pray, consult, and teach together with the goal of bringing whole families into the Faith.

Dr. Muhájir spoke to the believers of the supreme effort of the beloved Guardian, who, through Divine guidance, planned the expansion of the Faith throughout the world. In the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade, for instance, 2,000 localities were open to the Faith. When the Guardian passed away, even before the Crusade ended, there were 4,000. And the Guardian’s vision began the enrollment of indigenous people in the Faith. For example, in 1957 there were pioneers in Indonesia but no native believers. Indonesia had 11,000 believers in 1963.

Now the Five Year plan calls for even greater victories than past plans. The Faith has doubled in numbers every five years, but this Plan calls for more than doubling of numbers. It requires enrollment by troops. And during this plan, The Universal House of Justice has begun to build the Seat of The Universal House of Justice on the Arc on Mount Carmel. That is the second of five structures to rise on the Arc; the five will be completed concurrent with the establishment of the Lesser Peace.

The Cause of Bahá’u'lláh, Dr. Muhájir said, is very great, and very simple. It is so great that Bahá’u’lláh tells us that the Tablet of Carmel is only half fulfilled. And it is simple “if you look at everything with the Eye of God, not with your own eyes,” said the Hand of the Cause.

Bahá’í youth host awards ceremony

The Soul Survivors, a group of Bahá’í youth and friends from Palmer, Rainbow, Willow, and the Matanuska Valley recently hosted an awards ceremony and dinner for their parents and guests. During the ceremony, the Creed of the Soul Survivors was read and John Kolstoe, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly, spoke.

The Soul Survivors had completed a course in first aid; it was an adult course, and nine of the twelve youth received cards of completion from the fire chief of Wasilla, who was their instructor. The youth plan to handle first aid for the International Teaching Conference in Anchorage. They also plan to take hunter safety and junior instructor courses.

Australia

Traveling teachers reach Aboriginals

Three New Guinean women traveled and taught in Queensland, Australia, during January and attended the Youth Conference in Brisbane. Janet Elias of Manus, Elizabeth Karava of New Ireland, and Lynn Apu of Lae were accompanied by Margaret Sharon and four-year-old Anna Lisa Bluett of Lae, and by Louise Mills of Rabaul.

The team first went to Cairns and met about 20 people at meetings in the home of pioneers Janet and George Scott. The
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young women showed slides of New Guinea, and the seekers, who were Australians of Aboriginal, American Negro, and Singalese descent, were most interested in New Guinean ways. Two pioneer families took the team to an Aboriginal settlement near the small town of Mossman. Baha'is recently made contact there and the people are very shy. The Baha'is went swimming with village youth and concentrated on encouraging trust.

The team then went to Mackay and enjoyed a musical meeting organized by a pioneer. Several pioneer families from Australia have recently settled in Mackay, which has a small Aboriginal community. The families take turns hosting regular meetings in a public hall in the center of town. The team arrived in time for a meeting which had been advertised by musician pioneer Margaret Brew as a musical talent quest. About 50 people, most of them musicians, came. Mostly youth, the majority had never heard of the Faith before and joined in singing Baha'i songs from the song sheet prepared by Mrs. Brew. The teaching team, the guests, and the pioneers had a fireside until after midnight.

The team then traveled to the Brisbane conference, where they joined the dancing group which was part of a proclamation. They were on television and were interviewed several times by the press. During one interview, Mrs. Bluett told the story of Elti Kunak, an illiterate woman of 32 who had grown up in a tribal village. Seven years ago she became a Baha'i and last year she won the British Empire Medal for her services to the education of women in Papua New Guinea.

Misses Elias, Karava, and Apu returned after the conference to Mackay and spent a week in the home of pioneer Monnie Yaganegi, where daily informal firesides were held. One night the entire congregation of a church came with their pastor to hear the Baha'i Message.

They then went to Cairns, where they renewed friendships forged during their first visit. Before they left, they prepared a New Guinean dinner for their friends, about 40 people. After the feast the whole party accompanied them to the airport.

Cameroon Republic

Teaching trips follow conference

After the recent National Teaching Conference in Cameroon, teams set out on teaching trips. One of the teams, consisting of Auxiliary Board member Iraj Yeganeh, Naz Yeganeh, Suzanne Ovambe, and John Johnson, traveled by land-rover to N'Kongsamba, Bafang, Melong, Kekem, Foumban Fourbat, Bafousan, Bandjoun, Bafia, Batchenga, Obala, and Yaounde.

The team convened the spirit of the National Teaching Conference and discussed the goals of the Five Year Plan with the Bahais. Whenever possible they met officials, introduced the Faith to them and gave them books.

In N'Kongsamba, three Bahais and ten seekers attended a fireside and one seeker declared. In Foumban, there was one declaration during an afternoon meeting, after which the team split into two teams and invited people to an evening fireside. About 20 people came and four declared. Another meeting attracted 22 seekers and four declarations, and in Bafia an evening fireside extended into late night and five people became Baha'is.

The teaching conference in Kumba December 19-21 had been distinguished by the active presence of about seven Cameroonian women, responding to the increased emphasis on the education of woman required in Africa during the Five Year Plan. In fact, the conference was chaired by Suzanne Ovambe, who also spoke and sang during an evening public meeting. Twenty-three seekers came to the meeting, and others attended firesides which were held on the two other evenings of the conference.
Canada

Dr. Muhájír meets with Canadians

The Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'lláh Muhájír visited Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City, Winnipeg, Halifax, Toronto, and Vancouver in January during his first visit to Canada since 1965.

In Vancouver, he so moved the friends with his words about the construction of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice that they contributed about $450 to the building fund. He also encouraged them to teach the Indians, as there are nearly 30 Indian Reserves near Vancouver.

In Halifax, the Hand of the Cause attended a World Religion Day observance with a panel of representatives of the Hindu Faith, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, the Micmac Indian Religion, and the Bahá’í Faith. Bahá’í Pat Verge, who chaired the panel, announced that Bahá’u’lláh was the latest Messenger from God; a non-Bahá’í in the audience of 100 people said, “Surely this is a challenging statement, yet I see no reaction from any of the representatives.” Dr. Muhájír, from the audience, lovingly informed all the representatives that they were presenting a perfect picture of Progressive Revelation.

Dr. Muhájír told the friends in Toronto that homefront teaching would generate more pioneers, and he said that the pioneers in Africa and South America will soon have the bounty of witnessing entry by troops; the pioneers will become harvesters who can expect to gather countless new believers into the Cause.

80 attend Association for Studies meeting

The newly-formed Canadian Association for Studies on the Bahá’í Faith had its first annual meeting January 1-4 near Toronto. Despite a postal strike which limited communication about the meeting, 80 people came, representing Assemblies and campus clubs from nearly every province in Canada and as far north as the Yukon.

The program included the presentation of seven papers which were received with intense attention. Topics included the Faith and its critics, and the relationship between science and religion. Lectures were discussed during coffee breaks and the Ballet Shayda presented three dances Saturday evening.

Saturday afternoon, the Association consulted on work to date and made plans which include beginning and making available to universities a publication called Bahá’í Studies, the first issue of which will carry the texts of the seven papers presented during the first meeting.

Guyana, Surinam and French Guiana

Goals adopted at youth camp

The Third Annual Bahá’í Youth Camp in Guyana was attended by over 100 Bahá’ís with visitors from Surinam, Trinidad, Tobago, the U.S., Brazil, and Venezuela. Participants overcame torrential tropical rainstorms to reach Camp Kayuka in a beautiful forest in Central Guyana. The National Youth Committee had arranged for chartered buses to pick up the youth who would travel from their villages to major roadsides; despite nearly impassable, muddy roads, the youth came.

Continental Counsellors Leonora Armstrong, Donald Witzel, and Peter McLaren gave much-appreciated talks. Traveling teachers Dawn and Greg Dahl showed slides, sang, and spoke. Study classes were presented by Guyanese youth; other activities were dawn and evening prayers, swimming, sports, and a talent night.

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The sun came out on the second day of the December 25-28 conference and shone till the last, when several teams of youth went immediately to assigned areas to spend the remainder of their vacations teaching. Camp participants adopted 83 specific individual goals to be filled by Ridván.

India

Travelers find receptive areas

The receptivity of the people of India, Sri Lanka, and Burma thrilled members of a three-week India teaching project December 19-January 11. Participants in this second phase of the East-West project ranged in age from 19 to 50. They traveled in teams of two or three to remote villages as well as modern cities. Their duties were chiefly to help with consolidation.

The Bahá’í teams were often the only westerners on the trains to the villages.

Traveling teachers from the United States spent three weeks in India, Sri Lanka, and Burma recently. At top, citizens of Sri Lanka carry umbrellas on a sunny day as they pass a small Buddhist shrine. Above at right is a typical village store in southern India. Below, the Mangalore Bahá’ís and projectees gather at a fishing village beach.
The musicians among them learned songs in Hindi, one about unity which had been written by Mahatma Ghandi, and a Bahá’í song. This immediately attracted people, who approached and requested literature, read it, and immediately began asking questions.

"In the West," explained projecteer John Woodall, who at 19 was the youngest on the trip, "we first have to establish the fact and reality of God. In India, belief in God is already a part of life."

"Several thousand people heard of Bahá’u’lláh and His Teachings as a direct result of the project and about 100 declarations were received," reported project coordinator John Knowlton Brown. "The areas where the teams worked were left stronger than when the teams arrived, often with the Local Spiritual Assembly now meeting regularly and openings held on a regular basis."

The teams spent a week in Sri Lanka (Ceylon). Some of the Bahá’ís in one village there had been subject to subtle derision and persecution because of their Faith. The projectees spent time with them and helped them elect their Local Spiritual Assembly officers. When the projectees left, the entire Bahá’í community walked with them to the train in a courageous demonstration of unity.

One of the projectees, Frank Stewart, went to Burma. He found that the friends there were very anxious to know of progress in the United States toward winning the Five Year Plan goals. They treated him with utmost consideration and tried to be with him as much as possible, as they understood how hard it is to be alone in a strange country, especially when one is unfamiliar with the language. The arranged firesides and he was impressed with the depth of the questions. On one ride home from a fireside he was surprised as the Bahá’ís, young and old, began singing "We are the People of Bahá’í" at the top of their voices. "I felt like I was home. They sang it over and over again."

Mr. Stewart gave firesides to Buddhists in the village of Akkyn, and to Muslims in the village of Themine. He attended Feast in Rangoon and was told that attendance during the fast, the Baha’i Fund, and the Five Year Plan. Early in the morning he rose at 6, met some friends, went to the jetty on the Rangoon River, caught a launch, and traveled across the river to a small shore town where they had tea in a native, thatched hut tea house. They then traveled by jeep to Daidanaw (Abdu’l-Bahá’s village) in the farmlands of Burma. There, they had a wonderful gathering. "The people are very deep and devoted," Mr. Stewart wrote, "and one can feel the development of the World Order when among them."

For many of the projectees, this was their first Bahá’í experience outside of the United States. They were delighted to see familiar concepts of the Faith in action in a different context, and to talk with willing listeners.

"You can’t believe how ready they are to listen, how eager they are to ask questions," said one projecteer.

In Sri Lanka, one team returned to their hotel from a meeting, and were approached by a waiter in the dining room who said that he needed their help. All the waiters in the hotels were talking about the Faith, he said, and he had run out of information.

An a projecteer, standing in a dusty field, in India, was asked by a villager if there were miracles in the Bahá’í Faith. "Yes," replied the Bahá’í, "The fact that I am here, that we are talking, is to me a miracle."

**Korea**

**Teaching campaign held in villages**

Korea’s National Teaching Conference, originally planned for March, was held January 1-5 because the Hand of the Cause of God Ráhmatu’lláh Muhájír, who visited Korea in December, emphasized the need to teach now.

The four-day conference was crowned with a teaching campaign in more than 10 villages. Three people declared in the villages and six more during women’s classes at the conference. Village women attending the classes urged the Bahá’ís to visit their villages and teach for a sustained period. One of the new declarants, an 82-year-old woman, expressed her readiness to meet Bahá’u’lláh in the Abba Kingdom any moment.

Five National Spiritual Assembly members attended the conference with Auxiliary Board member Seo Ch‘eol-Min and three of his assistants. About 80 Korean friends were present with six traveling teachers from Japan.

**Trip uncovers many receptive souls**

Nine traveling teachers from Japan discovered that Korea is a field ripe for harvest as they traveled to over 20 communities during December and January. In fact, their success encouraged the National Spiritual Assembly to increase goals: from 1,000 new enrollments by Ridyán to 2,500; from 56 new Spiritual Assemblies to 95.

The first group of four teachers, Iranian pioneers to Japan, met over 400 Bahá’ís and friends. In the village of Chongch’on they taught about 25 children to sing "Allah’u’Abba."

Another teacher traveled through the country for a week; then a group of three worked for 10 days. This group visited the village of Shinch’ón’ri, where the first group had held a meeting. They spoke to members of the village woman’s club and 22 women, who had been considering membership in the Faith declared.

Another teacher arrived on January 18 and made a 10-day trip, during which he visited a village in Kwangyang County where he taught the family of Seo Heon’In, a recently enrolled college student. Mr. Seo’s parents became the first Bahá’ís in the village and later were joined by 20 more.

**Laos**

**Youth participate in training institute**

Youth met at the National Hazíratu’l-Quds in Vientiane for Laos’ Second Youth Training Institute January 24-February 1. Participants were especially invited by the National Youth and Children Committee, which planned the institute.

Continental Counsellor Firaydún Míthaqíyán addressed the participants and told of his recent teaching trip to South America. Other institute sessions included workshops on Local Spiritual Assemblies and on marriage, and lessons on the history of the Faith, Feasts and Holy Days, fasting, the Bahá’í Field Fund, and the Five Year Plan. Each day began with dawn prayers.

Immediately after the institute, the Na-
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tional Teaching Committee gave a one-week deepening for new members of its teaching teams. The two teams travel extensively, one in North and one in South Laos. During this deepening, the teams prepared teaching posters inspired by posters sent to Laos by the Baha'is of the Philippines.

Malaysia

Colleges offered Baha'i speakers

The Baha'i Faith is now included among religions listed in the curriculums of teacher training colleges in Malaysia. Because non-Baha'is often have been asked to explain the teachings of the Faith, the National Spiritual Assembly is arranging to offer Baha'i speakers and literature to the colleges.

New Zealand

Pioneer visits Summer School

A key teacher at the National Bahá'í Summer School in Blenheim December 27-January 2 was Florence Fitzner, who is a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh.

Mrs. Fitzner spoke at several sessions and told of Portuguese Timor, her home and pioneering post since 1954. Mrs. Fitzner and her husband, Harold, were the first non-Portuguese to receive permanent entry visas to Timor, where they operated a private school that taught English. Mr. Fitzner died and is buried in Timor.

Mrs. Fitzner also addressed a public meeting December 30. Guests from Picton and Blenheim came, attracted by a large photograph with a feature article on the front page of the newspaper. This was the paper's second front-page article about the school.

The sessions were based on a study of Bahá'í literature, but one was devoted to a full and frank consultation, by parents and children, on Bahá'í standards of conduct.

Papua New Guinea

Traveling teachers visit 9 villages

"At all times we were treated like kings, welcomed with open arms," reported three youth from New Zealand who taught in Papua New Guinea during December and January.

Geoff Irving, Adrian Richards, and Bernie Gilchrist visited nine villages in Papua and found the Baha'is in some places meeting for regular dawn prayers; in others having constructed local Ḥāẓiratu'l-Quds; and in all desiring deeper understanding of the teachings and the administration.

The three young men were guided by Tari Maro, chairman of the Spiritual Assembly of Port Moresby, who accompanied them throughout their journey. A young English-speaking student, Simoi Dumo, spent his two week holiday translating for the team through many deepening and consultation periods.

To reach the villages, the team walked long distances through steamy, often rainy jungles; and crossed rivers, slept in mud, endured leeches, climbed mountains, sometimes were hungry, and struggled with languages they had never heard before. Of the villagers they said, "Although to our eyes they have nothing, they gave all."

Another team, from New Zealand and Australia, traveled through the Eastern and Western Highlands of New Guinea. Greg Anderson, Tony Voykovic, Tahana Moore, Tom Price, Bob Mannell, Ron Osmo, and Lishy Souness began their work by helping to organize a teaching institute in Arufa. They spread out through surrounding villages, in some cases traveling long distances, to bring Bahá'ís to the institute, which was conducted by David and Sue Podger, Mariette and Ho San Leong, and all their children. The believers of Arufa offered hospitality, and the Feast which concluded the institute was "beautiful," one of the youth reported.

After the institute the team broke into smaller teams. One traveled to the Jimmi Valley in the Western Highlands, another stayed in the Eastern Highlands, and the third went to the Siame and Chimbu area. Teaching and deepening in the New Guinea Highlands requires great patience and fortitude. The region is undeveloped, with villages as high as 8,000 feet in steep mountains with treacherous roads. The people are isolated, vigorous, and aggressive, with little knowledge of or contact with the outside world. However, they are responding to the Faith in large numbers.
and the youth were welcome in their grass houses.

Two of the youth helped the believers in the Eastern Highlands organize their regional convention in the village of Kiugato, and then, accompanied by New Guinean Baha'is, opened four villages to the Faith. The New Guinean friends did most of the speaking. An entire region called the Sinna Sinna was also opened. Here, one newly-declared Bahá'í had a dream of teaching the Faith to large numbers of people.

After the arduous work in the Highlands, three of the youth flew to Rabaul, where the Baining people live. These people are deeply attached to their churches, and teaching is difficult, but the youth managed to hold a meeting in one college. The three then went to the Trobriand Islands, another difficult teaching area, noted for beautiful scenery and carvings. One islander is now studying Bahá'í literature.

All of these youth traveled at their own expense; three of them wrote, “what a wonderful privilege it has been for us to share the Message of Bahá'u'lláh with these beautiful people.”

Philippines

Faith represented at Ecumenical Congress

The Faith was represented at the First Asian Ecumenical Congress in December by a Bahá'í delegation that included Continental Counsellor Vicente Samaniego. Over 100 people attended the congress, representing various Christian sects, Islam, the Taoist Movement, and the Buddhist Society.

Mr. Samaniego spoke on the second day of the congress in response to other delegates' questions on the Faith. Some literature was distributed. The four-day conference included workshops and planning sessions and two Bahá'ís served as secretaries.

The climax of the meeting was a courtesy call to President Ferdinand E. Marcos and the first lady, Imelda R. Marcos. A member of the Bahá'í delegation read a unity prayer, the first time a Bahá'í prayer was read in Malacanang Palace, official home of the president of the Philippines.

Because of the congress, the Asian Inter-Faith Council was formed. Mr. Samaniego was one of 15 people elected to the council. With 16 other Bahá'ís, Mr. Samaniego attended the induction party in Pangsanjan, Laguna. The diversity of the Bahá'ís (Filipinos, Iranians, Americans, and Eurasians) caught the eye of the press and a photograph of the Bahá'ís with an article appeared in the paper. All the reporters received Bahá'í pamphlets.

A few weeks after the ecumenical congress, the Faith was again represented in the Philippines Mental Health Seminar, where Bahá'ís introduced the teachings into discussions and workshops.

Rhodesia

77 children attend new Bahá'í school

The first Bahá'í Children's School of Rhodesia welcomed 77 children, ages 7-15, from 15 Rhodesian communities and from Australia and England. The children gathered in Salisbury West on the property of pioneer Lawrence Hautz to enjoy the program planned by the Continental Board of Counsellors in Southern Africa and the National Spiritual Assembly.

The teachers began school on January 10, when they were briefed by two professional teachers, Irma Allen and Carlos Kaupo.
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The children registered on January 11 and the oldest group of 30 met Mr. Kaupo who started them working on a puppet show. The school then progressed through a program that included daily prayers, lessons on living the life, and trips to a snake park and bird farm.

On the last evening of the school, the puppet show, acting out a Local Spiritual Assembly meeting and a Feast, was presented to parents and teachers. Counsellor Shidan Fat’he-Aazam then presented a pin and certificate to each child. The children’s happy smiles became wider when Mr. Aazam also gave them chocolate bars.

Counsellors address youth at school

The recent International Bahá’í Youth School at Hlekweni Rural Training Center was attended by 133 Bahá’ís from Botswana, South Africa, Swaziland, Lesotho, Zambia, Seychelles, Malawi, Germany, the United States, and Rhodesia.

The conference was highlighted by an evening discussion for the friends with three Continental Counsellors and five Auxiliary Board members.

Among the other speakers were Dwight Allen, who spoke on the role of youth in the Five Year Plan, and Gary Melendy, who presented the writings on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by Bahá’u’lláh. The friends also enjoyed a filmstrip of the Master’s visit to North America in 1912.

The school ended with a unity feast during which about $60 was contributed toward the building of the Seat of The Universal House of Justice.

Uganda

Thirst for Faith leads to Assembly

Bahá’ís brought the Faith to the village of Singo, Uganda, in 1963, and 12 years later Teresa Mbekkeka of Singo traveled to the Bahá’í House of Worship on Kikaaya Hill, Kampala, to learn more.

The secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly invited her to stay on the Hill as a guest of the Faith while she studied and received answers to her questions. She had the bounty of meeting the Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga. During a weekend study class, she spoke briefly; she declared, and returned to Singo with literature and declaration cards.

Her husband became a Bahá’í, then 19 others. Unexpectedly, she received a letter from a woman she had taught, but who was not a Bahá’í; the woman asked assistance because she had told people of the Faith and so many were interested. Mrs. Mbekkeka hurried to her aid, stopping on the way at Kikaaya Hill to consult with the staff at the National Bahá’í Center.

The first Spiritual Assembly of Singo will be formed this Ridván.

United States

Teaching in South moves forward

Teaching in the South has been reactivated through the visit of the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláh Muhájir, who stirred the believers’ response to the new plan by the National Spiritual Assembly.

“We do not know, individually, how long we have to build the Kingdom of God on earth,” said Auxiliary Board member Eunice Braun as she spoke at a training conference in Texas. “Every moment must count. It is time for dedication and inspired action.”

In Georgia, intensive proclamation and teaching has been taking place in the goal town of Gainesville since September. The result is expansion: a Spiritual Assembly will be formed this Ridván. Recently, Bahá’ís were invited to give a full day of classes at Gainesville High School, and several students are writing papers on the Faith. The new Bahá’í community of Gainesville has regular children’s classes and a goal to reach nine families by Ridván.

Atlanta, near Gainesville, will have a renovated Bahá’í Center by late May. The Atlanta Bahá’ís, now painting and furnishing the building, intend to hold firesides there five nights a week and to launch a Spanish-speaking campaign among Atlanta’s 25,000 Spanish-speaking residents.

In South Carolina, the program began with five declarations and the opening of two localities. In the goal town of Columbia, Bahá’ís sponsored four weeks of classes at the University of South Carolina and have regular firesides in Benedict College because of contacts made during direct
teaching. South Carolina Bahá'ís began intensive, daily proclamation in Orangeburg in March.

Alabama Bahá'ís welcomed 14 new believers at the beginning of the campaign and opened three new localities and three counties. Traveling teachers from Alabama restored the Spiritual Assembly of Canton, Mississippi.

This is only the beginning of the campaign which was designed to reach large numbers of people.

National Teaching Committee member Fereydoun Jalali spoke at the Texas training camp February 21-22, recalling the first flush of mass conversion in the South in the early 1970's: "We were not really sure what to do, but we would walk down country roads, or the streets of small villages, and tell people about Baha'u'llah and His Message. We learned the hard way what methods brought good results and what ones did not.

"Each one of us has some memory of the look of a person hearing for the first time about Baha'u'llah and responding to His Message. There were many problems, but these are good problems to have, the ones that are connected with a growing community and with a sudden influx of new believers."

Through the Local Spiritual Assembly Development Program, now in progress across the U.S., Assemblies will be ready to welcome masses of new Bahá'ís and educate them. Most of the current goal areas in the South are near Assemblies. In fact, the effort in Tennessee began in Chattanooga with a direct-teaching program in one neighborhood February 14. This was sponsored by the first Spiritual Assembly of Chattanooga, formed in February, and that Assembly is continuing neighborhood teaching. When the first Southern teaching plan began in 1969, believers gathered in Chattanooga for a conference. Chattanooga had no Bahá'ís at that time. Now, the Chattanooga Assembly is the springboard for Tennessee's reinvigorated teaching work.

Mr. Hayden named poetry consultant

Bahá'í poet Robert Hayden has been appointed consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The post of consultant in poetry is often called the U.S. equivalent to Britain's poet laureate. Mr. Hayden is the first black poet to receive the position. His duties as consultant in poetry will include advising the library on its literary collection, selecting scholars and poets for recordings and poetry sessions, and giving public lectures and readings.

Mr. Hayden is a professor of English at the University of Michigan and an associate editor of World Order magazine. He recently was awarded a fellowship of the Academy of American Poets, and was appointed consultant in poetry February 20.

His books of poetry include Heart-Shape in the Dust, Angle of Ascent, Figure of Time, and A Ballad of Remembrance, which won the grand prize at the first World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar, Senegal, in 1962. Mr. Hayden's work has often appeared in World Order.

Venezuela

4,000 students visit Bahá'í exhibition

Students of the Universidad de Zulia, Maracaibo, enthusiastically visited a Bahá'í exhibition January 21-28. Approximately 4,000 students viewed the exhibition and received explanations of the Teachings. Pamphlets about the life of Táhirih, about the equality of men and women, and other basic Bahá'í principles were distributed.

One young woman received the pamphlet on Táhirih in the morning and returned in the afternoon saying she had read it and that she would like to follow the example of Táhirih and give her life for a cause. She took more pamphlets and spent her free time at the exhibition.

A janitor at the university studied the exhibition and talked with the Bahá'ís; then the Bahá'ís noticed that he was teaching others. He also spent his free time at the display, and copied in a notebook all the quotations and drawings.

Zaire

Quality of friends impresses pioneer

"The friends here (in Lubumbashi, Zaire), . . . have become spiritually independent," a pioneer recently wrote the World Center. " . . . encouragement flows from them to us, instead of from us to them . . . Last year when we were here, we had to seek out the local friends and bring them to the meetings. Now they come and invite us. All meetings are conducted by them. They regard themselves responsible for the work . . . .

"Our joy knows no bounds, and we offer our gratitude to the Blessed Beauty."
Excavation on Mount Carmel completed
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On the cover: the completed excavation on Mount Carmel for the Seat of The Universal House of Justice and an artist's conception of the building.
Riḍván message

Many gains reported, but goals of Plan are lagging seriously behind

Announce delegates assembled national conventions glad tidings completion excavation Mount Carmel preparatory raising majestic center legislation God’s Faith that sacred spot, signature Italy five and half million dollar contract for supplying over two thousand five hundred cubic meters Pentelikon marble from Greece and fashioning therefrom the columns facings ornamentation befitting monumental building. Deeply moved enthusiastic response believers all parts world this challenging glorious task. Developments World Center paralleled further unfoldment administrative structure continental national levels through raising number Continental Counsellors to sixty-one by appointment Thelma Khelghati Western Africa, William Masehla Southern Africa, Burhānī’-Dī Afshān South Central Asia, Hideya Suzuki North-Eastern Asia, Owen Battrick Australasia and Adīb Taherzadeh Europe, authorization Boards Counsellors appoint ninety more members Auxiliary Boards, and call for election at Riḍván 1977 of seven new National Spiritual Assemblies: two in Africa, Mali with its seat in Bamako and Upper Volta with its seat in Ouagadougou, two in the Americas, the French Antilles with its seat in Point-A-Paramaribo, and Surinam and French Guiana with its seat in Paramaribo, one in Europe, Greece with its seat in Athens, and two in the Pacific, the New Hebrides with its seat in Port Vila and the Marshall Islands with its seat in Majuro, the latter being supplementary achievement of Plan. Number National Spiritual Assemblies thus raised one hundred twenty four following dissolution account local restrictions National Assemblies Equatorial Guinea Nepal. Of nine hundred fifty three pioneers called for specific posts four hundred ninety two already settled. Also four hundred seventy seven other pioneers proceeded goal countries. Great outflow international traveling teachers recorded. Moved pay tribute indefatigable services Hands Cause God past year in promoting above successes and in fields teaching protection preservation proclamation and literature Faith as well as signal services International Teaching Center constituting great accession strength World Center relief burdens resting Universal House Justice. Middle year Five Year Plan now opening will witness gathering followers Bahá’u’lláh eight International Teaching Conferences designed generate tremendous impetus progress Plan accomplishment whose goals now lagging seriously behind. Most pressing need Faith this critical juncture its mission redeem mankind is for every believer all Assemblies national local concentrate attainment goals placed before Bahá’í world, promote process entry by troops, achieve vast increase size community, increase number steadfast selfsacrificing believers dedicated conform every aspect their lives high standards set Sacred Texts. The field is vast the time short the laborers lamentably few but on the efforts we followers of the Blessed Beauty now exert, on the degree to which we successfully and speedily proclaim and teach His Message to our fellow human beings, depends in great measure the course of human history in the decades immediately ahead.

The Universal House of Justice
Naw-Rúz 1976
As announced in the Ridván message, The Universal House of Justice has appointed six new Counsellors and has authorized the appointment of 90 more Auxiliary Board members. Below is a complete list of the members of the Continental Boards of Counsellors. At right is a statistical breakdown of the Auxiliary Boards.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CONTINENTAL BOARDS OF COUNSELLORS — MARCH 1976

AFRICA
Northern Africa — Muhammad Kebdani, Muhammad Mustafa, 'Imad Sabilir
Western Africa — Husayn Ardikani, Friday Ekte, Zekrullah Kazemi, Thelma Khelghati, Mihdi Samandari
Central & East Africa — Husang Ahdyyih, Oloro Epyeru, Kolonario Oule, Isobel Sabri, Peter Vuyiya
Southern Africa — Seewoosumbur-Jeehoba Appa, Shidan Fat'he-Aazam, William Masehla, Bahiyiy Winckler

WESTERN HEMISPHERE
North America — Lloyd Gardner, Sarah Pereira, Velma Sherrill, Edna True
Central America — Carmen de Burafato Rowland Estall, Artemus Lamb, Paul Lucas, Alfred Osborne
South America — Leonora Armstrong, Athos Costas, Mas'ud Khamsi, Peter McLaren, Raúl Pavón, Donald Witzel

ASIA
Western Asia — Iraj Ayman, Masih Farhang, 'Hadi Rahmani, Manuchihir Salmantur
South Central Asia — Burhani'd-Din Afsaf, Shirin Boman, Salisa Kermani, Dipchand Khianra, Zena Sorabjee
North-eastern Asia — Richard Benson, Elena Marsella, Ruhullah Mumtazi, Hideya Suzuki
South-eastern Asia — Yan Kee Leong, Firaydun Mithaqiyán, Khudarahm Payman, Vicente Samaniego, Chellie Sundram

AUSTRALASIA
Suhayl 'Ala'i, Owen Battrick, Howard Harwood, Violet Hoehlke, Thelma Perks

EUROPE
Erik Blumenthal, Anneliese Bopp, Dorothy Ferraby, Louise Hénuzet, Betty Reed, Adib Taherzadeh

The passing of dedicated Bahá’í, famous artist Mark Tobey

Deeply grieved announce passing distinguished dedicated servant Bahá'u'lláh Mark Tobey. Ever remembered his constant support Bahá'í community participating activities devoted services England Japan Switzerland United States unstinting testimony inspiration Faith as his fame increased. Ardent prayers offered Sacred Threshold progress his soul Abhá Kingdom.

The Universal House of Justice
April 26, 1976
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Excavation on Mount Carmel completed

The Universal House of Justice has announced the glad tidings that the first step toward erecting the majestic edifice which will be the center of legislation of the Bahá'í Faith has been completed.

Completion of the excavation work on Mount Carmel was announced in the Ridván 1976 message of The Universal House of Justice. The message also reported that a contract has been signed for $5.5 million in Pentelikon marble which will be used for fashioning 58 stately columns, facings, entablature, and the dome. More than 200,500 cubic meters of marble will be used in the monumental building.

The Universal House of Justice said it is deeply moved by the enthusiastic
The photograph at left shows the western half of the upper basement level. Aziz Khabirpur, resident engineer for the project, is standing behind the stake showing the northwest edge of the building and the man at left is at the southwest edge of the building, the distance between them being 111½ feet. The stake in the right foreground is at the center line of the building, the total length of which will be 230 feet. Bulldozers remove the last of the excavated material at right. Below, the surveyor at right is standing in line with the front of the building and the surveyor's helper at left is on the ground floor level.

Response of the believers in all parts of the world to the challenging, glorious task of raising a befitting seat for the Administrative Order, the greatest single undertaking of the Five Year Plan.

In announcing the project on June 5, 1975, The Universal House of Justice wrote: "It is now both necessary and possible to initiate construction of a building that will not only serve the practical needs of a steadily consolidating administrative center but will, for centuries to come, stand as a visible expression of the majesty of the divinely ordained institutions of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh."

Meanwhile, the World Center revealed further details of the building. It will be approximately 230 feet long, 111½ feet wide, and 85 feet from the ground floor to the top of the dome, considerably larger than the International Archives Building.

The portico surrounding the ground floor will have a colonnade of 18 columns on the front and rear, eight at each end, and six at the head of the staircase, for a total of 58. Each column, including the base and the Corinthian capital, will be 36 feet in height. All elements of the capital, which will be composed of three fluted drums, will be of marble quarried in Greece and cut and dressed in Italy. The same marble will be used for the dome of the building and for facing the upper terraces which have been carved from the side of Mount Carmel.

There will be an upper basement and a lower basement below the ground floor, three full floors above the ground floor, and a mezzanine under the dome, for a total of 5½ floors.

The building will contain a council chamber of the House of Justice, a library, a concourse for the reception of pilgrims and dignitaries, accommodation for the secretariat and many other ancillary services that will be required, and storage vaults with air purification for the preservation of original Tablets and other precious documents.

The building will face northward toward Akká and Bahji with the Shrine of the Báb and the International Archives Building to the northwest.
International Teaching Conferences

Many activities planned in conjunction with Conferences

A series of regional teaching conferences and Bahá'í Schools will be held in conjunction with the first three International Teaching Conferences scheduled by The Universal House of Justice.

In its Ridván message, The Universal House of Justice said the eight conferences are designed to "generate tremendous impetus" toward winning the goals of the Five Year Plan.

The first conference will be held July 5-8 in Helsinki, Finland, with the Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery representing The Universal House of Justice. The second of the Arctic conferences will follow July 23-25 in Anchorage, Alaska, with Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone representing The Universal House of Justice. Both conferences will feature discussions on teaching the native peoples of the Arctic—the Lapps, Eskimos, Indians, Aleuts, and Gipsies.

Paris, blessed by the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His travels to the West, will host the third conference August 3-6. The participation of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum as representative of The Universal House of Justice will recall her distinguished mother's association with that city at the turn of the century. Large delegations from America, Europe, North Africa, and Iran are expected to attend. The Paris International Conference Committee has requested that the friends dress conservatively to avoid attracting negative criticism. The Paris conference will be the first large gathering of Bahá'ís in France.

The Five other International Teaching Conferences are scheduled October 15-17 in Nairobi, Kenya; November 27-30 in Hong Kong; January 19-22 in Auckland, New Zealand; January 28-30 in Bahia, Brazil; and February 4-6 in Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico.

Below is a list of activities planned in conjunction with the first three conferences:
- July 9-15—teaching activities throughout Finland.
- July 10 National Teaching Conference, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- July 10-17—Summer School, Inverness, United Kingdom.
- July 16-18—National Teaching Conference, Gothenburg, Sweden.
- July 22-24—National Teaching Conference, Bodo, Norway.
- July 25-31—Scandinavian Summer School, Uldum, Jylland, Denmark.
- Following Alaska conference—Native Council, Alaska.
- Prior to Paris conference—Summer School and camping session, Italy.
- August 8—National Teaching Conference, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- August 8—National Teaching Conference followed by two-week teaching campaign, Luxembourg City, Luxembourg.
- August 8-9—National Teaching Conference, Lenzburg, Switzerland.
- August 12-16—Summer School and National Teaching Conference, Belgium.
- August 21-29—Summer School and National Teaching Conference, Ireland.
- August 24-29—Summer School, Ansembourg Castle, Luxembourg.
- Beginning August 27—Summer School, Iceland.
- Following Paris conference—National Teaching Conferences, Toronto and Vancouver, Canada.
- Following Paris conference—National Teaching Conference, Spain.
Benin

Walking teacher reaches herdsmen

A young traveling teacher recently walked 25 miles into the bush of Benin (formerly Dahomey) to meet a village of Peulh herdsmen, thus making the first contact for the Faith with that tribe. Roger Attiogbe was with youth from Benin and America on a summer project.

The youth were following the example of the first youth from Benin to take an unaccompanied traveling teaching journey.

Vincent Aguemon of Porot-Novó began that journey by meeting with several heads of villages in the Mono province. One mayor was so impressed with the Faith that he loaned his motorcycle to Vincent so the Baha'i teacher could reach neighboring towns.

Vincent proceeded to form a Spiritual Assembly in one village, enroll nine new Baha'i's in the next, and enroll the principal of the public school in another. The principal took a Baha'i prayerbook so he could share his morning prayers with his students.

Bolivia

Teaching project nets many victories

Four participants in Bolivia's first year-long international teaching project, which ended in April, have stayed in Bolivia as pioneers. Bolivia's second international teaching project will begin in July and continue through August.

The first project involved 20 Baha'i's from Argentina, Mexico, Germany, and the United States. A notable success was the enrollment in the Faith of 28 student-teachers at a rural teachers' college in Paracaya.

"We were assigned the goals of proclamation, teaching, and consolidation in the four provincial capitals of Valle Alto: Punata, Arani, Cliza, and Trata," wrote one projecteer. "In each town, we began by contacting the mayor, explaining who we were, and requesting permission to teach. In Tarata, one of us was able to meet informally with the mayor for one and a half hours. In one day we were accorded access to the municipal theatre, made appointments to give a 30-minute program to each grade in three schools, and to offer talks to the high school and three teachers' colleges. We showed films twice on market day in Tarata to large audiences and proclaimed with the exposition in the park ... . The exposition has also been used in Punata and Cliza along with felt board presentations, music programs and personal teaching. There is one new Baha'i in Punata .... Groups of students followed us to the central plaza after one talk in Punata and asked questions about the Faith for over half an hour."

"Over 200 young soldiers at the military barracks in Cliza have welcomed us on four separate occasions, learning and enjoying some Baha'i songs, listening intently to our short presentations on the elimination of prejudice, spiritual growth, the history of the Baha'i Faith, life after death, progressive Revelation, and the healing social teachings of Baha'u'llah. They have asked many questions. Two have become Baha'i's. Two radio stations, one in Cliza and the other in Punata, have given us free radio time, up to two hours weekly for a year."

The July-August project will involve consolidation work in the more than 4,000 rural Baha'i communities in Bolivia, which include about 35,000 Indian believers. Projecteers will also teach in cities, universities, and colleges; help train Baha'i teachers at special institutes; and help prepare audio-visual aids, including radio tapes.

Central African Republic

Television used to proclaim Faith

The president of the Central African Republic recently granted the Baha'i community and the other three major religious groups of the country an extension of radio and television time.

The 40 Baha'i marchers in the Independence Day parade had experienced happy results of their three-year-old weekly 30-minute radio program. Children and youth serenaded them with the theme song of the program. People called, "La Foi Baha'i," and "Baha'u'llah," to the marchers, who were led by the chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly and a traveling teacher from India who wore her colorful sari.

Following Independence Day celebrations, the president met with all participating organizations.

During the meeting with the president, the National Spiritual Assembly representatives congratulated him for putting into effect some of the teachings of
Around the world

Bahá’u’lláh, such as the equality of men and women, universal education, and the equality of religions.

Responding to a request from the representative of another religion, the president allotted television time to each religion, and extended their radio times from 15 to 30 minutes.

With 48 hours notice, the Bahá’ís prepared their first television show. They included a children's chorus and two speakers, who, with visual aids, demonstrated the unity of God, religion, and humanity.

Each of the four major religions of Central Africa now has 30 minutes of television time every Sunday evening. Central Africa was one of the few African nations to have proclamation through television as a special Five Year Plan goal.

Bahá’í pioneer admitted to Bar

A Bahá’í pioneer was the first non-French lawyer to be admitted to the Bar in the Central African Republic. Albert Lincoln of the United States was sworn in during a ceremony on November 1 which was broadcast on national radio and television, and was attended by his fellow-members of the National Spiritual Assembly.

During the ceremony, the Attorney General mentioned that Mr. Lincoln is a Bahá’í and, because of his knowledge of the country and its culture through his involvement in Bahá’í activities, he would be well able to serve the needs of the people.

The president of the republic recently waived the requirements governing the nationality of lawyers.

Dominican Republic

First week-long school is held

In the central mountains of the Dominican Republic, Bahá’ís met for the first week-long summer school in the history of that country December 22-28. Special speaker was Continental Counsellor Carmen de Burafato, who spoke of her participation in the United Nations-sponsored International Women's Year Conference in Mexico City.

One of the most talked-about developments at the school was the help which men gave in cooking, washing dishes, and mopping floors. This is a great contrast with current Dominican customs.

Mrs. de Burafato also gave presentations on the progress of the Five Year Plan in the Caribbean and throughout the world. Some other classes were about the Kitáb-i-Íqán, The Obligatory Prayers, and the history of the Faith in the Dominican Republic.

Ecuador

Radio programs being expanded

"We are thankful to have been allowed to participate in the first stages of what will surely become one of the most powerful organs for Bahá’í education on the continent," said members of the Bahá’í National Radio Committee of Ecuador. They are working toward winning the goal of having a Bahá’í radio station in Ecuador.

Currently, Bahá’í programs are broadcast on six stations, giving Ecuador nearly nationwide exposure to the Faith.

This year, Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era is being translated into Quechua for broadcasting. The Quechua edition of Children's Stories from the Dawn-breakers is being adapted for radio.

Two special conferences in Otavalo and Cuenca began the training of Bahá’ís who want to work in radio. Ecuadorian Bahá’í composers and musicians frequently help prepare tapes and also make television appearances.

The committee has aided international projects and assists United Nations projects in Ecuador.

It's library of radio scripts includes many on general aspects of the Faith as well as single scripts or series on children's education, literacy, the development of the Faith among American Indians, Bahá’í answers to Christian questions, and women in society.

Ethiopia

Translation wins goal of Plan

A goal of the Five Year Plan was recently won with the translation and publication of the Hidden Words into Tigrinya, an African semitic language spoken by about 1.5 million Coptic Christians in Ethiopia. The work was done by the National Spiritual Assembly of Ethiopia in cooperation with and on behalf of the Spiritual Assembly of Sudan.

A few prayers for children, material for children's classes, and a pocket-sized prayer book were also translated into Tigrinya and mimeographed.

Finland

Pioneers report loving atmosphere

Alaskan pioneers in Finland recently wrote: "What to say: how to express what we feel? There is such a joy, a richness, and a fullness in our lives these days . . . "Bahá’u’lláh has sent us wonderful friends in the Finnish Bahá’í community. I could never have believed it possible that any community could be so warm and loving and close-knit and alive in their love for Bahá’u’lláh. It is so powerful that often when prayers are read there is a silence afterward filled with awe and power . . . It's hard to believe we've only been here a little over a month, so like home does it feel . . . How God has blessed and guided us!"

Finnish Bahá’í magazine published

The first issue of the Finnish-language Bahá’í magazine, Maailmankansalainen (World Citizen) was published in January. Maailmankansalainen is patterned after the Herald of the South and World Order, and is produced under the auspices of the National Spiritual Assembly by Harri Peltoła of Helsinki, who is editor and general manager.

The January issue contained 60 pages of articles, some of them the original texts and translations of material by Bahá’í authors of other countries. There were also photographs and original artwork.

France

Architecture student talks about Faith

An isolated believer in Bordeaux addressed an audience of more than 350 people about the Faith recently. Farhâd Hashimizâdîh arrived in south-
western France in Bordeaux, a goal city of the Five Year Plan, a year and a half ago. He is a student at l'Ecole Superieure d'Architecture de Bordeaux.

With the agreement of his teachers, he studied for a year "The Bahá'í Faith and Architecture," and then gave a two and a half hour presentation to his large audience, which included his professors of art and psycho-sociology. He showed the film, "It's Just the Beginning," spoke of the Central Figures of the Faith, and gave a slide show of the building of the House of Worship in Panama and its dedication. Between each phase of the program, the audience asked questions.

Mr. Hashimizadih is helping 15 seekers to study the Faith.

Germany

**Enthusiastic youth plan developed**

Children prepared the program for the 19-Day Feast during the Bahá'í Winter School at Herl. The Hand of the Cause of God Adelbert Muhlschlegal taught at the school.

Soon after the school, 250 friends met for the National Youth and European Teaching Committee Conference in Langenhain where they instigated an enthusiastic youth plan with goals to be achieved by Ridván 1977.

More than 200 friends attended the winter school, some of whom were from Greece, Austria, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Two students from the school spoke in two public meetings.

Classes included detailed study of some of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, workshops on Spiritual Assemblies, and the relationship of the Bahá'í Faith with Islam.

India

**Non-Bahá'í sponsors meeting on Faith**

A non-Bahá'í organized a public meeting for the Bahá'ís in the Belaghata Trikon Park locality of Calcutta and 500 people came. They filled the hall and many stood

Guyana, Surinam and French Guiana

**Children gather for conference**

Children from nine communities in Guyana, Surinam, and French Guiana participated in the Second Annual Conference in Georgetown March 28. A total of 128 children gathered at the National Bahá'í Center.

Around the world

outside and sat on house-tops that adjoined the hall.

Tapan Deb told the audience that he had first come into contact with the Faith at a meeting addressed by Auxiliary Board member S. Chatterjee, and had wanted to sponsor a meeting ever since.

Mr. Chatterjee spoke to the large gathering, which was chaired by Manik Banerji, headmaster of Belaghata Doshabandhu High School. Mr. Banerji thanked those who had organized the meeting with Mr. Deb and assured them of every assistance for the propagation of its glorious teachings which meet the need of the day.

The meeting began with the recitation of Bahá’í prayers in various languages. Abinash Chakrabarty spoke on the history of the Faith, and Mr. Chatterjee presented the Faith as the solution to the world’s problems.

Official receives Bahá’í delegation

Continental Counsellor Shirin Boman recently visited Home Minister of India, K. Brahmananda Reddy, on January 24. Accompanied by K.H. Vajdi and R.N. Shah, chairman and secretary, respectively, of the National Spiritual Assembly, she gave Mr. Reddy The Bahá’í World, Vol. XIV.

“Mr. Reddy did not know much about the Faith, and we took this opportunity to acquaint him with the fundamental verities of the Cause,” the Bahá’ís wrote.

Iran

Chiefs receive tapes on Faith

Some tribal chiefs in southern Iran recently requested tapes on the Faith in their own languages for use with Bahá’í films. Local Spiritual Assemblies in the areas of Bakhtari, Lur, and Arab tribes of Khúsistán have filled the request.

In Kirman, a high school teacher assigned compositions on various religions to his students. One group of non-Bahá’ís were to write about the Bahá’í Faith. They went to the Local Spiritual Assembly for consultation and guidance, and with the help of a local believer, they wrote and presented an article on the Faith. Another teacher asked a Bahá’í girl to describe the Teachings to her fellow-students, and then suggested that the students ask their parents to investigate the Faith.

Auxiliary Board assistants raised

To help win the goals of the Five Year Plan, the Continental Board of Counsellors in Western Asia has raised the number of assistants to the Auxiliary Board to 100. Each assistant attends a series of training seminars for nine hours of study. Special three-day teacher training courses are also conducted by the Counsellors in collaboration with the National

Iran

Youth Committee and the National Teaching Committee. “The number of applicants among the youth to attend the training courses increases daily,” it was stated.

Ireland

School, conference set Aug. 21-29

The Bahá’ís of the Republic of Ireland will host a summer school August 21-29. The school will include a special two-day teaching conference.

Ivory Coast, Mali and Upper Volta

88 new believers form community

“In one village near the border of Liberia, our team of three succeeded in attracting to the Faith a number of people and this, we feel, augurs the beginning of mass conversion in this area of the country,” wrote a traveling teacher from Abidjan on the Ivory Coast.

“Fifty-three adults and 35 youth accepted the Faith. A Local Spiritual Assembly was formed on the spot and the officers of this Assembly met with the chief of the tribe and officially introduced themselves. The children were taught prayers and Bahá’í songs and gradually all the Bahá’ís of the village began to sing these songs in their own language. Pre-recorded tapes of these songs were played to make it easy for the local believers to learn them...”

“A gathering was organized at which the chief of the tribe gave a talk and expressed his delight that the Bahá’í Faith had come to his village. He spoke of his happiness in knowing that the Faith brings love and unity. The chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly replied. Then both shook hands and pledged to help each other to promote that spirit of unity. They requested us to establish a school for children and it was decided that one member of our team who speaks the local language would come two or three times a week to the village and would teach the children prayers and Bahá’í songs, as well as how to read and write.”

The team of three established Bahá’í communities in 14 other villages, formed another Spiritual Assembly, began prep-
arations for the formation of three more Assemblies, and presented deepenings, with specially printed booklets and compilations, in many areas. And that team was only one of many that traveled through the western part of the Ivory Coast during the Christmas holidays.

Abidjan to host youth conference

The purpose of the International Youth Conference in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, July 9-11, will be to launch "a great West African teaching project . . . in an effort to accomplish all the teaching goals . . . by October, midpoint of the Five Year Plan."

Sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Ivory Coast, Mali, and Upper Volta, the conference will be preceded and followed by teaching projects. It will be similar to one held last summer in Accra, Ghana, and attended by youth from Europe, Iran, West Africa, and the United States. Ghana and nearby communities are still feeling the enthusiasm and energy of that gathering.

President greeted by Bahá'í group

Representatives of the Bahá'í Faith were greeted warmly by the President of the Republic of the Ivory Coast when they visited him and wished him a happy new year January 1.

They had sponsored a Human Rights Day meeting in December with the cooperation of the minister of the interior and the minister of information. Their gathering, in the French Cultural Hall of Abidjan, was filmed by the television station and featured on the news.

The mayor of Abidjan allowed the Bahá'ís to display posters in prominent places, and many invitations were sent to professors and university students, government officials, dignitaries, and executives. Many Bahá'í books and pamphlets were distributed at the meeting.

Liberia

Believers share stories of Master

On the last night of the Summer School in Bomi Hills in late December, Bahá'ís from Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone shared their best-loved stories of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The gathering in honor of the Master capped joyous days that met the school's goal of universal participation.

Auxiliary Board member Vera Edwards spoke on "Prayer and Meditation," and during a public meeting two Bahá'í films were shown to an audience of 45. Three hours of classes and three hours of workshop time were allotted each day, but enthusiasm carried every session over-time.

Luxembourg

Faith proclaimed to prime minister

His Excellency Gaston Thorn, the prime minister of Luxembourg, recently received The Bahá'í World, Vol. XIV, and a comprehensive portfolio of Bahá'í literature, during a 15-minute audience with a Bahá'í delegation. Mr. Thorn is also the chairman of the United Nations General Assembly.

Representing the Bahá'ís of Luxembourg were Robert Bontemps and Berthy Schoos, chairman and secretary, respectively, of the National Spiritual Assembly, and Anita Bontemps, a member of the National Press and Proclamation Committee.

The three Bahá'ís said their meeting with Mr. Thorn was relaxed and friendly. Mr. Bontemps pointed out to Mr. Thorn the importance of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh at this critical stage in world affairs, saying that in his role as chairman of the United Nations General Assembly, he would be more aware than anyone of the need for peaceful solutions to universal problems.

Mr. Thorn was very interested in the growth of the Faith in Luxembourg.

TV, newspapers report proclamation

Continental Counselor Anneliese Bopp spoke on women's rights during a three-day proclamation in Luxembourg City. The meeting she addressed was both televised and reported in the newspaper.

With Marco Kappenberger of Switzerland, Miss Bopp met many prominent citizens during the December 8-11 proclamation.

Mexico

Audiences respond to teaching trip

The University of Mérida requested traveling teachers Marvin and Jan Dreyer, of El Salvador, during their recent two-week teaching tour of Mexico, to give a concert in its theater. Five hundred people came, including the rector of the university and his wife, who is the director of cultural activities. The university had placed a large ad and photograph in the newspaper.

After the concert, 50 seekers attended a fireside at the Mérida Bahá'í Center.

Before the university concert, the Dreyers had performed at the Instituto Tecnologico to an audience of 300.

The Dreyers were interviewed on television and radio; the television interviewer went with them to a fireside that lasted until 2 a.m. The newspaper also printed a fine article about the Faith after interviewing them; it was the first feature on the Faith ever printed in Mérida.

As the Dreyers waited for their plane in Mérida Airport, a newspaper reporter recognized them and they were interviewed again.

Mérida is the site of one of the International Teaching Conferences.

In Mexico City, Bahá'í youth organized activities for the Dreyers.

Responding to invitations distributed by the youth in the neighborhood of the Bahá'í Center, 20 seekers heard the Dreyers sing international folk songs and saw the film "Paso al Paso." After another series of songs with Bahá'í themes, the Bahá'ís circulated among the guests, answering their questions, and one young man declared.

On the second evening, 15 people came to a meeting, and, on the third, after an invitation by Chela Lucas, students and teachers from six English classes were present.

"The youth of Mexico City are really wonderful," the Dreyers said. "Their teaching is spontaneous and they are very knowledgeable. They said that it was their first attempt at this kind of program at the Bahá'í Center and they considered it a smashing success. Already, they have planned follow-up programs."

The Dreyers also visited Bahá'ís in Yaxpoil, a Mayan village, where they presented a music program and showed a
Baha’i film to an audience whose response, they said, was “respectful and dignified.”

Niger

**Weekend classes highly stimulating**

Classes at teaching institutes held once or twice each month in Niger are taught by youth. Traveling teachers serve as guest speakers.

Youth bring their friends who are studying the Faith. Occasionally, the gatherings take the form of picnics.

“We have found these weekends together to be highly stimulating and they provide a splendid opportunity to learn the Baha’i life,” said the National Spiritual Assembly.

North West Pacific Ocean

**Santo Island forms first Assembly**

The formation of the first Spiritual Assembly on Santo Island, in the Kwajalein Atoll of the Marshall Islands, was announced January 1.

All the teachers involved in the formation were Micronesians.

The activity evolved under the direction of the National Teaching Committee of the Marshall Islands, with the help of the Spiritual Assembly of Ebeye, another island in the Kwajalein Atoll.

Panama

**Five Counsellors make special visits**

Television cameras whirred as the friends, colorful in their diversity and radiant in their love, streamed out of the Panama Temple. Later, Baha’i smiles made the news.

The friends were going from Sunday devotions to a special fireside in the home of the Temple’s caretakers, Ed and Anita Dougan. Fireside speakers were Continental Counsellors Carmen de Burafato, Rowland Estall, and Artemus Lamb, who, with fellow Counsellors Alfred Osborne and Donald Witzel, made a series of special visits in Panama February 13-20.

San Blas and Guaymi Indians, who had met the Counsellors at a teaching institute in Villa Virginia, met them again at the fireside, as did friends from as far away as Chepo, and friends from Colon who came in a bus. Others walked long miles to the meeting.

The Counsellors spoke to the Baha’is and their guests in Spanish and English. Then all enjoyed a huge, anonymously donated cake.

The Counsellors also visited the Baha’i National Center, where Mr. Lamb recalled the growth of the Panama Baha’i community: 10,000 Baha’is in only 30 years. Many times this rate of growth is required during the Five Year Plan; the Counsellors reminded the Baha’is that the Plan is the Will of God and of Baha’u’llah, therefore, all the goals can be won. Mr. Estall emphasized the need for each Baha’i to become a channel for the love of Baha’u’llah, so that His will may be done.

Mr. Lamb and Mr. Osborne also spoke at Don Bosco in the San Miguelito area. Mr. Estall spoke on “Creating the World Community” at the Training Center in the Canal Zone, and Mr. Witzell spoke at the Cristobal YMCA to 60 Baha’is and guests.

Peru

100 enrolled, two Assemblies formed

The Ninth International Baha’i Summer School in Lima January 10-25 was set aglow by the film of ‘Abdu’l-Baha in America, the enrollment of over 100 people in the Faith, the formation of two new Spiritual Assemblies, and the celebration of the Feast of Sultan with prayers in 10 languages and dialects. These dialects included those of Indians from Cuzco, Puno, Hunacayo, and the upper Amazon. Two Aguaranas from the Amazon were the first of their tribe to attend a Baha’i School.

The urging of Continental Counsellor Mas’ud Khamsi sent the Baha’is into Chincha, an area with a large black population, about 175 miles from Lima. After two weeks, 95 people were enrolled and two Assemblies were formed.

Other enrollments were in Chaclacayo, near Lima.

Baha’is from Ecuador, Belize, Argentina, Chile, New Zealand, and France, joined Peruvian friends including pioneers from Iran, Canada, and the United States, for classes with teachers such as Alejandro Reid of Chile, translator into Spanish of The Dawnbreakers and The Priceless Pearl.

An address by Mr. Khamsi about the station of the Master prepared the friends to view the priceless film of the Master in America. The next day with ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s image in their hearts the friends heard Mr. Khamsi assist their National Teaching Committee with its explanation of goals and plans. Six people arose to pioneer and many others volunteered to travel and teach.

Baha’is gather for the Ninth International Baha’i Summer School in Lima, Peru, January 10-25. Believers from Peru, Ecuador, Belize, Argentina, Chile, New Zealand, France, Iran, Canada, and the United States attended.
National Assembly wins incorporation

The incorporation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Portugal, a goal pursued by the Assembly since its formation in 1962, was confirmed by the ministry of justice December 26.

"We are very happy that we have fulfilled this goal, so long wished for," that Assembly wrote to The Universal House of Justice.

Samoan

Prayers are said at Temple site

On the mountain-top where Samoa's Bahá'í Temple will be built, 130 Bahá'ís from the recent summer school said prayers to bless the land. They stood in the cool rainy tropical breeze, surrounded by lush greenery and tall trees, while Continental Counsellor Suhayl Alai told them the story of the purchase of the 12 acres.

When the temple is completed, travelers on every plane and ship will see it as they arrive in Samoa.

About 65 children were among the friends on the mountain-top. They spent the four days of the school singing, dancing, and learning prayers in Samoan. Most of the classes were taught by youth.

A special feature of the school was a song competition. Song competitions in Samoa have brought forth wonderful new songs, including one for the Five Year Plan which the Bahá'ís sing with an air of victory. A tape of this song is being sent to the Alaskan International Teaching Conference.

Patients, elderly hear the Message

"Keep singing, the patients are happy," said the nurses to Bahá'ís adults, youth, and children who recently visited a new hospital in Apia. As the Bahá'ís explained the song, tears were seen on many of the patients' faces.

The Bahá'ís were to stay 20 minutes, and instead remained for 2-½ hours, singing in every ward. They gave a box of surgical supplies to the hospital. Their photo appeared in the paper, and the radio also reported the visit.

The next day, residents of the Catholic Old People's Home also wept as they heard the Bahá'í Message. They repeated, over and over again, "Bahá'u'lláh, Bahá'u'lláh."

Bahá'í programs are broadcast

People in Samoa and Tonga can hear 15-minute Bahá'í radio shows every Sunday morning. Songs and the Writings of the Faith in Samoan help deepen the Bahá'ís and aid the teaching work.

Programs made by Samoan Bahá'ís and New Zealand Bahá'í youth are used on television. One, about Mount Carmel, has been shown six times. A half-hour interview was televised in January, and 13 Bahá'í shows from Hawaii are being shown as a 26-week series. These shows all take advantage of free broadcasting time.

South West Pacific Ocean

Teaching follows Yahoue conference

As six teams from the New Caledonia and Loyalty Islands Sixth National Teaching Conference spoke to seekers in four towns, they felt courage created by the conference's unity. They taught in Yahoue, Noumea, Mont-Dore, and Paita during the last afternoon of the conference.

The highlight of the conference, which was in Yahoue, February 6-8, was teaching demonstrations acted out by teams of two. One person played the Bahá'í, the other the non-Bahá'í. The goal was for the Bahá'í to mention the name of Bahá'u'lláh within three minutes.

Other conference events were reports from traveling teachers, a social, and workshops on consolidation.

The conference finished with a public meeting in Yahoue where the praises of the Faith were sung with Samoan, Hebridian, French, English, and Maraean Bahá'í melodies. Andre Trabe introduced the Faith and Jean Sevin gave a moving account of the Dawn-breakers. The meeting climaxed joyously with a Samoan farewell dance by Pilli Muaulu and Akatoto Saliga.

Teams went to Thio the weekend after the conference, and planned to keep going.

The road leads to unification

Under a blue sky, in the soft air of Lifou (Loyalty Islands) five Bahá'ís and a friend walked along the road. Pilli Muaulu suddenly said in English, indicating the non-Bahá'í friend, "What about this young man? Wouldn't he like to become a Bahá'í?" Luc Herson translated that to his wife, Kenyie, who said to the young man, who was her brother, in the language of Lifou, "Look, we are all Bahá'ís except you."

Antoine Goetro's face lit with joy, and he said, "I also would like to become a Bahá'í."

He was immediately embraced by his Bahá'í brothers and sisters, and they continued together down the road.

Special programs highlight school

Two cyclones did not dim the enthusiasm of the Bahá'ís at New Hebrides' first week-long summer school January 16-23. The school was a special project of the Spiritual Assembly of Fila Island.

Many non-Bahá'í children joined the 40 Bahá'ís each evening for special programs that featured members of the National Spiritual Assembly, Auxiliary Board members Owen Battrick and Alick Soalo, Assistant Auxiliary Board member Jimmy Martin, a traveling teaching team from New Zealand, pioneers, New Caledonian, Samoan, and New Hebridian believers.

The friends studied the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, The Universal House of Justice, National Spiritual Assemblies, and Local Spiritual Assemblies; the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh; "How You Become a Bahá'í;" the evolution of the Faith in New Hebrides; goals of New Hebrides in the Five Year Plan; the unity of mankind; and the equality of men and women.
South and West Africa

Boy, 11, teaches Assembly class

Eleven-year-old Deric Qunta taught a class on "The Duties of a Local Assembly" at a recent conference in Chalumna in the Eastern Cape Region. "The way he taught his lesson . . . was excellent," participants in the conference said.

Other topics discussed at Chalumna and in sister conferences at Jojweni Village and Mdantsane were progressive Revelation, Bahá'í attributes, the Five Year Plan, and future planning.

United Kingdom

Mr. Hainsworth speaks in House of Commons

A Bahá'í shared the platform at a symposium in the House of Commons February 11. The symposium was called "Spiritual Paths to World Government."

"It is a significant development in our emergence from obscurity that a Bahá'í has been asked to share a platform with such nationally-known, distinguished speakers," the National Spiritual Assembly commented.

Philip Hainsworth, secretary of the National Assembly, represented the Bahá'ís in a panel that included the Rev. the Lord Soper, who is a Methodist minister, and the Rt. Rev. Trevor Huddleston, Bishop of Stepney.

The symposium was arranged by the Association of World Federalists.

Total Assemblies now at 111

The formation of the Spiritual Assemblies of Worthing, Eastbourne, and Greenwich, raises the number of Assemblies in the United Kingdom to 111, the National Spiritual Assembly announced in February.

United States

Teaching conferences held across country

Bahá'ís who gathered at teaching conferences in every district of the United States and in Bermuda and the Bahamas March 27 were enveloped by the prayers of The Universal House of Justice, which cabled:

Fervently supplicating Holy Threshold beseeching concourse on high stimulate strengthen participants countrywide teaching conferences enable them embark strenuous campaign attract multitudes as yet unaware teachings Bahá'u'lláh, assure you and American Bahá'í community our loving prayers.

Highlights of the conference were recorded interviews with the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir. Dr. Muhájir spoke of the urgent need for teach-
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Around the world

At right, Bahá'ís gather at the pioneer institute held April 8-11. Above, the Hand of the Cause of God Dhihru'llah Khádem (right) greets the friends. Below, Lea Degan, 70, will leave to pioneer in Kenya “to inspire the young ones.”

Kenya. And Katherine Faily, who is also 70 and who pioneered in Guam and aided the establishment of the Faith in South Carolina for 19 years, is going to Barbados.

Continental Counsellor Edna True outlined the history of pioneering for the friends, and Auxiliary Board member Javidokht Khádem, speaking on the Power of the Covenant, also reminded them that their services make the history of the Cause.

“We’re going back because we love it,” said Anita and Dermot McHuth, who served that project to settle as a pioneer in India.

India two years ago with a teaching project, is returning to pioneer because, he said, he developed a love for the people, an admiration of their subtle spiritual qualities. He is the third of the five Bahá'ís who served that project to settle as a pioneer in India.

8 Assembly members agree to pioneer

The Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláh Muhájír prompted eight members of the Spiritual Assembly of Pomona, California, to go pioneering soon. “It was something we’ve all discussed,” explained Gloria Buis. “But Dr. Muhájír made us decide faster.”

Taw and Priscilla Womack, who are going to Chile, and Tom and Caroline Gosling, who are going to Bangladesh, heard Dr. Muhájír speak in Los Angeles and returned home so excited that the four other prospective pioneers flew to San Francisco to hear him.

Mrs. Buis and Nat Anderson are going to Africa. Andy and Gladys Johnson are going to Brazil. All plan to leave this summer.

Traveling teaching trips on increase

Traveling teaching trips from the United States totaled 322 at Ridván, compared with 139 the previous year. Of the 322 trips, 258 were to countries assigned to the U.S. by The Universal House of Justice in a special international traveling teaching program.

Believers from abroad have also been assigned to travel and teach in the United States. Some communities which will send traveling teachers to the U.S. are Alaska, Canada, the Hawaiian Islands, Hong Kong, Ireland, Japan, and Mexico.

The Universal House of Justice said that this flow of traveling teachers reinforces the teaching work throughout the world.

Inquiries double in just one year

The Bahá'í National Information Office received 2,253 requests for information on the Faith from January 1975 to January 1976, double the number of inquiries received the previous year. And the rate of inquiries increased by 30 per cent during January and February this year.

Almost half of the inquirers tell how they heard about the Faith. Of these, nearly half heard through Seals and Crofts’ records or concerts.

Most want to know the history and origin of the Faith, and are very interested in Bahá'í attitudes toward other religions. Often, they ask how they can meet Bahá’ís in their communities.

The largest number of inquiries came from Illinois, followed by New York, California, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.
Mr. Gillespie honored by South Carolina

Trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie was honored at a special joint session of the South Carolina Legislature in Columbia March 9. Mr. Gillespie received a plaque from the South Carolina Arts Commission commending his contribution "to the world of music and the state of South Carolina."

Mr. Gillespie accepted the plaque, identified himself as a Bahá'í, and said that he was "full of hope for America as it honors its Bicentennial." He read 'Abdu'l-Bahá's words: "The continent of America is in the eyes of the one true God the land wherein the splendors of His light shall be revealed, where the mysteries of His Faith shall be unveiled, where the righteous will abide and the free assemble."

He also read the entire editorial, "Two Hundred Years of Imperishable Hope," from the Bicentennial issue of World Order magazine.

Governor James B. Edwards, present for the award ceremony, during which Mr. Gillespie's quintet performed, later joined the musician for a press conference before television news cameras.

Special guests at the legislative session were Charles Jackson, Mayor of Cheraw, which is Mr. Gillespie's home town, and many other friends from that area. These friends joined Mr. Gillespie at a reception for 300 in the Governor's guest house, and later at a private dinner given by the Governor for Mr. Gillespie, the quintet, and members of the South Carolina Arts Commission.

The ceremonies in Columbia crowned a six-day visit by Mr. Gillespie and his quintet, during which they gave a concert at the University of South Carolina and workshops at Benedict College. They also visited Walterboro and Greenville.
Devoted maidservant Amelia Bowman passes

Grieved passing serene devoted maidservant Bahá'u'lláh Amelia Bowman her services pioneering field Scandinavia since opening years second Seven Year Plan unforgettable. Praying Holy Shrines progress her radiant soul Abhá Kingdom. Advise hold befitting memorial gatherings throughout Norway.

The Universal House of Justice
May 10, 1976

The passing of dearly-loved Saichiro Fujita

Dearly-loved tireless steadfast Saichiro Fujita passed to Abhá Kingdom after long years service Sacred Threshold. His rank in vanguard first Japanese believers his labors World Center his dedication humility sincerity love will forever be remembered and provide shining example to rising generations Japanese Bahá'ís who will view with pride distinction conferred upon him. Praying Holy Shrines progress his radiant soul under loving grace his Master and Guardian both of whom he served so well. Advise hold befitting memorial gatherings Japan.

The Universal House of Justice
May 9, 1976
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Alaska, Australia, Belize, Canada, Colombia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Gambia, Guatemala, Hawaii, Iceland, India, Italy, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Samoa, United Kingdom, United States, Venezuela

On the cover: the monument on the Guardian's grave in the Great Northern Cemetery in London hovers above photographs of the United Kingdom and France and Baha'i activities in those two countries. The pictures show: top left—Lyon, France; top row, right to left—a Bahá'í conference in Aberystwyth, Wales; the countryside of Cornwall, England; and the George Ronald

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Activities throughout Europe are intensifying as the International Teaching Conferences called for by The Universal House of Justice in Helsinki, Finland, and Paris, France, draw near. The conferences are designed to generate increased teaching work to advance the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. This is the first in a series of pictorial essays on the countries of Europe and current Bahá'í activities. This report features the United Kingdom and France. Other European countries will be included in the months to come.
United Kingdom

Hundreds of Bahá'ís from all over the world visit the Guardian's grave (facing page) every year in the Great Northern Cemetery in London. Shoghi Effendi's remains were laid to rest November 9, 1957, upon a rug from the Holy Tomb at Bahjí. Since that sad and memorable day, when the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom were made the custodians of so great a treasure, a beautiful yet simple memorial, designed by the Guardian's widow, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, has been erected and surrounded by formal gardens. The cemetery is located on a beautiful, peaceful spot on a hill surrounded by rolling country. Below, top left, is a typical building at Balliol College at Oxford University where Shoghi Effendi attended college. Oxford is north of London between the villages of Cotswold Hills and Chiltern Downs. Top middle are the
National Center at 27 Rutland Gate (third entrance from left) and the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom in session. Bottom left the Baha'is enjoy a deepening weekend at Aberystwyth, Wales, a crowded seaside resort in the summer. At right, from top to bottom, a typical street scene in Cornwall, England; a display created by the Baha'is of Bangor at the conference in Aberystwyth; and a social event in Wales. The photograph on Page 4 shows the magnificent coastal area of Cornwall in the southwest portion of England. The Baha'is of the United Kingdom are active teachers who are reaching many of their countrymen with the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. One goal of the Five Year Plan is open to the Faith every county in the United Kingdom. At present, there are 122 Local Spiritual Assemblies.
The friends in France are preparing for the largest Bahá'í gathering in France in history, the International Teaching Conference in Paris August 3-6. The pictures show: top right—the National Center at 11 Rue de la Pompe (corner ground floor entrance); bottom right—a fireside in the town of Clermont-Ferrand; at left, top to bottom—the friends in Nantes, a Bahá'í meeting in Tours, and teaching activities in Sens.
3 Hands of the Cause due in Anchorage

Three Hands of the Cause of God will attend the International Teaching Conference in Anchorage, Alaska, July 23-25, the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska announced.

In addition to The Universal House of Justice representative, the Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone, the Hands of the Cause of God John Robarts and William Sears will be present.

The Anchorage conference is one of eight sponsored by The Universal House of Justice in a major effort to generate tremendous impetus to the progress of the Five Year Plan.

The first conference will be held at Helsinki, Finland, July 5-8. Others are scheduled at Paris, France, August 3-6; Nairobi, Kenya, October 15-17; Hong Kong, November 27-30; Auckland, New Zealand, January 19-22; Bahia, Brazil, January 28-30; and Merida, Yucatan, Mexico, February 4-6.

Six Hands of the Cause will serve as representatives of The Universal House of Justice at the conferences: Amatül-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, Paris; Ugo Giachery, Helsinki; Mr. Sears, Nairobi; Ali Akbar Furutan, Hong Kong; Abu'l-Quásim Faizi, Auckland; Enoch Olinga, Bahia; and Paul Haney, Merida.

Bahá’í TV series promoted widely

A Bahá’í weekly television series is being shown in 40 localities in Alaska. The series was distributed by the Public Information Office of Alaska.

The 40 sponsoring Bahá’í communities use various methods to promote the 13-show series: each Bahá’í calls 19 friends to remind them to watch the shows; Bahá’ís without televisions ask to view the shows at their neighbors’ homes; announcements are made at firesides and other meetings; newspaper, radio, and TV spots are used.

Many of the shows are narrated or feature presentations by the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears. Five are interviews with Dizzy Gillespie, Russ and Gina Garcia, James and Dorothy Nelson, Seals and Crofts and Marcia Day, and England Dan and John Ford Coley. Others speak to the problems of youth, show how a Bahá’í community works, explain the Bahá’í relation to the United Nations and to the Holy Land, illustrate the principle of the oneness of mankind, and discuss prophecy and the Bahá’í Faith.

Youth enthusiastic at Brisbane conference

Bahá’ís at the recent National Youth Conference in Brisbane had the opportunity of consulting with the Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone and Continental Counsellor Howard Harwood.

The 175 youth from all states of Australia and some Pacific and Southeast Asian countries began their conference by bringing non-Bahá’í friends to an interfaith service.

Each day of the conference the enthusiastic youth sang, danced, and held firesides in King George Square. Their presentation was televised at least twice. Interviews with Mr. Featherstone were broadcast on national radio stations and published in newspapers. Many new faces appeared at a public meeting, and four
people became Bahá'ís.

The conference also offered valuable deepening with National Spiritual Assembly members Joy Stevenson, Aftaatoon Payman, and Andrew Gash; and Auxiliary Board members John Walker and John Davidson.

Thirteen youth volunteered to become homefront settlers, and traveling teaching teams went forth from the conference throughout Eastern Australia.

Faith proclaimed in radio broadcasts

A radio station in Victoria broadcast an interview with Bahá'ís on Naw-Rúz, and then re-broadcast it two times because it was so interesting.

Encouraged by this success, Auxiliary Board member Mahwash Master approached a radio station in Tasmania and a 15-minute program resulted.

Mr. Master had initiated the Victoria show. After receiving airtime, he had only five days to write a script. He told the producer that his English was far from perfect. The finished script, however, surprised the producer because it was so polished. It had been written as a joint effort by all the friends in Melbourne.

The Victoria station accepted another Bahá’í program for the Anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb.

The stations in Victoria and Tasmania are both public service stations which give airtime to community groups.

UNICEF official praises Bahá’ís

When the Bahá’í International Community requested information from UNICEF about Universal Children’s Day, it received a response which praised the Australian Bahá’í community.

Joan Bel Geddes, chief of the Editorial and Publications Services of UNICEF, wrote:

"...we are emphasizing youth group activities and religious activities, mentioning specifically the interfaith services that the Bahá’í community conducted in Australia.

"I am enclosing for you one copy of a series of small posters that Bahá’í has distributed in Australia in connection with the day. As I said to you on the phone, I have been very impressed with the way Bahá’í has helped with the day’s observances in Australia and I would certainly be glad to do whatever I can to help encourage similar activities in other countries."

Belize

Traveling teachers aid in proclamation

Many West Indian and Mayan Indian Bahá’ís and seekers were visited by traveling teachers in Belize March 19-April 4. Felicia Fennell, Nancy Barnes, Bill Barnes, and Violet Clarke made their home base in Corozol and visited Concepcion, Cristo Rey, Chan Chen, Patchatkan, San Andres, San Roman, and Xaibe.

Dr. Clarke is a pioneer to Belize from Michigan.

The teaching team often visited three villages a day. In most places, they helped the friends elect delegates to the National Convention.

A proclamation meeting in Patchatkan was supported by the chairman of the Village Council. The team secured from him Centro Comunal building for their meeting, but when they arrived to prepare the room they found a business meeting in progress. Sr. Rocque, the chairman, dismissed the meeting, informing the people that the Bahá’ís would present a program and inviting them to hear the new Message. A half-hour before the Bahá’í program was to begin, the room filled with people: men, women with tiny babies, children, and youth; 140 people heard the Message that night.

In Concepcion, the Bahá’ís presented a proclamation program and then another meeting. A man who had attended the first meeting came and said he wanted to be a Bahá’í. He had received a pamphlet, but it wasn’t enough. He had borrowed a Bahá’í book from one of his friends, had read of the sufferings of Bahá’u’lláh, and said, "Do you know how I learned about Bahá’u’lláh? I had to borrow a Bahá’í book from my friend, because the night of the meeting you only gave me a pamphlet."

"Well, this was the spirit of the people which made you feel like staying with them longer so you could teach them more and more about the Faith," wrote Miss Fennell. And Mr. and Mrs. Barnes did stay longer, teaching in Belize for two months after the project ended.

Mr. Robarts speaks at teaching conference

French-Canadian Bahá’ís gathered at the first national Francophone teaching conference and enjoyed the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts. Mr. Robarts insisted on following the conference rule that all proceedings be in French. With the assistance of his wife, Audrey, he gave a brief talk on service.

The 80 believers who came from all parts of La Belle Province for the December 27-29 meeting also heard Douglas Martin, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly; and Auxiliary Board member Ted Oliver. Mr. Martin spoke of the valuable work done by French-Canadian pioneers. Mr. Oliver, aided by his assistant, Huguette Vaillancourt, spoke on individual teaching.

Hearts were especially warmed by stories of 'Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi told by A. R. Yazdi. As a youth, Mr. Yazdi met the Exemplar and the Guardian.

Colombia

Pioneer reports gain in islands

The Bahá’í Faith was unknown in the small islands of San Bernardino until a pioneer settled there about two years ago.

Eugenio de Hoyos, the first Bahá’í of San Bernardino, lives in the village of Islote. Pioneer Eric Teitelbaum lives in the home of Eugenio and his mother. About 10 families (300 people) live on the island of Islote. They call themselves Morenos. "They are very peaceful, friendly and pure-hearted," wrote Mr. Teitelbaum.

The pioneer said that Mr. de Hoyos befriended him and helped ease the loneliness he felt in his new surroundings. As the friendship grew, Mr. de Hoyos read some Bahá’í literature. When Mr. Teitelbaum showed him a visual-aid book that is widely used in Colombia, he became a Bahá’í.
Eugenio de Hoyos (left), the first Bahá’í of San Bernardino, with pioneer Eric Teitelbaum.

Mr. de Hoyos, the first Moreno Bahá’í, is 25 years old and is a fisherman. He embraced the Faith on November 28, 1975.

“When Eugenio declared we both had a marvelous feeling of happiness,” wrote Mr. Teitelbaum.

“There have been a few other declarations,” he reported in April, “in the pueblo of Tolu, which is about 25 miles from Islote on the Colombian mainland. I go back and forth between the islands, Tolu, and Cartagena (a port city) by boat.”

The boat was supplied by the man who is deputizing Mr. Teitelbaum.

Mr. Giachery attends teaching conference

Over 100 Bahá’ís from every region of France enjoyed meeting the Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery, Continental Consellor Louis Henuzet, and Angeline Giachery at a National Teaching Conference.

France

The friends gather for the National Teaching Conference in Clermont-Ferrand, France, February 7-8.

Mr. Giachery welcomed about 100 guests, including 70 children, to the program at the Bahá’í Center of Asmara.

Ethiopia

Newsletter published in Amharic language

As a special gift to its community, the Spiritual Assembly of Addis Ababa published the first Bahá’í newsletter in the Amharic language at Naw-Rúz.

Addis Ababa Bahá’ís also commemorated the New Year with a reception that featured drama and music by 25 children. More than 75 children enjoyed the program. Many of them were non-Bahá’ís who had been attending children’s classes. All the children received gifts from the Children’s Committee which had initiated a special fund for that purpose.

Lunch-time prayer sessions had strengthened the community during the 19-Day Fast. One of the sessions was especially joyous because of a visit by one of the early pioneers to Ethiopia, who now lives in France. He was happy to see his spiritual children, many of whom had been youth when he taught them.
Each Spiritual Assembly and regional teaching committee was represented at the conference in Clermont-Ferrand February 7-8. Each Assembly and committee reported on the progress of the Five Year Plan.

The friends enjoyed a Unity Dinner in a restaurant on Saturday evening and a public meeting at the Lycee Blaise Pascal on Sunday afternoon.

Bahá'ís were interviewed and the newspaper published an article about the conference on Sunday.

Gambia

Six communities building centers

Six Bahá'í communities in Gambia are erecting their own Bahá'í Centers.

Believers in Sotokoi, Kanfenda, Burrock, Badjiran, Wassadoung, and Bulenghat are building their centers out of mud blocks with rafters, beams, and joists made of rhone palm.

It is a Five Year Plan goal for Gambian Bahá'ís to build seven new local Bahá'í Centers.

Guatemala

Earthquake-damaged areas hear Message

Traveling teachers to Guatemala, participants in the March 19-April 4 project, taught in Zona III their first night; the place had been devastated by the February earthquake and rubble was everywhere. The moonlit meeting was attended by many children.

Marcia Baltgalvis of California, Jess Portillo of Kansas, and Christopher Ruhe of New York, then proceeded to Villa Canales and assisted the election of National Convention delegates. Two women became Bahá'ís. The team found that throughout their trip the bold, loving teaching efforts of Mrs. Baltgalvis attracted many women to the Faith.

In Barbarena, a dignified, elderly man accepted the Faith. In Jalapa, Ernesto Rosales joined the team. He is a Salvadoranian Bahá'í pioneering in Guatemala.

After a large meeting in Jalapa, the teachers had a friendly interview with the mayor, who eagerly accepted books and arranged a second, larger meeting. He had attended the first meeting with his wife.

Two women became Bahá'ís in Jalapa, and the Bahá'ís were enthused by the visit. Jalapa had been badly hit by the earthquake. One of the Bahá'ís, a nationally recognized composer, entertained the teachers on the saxophone, performing by himself and with his son.

"During the course of the trip," wrote Mr. Ruhe, "we gave out literally hundreds of pamphlets. The power of traveling for Bahá'u'lláh causes people to be attracted to the traveler in an amazing way. We taught on every bus trip. We sat purposely in separate seats so we could reach the soul that was guided to sit beside us. Soon, everyone around was reading his little pamphlet."

The team taught in El Rancho, Saloma, and Esquintla. The earthquake had not struck Esquintla. They enjoyed the communal life of the towns, the bands that played in the plazas while people strolled and chatted. They met with Bahá'ís in the home of Roberto Zabaleta in Esquintla. Mr. Zabaleta is a member of the National Spiritual Assembly. At the meeting, his son and brother-in-law became Bahá'ís, and all enjoyed joke-telling, which is a national pastime in Guatemala. The projectees traveled to Retalhuleu and re-
Around the world

The delegates to the National Convention of the Bahá'ís of the Hawaiian Islands pictured at the National Bahá'í Center in Honolulu.

turned to Esquintla for a joyous reunion with a family that had been taught by Mrs. Baltgalvis and Mr. Portillo. The elderly parents had both become Bahá'ís.

In El Rancho, the team was honored to meet Gregorio Alvarado, a Bahá'í who is an internationally noted author. He autographed copies of his most recent book for each member of the team. They also met Oliverio Martinez, a Bahá'í who heads part of Guatemala's highway department, and who once lived near the House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois.

"It seemed like the journey had taken six months. How could it only have been two weeks?" wrote Mr. Ruhe. "I was not sad at saying farewell to my precious companions, rather I was filled with joy at having been able to share in such mercy and bounty and strength that only God can give to His Bahá'ís."

Hawaiian Islands

33 delegates elect new National Assembly

Thirty-three delegates elected the members of the new National Spiritual Assembly at Hawaii's National Convention in Honolulu April 23-25.

The newly-elected National Assembly includes Evelyn Musacchia, recording secretary; Michael Woodward; Ben Ayala, treasurer; Brad Hollinger; Tracy Hamilton, chairman; Craig Quick; Elizabeth Hollinger, secretary; Tony Pelle, vice-chairman; and Gertrude Garrida.

About 67 visitors also attended the convention.

Micronesia, Truk advances reported

"...first Bahá'í woman in Laura, so beautiful—her name is Atina Emil," wrote Nancy Emerson from her pioneer post in Micronesia. "Gave fireside with Don, two more men declared: Kira Ken and Tebra Mek. We had three children's classes today, about 12 to 18 each time. They laugh when I sing but they pick up English quickly. They say I talk so slow and simple, they understand my 'da kine' English."

"...they are heart Bahá'ís who remain firm in spite of ridicule and abuse from their friends and families," said Doug Terrell of the Bahá'ís in Truk. Mr. Terrell recently arrived from Hawaii to pioneer in Truk. "They believe," he continued. "They're so happy to see us. 'Oh, Bahá'í! Oh, Bahá'í!' they cry. They take us into their hearts, and we love them. They beg us to stay. When they find out we will, they are so happy."

Bahá'í prayer opens Hawaii Legislature

A Senate session of the Hawaii Legislature opened with a Bahá'í prayer March 22.

Ceferina Caver read the Prayer for America. The Bahá'í Faith was listed on the State Senate's Order of the Day. By a Senate resolution the legislators thanked Mrs. Caver.

Honduras

Name of Bahá'u'lláh attracts many souls

"It was our profound good fortune to attend the meeting with the Hondurans and..."
the Hand of the Cause of God Râhmatu'llâh Muhájír," wrote Nick Bauer. "His message to the Honduran Baha'ís formed the basis of my communications to all the Baha'ís I visited. That message is one of immediate action: teach!"

Mr. Bauer, who is from Minnesota, toured a coastal region of Honduras during the March 19-April 4 traveling teaching project in Central America. Ernest Lopez, of Illinois, toured a mountainous region.

Mr. Lopez said that whenever he spoke he praised the Indian heritage of most Hondurans. At a fireside in La Paz, where, he said, "out of almost 30 people every one was either part Indian or all Indian," a non-Baha'i Indian woman and her husband beamed. "Thank you, it is good to hear these things," she told Mr. Lopez.

"People were humble, with great dignity," Mr. Lopez said. "Their courtesy, hospitality, generosity, were unexcelled by any other people I've met."

Mr. Lopez spent time in Seguatepeque, working with two families of pioneers, the Cornells and the Mandigaris. Mr. Mandigari took Mr. Lopez to the top of a mountain on a teaching trip to the town of San Ysidro. There, he introduced Mr. Lopez to several Baha'i families. Mr. Mandigari works three days a week at his business and spends three days a week touring a large area where he has brought many people into the Faith. He often travels on foot.

In Seguatepeque, the Baha'is have regular radio spots and a brief weekly program. All the spots end with the words "Baha'u'llah-La Gloria de Dios." When the children of Seguatepeque see Baha'is, they call "Baha'u'llah! La Gloria de Dios!"

And children in San Buenaventura now know the prayer that begins, "O God, guide me..." They learned it at a public meeting from Nelly de Vasquez, Mr. Bauer, and several pioneers.

Mr. Bauer felt the power of Baha'u'llah's name as he traveled to Olanchito in a hired car. "The car broke down in the mountains and, while repairs were being made, a heated religious discussion got under way among several passengers. Soon everyone was listening. When my opinion was asked of a certain belief, I replied that Baha'u'llah had explained it in such a manner. The argument vanished, as everyone questioned me about Baha'u'llah's teachings on various topics. The result was a round of very favorable reactions to Baha'u'llah and a more amicable atmosphere in the car for the rest of the trip."

Describing a radio interview that he had in Comayagua, Mr. Lopez said that the announcer became very excited about the Faith and extended the duration of the interview from five to 10 minutes, exclaiming several times, "This is exactly what people need in this day: unity and justice!"

Music used effectively in teaching project

A Hong Kong teaching campaign, coordinated by Auxiliary Board member Sundra Sundram, involved 22 Baha'is from Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. One Malaysian remained in Hong Kong as a pioneer after the December project.

In Macau, Baha'is gave the group a grand welcome and took them to a remote Hakka village of about 80 people. The Hakka are a Chinese farming people. The headman had been visited by Baha'is and had received books. He was cordial, and the group sang for the villagers.

Some of the most exciting sessions of the campaign were performances in the Ocean Terminal Shopping Complex. For an hour on each of four evenings the Baha'is sang. Their music was piped through the center via a P.A. system. Many shoppers stopped to listen to the entire show. They took pamphlets. Some were tourists who said they would look for Baha'is in their homelands.

At a factory, Baha'is were allowed to give a musical fireside during the teabreak.

At a university, they mingled daily with students at the cafeteria. After a fireside, the students were invited to meet the choir. When the choir sang for them they applauded so enthusiastically and sincerely that friendships were easily formed.

The campaign climaxed with a party. All the seekers met during the 12-day campaign were invited. The hall soon filled with over 100 people of all ages, representatives of almost every group that had been contacted. The informal program included favorite Baha'i songs with the audience joining in the choruses, clapping, and tapping their feet.

Returning to Malaysia, many of the teachers taught for over a week in Thailand. They gave musical firesides at universities and colleges in Bangkok and Chiangman.
Around the world

Iceland

First Faroe pioneer celebrates 90th birthday

A call for pioneers was issued at a conference in Stockholm, Sweden, at the beginning of the 10 Year Crusade in 1953. Eskil Ljungberg was one of the pioneers who answered that call. He went to the Faroe Islands in 1953 and is still at his post. He was the first pioneer to the Faroes; therefore, the Guardian named him a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh.

Mr. Ljungberg celebrated his 90th birthday on May 20.

Mr. Ljungberg was the only Bahá'í on the Faroes for 16 years. Many people crossed to the other side of the street when they saw him. He found the first Faroese believer when he gave a pamphlet to a shopkeeper because she seemed sad. The shopkeeper, Emma Reinert, studied the Faith for a year and became a Bahá'í in 1969.

The first Spiritual Assembly of Torshavn formed in 1973. It was a goal of the Nine Year Plan.

Mr. Ljungberg keeps up a busy correspondence with Bahá'ís all over the world. He has translated, and still translates, Bahá'í literature from English into Swedish.

India

President receives Mr. Fozdar's book

During a recent three-month tour of India, Jamshed Fozdar presented his new book, The God of Buddha, to President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed.

Mr. Fozdar spoke in several prestigious universities, sometimes addressing audiences of over 500 people. University leaders invited Mr. Fozdar to speak because of his authorship of books on Hinduism and Buddhism, and his knowledge of telecommunications technology.

English and vernacular language newspapers printed interviews with Mr. Fozdar and covered his talks. Among these papers were the Times of India, the Indian Express, and the Deccan Herald. Mr. Fozdar was interviewed twice on All-India Radio. He was received by the governors of various states. He also conducted deepenings at many Bahá'í Centers.

Italy

Entire student bodies hear talks on Faith

A teacher of religious education in a large junior high school in Cagliari, Sardinia, recently invited a Bahá'í to speak in each of 36 classes. Three Bahá'í children attend the school.

The Bahá'í had spoken in 33 classes by April. She spoke two times in one class and three in another at the request of the students.

Bahá'ís in Alessandria were also invited by teachers of religion to address classes.

A Bahá'í who teaches in a professional institute in Sardinia asked if a Bahá'í could speak there. Every class was addressed. Two classes asked if they could hear the talk together so that they could have two hours of information instead of just one.

Hour-long interviews with Bahá'ís were broadcast on two Cagliari radio stations. One of the stations, which is owned by a Bahá'í, is presenting a children's program two times a week. The program is prepared by the Child Education Committee and presented by one of its members with enthusiastic help from the children's classes of Cagliari and Quartu S. Elena.

Quartu S. Elena formed its Spiritual Assembly in February. It is Sardinia's second
Assembly and it fills a goal of the Five Year Plan.

Radio Bolzano requested Bahá’ís in its area to grant five interviews. A 40 minute interview had been broadcast as well as two 20 minute programs, and the station wanted material for follow-up shows.

Nicaragua

**Concentrated teaching program under way**

An ambitious teaching plan was launched, after consultation with the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláh Muhájír, by the National Spiritual Assembly of Nicaragua. For the second time in two years, the National Spiritual Assemblies of the United States and Nicaragua cooperatively launched a special teaching and consolidation program.

A two-week teaching project in Nicaragua began March 20 with orientation in Managua. Sessions were entirely in Spanish. The 12 projectees, who came from California, New York, Kansas, Illinois, Minnesota, and pioneer posts in Central America, all spoke fluent Spanish.

Two projectees remained in Nicaragua after the orientation. Dee Carson and Anne King began their work encouraged by the example of Dr. Muhájír. He spoke in two of the eight villages which the projectees visited. More than seven people became Bahá’ís during and after his visit.

The projectees visited newborn Bahá’í communities in eight villages. They traveled as far as Jinotega in the north and Rivas-Nancími in the south, teaching on buses and as they walked down the streets. They met town leaders and consulted with new and veteran Bahá’ís.

Special treats were an exchange with native women of ideas about the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh, and the deepening of children through song.

Five Year Plan goals for Nicaragua include the formation of 30 Spiritual Assemblies by Ridván 1978.

Concentrated teaching efforts in Nicaragua are centered for three months each in Leon-Chinandoga, Managua-Jinotepe, Matagalpa-Beace, and Granada-Rivas.

Pakistan

**Teaching highlights Asia Youth Conference**

The first Continental Youth Conference of Western Asia was preceded by and followed with special teaching. The youth from Pakistan, Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, Dubai, Abu-Dhabi, Al Ajman, Muscat, Oumán, and Al Fujairá, who met at Karachi March 24-25, expressed "with one voice" their desire to teach ceaselessly.

Key speaker at the conference was Continental Counsellor Masih Farhangí. Three Auxiliary Board members also spoke. The conference was the fruit of a proposal made at an Inter-Assembly Conference in Írán.

Before the conference, 30 youth taught extensively in Karachi. They met professors, scholars, historians, scientists, doctors, and editors. They presented Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era to those leaders of thought, often during the course of deep discussion.

Hearing of the youths' activities, Pyar Ali Allana invited them to his home March 23. Mr. Allana is the provincial minister of education for the government of Sind. Despite his many obligations on that day, which was Pakistan Day, he spoke with the youth for 1½ hours. He admired their devotion to their religion, and said that he hoped others would follow them.

The 30 teachers then joined others for the conference, which was highlighted by Fr. Farhangí's talks on youth and the Five Year Plan and on the spirit of sacrifice.

After the conference all the youth dispersed throughout Pakistan to activate teaching plans that call for mass entry into the Faith.

The youth of Pakistan volunteered to enroll 4,000 new believers in one year following the Continental Youth Conference in March. The youth pictured are from Thatta (top) and Tharparkar (above). At left, Pyar Ali Allana, provincial minister of education for the government of Sind, meets with Bahá’í youth in his home.
Center is dedicated on island of Tutuila

The first Bahá’í Center on the island of Tutuila was dedicated in Pago Pago on Naw-Rúz. Continental Counsellor Suhayl ‘Alá’í performed the ceremonial ribbon-cutting with Filifili Tu’umalo standing beside him. The center is the former home of Mrs. Tu’umalo.

Members of the National Spiritual Assembly attended the dedication and participated in other ceremonies. In keeping with Samoan tradition, food was presented to the village of Pago Pago. A Samoan fire dance was performed by Leland O’Conner, who is Mrs. Tu’umalo’s nephew.

The center is a gracious house on a hill overlooking Pago Pago bay and harbor. Study classes for adults and children are held there each week.

4 Hands of the Cause attend 67th convention

Four Hands of the Cause of God, two Continental Counsellors, and five Auxiliary Board members were present at the 67th Bahá’í National Convention April 29-May 2.

Amatu’l-Bahá Ruhiyyih Khánum visited the convention to introduce her exciting film of the Green Light Expedition and the Hands of the Cause of God Dhikru’lláh Khádem, Rahmatu’lláh Muhájir, and William Sears addressed the delegates and friends. Counsellors Edna True and Sarah Pereira gave short talks and introduced Auxiliary Board members Darrell Bolland, Eunice Braun, Thelma Jackson, Javidukht Khádem, and Peter Khan.

Elected to the new National Spiritual Assembly by the delegates were Dorothy W. Nelson, Firuz Kazemzadeh, Glenford E. Mitchell, Daniel Jordan, William Maxwell Jr., Magdalene Carney, Franklin Kahn, Richard D. Betts, and Soo Fouts. At an organizational meeting, the National Assembly re-elected Dr. Kazemzadeh chairman, Dr. Jordan vice-chairman, Mr. Mitchell secretary, and Dr. Nelson treasurer.

Mrs. Fouts of Fairfax, Virginia, was elected to the National Assembly for the first time. Born in Hawaii of Korean ancestry, she has been a Bahá’í 36 years and was one of the first three Bahá’ís youth of Hawaii.

In his address, Mr. Khádem urged the friends to turn to prayer to remove any traces of apathy, to put our trust in Bahá’u’lláh and we will gain the necessary inspiration to advance the Cause.

Dr. Muhájir told the believers that this is the most important year of the Five Year Plan, the year of expectation and decision. He said that when the International Convention takes place in the Holy Land in 1978, many National Assemblies will report that they have completed their goals. They are not waiting for 1979, the end of the Plan.

“We must have a constant stream of new believers,” Dr. Muhájir said. “If we are united, we will progress.”

Mr. Sears urged the friends to arise and approach the goals with the spirit to attain them. “However hopeless the goals, if we set out to win them, Bahá’u’lláh will assist and reinforce us. And if we arise,
Bahá'u'lláh will change the atmosphere and all the goals will be won," Mr. Sears said.

Miss True and Dr. Pereira, reporting on developments for the Continental Board of Counsellors, pointed to the steadily deepening relationship and the spirit of collaboration between the Counsellors and the National Assembly. It was also announced that Dr. Khan, an Auxiliary Board member in the United States for the past nine years, is returning to his native Australia where he will be a professor at the University of Queensland in St. Lucia.

One of the highlights of the convention was the introduction of Design for Victory, a book published by the National Assembly to serve as the guide for individuals, groups, and local communities in their efforts to win the remaining goals. The book includes specific suggestions for individuals and communities.

In its annual report, the National Assembly said that Bahá'í year 132 was marked by an unprecedented range and intensity in proclamation activities, impressive progress in the international fields, but a lagging behind in the rate of expansion.

"We turn now to the path immediately ahead with a resolute feeling that more of last year's good must be done but particularly that the lag in teaching must be no more," the report said. "The atmosphere throughout the country is charged with new possibilities. But time is running out. We must seize our chance before it is too late."

In a message to The Universal House of Justice, the delegates pledged to renew efforts to revivify the spiritual life of the Bahá'í community, to inflame the spark of teaching enthusiasm, and to enlist troops of believers.

There were these other major develop-
Charlotte Linfoot ill, praised at convention

The National Spiritual Assembly, the delegates and friends at the National Convention, and the Continental Board of Counsellors paid moving tributes to the dedicated service of Charlotte M. Linfoot, assistant secretary of the National Assembly for 22 years, who has been seriously ill since suffering a stroke last December 17.

In its annual report, the National Assembly said: "Charlotte Linfoot's illness abruptly interrupted over twenty years of constant, heroic service at the National Center. We openly lament her absence and her pain. A sterling example of undaunted faith, uncommon loyalty, selfless devotion, and tireless vigor was removed from the administrative scene last December, perhaps never to return to its pristine radiance. No doubt her spirit helps us yet.

We record in this report our testimony, however brief, to the inestimable magnitude of her gifts of mind and spirit to the progress of the Administrative Order in the United States. May able future scholars amplify this record with the details of her rich Bahá’í accomplishments."

A "love letter" from the delegates and friends was presented to Miss Linfoot. It read: "We who are gathered here for the sixty-seventh Bahá’í Convention wish to convey to you our deep affection and our daily sense of loss that you are not with us. Please let us intrude on your modesty to express our collective appreciation of your years of selfless and tireless devotion to the Bahá’í community, the distinctive quality of your superlative services to the National Spiritual Assembly, and the extraordinary gifts of mind and pen that you brought to the service of Bahá’u’lláh. We cherish you and pray for your recovery."

The delegates and friends gave Miss Linfoot a bouquet of 19 red roses which had been presented to the National Assembly from the National Assembly of Canada by the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears. In addition, a contribution was sent to The Universal House of Justice in Miss Linfoot's name.

Counsellor Sarah Pereira, who served on the National Assembly with Miss Linfoot for 13 years, spoke of her selfless service, her warm and loving friendship. "She was a quiet fortress of strength, a giant spiritually," Mrs. Pereira said.

Finruz Kazemzadeh, chairman of the National Assembly, talked about her clarity of mind. He also said that to many Miss Linfoot, who handled many unpleasant personal status cases, may have looked personal status cases, may have looked

what would have been a vast, emotional outpouring of love," he said.

When she suffered the stroke, doctors gave very gloomy reports regarding her immediate survival. Prayers were offered by The Universal House of Justice at the Most Holy Shrine at Bahjí. Prayers were said at the Holiest House of Worship.

In early January, Miss Linfoot showed remarkable signs of recovery which prompted the attending physician to use such terms as "astounding," "very good." Her faculties seemed suddenly to be revitalized and her whole being vibrated with life.

Miss Linfoot left the hospital in March and is gradually convalescing in a nursing home.

Pioneer describes Orinoco River trip

"One exciting trip was with a friend from Caracas to the Amazon," a pioneer from Venezuela recently wrote. "A local believer, over 60 years old (a woman), a 9-year-old girl, and the two of us went with two Indian motorists to visit a few of the communities along the Orinoco River where 'Amatu'l-Baha Ruhíyyih Khánum had been with the film crew."

Susan Isaacs and her companions visited six villages and assisted with the elections of five Assemblies. They also spent time with the children in each of the villages.

"It was completely new to me—the jungle, river travel, and the election of Local Spiritual Assemblies," wrote Miss Isaacs. "We slept in hammocks—ate some canned foods and once were given local fish that was delicious, the best meal we had. In one village we bought casaba, a flat bread made from roasted ground yucca—a root that the Indians plant. It's a lot of work and the people in the villages have very active, productive lives. It was interesting, because as we approached the villages after hours of travel in our lancha (a small, covered canoe) I wondered what in the world people would do who lived 'so far away from everything.' But there's a lot of work building homes, caring for the land and the children, planting, fishing, clearing new land, using the plants to make baskets.
“In one village every person was a Bahá’í. It was the cleanest, loveliest village we had seen, and the people offered us a school house, helped us set up our hammocks, and stayed until well after dark waiting for the election results—the women with babies in arms—until the last votes were counted.”

Referring to the films taken by Ruḥšiyih Khánum and her Green Light Expedition, Miss Isaacs said, “it will be wonderful when the films of this region will be available to the Bahá’ís.”

Miss Isaacs took the trip down the Orinoco River during her first months in Venezuela. Right after her arrival she had attended the National Convention, which, she said, “was very exciting, with representatives from all the diverse regions of Venezuela—the Amazon territory—the Goajira, where there are about 10,000 Indian Bahá’ís, and, they say, over 100

Green Light Expedition film is available

The film of the Green Light Expedition is available. Narrated by Amatu’l-Bahá Ruḥšiyih Khánum, The Green Light Expedition is the story of her voyage through Amazonia: a 13,000 kilometer journey through South America.

The two-hour color-sound film allows viewers to share travels up the tropical rivers of Venezuela to Indian villages; to shoot the rapids of Surinam in a dugout canoe and visit Bush Negro villages; to climb a high Andean mountain in Bolivia and sing and dance at the peak with Indian Bahá’ís; to stand where “the sun was tied” in the Inca city of Machu Picchu in Peru.

The Hand of the Cause of God shares her view of pioneering in intimate discussions during the journey.

A 16 mm color film with optical sound track costs $350; insurance and postage extra. A Super 8 mm color film with magnetic sound track costs $150; insurance and postage extra. Future editions of the film will cost more. The film is available in English, Spanish, or French.

Order from the International Bahá’í Audio-Visual Centre, 1640 Holcomb Road, Victor, N.Y. 14564, U.S.A. 16mm sound film projectors are easily available in most countries, and can be rented or borrowed for a Bahá’í showing from the United States Information Service (USIA), Alliance Francaise, or some other cultural organization. 16mm film projects on large screens in theaters and halls as well as on small screens.

Super 8 film can be projected only by a special Super 8mm magnetic sound film projector on small screens.

Unesco certification for the Green Light Expedition has been requested. Under the terms of the Unesco Beirut Agreement, such certification would class the film as religious educational material and make it eligible for duty-free entry into some countries.

Miss Isaacs is pioneering in San Cristóbal, a city in the Andes Mountains. There she finds increasing interest in the Faith, which she says, "is what keeps a pioneer at her post."
The spirit of Europe—part II
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On the cover: part of the skyline of the Spanish seaport city of Barcelona provides the background for Bahá'í activity in Spain and the Netherlands. Inset at left is a fireside at Voorschoten, Holland. Inset at right, Auxiliary Board member Mr. Farghani addresses a Bahá'í School at Lidria, Spain.
The Spirit of Europe Part II

Text and photographs by Paul Slaughter

Netherlands

Canals, quiet streets, cheese, warm friendly people—that's Holland where a healthy Baha'i community is gradually gaining in strength. Holland has more than 20 Local Spiritual Assemblies and a high percentage of youth who are very capable and enthusiastic.

The canal scene is at Haarlem. Inset top is the headquarters of the National Spiritual Assembly in The Hague. Inset bottom is a fireside at Haarlem.
The Faith of Baha'u'llah is gaining new friends among the warm people of Spain. From the principal cities of Madrid and Barcelona, each with populations in excess of three million, to rural areas, the Cause is expanding. The people of Spain are friendly and emphasize close family life.

At left is a Moorish palace at Alhambra near Madrid, one of the many ancient buildings throughout the country.

On facing page at top, some of the Baha'is of Montgat, near Barcelona, gather at their Center. Baha'is from Spain, Morocco, Portugal, France and the United States participate in a Baha'i School at Lidaia (center photos). Lidaia is an urban area dotted with many summer homes. Below left, young Baha'is on a teaching trip stop for a break. Below right, Baha'is and friends in Romagnol examine Bahai literature during a meeting.

Teaching opportunities abound in Spain and a National Teaching Conference will be held in Barcelona August 14-15 in conjunction with the International Teaching Conference in Paris earlier that month.

Many pioneers live in Spain, some of whom have been there for more than 20 years.
International Teaching Conferences

Traveling teaching opportunities abound

More than 70 subsidiary conferences have been scheduled around the world in conjunction with the eight International Teaching Conferences which begin this month.

Activities are planned this month in Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Germany, Austria, United Kingdom, Alaska, Canada, and the United States in connection with the conferences in Helsinki, Finland, and Anchorage, Alaska. Almost all of the events are designed to provide opportunities for traveling teaching.

The Helsinki (July 5-8) and Anchorage (July 23-25) conferences are the first of eight sponsored by The Universal House of Justice. In its Ridván 1975 message, The Universal House of Justice said the purpose of the conferences “is to strengthen the bonds of unity and fellowship among the friends, to increase their involvement in the teaching work and their interest in its progress, and to serve as magnets to attract divine confirmations. They are also rallying points for the believers, evidences of the vitality of their love for Bahá'u'lláh, and potent instruments for generating enthusiasm and spiritual drive for advancing the interests of the Faith.”

The third conference will be in Paris, France, August 3-6. Other conferences will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, October 14-17; Hong Kong, November 26-30; Auckland, New Zealand, January 19-22; Bahia, Brazil, January 27-30; and Merida, Yucatan, Mexico, February 4-6.

Friends traveling to and from the International Teaching Conferences may wish to participate in the following subsidiary gatherings, perhaps in conjunction with traveling teaching:

International Conference in Paris, France, August 3-6

August 8—National Teaching Conference, Copenhagen, Denmark.
August 8—National Teaching Conference, Luxembourg City, Luxembourg.
August 8-9—National Teaching Conference, Lenzburg, Switzerland.
August 12-16—National Teaching Conference and Summer School, Belgium.
August 13-15—National Teaching Conference, Innsbruck/Tyrol, Austria.
August 14-15—National Teaching Conference, Lisbon, Portugal.
August 14-15—National Teaching Conference, London, United Kingdom.
August 14-15—National Teaching Conference, Barcelona, Spain.
August 21-29—National Teaching Conference, Netherlands.
January 1-2—National Teaching Conference, United Kingdom.

International Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, October 14-17

July 9-11—International Youth Conference, Abidjan, Ivory Coast.
July 30-31—Togo/Ghana Teaching Conference, Accra, Ghana.
August 13-15—National Teaching Conference, Benin (Dahomey).
October 1-3—National Teaching Conference, Sierra Leone.
October 9-10—National Teaching Conference, Monrovia, Liberia.
October 14-17—National Teaching Conference, Cameroon Republic.
October 22-23—National Teaching Conference, Upper West Africa.
October 23-24—National Teaching Conference, Gambia.
October 23-24—National Teaching Conference, Congo Republic.
October 23-24—National Teaching Conference, Ibadan, Nigeria.
October 23-24—National Teaching Conference, Réunion.
October 23-24—National Teaching Conference, Rhodesia.
October 23-24—National Teaching Conference, Kigali, Rwanda.
October 23-24—National Teaching Conference, Swaziland.
October 23-24—Regional Teaching Conference, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.
October 24—National Teaching Conference, Port Louis, Mauritius.
October 24—Regional Teaching Conference, Kinshasa, Zaire.
October 29-31—National Teaching Conference, N'Djamena, Chad.
October 29-31—National Teaching Conference, Togo.
October 30-31—National Teaching Conference, Malawi.
October 31—National Teaching Conference, Kananga, Zaire.
October 31—National Teaching Conference, Kisangani, Zaire.
October 31—National Teaching Conference, Lubumbashi, Zaire.
Around the world

Bertha Dobbins, the first Bahá’í in the New Hebrides, with Commissioner R. Gauger at dedication of the Ḥazíratul-Quds in Port Vila. The building is at right.

ribbon across the entrance to the building. She was accompanied by the resident commissioners, J. Champion and R. Gauger.

Both resident commissioners expressed their appreciation of the warmth of the welcome extended to them by the Bahá’í community. Mr. Champion, born in Palestine, said he learned of the Faith while living in Persia and was present at the opening of the Mother Temple of Africa in Uganda. He said he admired the Bahá’ís. Mr. Gauger said that although he had had no previous contact with the Faith before coming to the New Hebrides, he was impressed with its universality; a country such as the New Hebrides, with its diverse mixture of peoples and cultures, greatly needed to be unified and he wished the Bahá’ís well in their efforts.

The official opening gave opportunities for an unprecedented amount of publicity on Radio Vila, the only broadcasting station for the New Hebrides. The national news, broadcast in English, French, and Pidgin, carried advance notice of the ceremony and included a full report on what had happened.

During the two days following the ceremony, the Bahá’ís of the South West Pacific Ocean held their National Convention in Port Vila for the first time in history. The excitement generated by the opening of the Ḥazíratul-Quds set the tone for fruitful consultation and paved the way for further development of the Faith in the area.

Swaziland, Mozambique and Angola

Queens, princesses at Bahá’í program

The Bahá’í women of Swaziland hosted a tea marking the end of International Women’s Year. Eight queens of the royal household of Swaziland were among the 70 guests at the gathering in the Leroy Ioas National Bahá’í Institute, Malagwabe Hill, Mbabane.

Several princesses were present, including Princess Goinaphi, who is a Bahá’í. Women from the embassies of various countries were there with wives of ministers of the Swaziland government.

After introductions, the women toured the gardens and were photographed before the araucaria tree which Princess Goinaphi planted when the institute was dedicated in 1971.

The program was chaired by Treasure Dlamini. Bahá’ís prayed in siseati, siseSotho, Portuguese, Tigrinya, Persian, and English. A Bahá’í children’s choir sang. Dr. M. Ahmadi gave an address on the equality of men and women. Small girls distributed the brochure “The Equality of Men and Women: A New Reality.” Concluding the program was a formal message of appreciation by Martin Mdiniso, private secretary to King Sobhuza II.

The Swaziland Times reviewed the meeting and published photographs.

Bahá’í children serve some of the royal guests at a tea sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of Swaziland, Mozambique and Angola.
Radio Swaziland reported the gathering on three news shows. A number of inquiries about the Faith were received because of the publicity.

Prayers published in Chiyao language

Publication of a compilation of prayers in the Chiyao language, also known as (Chi) Yao, achieved a goal of the Five Year Plan. The translation and publication was accomplished by the National Spiritual Assembly of Swaziland, Mozambique and Angola.

Chiyao is spoken by about 500,00 people in a wide area from southern Tanzania to Malawi. The largest number of Yao speakers live in Mozambique.

Baha'is participate in book exhibition

Officials invited the National Spiritual Assembly of Taiwan to participate in a book exhibition at the National Central Library, Taipei. The exhibit theme was “Religions in the Republic of China” and its purpose was “to remind people of their religious freedom.”

The Baha'is displayed books in Chinese, English, and Persian with photographs of the World Center and the Baha'i House of Worship in Wilmette. Baha'is were listed as number nine in the list of participating groups in a catalog published by the library. The booklet contained a brief description of the basic teachings of the Faith.

During the five-day exhibit inquirers took 1,500 pieces of Baha'i literature.

Baha'i volume given to prime minister

The Hon. Rashidi Mfaume Kawawa, prime minister and second vice-president of Tanzania, received The Baha'i World volume XIV from a Baha'i delegation on March 23.

Representing the Baha'i's were Prosper Nduke, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, Auxiliary Board member Herbert Sikombe, and Barnabas M. Barnabas.

While waiting to enter the prime minister's office, the Baha'i’s had a chance to introduce the Faith to the regional party secretary and a member of the National Executive Committee.

The prime minister responded cordially to the delegation, saying that he had learned of the Faith through early pioneers to Tanzania.

Uganda

Mr. Olinga’s group tours Busoga Province

The Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga recently completed a month’s tour of Baha'i Centers in Busoga Province, Uganda. With him were his wife, Elizabeth Olinga, Continental Counsellor Kolonario Oule, Augustine Nnaku of the National Spiritual Assembly, and Auxiliary Board member Peter Mutabazi. Mr. Nnaku also serves on the District Teaching Committee of Busoga.

Mrs. Olinga is a member of the Baha'i Women's Education Committee and she gathered the women of each locality and organized a Baha'i Women's Group, each of which appointed a secretary and found a teacher to conduct weekly classes for women and children.

Everywhere believers were overjoyed to welcome the Hand of the Cause and his wife. Mr. Olinga addressed audiences ranging from 50 to 500. In the town of Busoga he and his companions met with the provincial governor, the provincial executive secretary, the district commissioners of North and South Busoga, and five county sub-chiefs in their respective offices. He gave them Baha'i literature. Some of the officials called in their staff to hear the message. Mr. Olinga made similar visits in the other Centers.

In one community a choir of 13 children sang farewell to the Olingas with a song that contained the phrase, “Don’t forget us, Hand of the Cause Olinga; Don’t forget us, Elizabeth Olinga...”

United Kingdom

A quick response results in Assembly

When the secretary of the Spiritual Assembly of Northampton, U.K., heard of an urgent need for a pioneer to Iceland he immediately volunteered.

Michael Cooper had never had a passport, been out of his country, or been on an airplane. But two weeks after his decision to pioneer he was free of his job, and he arrived in Iceland on April 20, in time to become the ninth member of a Spiritual Assembly.

United States

Bicentennial used to proclaim Faith

Wide proclamation of the Faith is taking place throughout the United States as Baha'i's continue to host and participate in American Revolution Bicentennial activities.

The events include public meetings, parades, musical programs, displays, and presentation of Baha'i literature to public officials.

The Baha'i's of West Hollywood, California, honored the Bicentennial with an entire week of activities, including a luncheon, a senior citizen's day, and an all-day proclamation on May 8.

Baha'i's entered floats in parades in Henderson, Nevada, Scottsdale, Arizona, Clovis, California, Cave Creek, California, and College Park, Maryland.

The Henderson community of less than 20 believers built a float resembling the Bicentennial Freedom Train. The Baha'i train consisted of an engine and two cars, one car painted with the words “freedom from prejudice,” the other with “freedom from materialism.”

Scottsdale Baha'i's submitted a float design prepared by two college students proclaiming unity through diversity. The design was accepted with a comment from the parade chairman praising its uniqueness.

Baha'i's in Clovis built a model of the House of Worship for their float. Al Ayala built the structure of wood, cardboard, and...
wire, and then the friends made paper flowers and covered the structure with them.

The Northern Marickop County, California, community won a special trophy for its “melting-pot dream” float in Cave Creek.

The believers in College Park, Montgomery County, Prince Georges County, Washington, D.C., Greenbelt, and Takoma Park cooperated to make banners and march in the College Park parade. Bahá'ís of New York City are hosting a series of Sunday morning meetings called “Conversations with Americans.” The programs are presented at the Bahá’í Center with Hussein Ahdieh interviewing Bahá’ís on various topics. After each conversation the floor is open for questions and the response has been excellent.

The Bahá’ís of Wilmette, Illinois, sponsored a musical proclamation in a park near the House of Worship. The event, an official Bicentennial activity of the Wilmette Bicentennial Commission, included square dancing, a jazz concert, and a talk on the Faith. Some persons who attended went from the park to the House of Worship for devotions.

As a result of presentations to officials, the chairman of the Spiritual Assembly of Jersey City, New Jersey, gave a talk to the City Council about Bahá’í aims and principles. The Bicentennial issue of World Order magazine had been presented to the mayor and City Council members.

Bahá’ís of Reno and Sparks, Nevada, manned a booth in the Folklore Festival and Food Fair hosted by the Sparks Bicentennial Commission. Newport Beach, California, Bahá’ís had a booth in a Bicentennial festival at a junior high school.

Bahá’ís of Dover, New Hampshire, presented the mayor with the Bicentennial issue of World Order and Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era, and gave copies of World Order to 40 civic and religious leaders of the city.

Proclamation activities in the United States included participation in parades at Henderson, Nevada, Scottsdale, Arizona, Cave Creek, California, and Clovis, California. There was a musical proclamation in Wilmette, Illinois, and a presentation to the mayor of Jersey City, New Jersey. Bottom right, Ina McNeil is interviewed by Hussein Ahdieh in the New York City Bahá’í Center.
TV series on Faith is now available

"The New World," a series of 13 half-hour color television shows on the Bahá'í Faith, is now available for distribution and use worldwide.

The series was produced under the supervision of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands. Videotaped in a Honolulu television station, the series presents the Bahá'í message through songs and interviews.

The Universal House of Justice requested that the National Assembly of Hawaii handle distribution to other national communities. All proceeds will be sent to the World Center.

In Hawaii, the series has already been shown twice by the NBC television affiliate and is scheduled to be shown a third time, all without charge. Reaction by the public has been extremely favorable. The series has increased the number of inquiries on the Faith and has been an excellent proclamation and consolidation tool.

The television tapes are available in two sizes: 2-inch and ¾-inch. It is best to check with your local television station to see which size they can use. Cost of the 2-inch tape per program to purchase is $230 or $2,990 for the 13-program series. Cost of the ¾-inch tape per program to purchase is $80 or $1,040 for the 13-program series.

Tapes can also be rented at $60 each program for the 2-inch tape for three days and $20 each program for the ¾-inch tape for three days. The tapes are sent directly to the television station.

Bahá'í communities wishing to purchase or rent the series should write to: "The New World" TV Series, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Hawaiian Islands, 3264 Allan Place, Honolulu, Hawaii 96817, USA. Be sure to include the name and address of your Spiritual Assembly, whether this is a request to purchase or to rent, what size tape, number of tapes or is the entire series wanted, dates of rental and television station it is to go to, and any other pertinent information.

Mr. Sears
Seals and Dash Crofts; England Dan and John Ford Coley and their manager, Marsha Day; jazz trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie; Dorothy W. Nelson, treasurer of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and dean of the University of Southern California Law School, and Judge James Nelson of the Los Angeles, California, Municipal Court; Honolulu actress Lynne Ellen Hollinger; Heanlani Alami Hamilton, entertainer and Auxiliary Board member. Hawaiian Bahá'í singing groups include the Hawaii Bahá'í Chorus, Sunshine Delight, East of Midnight, Steve and Bunny and Frank Williams.

Subjects covered in the series include the oneness of God, of religion, of the prophets, of mankind; prophecy; progressive revelation; the Bahá'í World Center; the United Nations; Bahá'í Houses of Worship; justice; youth; and Bahá'í literature.
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On the cover: A proclamation meeting in Finlandia Hall on July 7 was one of the highlights of the International Teaching Conference in Helsinki, Finland, the first of eight to be held during the Five Year Plan. John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie speaks to the audience, estimated at 1,000 persons. Inset at left, the Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery, representative of The Universal House of Justice, greets Erik Nielsen, one of the many Bahá'ís who volunteered to fill pioneer posts. Mr. Nielsen plans to go to Greenland. Inset at right is a group which shows the diversity of Bahá'ís who attended the conference from around the world.

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Helsinki:
a call
to action

Text and photographs
by Paul Slaughter

Action to spread the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh was the keynote of the first International Teaching Conference of the Five Year Plan, held July 5-8 in Helsinki, Finland.

More than 800 believers from around the world attended the historic conference, the first of eight sponsored by The Universal House of Justice. It was the first such international Bahá'í gathering in Finland.

Feelings of love and unity were heightened by the presence of four Hands of the Cause of God, five Continental Counsellors, and many members of National Spiritual Assemblies and Auxiliary Boards.

In a message to the conference, The Universal House of Justice said: "It is our fervent prayer at the Threshold of Bahá'u'lláh that this Conference will produce an upsurge of Bahá'í activity throughout the northern lands and in the islands of the North Sea and the Baltic that will outshine every achievement made in those promising regions, and be an inspiration to your fellow-believers in every country of the world."

The message was read to the believers by the Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery, representative of the Supreme Institution. In addition to Dr. Giachery, other Hands of the Cause participating in the sessions were Shu'á'u'lláh 'Alá'í, Rahmatu'lláh Muhájír, and Adelbert Múhlschlegel. Counsellors present included Erik Blumenthal, Anneliese Bopp, Dorothy Ferraby, Betty Reed, and Adib Taherzadeh.

One of the highlights of the conference was a report by Dr. Giachery on developments at the World Center. He said that work is progressing on the English translation and publication of three compilations of Scripture. Prayers and extracts from the
New details of the Seat of The Universal House of Justice

Writings of the Báb will be available before January, Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas should be ready by mid-1977, and selections from the Master’s works will be completed before the end of the Five Year Plan. All three volumes are major tasks of the World Center in the Plan. Dr. Giachery displayed an advance copy of Bahá’í World, Volume XV, and announced that it will be available soon.

Dr. Giachery said that collation and classification of the Sacred Texts is being done with meticulous care. He added that the work is limited because there are not enough Bahá’í scholars at present, and he urged Persian families to train their children to excel in the mother language, Arabic, and English.

“The activity of The Universal House of Justice is like a steel plant,” Dr. Giachery said. “They’re going constantly, day and night, especially in the spiritual world.”

He talked enthusiastically about the seven new National Spiritual Assemblies which will be formed at Rīvvan. “One will be in Greece,” he said. “It’s a beautiful place to spend your honeymoon, or to vacation, or to pioneer.”

As the Faith expands, activities of The Universal House of Justice increase daily and the time has come for a suitable building, he said. Dr. Giachery described in detail the Seat of the Supreme Institution which will be raised on Mount Carmel. The building will include a large main entrance, a ceremonial area off the main entrance, a large entrance hall, a concourse for the reception of pilgrims and others, a banquet hall, a council chamber for The Universal House of Justice, a library, an area for meetings, an area for the Secretariat and other departments, a laboratory for research on preserving documents, and an area for storing precious papers. “This building is being con-
constructed to last at least 500 years," he said.

Another highlight of the conference was the overwhelming response to a call for pioneers and traveling teachers to spread the Message throughout the northern lands and beyond. One of the most moving moments was the presence on the stage of Finlandia Hall of four Hands of the Cause with pioneers, traveling teachers, and Bahá'ís planning to pioneer.

"All Bahá'ís are potential pioneers," Dr. Giachery said. "We should be ready to go."

In addresses at the conference, General 'Alá'í, Dr. Muhájir, and Dr. Mühlschlegel outlined what is required of individual Bahá'ís to contribute to the building of the new World Order.

"The people of Bahá have the grave responsibility to serve mankind throughout the world without the expectation of reward," General 'Alá'í said.

The Hand of the Cause focused on the importance of the training of children. "No amount of effort is too much to guard and protect our children and our youth from the dehumanizing and corrupting influences of a decadent society," he said. "If children hear Bahá'í prayers and Sacred Tablets frequently, they will retain them and they will repeat them. The youth should be encouraged to participate in all Bahá'í community activities, such as pioneering, teaching the Word of God, and giving the Message of Bahá'u'lláh," General 'Alá'í said. He suggested that Bahá'í communities establish kindergartens to assist in the spiritual and moral education of all children.

"We live in an age of inner emptiness, tension, friction, and conflict as a dehumanizing civilization approaches its most agonizing terminal phase," General 'Alá'í said. "Let us transcend and survive this dangerous phase."

Dr. Muhájir urged the history-making
The progress of the
Five Year Plan in
Europe

Bahá’ís of the present age to take action now, that the collective maturity of mankind is at stake. “Whatever we do, whatever we decide, whatever we plan will influence the future,” he said. “A consciousness that we are the foundation of the future will give us more energy, more hope to build this great edifice of God.”

He urged individual believers to study the Writings more deeply, share the Message, and teach with Bahá’í literature. “Every individual should have his own teaching plan,” Dr. Muhájír said. “Don’t sit at home. Movement is an essential part of the progress of the Faith.”

Dr. Mühlschlegel warned that “time is terribly short,” but there is nothing more rewarding or worthwhile than to attain the specific goals given to us by The Universal House of Justice. Later generations will perhaps “yearn longingly for our present opportunities,” he said. Dr. Mühlschlegel added: “We are not just individualists who have saved their own souls, we are soldiers in the glorious army of Bahá whose duty is to save the whole of humanity.”

“There is no more noble act which we can do that to arise and assist Local Spiritual Assemblies,” he said. “Take the first step and pray; Bahá’u’lláh will carry on.”

Counsellor Mrs. Ferraby reviewed the progress of the Five Year Plan in Europe by pointing out that some goals have been achieved, but others are moving slowly.

Property goals already completed include premises for Ḥażíratu’l-Quds in the Faroe Islands, Greece, Malta, and Greenland; and local Ḥażíratu’l-Quds in Spain and Italy. Other successes include the long-awaited incorporation of the Faith in Portugal, more literature and new translations, better opportunities for proclamation on radio and television, some progress in reaching minority groups, more em-
The Bahá’í International Community was welcomed into consultative status with UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund) March 8. A Bahá’í representative may now attend meetings of the non-governmental organizations’ committee on UNICEF.

UNICEF began in 1946 when millions of children were starving and homeless after World War II. UNICEF is financed by voluntary contributions from governments, organizations, and individuals. Today, UNICEF supports projects relating to the care of mothers and children.

A Save the Children Fund established after World War I was praised by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in two Tablets which can be found in appendix 3 of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by H.M. Balyuzi.
Cables From National Conventions—Riḍván 1976

This is a representative sampling of news items gleaned by the Bahá'í International News Service from the messages received at the World Center from National Spiritual Assemblies on the five continents. The volume of cables received makes it impossible to include even excerpts from them all.

AFRICA

Cameroon Republic: "...107 Local Spiritual Assemblies reported; enthusiastic response youth conference..."

Chad: "...9 volunteers accomplish Five Year Plan on localities..."

Ghana: "...appreciate designation Thelma Khelgati (newly-appointed) Counsellor West Africa..."

Lesotho: "...grateful presence three Counsellors particularly joyous participation (newly-appointed) Counsellor William Masehla...thirty-seven Local Assemblies reported formed..."

Ivory Coast, Mali and Upper Volta: "...Local Spiritual Assemblies: sixty-one Ivory Coast; three Upper Volta; two Mali...intensive teaching campaign Mali Upper Volta by birthday Báb..."

Nigeria: "...presence Khelgati new Counsellor West Africa special bounty..."

Rwanda: "...Local Assemblies, localities goals achieved..."

Sierra Leone: "...excitement first local woman elected National Spiritual Assembly..."

Togo: "...women delighted appointment Counsellor Khelgati bring down divine blessings..."

Uganda: "...Convention honored presence Hand Cause Olinga, Counsellor Oule, four Auxiliary Board members, 53 delegates, 102 visitors including 28 women...unique spirit exhibited...untiring services Hand Cause Olinga rejuvenates Uganda..."

THE AMERICAS

Alaska: "...29 commitments international travel teaching, one pioneer commitment Belgium, 30 national teaching commitments...youth volunteered assistance International Conference, mass teaching...consultation preparation entry troops prior International Conference...indigenous believers expand participation...seven villages recommend concentrated teaching efforts..."

Belize: "...thirty-six Local Spiritual Assemblies..."

Bolivia: "...concentrate...promote process entry by troops inspired Naw-Rúz message communicate 38,169 believers 4,281 localities more than 800 Assemblies..."

Brazil: "...grateful...presence beloved Hand Muhájjír, Counsellors Costas, Pavon, also 150 Bahá'ís including 5 Auxiliary Board members, 7 Assembly members, 36 delegates including 3 Indians. Entire Convention arose, singing, pledging dedication lives service Bahá'u'lláh. Launched mass teaching plan Bahia/Ceara. First day 90 new believers, preparation International Conference 1977. Twenty-five instructors dedicated periods one/nine months. All Assembly goals planned. Four offers foreign goals. Donations offered: for Indian teaching: school, furniture, donkey. For mass teaching: school, three Hażíratu'l-Quds properties and car..."

Chile: "...Thirty new Local Assemblies raising the number to 86 this Riḍván. More than 2,000 new believers especially outstanding because of Mapuche brothers. These attainments thanks to pioneering efforts natives and foreigners and for first time a group of dedicated loyal Mapuche travel teachers. Valuable guidance Hand Cause Muhájjír impulse third year Plan...first local Hażíratu'l-Quds Mapuche in Cerro Loncoche. Large increase of loyal believers serve His Faith..."

Costa Rica: "...forty-six Local Spiritual Assemblies elected..."

Ecuador: "...rejoice announce election indigenous believer National Assembly, attendance 90 friends including 38 delegates 4 Auxiliary Board members 3 new pioneers, inspired by six volunteers mass teaching project..."

El Salvador: "...first 9 days teaching campaign Bahá resulted 242 new believers. 214 children attended classes memorizing prayers, songs. New believers identifying themselves with Faith and arising to teach and starting children's classes. Also 198 subscriptions correspondence course as result public talks university and four schools...60 Local Spiritual Assemblies..."

Mexico: "...new efforts Five Year Plan second stage Mexican crusade vigorously preparing Conference Merida..."

Nicaragua: "...elevated spirit new teaching plan in process gratefule arrival pioneers..."

Panama: "Praise thanksgiving God radio recording center dedicated Riḍván..."

Paraguay: "...eight delegates majority Indians..."

Trinidad and Tobago: "...record delegate attendance..."

ASIA

Fiji Islands: "...12 delegates 7 Assemblies conscious renewed efforts urgently required meet goals. Thrilled opening local Hażíratu'l-Quds Buakonakai Rabi Island..."

Hong Kong: "...National Spiritual Assembly representing six nationalities three races..."

Counsellors Mumatází (and newly-appointed Counsellor) Suzuki can only heighten sense dedication Cause deepen appreciation Bahá'u'lláh's gift us Institution God…

Korea: "...13th Convention...witnessed dramatic increase number believers 1,695 (during year) highest its history..." 

Singapore: "...joyfully announce formation Stamford Assembly completing Local Spiritual Assembly goals..."

AUSTRALASIA

Hawaiian Islands: "...had highest delegate attendance and participation. Two arose to fill one remaining pioneer goal in Korea. Twelve arose for international travel teaching goals..."

North West Pacific Ocean: "Conventiongrateful inspiring cable announcing Marshall National Spiritual Assembly rejoicing 50 per cent increase Assemblies total at least 30 including Marshalls 9, Truk 7...recognize outstanding contribution resident Bahá'ís especially Marshalls. Declarations year reported 250, teaching accelerated past quarter, proclamation presentations leaders begun..."

Papua New Guinea: "...six local Hažíratu'l-Quds completed 11 Assemblies incorporated fulfillment incorporation goal Five Year Plan..."

Samoa: "Happy advise incorporation National Assembly registered with Government American Samoa April 21, 1976...concerted efforts many friends resulted five additional Assemblies largest attendance delegates..."

South West Pacific Ocean: "...excellent consultation two declarations National Spiritual Assembly elected 5 Hebrides 4 Caledonia, dedication Hažíratu'l-Quds 100 guests warm response Resident Commissioners numerous dignitaries..."

EUROPE

Germany: "Overjoyed formation Local Spiritual Assembly Iraklion, Greece...Large participation delegates Convention happy success Greece and fulfillment financial goals abroad. 8 pioneers 4 travel teachers homefront, 1 travel teacher abroad..."

Italy: "One hundred per cent participation election. Thirty Local Assemblies formed including two new. Fund noticeably increased. Two pioneers volunteered homefront..."

Norway: "...special summer teaching campaign Arctic regions. Pioneer family will establish goal Kristiansand..."

Spain: "...nine teachers offered financial support secured 5 groups soon becoming Assemblies..."

Switzerland: "...grateful presence Hand Cause Giachery wife Counsellor Ferraby Board members Convention exalted increasing evidence rise Faith obscurity, 15 homefront pioneers 10 travel teachers Africa...(funds assured) Liechtenstein endowment..."

Around the world

Central African Republic

Bahá'í readings given at commemoration

A delegation of nine Bahá'ís took part in the commemoration of the anniversary of the death of President Boganda, first president of the Central African Republic, March 28.

The Bahá'ís were invited to the event, which is held annually at Bangui.

Five religions shared prayers, addresses, and songs. Two African Bahá'í women presented readings on life after death. They were the last group to appear before the microphones and television cameras. The radio coverage reached all parts of the Republic and areas of the Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Zaire, and Sudan.

Chad

Villages opened following conference

New villages were opened to the Faith and one believer offered his home as a Bahá'í Center after a teaching conference in Danamadgi Village, Chad.

Organized largely by two African believers from a nearby town, the conference was attended by two Auxiliary Board members with believers from 28 villages. About 80 Bahá'ís were there and six countries were represented.

Chile

Radio, newspaper proclamation gains

For several months Bahá'ís in Iquique, Chile, have sponsored a weekly radio program of short excerpts from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Recently, they suggested similar features to Iquique's two other radio stations and the two newspapers. All accepted the idea.

Radio proclamation began in Iquique in October when a Bahá'í received eight minutes of radio time every morning for five days.

Denmark

Faith represented at meeting on youth

Five Bahá'ís were guests at a conven of the Roman Catholic Sisters of the Assumption during a conference of that Order in Copenhagen. The National Spiritual Assembly of Denmark, and other religious groups, had been asked to meet with the sisters, who were investigating reasons why some youth become involved in movements outside of the church.

Each group met with a group of Sisters. The Bahá'ís, who were Ingeline Sorensen,
**Around the world**

**Hans Rablen, Steffen Rasmussen, Niels Rasmussen, and Thomas Vium, enjoyed a simple dinner with the Sisters and then discussed the Faith with seven or eight of them. One Bahá’í began the discussion with a prayer for unity by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Mr. Rasmussen introduced the Faith and then the Sisters asked many questions.**

“The most outstanding feature of the evening,” the Bahá’ís reported, “was the heartening atmosphere of mutual respect and love which developed. The sisters were deeply and positively impressed by the Bahá’í Faith and we, for our part, appreciated their tremendous openness.”

The Sisters visited the National Bahá’í Center in Copenhagen and attended a Naw-Rúz feast.

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**Ecuador**

**Children’s conference nets 17 declarations**

A Regional Bahá’í Children’s Conference in Tachina, Ecuador, became a teaching campaign through the efforts of Tachina Bahá’ís and guests.

During the five-day conference daily visits culminated in meetings at night. Seventeen people became Bahá’ís. Most of them were parents who had sent their children to Bahá’í classes.

Children’s classes began last December in the Tachina area with 12 classes in the country and three in the city. Bahá’í mothers, most of whom had no previous experience, volunteered to hold the classes. Raquel Valencia conducted classes in different areas and covered great distances on foot.

The classes used children’s material produced by Colombian Bahá’ís and were family-oriented.

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**Fiji Islands**

**New Assembly formed on Lakeba Island**

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Fiji Islands recently announced the formation of the new Spiritual Assembly at Vakanua on Lakeba Island.

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**Guyana, Surinam and French Guiana**

**Ties strengthened with three tribes**

Two traveling teachers recently strengthened Bahá’í ties with the Wapishanna tribe in the Lethem area of Guyana. Ivan Fraser and Krishna Seebopal of the Amerindian Teaching Committee also reported what are thought to be the first enrollments among the Macusi and Wai Wai tribes during their visit.

Another traveling teacher, Youraj Sarju, visited jungle areas where two women accepted the Faith, Clara Narine, a youth, and Anita Chanderbhan.

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**Haiti**

**Bystanders applaud Bahá’í answers**

During a recent radio interview with traveling teachers in Haiti, people crowded in front of the glass window of the studio, waved and nodded agreement as questions phoned in by listeners were answered by Bahá’ís.

Traveling teacher Lea Nys and her daughter, Francine Levy, were frequently interviewed by press and radio during their visit to Haiti.

Mrs. Nys also discussed the Faith with several dignitaries and addressed some public meetings.

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**India**

**Teaching successful in Tumkur District**

A teaching project in Karnataka, India, reached its goal of establishing Bahá’í communities in the Tumkur District. The three-week project focused on Tumkur city and environs, Tiptur town and adjoining villages, and Kunegal and nearby areas.

In Tumkur, the friends visited most of the colleges and schools and gave talks. They had a Bahá’í book exhibit and distributed literature. Evening firesides were attended by 15 to 20 guests and 400 people attended a public meeting. Gloria Faizi addressed the gathering and a few among her audience said that they had never heard a more moving and inclusive message of love and unity. One person became a Bahá’í the next day.

A press conference was held and Bahá’í events were reported often in newspapers.

The Bahá’ís addressed the Rotary Club and the Jaycees and were invited to give a second lecture to the Rotarians.

A community of 12 Bahá’ís, five of whom are youth, was formed in Tumkur and a deepening class was established.

In Tiptur, Bahá’ís addressed the Rotary Club, visited with the assistant education officer for 30 minutes and then were invited by him to address about 60 schoolteachers. At a teacher training college they spoke to an audience of 200 and visited another school where they were invited to return five times. On their fifth visit, all five teachers in the school and the headmaster became Bahá’ís. More than 150 prayer books were purchased by students at that school.

In Kunegal, four people embraced the Faith.

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**Deepening sessions held in remote village**

Continental Counsellor Shirin Goman, R.B. Tripathi, and P.N. Mishra traveled for almost three days by various vehicles to reach the remote village of Ladania. There, they conducted deepening sessions for 35 Bahá’ís from 10 villages who had each walked about five miles to the conference. Many had carried gifts of rice or potatoes for conference meals.

About 50 people became Bahá’ís at the conference, which had been organized by the efforts of B. Mishra, a 75-year-old Bahá’í of Ladania, who had long dreamed of having a Bahá’í conference there. Mr. Mishra had the joy of seeing most of his family accept the Faith at the conference.

A number of the new Bahá’ís came from Nepal and through them two new localities were opened. In advance of the confer-
ence, new localities had been opened.

During three evenings of public meetings, about 800 townspeople saw slides and film strips about the Faith and heard Bahá'í youth eagerly explain pictures and posters. Many books and pamphlets were distributed.

The block development officer, about 20 of his staff, and the chief constable attended some deepening classes.

Mr. Khianra attends inter-religious meet

Continental Counsellor Dipchand Khianra represented the National Spiritual Assembly of India at a recent Inter-Religious Conference in Alwaye, Kerala. About 10,000 people attended the conference.

The conference is held annually in honor of Sri Narayan Guru, a saintly man from Alwaye who lived about 100 years ago and devoted his life to the protection of the down-trodden and to peaceful relations between religions. Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Bahá'ís, and disciples of Sri Narayan Guru participated in the conference.

Mr. Khianra explained progressive Revelation and quoted the Bahá'í and other scriptures. The chairman of the conference expressed appreciation of Mr. Khianra's address, saying that it had quelled his misgivings and corrected misunderstandings he had about the Faith.

Traveling teachers are active abroad

Individual traveling teachers from Iran visited Greece, India, Zaire, Chad, and Bolivia during February. Groups took traveling teaching tours through East Africa, Brazil, Nigeria, West Africa, and Greece. They were part of an ongoing traveling teaching program.

The teachers were recruited by the Travel Teaching Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran. The committee supplies the teachers with materials in English and Persian, brochures and tape recordings in other languages, and visual aids.

National newspaper publicizes Faith

An important 1,000-word article favorable to the Faith was printed in La Stampa, a national newspaper published in Turin, on May 23, the anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb.

The author, who heard about the Faith from a Bahá'í who had written to him, wrote: "The urge to deepen the limited knowledge which I had of it (the Bahá'í Faith) came to me because of the unusual coherence and tolerance which I found in the letters of a lady from Turin who reads this column regularly."

Before writing the article, the author spoke at length with the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly. The history, Administrative Order, and principles of the Faith were presented accurately.

Mr. Giachery speaks at regional meeting

The Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery discussed 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets of the Divine Plan during a regional meeting at San Zeno April 16-19.

Approximately 130 Bahá'ís from 24 communities attended the sessions which were held on the shores of Lake Garda.

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Italy

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The friends made a generous contribution toward construction of the seat of The Universal House of Justice. The Universal House of Justice sent a cable to the believers which said: “Joyfully acclaim excellent session Lake Garda graced presence Hand Cause and Signora Giachery. Magnificent contribution new building wannly acknowledged. Loving Riqvan greetings.”

Mrs. Burton was the only Bahá’í in her family and she was loved and admired by her relatives because of her faith in Baha’u’llah. Her daughter, a non-Bahá’í, requested the Bahá’ís to arrange the devotions. She read a Bahá’í prayer. The minister of pensions and social security attended the dedication with other prominent citizens.

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Lesotho

Address mistake leads to declaration

“Your correspondence study course has earned the Faith one declaration,” wrote Jacobeth Maqutu to the National Spiritual Assembly of Lesotho. Mrs. Maqutu is the secretary of the Hlotse Bahá’í community. The declarant was the wife of a Bahá’í. “It happened, Mrs. Maqutu wrote, ‘that she received the booklet you sent to her husband because, through an error, it was addressed to ‘Mrs’ Mahalefele Britz. She claimed it, opened it, and read it. When one of the Bahá’ís visited the Britz home, he found Mrs. Britz excited and happy, and he invited her to declare her faith because she had read the booklet that the good Bahá’ís sent her and she was ready to declare.”

Malaysia

Holy Days listed in Sarawak Almanac

The nine Bahá’í Holy Days are now listed in The Sarawak Gazette and Almanac for 1976. The almanac is about 8 x 10 inches and is designed for hanging on a wall or using on a desk.

Mexico

Counsellors hold deepening Institute

All five members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Central America participated in a special deepening insti-
tute held in Mexico City on May 23.

Bahá'ís from Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and Africa attended the institute which was sponsored by the Counsellors and the National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico.

Each of the Counsellors chose a specific topic and gave a deepening class. The areas covered were the Bahá'í message by Counsellor Carmen de Bufafato, Bahá'í character by Counsellor Rowland Estall, prayer and the importance of studying the Writings by Counsellor Paul Lucas, life after death by Counsellor Alfred Osborne, and Bahá'í courtship and marriage by Counsellor Artemus Lamb.

New Zealand

Bahá'ís clean, paint rotunda in park

Bahá'ís of Thames voluntarily cleaned and repainted the town rotunda in a public park. Their gesture of goodwill was much appreciated, and they were invited to participate in the public re-dedication of the rotunda.

Niger

Center established in town of Zinder

An important goal of the Five Year Plan in Niger was recently won with the establishment of a large and stately Bahá'í Center in Zinder, the second-largest town in the country.

The Center is in the heart of town on land which for several years had been open for purchase. The mayor of Zinder had refused several applications but approved purchase of the land by Bahá'ís. Construction of the building aroused interest among the townspeople and led to teaching opportunities.

Youth participate in teaching trips

About nine youth gave their school holidays to extensive teaching trips within Niger during Ridván. They visited seven localities, conducted classes, and assisted the re-formation of Spiritual Assemblies.

The youth were participating in a project sponsored by the National Teaching Committee of Niger.

Nigeria

Village population sees Bahá'í show

A slide show was shown for the first time in the small village of Maulie in April. Maulie is a community of simple huts. All the villagers were present for the Bahá'í show. Commentary on the slides was given in their native language by one of the Bahá'ís of a teaching team.

A Bahá'í of Maulie remarked, "This is the first time that such a show has been given in the village. I feel very proud that it was the Bahá'ís who organized such an event."

In another area, a teaching team held six meetings in two months. The number of people attending the meetings increased from two to 13. Bahá'ís attributed the success to the fact that the team members pioneered to the area to stay or settle there temporarily.

The teams were two of six which resulted from an institute led by traveling teachers from Canada, Mr. and Mrs. Muhsin 'Inayat. The teams are working to establish Spiritual Assemblies in Talageh, Tillaberie, Maulie, and Dosso.

North West Pacific Ocean

Officers who seized Bahá'ís accept Faith

After teaching the Faith at Fason Village in the islands of Tol, the westernmost island group in Truk Lagoon, pioneers Douglas Terrel and Masaki Ushibata prepared to depart for their home base on Udot.

They were arrested and detained overnight on suspicion that they had illegally entered the district. Their detention aroused much interest among the townspeople. They were released the next morning.

At Ridván, a Spiritual Assembly was established in Fason Village. Its members included the two arresting officers. It was
one of seven Assemblies formed in Truk. The pioneers had intended to visit Romanum, but stiff winds had forced their landing at Pason Village.

**Norway**

**Bahá’í Forlag is registered**

A supplementary achievement to the goals of the Five Year Plan was accomplished through the registration of the former Norwegian Bahá’í Book Sales Committee as a Bahá’í Publishing Trust (Bahá’í Forlag).

**Pakistan**

**3-day proclamation honors Táhirih**

A three-day proclamation honoring Táhirih was recently conducted by the Bahá’í Youth Committee of Karachi. For two days the Bahá’ís taught and on the third day a successful public meeting was held.

A Bahá’í speaker introduced the Faith and spoke of the life, poetry, and martyrdom of Táhirih. Two Bahá’í poets read poems in her memory.

Non-Bahá’ís also paid tribute to Táhirih. Raees Amrohi, a well-known Pakistani poet, eulogized her. Others who spoke in her honor were the head of the Urdu Department at Adamjee College and a professor of Arabic at Karachi University.

Although non-Bahá’ís had not helped construct the Center, they had helped prepare the land and clean and beautify the village. All the Bahá’ís, including the children, built the Center.

**Paraguay**

**Delegates, friends at National Convention**

Delegates and friends at the 16th National Convention are pictured in May in front of the National Hazíratu’l-Quds in Asunción, Paraguay.

Guests included Auxiliary Board members Natalia de Caballero (seated, third from left) and Zia Vojdani (seated, fourth from left).

**Portugal**

**Counsellor Bopp addresses school**

Continental Counsellor Anneliese Bopp discussed the urgency of intensifying efforts to attain the goals of the Five Year Plan at the National Spring School in Troia March 27-28.

Mrs. Bopp focused on the importance of putting the affairs of the Faith first in the lives of Bahá’ís. She said the goals will be won if Bahá’ís arrange their lives and concentrate on the teaching work.

Other classes included the spiritual and physical significance of the World Center and the building of the seat of The Universal House of Justice, the role of youth, and a round table discussion on promoting unity.

Approximately 30 believers attended the school.
Faith is proclaimed on Lisbon street cars

The Bahá'ís of Lisbon and the surrounding area celebrated Naw-Rúz by riding through the streets of Lisbon for three hours in rented street cars. More than 50 Bahá'ís and friends participated. Much of the time was spent singing Bahá'í songs. A banner reading “Baha'i-World Unity” was attached to the side of one of the street cars.

During the tour, the Bahá'ís were approached many times by people wanting to know more about the Faith. Some of them boarded to join the new year celebration. During one conference session a Magburaka believer praised the diligence of the early pioneers in that area. A prayer was offered for Ridá' Haydarí, a Persian pioneer who consistently visited Magburaka to aid the believers and who passed away there in April, 1974.

South West Pacific Ocean

New Hebrides Center officially opened

A delegation of Samoan Bahá'ís recently visited the new prime minister of Western Samoa. They extended the friendship of the Bahá'ís and gave assurance of their loyalty to the government. They presented the prime minister with Bahá'í World Faith and compilations of the Writings in the Samoan language.

The prime minister invited the government photographer to take pictures of the meeting. One of the pictures will be printed in a newspaper which is published for government employees.

Teaching conference greets new Assembly

Members of the new Spiritual Assembly of Magburaka were introduced to Bahá'ís from several communities in Sierra Leone and two friends from Guinea at the second National Teaching Conference in Magburaka recently.

Auxiliary Board member Shidá'á Kúchízádíh participated in the conference and addressed a public meeting of about 50 people. A panel of three joined him to answer the many questions that followed his talk.

During one conference session a Magburaka believer praised the diligence of the early pioneers in that area. A prayer was offered for Ridá' Haydarí, a Persian pioneer who consistently visited Magburaka to aid the believers and who passed away there in April, 1974.

South West Pacific Ocean

New Hebrides Center officially opened

A major milestone in the growth of the Faith in the New Hebrides was achieved April 23 with the official opening of the National Haźíratu'l-Quds. The building, located on Bahá'í property in Port Vila, was constructed in three months by Auxiliary Board member Alick Soalo following plans made by the National Spiritual Assembly of the South West Pacific Ocean. Its opening marks the attainment of a Five Year Plan goal and anticipates the formation of the National Assembly of the New Hebrides at Ridván 1977.

Despite almost continuous rain, the opening ceremony was attended by more than 150 persons, of whom about 50 were guests invited by the National Assembly. The presence of the joint heads of government in the New Hebrides, the British and French resident commissioners, greatly enhanced the dignity of the occasion and demonstrated that the Faith has official recognition in the country. Also attending were members of the newly-elected Representative Assembly, village chiefs, church and community leaders, the mayor of Port Vila, and representatives from the fields of education, health, commerce, and law.

Among Bahá'ís present were Counsellors Howard Harwood and Owen Battrick. The ceremony included prayers for the dedication of the new building and talks in English, French, and Pidgin describing the purpose of the Haźíratu'l-Quds and the aims and principles of the Faith. Speakers included Mr. Harwood, Mr. Soalo, Oliver Pakoa, and Jean Sévin, chairman of the National Assembly. The prayers and talks were summarized in an attractive souvenir program which was presented to all who attended. To symbolize the inauguration, Bertha Dobbins, the first Bahá'í to come to the New Hebrides in 1953, joyfully cut a
phasis on the education of Bahá’í children, and many conferences and gatherings for youth.

"The part of every Plan which demands the greatest concentration, perseverance and staying power and which always proves the most difficult is the building of new Local Assemblies and the opening of new centers," Mrs. Ferraby said. "It is in this area that in Europe we are not yet doing too well in the present Plan. Pioneers are needed to open new centers, to provide focal points for the expansion of the Faith, and to strengthen ailing Assemblies. Many pioneers have arisen in the various communities and many have come into Europe from outside, especially from the United States, Canada, and Iran, but still more are needed both from home and overseas if we are to win all the Local Assembly goals."

Mrs. Ferraby said: "The success of this conference, so far as Europe is concerned, will surely be if it generates in us all enough spiritual fire and devotion that we will go out and win the goals."

Counsellors Reed and Blumenthal, in cooperation with June Ritter of the Continental Pioneer Committee for Europe, went into further detail of the needs, particularly in the areas of pioneers and traveling teachers. It was at this point that volunteers crowded onto the stage, prepared to do what is required.

Counsellor Taherzadeh said that the key to success is to acquire unshakeable faith in Bahá’u’lláh and then turn to The Universal House of Justice for guidance. He recounted a few illuminating stories left by some of Bahá’u’lláh’s early followers, describing the awe-inspiring effects which the presence of Bahá’u’lláh had on them. They became spiritual giants, the embodiments of detachment, and a new race of men who completely submitted to the Will of Bahá’u’lláh, and consequently moving response to the call for pioneers
Entertaining program provided by children

were filled with such power that they overwhelmed their adversaries. The same bounties exist for the followers of Bahá'u'lláh today, he said.

Other speakers at the conference and their topics included Hubert Schuurman of the National Assembly of Canada, Bahá'í community life; Auxiliary Board member Anna Grossmann, the Covenant, Ritva Zabihian of the National Assembly of Finland, the growing Bahá'í presence at the United Nations; and Magdalene Carney of the National Assembly of the United States, the education of children.

Mrs. Zabihian also opened the conference by welcoming the friends and expressing the hope that the conference would provide spiritual nourishment and renewed power and inspiration for the believers and "radiate its light all over the world."

Emphasizing the international aspects of the gathering, prayers were said in at least 15 languages, including Finnish, English, Persian, Estonian, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, Arabic, Norwegian, Icelandic, Greek, French, Spanish, and German.

Musical groups from Finland, Holland, and Sweden performed daily for the friends.

Activities for children were held at the nearby Taivallahti School. They included a session with Dr. Giachery and his wife, Angeline, and a trip to the Helsinki Zoo. The children also provided an entertaining program on progressive revelation at the conference.

The Martyrdom of the Bab was commemorated on July 9 at the Taivallahti School. About 500 Bahá'ís, including the four Hands of the Cause, attended. Dr. Muhájir chanted the Tablet of Visitation and Dr. Giachery talked about the early history of the Faith and his recent trip to the Holy places in Iran.
Faith is proclaimed at conference

There were many opportunities to teach and proclaim the Faith to the friendly Finnish people during the International Teaching Conference in Helsinki.

An estimated 1,000 persons, including about 400 non-Bahá’ís, attended a public meeting in Finlandia Hall on the evening of July 7. John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie discussed progressive revelation and the role of the Prophets, particularly Bahá’u’lláh’s mission to unify mankind.

Mr. Gillespie also told how he became a follower.

Mr. Gillespie also appeared on Finnish radio and television programs. At least 200 persons attended the taping of a one-hour TV program with Mr. Gillespie in which the well-known trumpeter talked about the Faith and played several musical numbers.

The Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery, representative of The Universal House of Justice at the conference, also appeared on Finnish television in an interview.

A July 5 press conference with Dr. Giachery and the Hands of the Cause of God Shí‘á’u’lláh ‘Alá’í and Rahmatu’lláh Muhájjir was broadcast on radio throughout Finland two days later.

And Dr. Giachery presented a Bahá’í World volume to Helsinki Mayor Teuvo Aura at a special meeting. The mayor gave the Hand of the Cause a book about Helsinki.

Dr. Giachery presents a Bahá’í World volume to Helsinki Mayor Teuvo Aura (second from right) just before the International Teaching Conference opened. At left is Auxiliary Board member Maija Pihlainen and Enni Unkila, member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Finland, is at right. In the photo at right, John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie performs for Finnish television. An estimated 200 persons attended the taping of the one-hour program which was broadcast throughout Finland.
The Baha'is of Italy and Switzerland were joined in 1960 with the formation of a National Spiritual Assembly. Separate National Assemblies for Italy and Switzerland were established in 1962. Numerous firesides are held regularly in both countries. Above, believers and seekers are pictured at Lugano, Switzerland. The fireside below was at Cagliari, Italy.
The love, strength, steadfastness, and devotion of the Baha’is of Italy is building the Faith of Baha’u’llah in a beautiful country rich in cultural excellence. At present, there are 25 Local Spiritual Assemblies in Italy and the goal of the Five Year Plan is 40. The Italian Baha’is are confident that goal will be attained. Below left, the Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Gachery discusses Tablets of the Divine Plan at a conference in San Zeno. Dr. Gachery and his wife, Angelina, came to Rome in 1947 as pioneers from the United States. The Spiritual Assembly of Rome was formed in 1948. Dr. Gachery was appointed a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi in 1951. Below right, Auxiliary Board member James Holmlund, his Irish wife, Hazel, and daughter, Kathleen, are among the many devoted pioneers in Italy. Mr. Holmlund, who teaches English, has been there 16 years. At right is a canal scene in Venice.
The quiet country life is reflected at right as sheep graze peacefully near Sardenga. At left is a street scene at Albano. Below, pianist-songwriter Alfredo Speranza and soprano Minou Falahi complete a performance at a musical proclamation in Albano. The Italians love music and are receptive to numbers with Bahá'í themes.
The diversity of Switzerland is reflected by the fact that three languages are spoken in the country—French, Italian, and German. The Baha’is are working hard to bring the Message to the Swiss. Many seekers have been found, particularly among the young people. Above, a discussion follows a public meeting in Basel, home of the late Baha’i artist Mark Tobey. At right, Baha’is gather outside a restaurant in Zurich which is operated by a Baha’i. It is a favorite spot for teaching. One goal of the Five-Year Plan is the formation of 25 Local Spiritual Assemblies in Switzerland. There are 15 at present.
The Swiss Alps loom in the background of the picture of Lucerne (above left). Above right is a scene at Geneva. At left is Fritz Semle, the first Bahá'í of Switzerland. At right is Doris Lobse who has been a pioneer in Lucerne for the past 15 years. Born in Belgium, she has pioneered in the United States, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, and Switzerland.
Border teaching project under way

The second in a series of training sessions designed to provide support for teaching and consolidation efforts along the Mexican-American border was held June 25-27 at Agua Prieta, Mexico.

The project is a cooperative effort between the National Spiritual Assemblies of Mexico and the United States. About 75 volunteers are now assisting with teaching and consolidation activities on both sides of the border, and traveling teaching trips are being arranged to back the efforts of local believers.

During the June training sessions, classes were given by Continental Counsellor Carmen de Burafato; Anna Maria Padilla de Gomez, member of the National Assembly of Mexico; Mexican assistant Auxiliary Board members Arturo Serrano and Alfonso Escobedo; American assistant Auxiliary Board members Ernest Bruss Jr. and Stephen Powers; Joan Bulkin, secretary of the U.S. Baha'i National Teaching Committee; and Janet Rubenstein, secretary of the U.S. International Goals Committee.

A high point was the announcement of the appointment of Francisco Neveres of Agua Prieta as an assistant to the Auxiliary Board.

One highlight was a proclamation in which more than 100 persons attended a showing of the film of Amatu'l-Baha Ruhíyyih Khánum's Green Light Expedition. The proclamation resulted in one immediate declaration and several others expressed interest in the Faith.

First Local Spiritual Assembly of Zeist

The first Spiritual Assembly of Zeist has been formed, attaining a goal of the Five Year Plan and raising the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies in Holland to 22.

In a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Netherlands, The Universal House of Justice, through its Department of the Secretariat, said it was “delighted to receive the news of the formation of the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Zeist and asks you to tell the friends there that the House of Justice, will be offering prayers at the Sacred Threshold for the consolidation of the victory they have won and the confirmation of their devoted efforts in the service of the Cause...” The Spiritual Assembly of Zeist is composed of pioneers from Holland, Belgium, Iran, and the United States.

Members of the Assembly are, left to right, seated—E. Siedsma, J. Straub, R. V. Sombeek, and J. Tahzib; standing—A. Siedsma, M. Vloeberghs, Y. Rezvani, F. Devillee, and N. Tahzib.

Dignified services held for Mark Tobey

A dignified memorial service and burial for Mark Tobey were held April 28 in Basel, Switzerland. Mr. Tobey, a world-renowned artist, passed away on April 24.

The memorial service was held in St. Alban’s Church, a simple protestant church just a few hundred meters from Mr. Tobey's home in Basel. Mr. Tobey had visited the church often and enjoyed a long friendship with its former clergyman. Mr. Tobey had planned to make some stained-glass windows for the church.

The church was made available to the National Spiritual Assembly which supervised the memorial service and burial.

The 90-minute service included Baha’i prayers and readings from the Writings, music (one selection was a hymn composed by Mr. Tobey), and several moving addresses.

A biography of Mr. Tobey, prepared by his secretary and long-time friend, Mark Ritter, was read by a professor of theology at the University of Basel, another of Mr. Tobey’s friends.

The memorial address on behalf of
Around the world

Memorial service for Mark Tobey is pictured at right. Above is a room in Mr. Tobey's Basel home.

Baha'i community of Switzerland was delivered by Amis S. Khamsi, member of the National Assembly. "As Mark Tobey's art is the result of hard work, creative imagination, the combination of intuition, inspiration, and search for a new dimension, as well as experience accumulated throughout his journeys in the world, his service in the Baha'i community likewise is faithful, meaningful, constant, and of true dimension," Mr. Khamsi said. "May Mark Tobey's life, his endeavors, and his great talent be like his 'white writing' and the many calligraphic signs which pulsate on his paintings; may they become expressions of inspiration for the younger generations which now stand at the threshold of the new age."

The church was beautifully adorned with flowers and a picture of 'Abdu'l-Baha was placed at the front. About 150 persons, including Baha'is from throughout the country, gallery owners, art admirers, and other friends, attended the service.

The casket had been taken from the funeral home directly to Horno Cemetery. About 70 persons were present when three Baha'i prayers were said and the casket was lowered to its resting place.

The major Swiss newspapers published articles about Mr. Tobey's passing, the memorial service, and burial, mentioning that he was a Baha'i.
United Kingdom

50,000 see illuminated Bahá'í float

An estimated 50,000 persons viewed a brightly lit Bahá'í float in the annual charities carnival evening parade in May in Aberdeen, Scotland.

The 40-foot long Bahá'í float was the only one fully illuminated, making it the most conspicuous.

Central attractions of the float were a 9-foot diameter globe shining from within and two long banners quoting from Bahá'u'lláh: "So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth." The front and back of the float bore large posters which said "Bahá'í." Eleven Bahá'ís in different national costumes, ranging from Scottish to North American Indian and Japanese, sang songs on the float.

The inflatable globe will be used in future exhibitions. The Spiritual Assembly of Aberdeen is eager to share its plans for construction of the effective float. Interested communities should write to Spiritual Assembly of Aberdeen, 27 Rubislawden North, Aberdeen AB9 2XF, Scotland, United Kingdom.

United States

Bicentennial observed with proclamation

More than 750 persons attended major Bicentennial proclamation events sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly at the House of Worship July 3-4.

The proclamation was a celebration of hope for America's third century. The events featured a concert in Foundation Hall by several ethnic choirs on the evening of July 3 and a Bicentennial lecture by William Maxwell, member of the National Assembly, following a special Sunday afternoon devotional program which was in English and Spanish.

In addition, the National Assembly published full-page advertisements in the July 4 edition of The New York Times Sunday Magazine and in the August number of Ebony magazine. The ads were identical to the one published in the Bicentennial issue of Life magazine.

In his July 4 talk in Foundation Hall, Dr. Maxwell emphasized the accomplishments of America in the past 200 years and explained why she is destined to lead all nations spiritually. He touched briefly on the problems of America, but the overall theme of his address was one of encouragement and hope.

An estimated 400 persons attended the July 3 performance by the Northwestern University Chinese Choir, the Mexican San Vito Choir; the Barrett Sisters, a well-known Chicago area gospel group; and the Crossroads, a Bahá'í group. The audience, primarily non-Bahá'í, was friendly, enthusiastic, and relaxed.

Brief devotional services were held in the House of Worship at the start of every hour throughout the Bicentennial weekend. An estimated 6,000 persons visited the House of Worship during the three days.

In advance of the proclamation events, more than 1,000 posters in English and Spanish were distributed by 18 Bahá'í communities which participated in planning the program. A red, white, and blue graphic motif was carried on all printed materials, including the poster, invitations, flyers, and program.

Radio and television spots were used to spread news of the events. It was the first time an event at the House of Worship had been advertised on television. Many newspapers in the area carried information about the activities and small advertisements were placed in city and suburban papers.

To publicize the Faith and to inform the Latin community that the July 4 devotional would be bi-lingual, a series of spots was placed on a UHF television station broadcasting in Spanish.

More photos on Page 16
A friendly and enthusiastic audience (below) responds to a rousing number performed by four musical groups (above) in Foundation Hall on July 3. At left and left bottom, members of the Washington Bahá'í Chorale participated in the July 4 program. The proclamation events, sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, were in celebration of hope for America's third century.
A total of 85 Bahá'ís attended a pioneer institute June 10-13 at the House of Worship, the largest group ever to complete the pre-pioneering program. They are expected to be settled at their posts in time to meet almost all of the Five Year Plan pioneer assignments by October 20.

Most were preparing to fill foreign posts for the first time, but some had pioneered during the Ten Year Crusade and the Nine Year Plan. The veterans shared their experiences, creating a heightened sense of dedication and expectation.

The participants heard from the Hand of the Cause of God Džikru’l-láh Khádem; Continental Counsellor Edna True; Auxiliary Board members Thelma Jackson and Javidukht Khádem; Glenford E. Mithcell, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly; members of the Bahá’í National Center staff; and experienced pioneers.

“Pioneering is a very rough road,” Mr. Khádem said. “You will be faced with many trials. But you will be always happy that you have responded to the call of God.”

Miss True discussed the history of pioneering and responded to questions from the audience. Other subjects covered included the power of the Covenant, adjusting to a new culture, the use of visual aids, legal and medical problems, and the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh.

One of the participants, Doris Holley, often commented that it is necessary to “forget yourself and turn to God.” Mrs. Holley, widow of the Hand of the Cause of God Horace Holley, was visiting the United States from Ireland where she has been a pioneer many years.

Bermuda Hazíratu’l-Quds is obtained

A local Hazíratu’l-Quds has been obtained in Bermuda, completing another property goal assigned to the United States in the Five Year Plan. Transfer of the title to the property in Hamilton was completed in June by the National Spiritual Assembly.

The Hazíratu’l-Quds is located on Cedar Avenue in a non-commercial area near downtown Hamilton. The property consists of the main building and two smaller structures in the rear. The one-story main building has one large room, two offices, two baths, a kitchen, and basement.
Paris, Anchorage—The drive toward victory
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The cover shows the representatives of The Universal House of Justice to the International Teaching Conferences in Paris and Anchorage. Above, Rúhíyyih Khánum addresses more than 6,000 believers attending the Paris Conference. Below, the Hand of the Cause Collis Featherstone reads a message to the 1,300 Baha'is in Anchorage.
Message to the International Bahá’í Conference in Paris

To the Friends assembled at the International Teaching Conference in Paris

Dearly-loved Friends,

The brilliance of Paris in the story of European civilization bids fair to be renewed with even greater splendour during the Day of the Lord of Hosts and the establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth. The annals of Paris in this Day have already acquired eternal lustre from events of mightier import, of greater universal significance and more sacred character than any which its past history has witnessed. The visits of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Centre of God’s inviolable Covenant, alone outshine in historical importance anything in the long history of France, and are immortalized in the greatly-loved collection of His discourses given in that capital city. Beyond this, we recall with awe and pride that it was at ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s instruction that the illustrious May Maxwell succeeded in establishing in Paris the first Bahá’í centre on the European Continent, a continent described by Shoghi Effendi as “the cradle of a civilization to some of whose beneficent features the Pen of Bahá’u’lláh has paid significant tribute; on whose soil both the Greek and Roman civilizations were born and flourished; which has contributed so richly to the unfoldment of American civilization; the fountainhead of American culture; the mother of Christendom, and the scene of the greatest exploits of the followers of Jesus Christ”, and experiencing “the first stirrings of that spiritual revolution” which must culminate in the permanent establishment throughout its diversified lands of the divinely ordained Order of Bahá’u’lláh. The first centre was rapidly reinforced by the conversion of the first English believer and of the first Frenchman to accept the Faith—the distinguished Hippolyte Dreyfus, whose “pre-eminent role” it was to kindle “the torch which is destined to shed eternal illumination upon his native land and its people”—and by Laura Barney, whose “imperishable service” was to transmit to posterity Some Answered Questions.

The steadfastness and devotion of the Paris Bahá’í Community during the dark and sombre days of the Second World War earned great praise from the beloved Guardian of the Faith, while the recent signs of widespread and effective teaching work throughout France lend wings to the hope that this veteran, sorely-tested and steadfast community is about to gather the harvest of those potent seeds sown and nourished so lovingly by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

It is highly propitious that this city, thrice blessed by the presence of the Master, should be the scene of the first International Bahá’í Conference in France and one of the eight International Conferences to be held around the world during the Five Year Plan. You are gathered in this historic spot to deliberate on the fortunes of that Plan, to derive inspiration from the deeds performed there in the heroic age of our Faith and from your association together, to rededicate yourselves to the service of Bahá’u’lláh and to determine, each and every one, how best you can promote the victory of the Five Year Plan. We call to your attention ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words:

_The call of Ya Bahá’u’l-Abhá can be heard far and wide. It is my hope that this soul-stirring melody of the Abhá Kingdom may also be raised high in Paris, for Paris is tumultuous in all things. I pray the Almighty that the music and singing of the beloved of God will be so loud that the vibrations thereof may cause the limbs of Paris to quake. I await very joyful tidings from the friends in Paris. Unquestionably the divine melody will in the future be raised in that city, but I long that this may happen in these days of the Covenant, and that you will be the enchanting songsters and the sweet-singing nightingales of that land._

Our hopes are high and we pray at the Sacred Threshold that from this Conference will surge throughout Europe a wave of such sacrificial teaching as will impel large numbers of its diverse and highly-talented peoples to embrace the Faith of God and dedicate themselves to the redemption of mankind under the glorious banner of the Prince of Peace.

_The Universal House of Justice_
Preparation for the Harvest
The International Teaching Conference in Paris
A total of 6,050 Baha'is from 55 countries gathered at the International Teaching Conference in Paris, France, August 3-6, the biggest conference ever held under the auspices of The Universal House of Justice.

Amatu'l-Baha Rühiyyih Khanum, representative of the Supreme Institution, said it would be the greatest conference of the Five Year Plan. It was the most important Baha'i event in France since the historic visits of 'Abdu'l-Baha in 1911 and 1913.

"Our hopes are high and we pray at the Sacred Threshold that from this Conference will surge throughout Europe a wave of such sacrificial teaching as will impel large numbers of its diverse and highly-talented peoples to embrace the Faith of God and dedicate themselves to the redemption of mankind under the glorious banner of the Prince of Peace," a message from The Universal House of Justice said in part.

Whatever Baha'is are asked to do by the divinely-guided Universal House of Justice, "we must have the confidence that we can do it," Rühiyyih Khanum said in one of her talks. "We have no time to lose," she added, referring to the tasks remaining in the Five Year Plan, particularly the establishment of Local Spiritual Assemblies.

Responding eagerly to a call for more pioneers, a total of 367 Baha'is volunteered to fill international posts.

In addition to Rühiyyih Khanum, other
Hands of the Cause of God present at the historic conference were Shu'á'u'lláh 'Alá'i, H. Collis Featherstone, Dhikru'lláh Khádem, Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir, John Robarts, and 'Alí-Muhammad Varqá. One of the highlights of the conference was an evening with the Hands of the Cause at the Palais des Congres on August 4.

Many opportunities for teaching and proclamation developed before, during, and after the conference. Approximately 2,000 persons, half of them non-Bahá'ís, attended a public meeting on August 5 at which Continental Counsellor Louis Hénuzet spoke. Many dignitaries were present and a reception was held for them after the meeting.

Amatu'l-Baha held a press conference before the sessions and about 15 newsmen attended, including reporters from French and American media. In addition, a short presentation of the Faith was broadcast on the French national television station.

In another significant development, a message to the conference from Kurt Waldheim, secretary-general of the United Nations, was read. Mr. Waldheim wished the conference success and pointed to the "substantial and most important contribution" of the Bahá'í Faith.

The French Hazíratu'l-Quds was dedicated on August 8 with readings by Dr. Varqá and Amoz Gibson, member of The Universal House of Justice.

In addition to Rúhíyyih Khánum, other conference speakers included Mr. Hénuzet, Counsellors Erik Blumenthal, Anneliese Bopp, and Adib Taherzadeh, Firuz Kazemzadeh of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, and Auxiliary Board members John Paul Vader and Nosrat Tirandaz. Counsellor Betty Reed also attended the sessions.

Musical groups from France, the United Kingdom, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Ireland, Spain, Austria, the United States, and the Central African Republic performed during the conference.

One of the most moving moments of the conference came on the final day when Amatu'l-Baha spoke in three languages. The 2,500 Persians who attended the conference applauded warmly as Rúhíyyih Khánum, speaking in Persian, told stories about the life of the late Hand of the Cause of God Tarázu'lláh Samandari and how he served the Guardian.

Amatu'l-Baha also spoke in French, urging European Bahá'ís to work for the advancement of the Cause. The remainder of her closing address was in English. She urged the friends to carry forward the spiritual energies released by the confer-
ence, the third of eight called by The Universal House of Justice at the midpoint of the Five Year Plan.

In other talks, Rúhíyyih Khánum stressed the importance of attempting to follow the examples set by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. “If we follow the command of God to teach, follow 'Abdu'l-Bahá's methods, look back at the previous victories, we must realize that we can surpass the goals of the Five Year Plan,” she said.

Amatú'l-Bahá talked about the importance of Paris in the history of the Faith. She spoke lovingly of her mother, the late May Maxwell, who established the first Bahá’í center in Europe—Paris. “Her life should encourage each one of us to serve more actively,” Rúhíyyih Khánum said. “She made herself the flute on which the divine melody could be played. This is what can happen to each one of us. This is the lesson of the lives of people like my mother,” she said.

The Hand of the Cause discussed the development of the World Center and the present need to support the building of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice and the Temples in India and Samoa.

"Little things can often have as great an impact as very big things," she said. "For instance, there was an old woman in Africa who heard there was an appeal for a Temple in Panama, so she brought three eggs. A pioneer bought the eggs and the money went to the National Spiritual Assembly of Nigeria. The National Assembly of Nigeria sent it to the National Assembly of Panama and the National Assembly of Panama sent back a receipt. And the old woman received it."

Rúhíyyih Khánum said that "anything we have to sacrifice is so insignificant compared to what has already been sacrificed by other Bahá’ís, let alone by the Central Figures of the Faith."

Rúhíyyih Khánum, who has traveled throughout the world for the Cause of God, closed her final talk with these words: "I don't know what other Bahá’ís are afraid of, but I know what I am afraid of. I am not so afraid of all the things that I did I shouldn't have done in my life because God is forgiving. But what I am very much afraid of is that I will have to have the leisure after I die to look back on the things that I did not do. I didn't do what I could have done. I was complacent. I made excuses. I was lazy. I was selfish. And this to me is hell. It's not a hell that God imposes on us, it's a hell we impose on ourselves. So, let us seize our opportunity now."

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1. Some 2,000 believers from Iran attended the Paris Conference. Here two of the friends are shown strolling along a Paris Boulevard in their provincial dress. 2. Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh of the United States represented the U.S. National Assembly of which he is Chairman. Dr. Kazemzadeh, a professor of history and director of graduate history studies at Yale University, was recently named Master of Yale’s Davenport College. 3. A simultaneous translation of the proceedings was given for the Persians on headsets at every seat. Simultaneous English and French translations were given from the stage over the loudspeaker system. 4. Registration was handled quickly and efficiently for the more than 6,000 Bahá’ís attending. It was the largest conference ever held in Europe and, according to Rúhíyyih Khánum, it will be considered the most important conference of the Five Year Plan.
Baha'is from more than 55 countries were represented at the Paris Conference. A small but diverse group of them posed for this photo beneath Paris’ famous Arc de Triomphe.

U.N. Greeting

Text of message by United Nations Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim to Baha'i International Teaching Conference, Paris, France. The message was read at the opening session of the Paris Conference August 4 by Luc Van Bellinghen, Director of the United Nations Information Office in Paris.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to wish the International Baha'i Conference, and all those participating in it, every success in their work. Non-governmental organizations, such as yours, by dealing comprehensively with the major problems confronting the international community, and striving to find solutions which will serve the interests of all nations, make a very substantial and most important contribution to the United Nations and its work.

We live in a world which is undergoing a transformation in its attitude towards finding solutions to the great global challenges of the day. We must strive to insure, therefore, that effective solutions come about, not in anger and anarchy, but through the reasoned and concerted determination of all. Whether the object is to complete the great task of development, to secure respect for the rights and dignity of all men, to halt the disastrous arms race, to solve such diverse and complex problems as those of food, population, the environment, and employment, the United Nations must be able to rely on the support of the peoples of the world who are the cornerstone of its Charter.

This implies an important responsibility for those organizations who, like you, work hard to support the United Nations and the principles and objectives laid down in the Charter.

In recent years, the United Nations has embarked upon an unprecedented collective endeavor to create global strategies to meet problems that are beyond the power of any single nation to resolve. Our task is now to implement the decisions taken by the sixth and seventh special sessions of the General Assembly on the establishment of a new international economic order, as well as at the world conferences on trade and development, environment, population, food, the role of women in society, industrialization and human settlements.

In this respect, your own contribution as a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations is important, and I wish you every success in your deliberations.
God's Call to the Arctic

The International Teaching Conference in Anchorage

1. John Robarts was one of three Hands of the Cause attending the Alaska Conference. He is shown here making a presentation to the friends in which he urged them not to allow timidity, apathy, or complacency to deter them from completing their urgent responsibilities. 2. The Bahá'ís on stage are those who responded to a call for traveling teaching to win goals of the Five Year Plan.
More than 1,300 Baha’is attended the International Baha’i Conference in Anchorage, Alaska, July 23-25, the second of eight international conferences called for in the Five Year Plan.

The conference was opened by John Kolstoe, Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska, which recently celebrated the 19th anniversary of its formation.

Three Hands of the Cause attended: Collis Featherstone of Australia, the representative of The Universal House of Justice, and William Sears and John Robarts, both residents of Canada.

Mr. Kolstoe noted that in preparing for the conference the Alaskan friends had launched an intensive teaching program which netted more than 250 new believers and caused to be formed four Local Spiritual Assemblies. The first hardcover Baha’i book done in Alaska, High Endeavors, a collection of the Guardian’s letters to Alaska, was published to mark this event, he said.

Before the close of the conference 71 Baha’is volunteered to pioneer and 244 volunteered to travel and teach. More than $93,000 was contributed to the Fund. Baha’i is from 22 countries attended. In addition, 17 Indian tribes were represented. Six hundred of the participants were Alaskan; 200 were from the United States, 200 from Canada, and 100 from Iran.

The friends were greeted at the opening session by Lieutenant Governor Lowell Thomas, Jr., who attended on behalf of the Governor. Mr. Thomas especially welcomed the Iranian believers, saying he had spent the summers of 1948 and 1949 at work in Iran. He praised the Baha’i community for its labors toward the goals of peace and unity. Mr. Thomas read a poem by Governor Jay Hammond, in which the Governor expressed a longing for peace and brotherhood.

In one of his two talks, the Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts urged the friends not to allow timidity, apathy, or complacency to deter them from their responsibilities. “There never, never, never, has been a time when man has been given the opportunity to serve that we have now,” he said. He recalled a formula for...
teaching given by the Guardian: first study deeply the Divine Word, meditate on its import, pray for spiritual understanding, arise to teach and serve the Cause of Baha'u'llah.

The Hand of the Cause of God William Sears also had teaching uppermost in his thoughts. At a public meeting on the first evening he outlined emphatically the Mission of Baha'u'llah, inviting the guests to discern the unity of God's Manifestations. "What can I tell my kids when they say we're living in a world that is disintegrating?" he asked. His answer: "... in the midst of it all there is a world that is integrating—the Bahá'í World."

Counsellor Velma Sherrill, when her turn came, said that one of the objectives of the Universal House of Justice in calling the conference was to foster new opportunities for teaching the Faith. "Do we ever sit down with our prayer book and call upon Baha'u'llah for assistance that every soul may be summoned to Him?" she asked. The institution responsible for doing the summoning, she said, is the Local Spiritual Assembly. But, if love and unity do not exist at the level of these Assemblies, attractive characteristics will not be shown and the people will not come to the Faith, she said.

The law of Bahá'í consultation is the process that when applied correctly will set in motion forces of unity and inspiration," she said. The adherence to the requirements of consultation can create an atmosphere that will result in the accomplishment of the remaining goals of the Five Year Plan before the current year is ended, she insisted.

In a moving and informative session Sunday morning a panel of Indian believers discussed the challenge of teaching among the native people of the Arctic region.

Among their conclusions:
- indirect teaching, though slower, is usually more effective, as it produces lasting results;
- the key to teaching is to make friends with the people;
- speaking the language is a great asset;
- traveling teachers are readily accepted in the Indian areas because it is believed...
that Bahá'ís are not “pushy people”; • pioneers must live in the villages and they must be resigned to staying at their posts. It is discouraging to the people to become friends with pioneers after much effort, only to have them move away in a short time; • it must be stressed that the Faith honors all cultures. It does not weaken what is there already, but adds strength to it; • Bahá'ís must learn to appreciate differences; they must cultivate an attitude of service to the people; • the sense that village people are “different” should be resisted; one should look upon visits to village areas as visits to one's own nuclear family; • because many of the believers are youth who are rejected by their families for abandoning the traditional ways, the friends who live and teach in these areas should be prepared to become surrogate families.

“Ours is the task of service, love, and devotion and our total support of our National and Local Spiritual Assemblies,” Mr. Featherstone said in his closing remarks. “Please just make Bahá'u'lláh number one in your life.”

A variety of musical and dance performances were provided. Groups from the Eskimo, Macaw, Athabascan, Haida, Salteaux, Cree, and Tlingit tribes demonstrated traditional dances.
The Moral Education of Children

by Shu'á'u'lláh 'Alá'i, Hand of the Cause of God

Adapted from a talk given Tuesday, July 6 at the International Teaching Conference in Helsinki.

The subject of Bahá’í life and what distinguishes the life of a Bahá’í is the central theme of the current Five Year Plan. My topic today, “Character Building and Moral Education of Children and Young Adults,” underpins the entire subject of Bahá’í life.

In approaching the subject, I shall begin with citing from the beloved Guardian’s overall analysis of our time of troubles. He has said that there are three distinct forces at work in the world today, laying the foundation of the new World Order of Bahá’u’lláh.

First, there is the force of the Holy Spirit, that has willed to save mankind from extinction on this earth.

Second, there is the man-made destructive force that by necessity purges and cleanses the planet from the corrupt.

Third, there is the force of self-disciplined and self-sacrificing Bahá’ís, who should tirelessly promulgate the Cause of God and the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh to all peoples, races, creeds, classes, and nations.

Concerning the second of the three forces, Bahá’u’lláh wrote: “The world is in travail, and its agitation waxeth day by day. Its face is turned towards waywardness and unbelief. Such shall be its plight, that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly. Its perversity will long continue, And when the appointed hour is
come, there shall suddenly appear that which shall cause the limbs of mankind to quake. Then, and only then, will the Divine Standard be unfurled, and the Nightingale of Paradise warble its melody."

The third force consists of our own effort and endeavor to overcome our shortcomings, deficiencies and prejudices. The people of Bahá have the grave responsibility to serve mankind throughout the world, without the expectation of reward or reciprocation. Perhaps we cannot say when the present troubles will be over, but we are confident that they will end, and then we shall witness the rising World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

The central theme of the Five Year Plan is: How to Live Up to the High Standards of Bahá'í Life. The Bahá'í life begins in the cradle and in the arms of mothers, where the characters of children are molded. The Guardian has said that the triumph of the Cause of God depends solely upon the character of individual believers. The life of a Bahá'í should reflect and mirror forth the high standards of moral conduct proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. No excuse is accepted from those who fail to comply with the moral precepts of the Bahá'í Faith.

All Local and National Spiritual Assemblies ought to give most serious attention and thoughtful consideration to the moral education of children and the development of their characters, and should take firm actions to carry out their programs of inculcating Bahá'í principles in their children and youth. Such services as libraries, reading rooms, conferences, regular and special courses, discussions, seminars, etc., should be organized and provided in every Bahá'í community. No amount of effort is too much, or even enough, to guard and protect our children and youth from the dehumanizing and corrupting influences of a decadent society.

The youth should be encouraged to participate in all Bahá'í community activities, such as pioneering, and in teaching the Word of God and giving the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

Regarding the aims and purposes of children's character building and moral education 'Abdu'l-Bahá states: "Training in morals and good conduct is far more important than book learning. A child that is cleanly, agreeable, of good character, well-behaved—even though he be ignorant—is preferable to a child that is rude, unwashed, ill-natured, and yet becoming deeply versed in all the sciences and arts. The reason for this is that the child who conducts himself well, even through he be ignorant, is of benefit to others, while an ill-natured, ill-behaved child is corrupted and harmful to others, even though he be learned. If, however, the child be trained to be both learned and good, the result is light upon light."

In one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's addresses He states: "If the mother is educated then her children will be well taught. When the mother is wise, then will the children be led into the path of wisdom. If the mother is moral she guides her little ones into the ways of uprightness. It is clear therefore that the future generation depends on the mothers of today. Is not this a vital responsibility for the woman? Does she not require every possible advantage to equip her for such a task?"

Again 'Abdu'l-Bahá instructs us: "O maid-servants of the Merciful! It is incumbent upon you to train the children from their earliest babyhood! It is incumbent upon you to beautify their morals! It is incumbent upon you to attend to them under all aspects and circumstances, inasmuch as God—glorified and exalted is He!—hath ordained mothers to be the primary trainers of children and infants."

"A child is as a young plant; it will grow in whatever way you train it. If you rear it to be truthful, and kind, and righteous, it will grow straight, it will be fresh and tender, and will flourish. But if not, then from faulty training it will grow bent, and stand awry, and there will be no hope of changing it."

"...Therefore is it incumbent upon the mothers to rear their little ones even as a gardener tendeth his young plants. Let them strive by day and by night to establish within their children faith and certitude, the fear of God, the love of the Beloved of the worlds, and all good qualities and traits. Whenevery a mother seeth that her child hath done well, let her praise and applaud him and cheer his heart; and if the slightest undesirable trait should manifest itself, let her counsel the child and punish him, and use means based on reason, even a slight verbal chastisement should this be necessary. It is not, however, 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."

On the same subject, 'Abdu'l-Bahá has also said: "Beware! Beware! that ye fail not in this matter. Endeavor with heart, with life, to train your children, especially the daughters. No excuse is acceptable in this matter."

Among the many recommendations
made by Bahá'u'lláh to mothers, is that they entone melodious sonnets of Bahá'u'lláh's while the child is going to sleep, and when it is fast asleep, for its unconscious mind will be filled with divine guidance, its soul purified, its spirit uplifted, its character ennobled. Such are the powers of the sonnets of the Blessed Beauty that their influence will remain even after the child grows to adulthood.

In the light of such specific instructions given us by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, it is incumbent upon parents to expose their children at an early age to the moral and spiritual teachings of the Bahá'í Faith. Children's minds are not cluttered with the worries and irrelevancies of adult life. They are highly receptive and impressionable, and whatever they hear is registered and deeply imprinted upon their unconscious minds, thus remaining with them throughout their lives. Parents and other adults should be very careful in the conversations they have in front of children. They should use polite language and refrain from ugly words. Children repeat what they hear from their parents and other adults. If children hear Bahá'í prayers, poems, and sacred tablets frequently, they will retain them, and will repeat them.

'Abdu'l-Bahá says of education that it "...is of three kinds: material, human, and spiritual. Material education is concerned with the progress and development of the body, through gaining its sustenance, its material comfort and ease. This education is common to animals and man. "Human education signifies civilization and progress: that is to say, government, administration, charitable works, trades, arts and handicrafts, sciences, great inventions and discoveries, and elaborate institutions, which are the activities essential to man as distinguished from the animal.

"Divine education is that of the Kingdom of God: it consists in acquiring divine perfections, and this is true education; for in this state man becomes the focus of divine blessings, the manifestation of the words, 'Let us make man in our image and after our likeness.' This is the goal of the world of humanity."

Adherence to oneness in the world of humanity, and to the precepts of justice, humility, fairness, and objectivity is rooted deeply in early childhood upbringing and conditioning. Children must be oriented to giving to and serving others, rather than to exploiting them. For the higher qualities, positive character traits, and divine attributes to become second nature to a child, it must have wise and dedicated Bahá'í parents.

Bahá'u'lláh has given the world a common body of principles in order that all men may become united in one universal Faith, one common Cause. The unity of the world of humanity is impossible except by the establishment of common moral values through education, and the development from earliest childhood of self-disciplined, stoical characters in the believers. By giving children the same values and spiritual conditionings, they develop mutual understanding, common bonds of fellowship, and unity and harmony with their geophysical environment.

Bahá'u'lláh's promise: "The Most Great Peace shall come," is predicated upon the fulfillment of moral education, and high standards of character building in children over the entire face of the planet. Wars are made inevitable by neglecting moral education and character building, and concentrating solely upon formal schooling, rudimentary mental training, superficial expertise, and the like. There is no shortcut to universal peace; there is no panacea or magic formula for solving economic problems of unemployment and inflation. Long, hard and tedious moral education and firm character building processes must be instituted and executed with utmost determination over many generations before mankind arrives at its destination: the maturity and the coming of age of the human race.

I suggest that we ought to begin establishing Bahá'í kindergartens for our children and the children of non-Bahá'ís concerned with the moral education of their offspring. Results will come gradually, after several generations of hard work and inculcation of Bahá'í values in children and young adults. Our children will develop a universal outlook, a superior understanding of life, a balanced mind, a strong character, and distinct individuality. 'Abdu'l-Bahá says "... that man, if he is left without training, becomes bestial, and moreover, if left under the rule of nature, becomes lower than an animal; whereas if he is educated he becomes an angel."

It is our responsibility to establish for our children and youth—in addition to academic training—character building centers with classes for moral instruction. This is the only worthwhile service that we can now render to future and as yet unborn generations.

We live in an age of inner emptiness, tension, and conflict. As a dehumanizing civilization approaches its terminal phase, let us join our effort to transcend and survive.
Paper praises role Faith Habitat Conference

The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements was held in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, from May 31 to June 13, 1976. A Non-Governmental Organizations Habitat Forum was held concurrently, from May 27 through June 11.

Bahá’í participants at the Conference included Mr. Jameson Bond, Dr. Glen Eyford and Mr. Donald McLaren of Canada; Mrs. Sheila Banani of the United States; and Mrs. Lei Chapman of Alaska.

The main purposes of the Habitat Conference were defined as:

- the stimulation of innovation and to serve as a means for the exchange of experience, and ensure the widest possible dissemination of new ideas and technologies in the field of human settlements;
- the formulation and making of recommendations for an international program in this field which will assist governments;
- the awakening of interest in developing appropriate financial systems and institutions for human settlements among those making financial resources available and those in a position to use such resources.

Mr. Kenneth Goldstone, an urban geographer, represented the Bahá’í International Community at the Forum, which was attended, as well, by a sizable delegation selected by the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada.

In addition to valuable contributions to workshops and various informal gatherings, the Bahá’ís were able to present a specially prepared statement relating to the Conference theme. A Habitat brochure “Building a Unified Community” and other literature outlining the Bahá’í view were also distributed.

The June 3, 1976 issue of The Vancouver Sun carried a sympathetic and lengthy article, as a result of interviewing Bahá’í delegates to the Conference and Forum, prominently featured in the newspaper and bearing the headline: “Members of Bahá’í Faith Lend Spiritual Direction to Habitat Discussions”.

(Based on various reports by the Bahá’í International Community)

## Around the world

### Chile

**Indian enrollments surging in Chile**

An accelerated program of teaching in the Mapuche Indian territory of Central Chile has resulted in a surge of new enrollments, the Chilean National Assembly reports.

Teaching efforts conducted jointly by

In photograph at top right, Mapuche Indian teachers and resident pioneers have joined together in a new effort to spur enrollments in Central Chile. Shown here is one of the teams that has been active in bringing news of the Faith to the Indian territory. From left to right, Jorge Munoz, Antonio Lizama, Robert Seigel, Reed Chandler, and Pedro Salvador.

At right, the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’llah Muhajir spent time with Indian believers during his recent visit to Chile, urging them to make efforts to teach their children of the Faith. He is shown in the center of the photograph with Mapuche believers and their children during the inauguration of a local Hazratu’l-Quds.
Indian believers and resident pioneers and traveling teachers has pushed the total of Mapuche believers to 4,000 at Riqvan 1976; up from 1,800 the year before. More than 250 entire families are among the new believers.

The National Spiritual Assembly, following consultation with the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’llâh Muhâjir, has set a goal of 7,000 Indian believers enrolled in Central Chile by January 1977.

The new activity is centering around the city of Temuco, a trade center of 91,000 people about 100 miles northeast of Valdivia, on the Cautin River. Temuco deals in grains, fruit, and timber, primarily.

The launching of systematic efforts to reach individuals and families in the Indian areas is a relatively new development. For many years the Mapuche believers have been reluctant to teach their religion openly. Now, however, conditions have changed dramatically.

"Through the encouragement of the Institutions and the other teachers, and, above all, the grace and confirmations of Bahâ’u’llâh, these souls are now joyfully advancing to assume their rightful place in the forefront of the teaching work," the Bahá’í News correspondents in Chile reported. "The area’s one foreign pioneer family and several newly settled Chilean families provide an essential base and core for many of these activities.”

Efforts are also being made to deepen the new believers in their understanding of the Faith. More Bahá’í literature is being rendered in the Mapuche language and deepening classes, particularly for the children, are held regularly.

During his stay in Chile the Hand of the Cause Muhâjir visited with Indian believers, assuring them of their magnificent destiny and of the importance of the work they were carrying forward. He stressed the importance of developing a personal bond with the Manifestation of God through prayer, daily efforts to exemplify His teachings, and through the promotion of unity among all people.

He stressed too the need for regular children’s classes. Working with the children, he said, was the real consolidation of the Faith. By 1 June at least 7 different programs for children were functioning regularly throughout the Mapuche area, the National Spiritual Assembly reported.

It sometimes takes only 10 minutes to introduce a person to the Faith of Bahâ’u’llâh, Dr. Muhâjir said, but a whole generation to see the fruit of that teaching reflected in solid, well-established communities.

El Salvador

Publicity efforts rewarded by the U.N.

A special award, the United Nations Peace Medal, was given to the Bahá’í Community of El Salvador for assisting in publicizing the programs of the United Nations throughout the country. Mrs. Dee de Lamb, Bahá’í representative to the U.N. office in El Salvador, received the award at a special ceremony July 21. Vincent M. Piola, Director of the United Nations Information Center for Central America and Panama, third from left, is shown reading the award citation. Two distinguished newspaper publishers and a local U.N. organization also received medals for their contributions. The ceremony was given good coverage by the city newspapers and on television news broadcasts.

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Italy

Faith in Italy receives important recognition

Italy’s prestigious La Stampa, published daily in Turin, ran a 1,000-word article on the Bahá’í Faith on May 23, which was described by the National Spiritual Assembly as the most important newspaper publicity received in Italy during the Five Year Plan.

The author publishes a regular column called Religions and Society. He said he heard of the Faith from a reader who corresponded with him, and whose letters instilled in him an urge to inform himself of the teachings of the Bahá’í Faith.

In preparing for his article the writer spoke at length with the Secretary of the Italian National Assembly. Consequently, the distinguishing features of the Faith are accurately presented in the article, the National Assembly reports.
Around the world

Rhodesia

Training for children given encouragement

A training institute for children's teachers, the first in Rhodesia, was held July 11-12 at the Hazíratú'l-Quds in Salisbury. Approximately 30 Baha'í's from different areas of the country attended.

The purpose of the session was both to encourage the Baha'í communities to hold children's classes and to introduce teachers to methods and materials that could improve the quality of instruction. Different sessions covered such topics as the Baha'í Writings on child education, lesson planning, the use of visual aids, and organizing effective classroom presentations.

Lowell Johnson, a visiting lecturer from South Africa, showed how to use felt board displays in teaching. Other speakers were Irma Allen, Thomas Kufa, Beth Fat'he-Aazam, Tapuwa Zauyamakando, Enoch Zauyamakando, and Nuri Bebeshty. Phibion Ngondo demonstrated games and songs that would please the children.

United States

Baha'í display shown at Catholic gathering

A Baha'í exhibit was on display, July 30—August 7, at the 41st International Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which was attended by more than a million Catholics.

The display, the same used by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States for its Bicentennial observance in other locations, occupied a prominent position in the exhibit hall in Philadelphia's Civic Center.

A Baha'í attendant was with the display much of the time and had an opportunity to converse with hundreds of visitors. Many priests and nuns expressed interest in the work of the Baha'í Faith and spoke warmly of individual Baha'ís with whom they were acquainted.

The Congress explored the theme: "The Eucharist and the Hungers of the Human Family." The delegates were addressed by James Cardinal Knox of Australia, representing Pope Paul VI, who was unable to attend because of illness, and by other prominent Catholics.

Reprints of the Bicentennial editorial of World Order magazine, the article on the Faith in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, and a postcard of the House of Worship in Wilmette, were offered to those requesting information. Direct teaching of the Faith was avoided out of courtesy to the hosts.

Assistance with planning was given by the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'ís of Philadelphia.

"Many enthusiastic comments were made by visitors," one full-time attendant at the Baha'í exhibit later reported. "Many deep questions were asked, and large quantities of literature were taken. The postcard was particularly popular, as so many were there from distant places and would be writing home."

Participation in this event is part of an increasing effort, under the direction of the National Spiritual Assembly, to make known the aims and purposes of the Baha'í Faith to all strata of the nation.

The Eucharist is the Christian sacrament commemorating Christ's Last Supper, also called Communion. Gatherings such as the one in Philadelphia are held periodically to recall the sacrifice of Jesus and to revitalize dedication to the service of mankind.

Observance of Master's visit held

More than 400 persons attended the 64th Annual Souvenir of 'Abdu'l-Baha on the grounds of the Wilhelm Properties in Teaneck, New Jersey, on June 26.

The program included the reading of 'Abdu'l-Baha's talk given there on June 29, 1912, a talk by Mildred Mottahedeh on the Master and the destiny of America, and musical selections.

The commemorative services were held in the grove where 'Abdu'l-Baha gave His Unity Feast that memorable day in 1912. A special event was the opening of the Wilhelm House and its beautiful meditation room to guests.

Large numbers of people visiting the display area of the Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia obtained information about the Baha'í Faith.
Local proclamation activities increase

Imagine a special 200-page edition of the New York Times devoted entirely to articles about Bahá'u'lláh and the Bahá'í Faith. That would be the result if all of the free newspaper space devoted to Bahá'í activities in 1975 in the U.S. were published at once.

Such proclamation activities by local Bahá'í communities are creating a heightened awareness of the Cause in ever-widening circles, the National Spiritual Assembly said in its annual report.

Figures compiled by the Bahá'í National Information Committee show, for example, that 30,834 column inches (about 200 pages) of newspaper articles about Bahá'í activities were published. The figures were gathered in a media survey of Local Spiritual Assemblies and groups and show that last year was the greatest period of proclamation activities in the United States.

Bahá'ís participated in 140 hours of television programs and 325 hours of radio programs.

In the advertising field, Bahá'ís received eight hours of television air time, 27 hours of radio air time, and purchased 21,000 column inches of newspaper space. The Faith was proclaimed by 297 bus posters and 154 billboards. There were 1,727 proclamation meetings sponsored by Bahá'í communities and 107 communities made direct mailings. A total of 143 communities presented the Bicentennial issue of World Order to local officials and 70 communities participated in Bicentennial parades.

Indian youth among volunteer workers

Twenty-four Bahá'í youth, including five American Indians, participated in the Youth Work/Study Project at the Bahá'í National Center June 13-25.

Emphasis at the project was receiving first-hand exposure to the Administrative Order and assisting the National Center staff with such duties as typing, filing, mailing, working in the gardens, and maintenance.

During the evenings, the youth attended classes conducted by the Hand of the Cause of God Dhikru'lláh Khádem; Auxiliary Board member Thelma Jackson; Glenford E. Mitchell, Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly; and members of the National staff.

One highlight of the project was participation in a teaching campaign in nearby Niles, Illinois, on June 20 which preceded by a Design for Victory Conference. The projectees and youth from nearby communities also attended a square dancing party.

The American Indian youth who participated in the project were Marie Chiago (Papago) of Tucson, Arizona; Lorraine Cowboy Kahn (Eastern Navajo Agency) of Crownpoint, New Mexico; Regina Steffes (Eastern Navajo) of Ontario, California; Ermie Torres (Apache) of Mescalero, New Mexico; and Scott Tyler (Makah/Ehaitiset) of Neah Bay, Washington.

Other youth who attended were Katherine Perna of Millbrook, New York, Belinda Tremper of Chico, California, and Kianoush Ostovari, above, gets his assignment at National Teaching Office. Ermie Torres, at right, lends a hand with typing. At Publishing Trust, youth volunteers Soheil Moshtael, bottom right, and Bruce Schulte, second from right, pitch in with paper work.
Sequoyah:
Tribute to a Servant of Mankind
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The cover photo shows Ross Swimmer, right, Principal Chief of
the Cherokee people, presenting an
award to Baha'i artist David Villasenor at a ceremony in
Tahlequah, Oklahoma, capital of
the Cherokee Nation. Mr. Villasenor
sculpted a statue of Cherokee sage
Sequoyah, which was presented to
the Cherokee Nation by the National
Spiritual Assembly of the United
States.
Royalty visits Guardian’s resting place

With feelings immense elation announce Bahá’í communities all continents joyful news first visit by Bahá’í reigning monarch to resting place beloved Shoghi Effendi well nigh nineteen years following his passing. His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II of Western Samoa course his recent visit London attained this inestimable bounty. His Highness accompanied by small delegation friends headed by Hand Cause Giachery including Hands Cause Khádem Varqa and five members National Assembly United Kingdom proceeded cemetery participated deeply moving highly dignified visitation resting place Sign God on earth whose lifelong heroic labours achieved worldwide spread glorious Cause Bahá’u’lláh. Following prayers devotions and expressions appreciation gratitude by His Highness he met with radiant spirit large gathering believers assembled precincts grave to welcome him and to whom he conveyed greetings his fellow Samoan Bahá’ís and his hope growth Faith from strength to strength all over world. In Holy Land synchronizing with these events Hands Cause other members International Teaching Centre joined members House Justice special visit Bahji where fervent prayers were offered Sacred Threshold Most Holy Shrine in thanksgiving highly significant development which represents prelude to fulfillment long cherished desire ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi witness pilgrim kings pay their humble tribute at Holy Shrines Founders our Faith in spiritual heart planet. Fervently praying this joyous news will strengthen efforts to forge ahead however arduous the tasks however seemingly insurmountable the obstacles until every goal worldwide plan is speedily and fully consummated.

Universal House of Justice
21 October 1976

Majority pioneer assignments filled by midway point Five Year Plan

Joyfully announce realization hope expressed in January 1975 that by midway point Five Year Plan most pioneer posts be settled. Out of these 962 posts 612 already filled through settlement 1374 pioneers. 350 posts still remain unfilled but 227 volunteers have arisen and are being processed for settlement these goals. Call with urgent insistence all National Assemblies with unfilled pioneer goals expedite fulfillment assignments countries still needing urgent support. Praying Holy Shrines bountiful blessings all who have arisen pioneer fields various lands and who will arise during fast fleeting months before Ridvan 1977 win outstanding pioneer goals Five Year Plan.

Universal House of Justice
7 September 1976

Passing Adelaide Sharp ends five decades service Cause in Iran

Deeply grieved passing dedicated steadfast promoter cause dearly loved Adelaid Sharp whose selfless labours 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. Her devoted services won her praise beloved Guardian reinforced ties binding American Bahá’í community to friends Bahá’u’lláhs native land. Fervently praying Holy Shrines continuous progress her soul Abhá Kingdom. Advise hold befitting memorial gatherings honour her name. NSA U.S. holding memorial gathering Mashriqu’l-Adhkár. Advise hold befitting memorial service Temple.

Universal House of Justice
7 September 1976
Sequoyah
Tribute to a Servant of Mankind
Extensive publicity in the Indian press of America accompanied presentation of a ten-foot, redwood statue of Sequoyah by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States to the Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, Ross O. Swimmer, during the annual Cherokee Celebration on the Labor Day weekend, near Tahlequah, Oklahoma. A circle of Cherokee visitors surrounding the statue of Sequoyah the morning after its formal presentation to the Cherokee Nation left no doubt in the minds of viewers that the statue had arrived in a welcome new home.

For Chief Swimmer, the statue was characterized as a "beautiful, distinguished and deeply appreciated gift from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States." For the artist, David Villaseñor, this work culminated nine years of effort, following a dream that he would create a carving of a great Indian leader. For the National Spiritual Assembly, this event presented an opportunity to enunciate, before a large audience of Cherokee Indians and their friends the principle of the oneness of mankind and to show appreciation of the contribution made to this nation by its Indian inhabitants.

More than 200 people including members of the Cherokee tribal council and local dignitaries, were guests of the National Spiritual Assembly at a luncheon in the Tsa-La-Gi lodge, part of the Cherokee tribal complex, the day preceding formal presentation of the statue. A descendant of Sequoyah, Mr. George Cochrane, said the opening prayer at the luncheon.

In accepting the gift, Chief Swimmer said: "The theme of our Celebration this year is 'Reunion' and this gathering today, with Chief Crow representing the Eastern Cherokee, is a fitting expression of that theme."

Five members of the National Spiritual Assembly...
Assembly took part in the weekend program: Dr. Daniel Jordan, Mr. Glenford Mitchell, Dr. Dorothy Nelson, Mrs. Soo Fouts and Mr. Franklin Kahn. Auxiliary Board member Mrs. Nancy Phillips and Judge James Nelson took part in television and radio programs prior to the formal presentation Saturday. Radio stations in Pryor, Tahlequah, Wagoner and Muskogee, as well as network television stations in Tulsa, carried interviews with members of the National Spiritual Assembly and the Auxiliary Board member throughout the weekend. National Public Radio sent an interviewer from their Oklahoma affiliate, Mr. Garland McWater, of Stillwater, who not only covered the luncheon but interviewed individually all members of the National Spiritual Assembly who were present, and artist David Villaseñor, for separate programs to be broadcast nationally at a later date.

Franklin Kahn, in the formal presentation of the statue before a crowd of Cherokees Saturday, September 4, spoke of the love Bahá'ís feel for all the peoples of the world and the particular appreciation expressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the North American Indians. “We are happy to give this statue of a true servant of his people to the Cherokee Nation, the largest tribe in America,” said Mr. Kahn. In his response, Chief Swimmer again praised the generosity of the Bahá'ís, saying that the week he spent in Los Angeles, where there was a preliminary presentation of the statue, had been one he would never forget and attributed this to the kindness and warmth of the Bahá'ís. “Now Sequoyah has come to his true home,” he said, “and we gratefully accept from the National Spiritual Assembly this great work of art. It is fitting it should be presented to us by a member of the second largest tribe in this country, the Navajo.”

Chief Swimmer and his wife entertained Mrs. Fouts, Mr. and Mrs. Kahn and their son, Larry, and other Bahá'ís from the National Center who stayed an extra day at the Celebration, at breakfast in Tsa-La-Gi Lodge. Here he spoke fully about his hopes for his people and the difficulties he is facing as a newly-elected chief with a slim majority. He invited those present to feel welcome to come back and visit, and that evening included Mrs. Fouts and the Kahn family in his party attending a traditional stomp dance forty-five miles from the Cherokee tribal complex.

One month prior to the preliminary presentation of the statue at the American Indian Arts and Cultural Exchange in Los Angeles, a news release and photograph of the statue and artist was sent to all the Indian newspapers in the country, as well as major daily newspapers and magazines. Many of them ran this information. The Los Angeles Times and the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner included the photograph and brief article on their religion page during the weekend of the presentation.

The Celebration at the Cherokee tribal complex was filled with many memorable moments, one of the outstanding ones occurring when the Kahn family, with seven-year-old Larry in traditional Indian dress, danced in the pow-wow with thousands of their Cherokee brothers. Although this was not an occasion for open proclamation of the Faith, a noted Cherokee artist, Willard Stone, returned the day after the luncheon to request Bahá'í books. He commented, “I never knew other people felt the way I do about all of us being one family.”

Surely this was the weekend that Sequoyah's statue, together with the spirit of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, came to the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma.
1. Artist Villaseñor with statue; 2. members of the U.S. National Assembly with Ross Swimmer, light coat facing camera, Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation; 3. Prayers were offered before the start of the NSA's luncheon for Cherokee leaders; 4. Members of the National Spiritual Assembly with their guests. Representing the Board of Counsellors for North America was Auxiliary Board member Nancy Phillips, second from left. John Kolsbø left, Chairman of the Alaskan National Assembly, was also present; 5. Visitors view the statue; 6. Bahá'ís meet with members of Indian and national press.
Bahá’u’lláh’s Message challenges World Congress Faiths

The worldwide development of the Bahá’í Cause was dramatically recognized this July when the Faith was selected as one of the six world religions on which formal papers were presented at the 40th anniversary meeting of the World Congress of Faiths. The other five faiths represented were Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism, with speakers as impressive as the Right Reverend George Appleton, Archbishop of Jerusalem, His Excellency Sadiq-i-Mahdi, an Islamic scholar of international repute and formerly prime minister of the Sudan, and the Most Reverend Lord Abbot Kisho Ohtani of the Mother Monastery of Buddhism in Japan. The gathering was given added significance by the fact that it took place in Canterbury, England, ‘cradle of English Christianity’.

The World Congress of Faiths was originally founded in 1936 by Sir Francis Younghusband, in response to the growing interest in all religions, which was one of the outgrowths of ‘the World Parliament of Religions’ held in Chicago in 1893, the historic gathering at which the message of Bahá’u’lláh was presented for the first time in the West. The organizers invited the Beloved Guardian to deliver one of the papers, for both Sir Francis and Lord Samuel had personally known both ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, and had been deeply impressed with the spirit and teachings of the Faith. It would have been inappropriate for him to appear as one of several speakers on such a program, but the Guardian took a lively interest in the work of the Congress, and asked Mr. George Townsend, later a Hand of the Cause, to deliver an address on his behalf. Mr. Townsend, chose as his theme ‘Bahá’u’lláh’s Plan for World Fellowship’, and challenged the representatives of all the religions gathered in London in 1936 to study Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings and to attempt to find agreement on the principles which they contained.

It was, therefore, very fitting that the Faith should again be represented in a keynote address at the 40th anniversary Congress this year. The British National Assembly, which has maintained contact with the Congress over the years, asked the Universal House of Justice to nominate a Bahá’í speaker from outside the British Isles. To the delight of our own National Assembly a Canadian believer, Mr. Douglas Martin, was selected by the House of Justice to deliver the address. His paper was entitled ‘Bahá’u’lláh’s Model for World Fellowship’. Its essential message was that the Plan which Mr. Townsend had presented 40 years before, and which the interfaith movement around the world had for all practical purposes ignored, had been successfully set in motion by the Guardian himself. The paper was therefore presented in the form of a ‘progress report’ on the ‘model which has now emerged as the result of 40 years of effort on the part of the Bahá’í community around the world.’ The speaker was able to show that the goal which the World Congress of Faith was founded to seek is within mankind’s possibility to grasp, and that the Bahá’í community itself is the evidence that the unification of mankind and of religion is a practical reality.

The paper closed with a challenge to the Congress to undertake a serious and major study of Bahá’u’lláh’s model, ‘because that model lies directly in that path of the universal search for Truth chosen by the Congress itself,’ to examine its success in achieving universality without uniformity, and its preservation of unity without suppressing the spiritual integrity of its members. Mr. Martin urged the Congress to mobilize the scholarly resources which such a major research project would require, and to share the findings with all mankind: Bahá’u’lláh’s model is a proof, a gage that the universe we live in is rational, progressively evolving and at its heart loving and joyful, the intended home of a united human race. We have only to claim it.’

The paper was very well received, and the Bahá’ís present particularly appreciated the courtesy extended to the Faith by the Dean of Westminster who himself served as Chairman of that particular session and expressed the warmest sentiments of admiration for both the teaching of the Cause and the way in which the Bahá’í community was attempting to put them into effect. Thanks to the presence at the conference of a number of British believers it was also possible to hold firesides and discussion groups and thus answer the many inquiries which the presentation aroused from those attending.

A highpoint of the four days of meetings was a special service held at Canterbury Cathedral, the ancient building whose foundation dates back to St. Augustine, which was the scene and martyrdom and entombment of St. Thomas Becket, and which of course is immortalized in Chaucer’s famous Canterbury Tales. It was a very moving experience to see turbaned Sikhs, Buddhists in long gowns and members of the Jewish Faith in skull caps participating with Christians, Muslims, Bahá’ís and all of those others present. In his sermon, the Right Reverend George Appleton, Archbishop of Jerusalem paid tribute to the contributions which each of the founders of the great faiths have made to the spiritual history of mankind, recognizing each of these Founders by name, and concluding with a tribute to Bahá’u’lláh’s ‘teachings of universality and the positive and confident spirit in which the Bahá’ís are putting these teachings into practice all over the globe.’
Boosting expansion in North America

Mr. Furutan in the United States

Capacity attendance at summer schools, marriage, and learning have accompanied the visit of the Head of the Faith, of God, Mr. Mírzá Húmáíí, to the American Bahá'í community. Throughout a busy schedule of classes, at summer schools from coast to coast, as well as public meetings in a few major cities across the country, Mr. Furutan emphasized the significance of this day. "When all the doors of learning are open in your beautiful country," and urged the friends not to lessen their activities in mass teaching areas.

Mr. Furutan was invited by the National Spiritual Assembly to discuss the Bahá'í Administrative Order with Assemblies and localities throughout the United States. Mr. Furutan served on the National Assembly of Iran for 24 years. He arrived in the U.S. in the first days of August and returned to the Holy Land September 12.
On his final day in the United States Mr. Furutan met with Spanish-speaking believers from the Chicago area. This photograph was taken at the end of his presentation.

"It is evident that you are teaching well, for everywhere I meet new believers," he commented several times. "I would ask only that your teaching increase still more, for the time is ripe and many successes await your efforts."

Wherever Mr. Furutan traveled, he left a trail of happy Baha'is, warmed by his praise and encouraged by his view of the great opportunities available to the American believers. He forgot no one. Old and young, of all backgrounds and economic strata, whether already declared Baha'is or seekers, each person coming into his presence was given a share of his love. At the summer schools, special classes were held for the staff, many of whom commented later that this greatly increased their awareness of "the privilege of serving".

For many Baha'is who had never had the experience of meeting a Hand of the Cause of God, this moment left indelible memories. One later reported: "I always thought that every single Baha'i had the same station and should be treated exactly alike. Somehow, the humility and kind-ness of Mr. Furutan helped me to feel reverence, and to know that he had the station of Hand of the Cause of God, representative of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi."

This was an experience shared by others. To live while the Hands of the Cause are amongst us, sharing their memories of the beloved Guardian and their view of the emerging World Order of Baha'u'llah was a blessing commented on by several of those attending the summer schools. "I understand better what it means to serve on a Local Spiritual Assembly," said one Baha'i, and another added: "It is more important to me, now, to read communications from the National Spiritual Assembly and support their decisions."

In Los Angeles, 1,000 Baha'is gathered for an unforgettable evening with Mr. Furutan and his wife, who traveled with him throughout America. At this meeting, he stressed the importance of reading from the Writings each evening and morning, of saying the obligatory prayer daily, and of attending Feast. "It is so important that we study the Writings of Baha'u'llah and all the Central Figures of the Faith," he said. "Each Baha'i can decide the amount he wishes to read, whether it be one page, one sentence or one book, but it is necessary that we turn to the Writings morning and evening if we wish the power of this Faith to be expressed in our daily actions."

An unexpected gift for Baha'is and friends attending a meeting at the Los Angeles Center, at which Principal Chief Ross O. Swimmer, of the Cherokee Nation, was the speaker, was the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Furutan as guests at this gathering.

While in the Temple area, Mr. Furutan consented to make three video tapes in which he speaks on such topics as "The Covenant," "The Local Spiritual Assembly," and "Backbiting." These video tapes will be edited and made available to the community at a later date.

Mr. Furutan was particularly pleased with the Louis Gregory Institute, where he felt the influence of the spirit of Louis Gregory. The summer schools at which he taught were: Oklahoma/Texas, Washington/East, Bosch, Green Acre, as well as the Louis Gregory Institute. He spoke at meetings with Baha'is in Los Angeles and San Jose, California; New York City, New York; Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Atlanta, Georgia, as well as a meeting at the House of Worship in Wilmette.
Top. Mr. Furútan met with the National Assembly on September 11 to report his impressions of conditions in the Bahá'í community. He said afterwards that he had witnessed great progress since his visit seven years before. Many new believers had been enrolled he said, and the friends were paying more attention to the education of children; Right, while in Wilmette Mr. Furútan recorded three videotapes for use in deepening the communities; Below, many hundreds of believers attended his talk at the House of Worship in Wilmette. He urged the friends not to ignore their own families when teaching the Faith. We are going to the masses with news of these teachings, and we are sacrificing our lives for their fulfillment. "In light of this is it logical that we... leave our families and our children alone without guidance?"
The Bahá'í International Community: a growing presence at the United Nations

Many people ask—Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís—"What is the Bahá'í International Community?" It is the name used, for the purpose of representation at the United Nations, by the Bahá'í world community, a community, growing every year, uniting every year in diversity more people of different backgrounds. Non-Bahá'ís we meet are often surprised when we tell them that more than 1,600 ethnic groups and tribes are represented in the Bahá'í world community; that Bahá'ís live in over 70,000 localities; and that the Bahá'í Writings can be read today in some 600 languages and dialects. Bahá'ís living in 330 countries and territories—152 of these independent nations—are the people that make up the Bahá'í International Community. So, at the United Nations, the "Bahá'í International Community" is not only three "words," but in its wider implications it is a "world"—a developing world fellowship underpinned and supported by a divine world order.

While the Bahá'í International Community is, in a sense, merely a name for a nongovernmental organization cooperating closely with the United Nations to achieve the goals expressed in the UN Charter—world peace, universal human rights, and the full economic and social development of the peoples of this planet—it is, in its broader sense, immensely more than that. It represents the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh in its current stage of development.

The Bahá'í International Community is a growing presence at the United Nations. As is true for every human being, officials representing their respective countries and governments at the United Nations, as well as the international civil servants working for the United Nations Secretariat, may be more or less responsive to the healing medicine of Bahá'u'lláh for the ills of humanity. What is important is that Bahá'í principles and teachings are being offered, through personal conversation and through official statements, to representatives of almost all nations on earth, as the solution to the problems of their own people and those of mankind. Furthermore, since all men and women are both citizens of their countries and citizens of the planet, governments at the UN are becoming increasingly aware that purely national or regional solutions will not be truly effective. "The interdependence of all peoples and nations" has, in fact, become a commonp-
The strengthening of the ties of the Bahá’í International Community with the United Nations is a Bahá’í World Center goal for the Five Year Plan—as it was earlier for the Nine Year Plan. In fact, the Bahá’í-UN relationship began in 1947, when the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada became affiliated with the United Nations Office of Public Information (OPI) as a national Non-Governmental Organization. (In granting accreditation to religious bodies the United Nations distinguishes between “religions,” which it does not accredit, and “organizations connected with religions.” For this reason, it is not the “Bahá’í Faith,” but the “Bahá’í International Community”—that is, the world Bahá’í community—which is officially represented at the United Nations.)

On April 16, 1948, the Guardian sent a cable to the National Convention of the Bahá’í International Community to the United Nations:

“Recognition extended Faith United Nations as international non-governmental body enabling appointment accredited representatives to United Nations conferences heralding world recognition universal proclamation Faith Bahá’u’lláh.”

The significance of the association of the Bahá’í International Community with the United Nations was further emphasized by Shoghi Effendi in a letter dated May 18, 1948, written by his secretary on his behalf to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States: “The recognition given your Assembly (as representative of the other National Spiritual Assemblies) by U.N.O. conferences marks an important step forward in the struggle of our beloved Faith to receive in the eyes of the world its just due, and be recognized as an independent World Religion. Indeed, this step would have a favorable reaction on the progress of the Cause everywhere, especially in those parts of the world where it is still persecuted, belittled, or scorned, particularly in the East.”

The expanding relationship of the Bahá’í International Community with the United Nations since 1948 had afforded new and varied opportunities for increasing the recognition and prestige of the Faith in the eyes of the world. The relevance of the cooperation of the Bahá’í world community with the UN was further highlighted by the Universal House of Justice, when the Bahá’í International Community was granted consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1970, in a cable to the Bahá’í world: “Joyfully announce Bahá’í world attainment consultative status United Nations Economic and Social Council, thereby fulfilling long-cherished hope beloved Guardian and World Centre goal Nine Year Plan... significant achievement adds prestige influence recognition ever-advancing Faith Bahá’u’lláh...”

On March 8, 1976, the Bahá’í International Community achieved a third relationship with the United Nations—consultative status with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). This further affiliation promises to offer additional avenues for establishing close ties with the UN, and to make better known the Bahá’í Faith and its institutions throughout the world.

These six years since the Bahá’í world gained accreditation with the Economic and Social Council have offered the Bahá’í International Community numerous opportunities to bring to the attention of UN delegates, representing now 144 independent countries, the Bahá’í teachings, principles and laws, as well as to acquaint these government officials with the growing implementation of such teachings in the lives of Bahá’ís and of their communities. In our most recent pamphlet, “Building a Unified Community,” prepared for the United Nations Conference on Habitat/Human Settlements, after mentioning that we are accredited with the UN Economic and Social Council, with UNICEF, and with the UN Office of Public Information, and that we have representatives at the United Nations in New York and in Geneva, as well as with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi, we explained that “in the areas of social and economic development, the Bahá’í International Community has worked closely with ECOSOC, its functional commissions, committees, and associated bodies. In this cooperation, it has furnished information, submitted statements, and published brochures on many issues: human rights, social development, status of women, world food, science and technology, population, drug abuse, environment, the United Nations University, the family, youth, and now human settlements.”

Furthermore, the Bahá’í International Community “has also participated in United Nations Years and major world conferences concerned with the socio-

economic problems of our planet, as well as in preparatory and follow-up meetings and activities."

The consultative relationship with the Economic and Social Council, a relationship established in Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations, allowing ECOSOC to make "suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence," marked a new stage in the relationship of the Bahá'í International Community with the UN. We could now participate in all sessions of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, and could attend United Nations global and regional conferences and seminars organized under the jurisdiction of ECOSOC. Here, Bahá'í International Community representatives to governmental conferences and meetings could present pertinent written or oral statements. The former were circulated widely, almost always as United Nations official documents, in three languages: English, French, and Spanish. The Bahá'í International Community could also now be "consulted" on studies being undertaken by the United Nations, or on the substance of UN resolutions which asked for the views of non-governmental organizations; and this has already happened on the subject of the rights of minorities and of indigenous populations, on genocide, on the status of women, etc.

The wide access to highly placed governmental officials, which is today available to the Bahá'í International Community, is of direct assistance to the Five Year Plan goal, assigned by the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, of reaching and making friends with "prominent people and responsible governments officials." Since the UN delegates whom the Bahá'í International Community representatives meet are not only professional diplomats, stationed in New York or Geneva, but also experts in a variety of social and economic fields sent by their governments as delegates to world-wide conferences, the Bahá'í International Community office informs the appropriate National Spiritual Assemblies of friendly contacts. These institutions may then, if they wish, continue such friendships, and foster the person's understanding of the Faith, and his or her sympathy for Bahá'í views and goals.

Since 1970, the Bahá'í International Community has been invited to participate in a series of United Nations world conferences on economic and social matters, designed not only to create worldwide awareness of the existence of such serious world problems, but also to seek solutions through a world plan of action and through national programs of implementation. Representatives of the Bahá'í International Community attended the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment (1972), the World Population and World Food Conferences (1974), respectively in Bucharest and Rome, the World Conference for International Women's Year (1975) in Mexico City, and recently, the Habitat/Human Settlements Conference in Vancouver, Canada. For such conferences—as well as frequently for UN seminars and other meetings—pamphlets and statements have been prepared, presenting, in brief but attractive and dignified manner, the Bahá'í view. In all presentations, the Bahá'í International Community office in New York has followed closely the advice of the Universal House of Justice given to the National Spiritual Assemblies of the United States: "The guidance that Bahá'í institutions offer to mankind 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 not arise, or, if they arise, can be resolved. . . ."

The pamphlets the Bahá'í International Community has published—"The Environment and Human Values - A Bahá'í View," for the Stockholm Conference; "One World, One People - A Bahá'í View," for the World Population Conference; "Divine Law: Source of Human Rights - A Bahá'í View," in observance of the 25th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; "Equality of Men and Women: A New Reality," for the World Conference for International Women's Year; and "Building a Unified Community," for the Habitat Conference—attempt to respond to the world issues with which the UN is concerned, offering not only the Bahá'í approach to life and society, but also suggesting the application of certain Bahá'í principles to specific world problems. These pamphlets are intended not only for the Bahá'í work with the United Nations, but are for use by Bahá'ís in proclaiming and teaching the Faith around the world. They focus on the Bahá'í community as the visible product of Bahá'í teachings and laws, and offer a different way to present the Bahá'í answer to individuals who are looking for a solution to the many pressing world problems. While these concerned people are not necessarily seeking for religion, they are becoming more and more frustrated, as one human solution after another collapses. The words "spiritual" and "moral," in fact, are now heard with increasing frequency in the halls of the United Nations; and many speak of the need for a "change of attitudes," of "values," in order to achieve the full social and economic development of the peoples of the earth.

In the same way, the statements the Bahá'í International Community has presented to the UN, bearing frequently the UN official heading and classification, can
to see the agonies of the world relieved. For many are beginning to see that the greatest "hunger" in the world is, as the Universal House of Justice has told us, "spiritual hunger." Unless people acknowledge and assuage that hunger, problems of starvation and malnutrition can have no lasting answer.

One helpful illustration of the direct connection between goals of the Five Year Plan and the work of the Bahá’í world community at the United Nations is the question of the status of women throughout the world. In its message of May 25, 1975, to National Spiritual Assemblies, the Universal House of Justice wrote: "Although obviously the entire Bahá’í world community is committed to encouraging and stimulating the vital role of women in the Bahá’í community as well as in society at large, the Five Year Plan calls specifically on eighty National Spiritual Assemblies to organize Bahá’í activities for women. In the course of the current year, which has been designated 'International Women's Year' as a worldwide activity of the United Nations, the Bahá’ís, particularly in these eighty national communities, should initiate and implement programs which will stimulate and promote the full and equal participation of women in all aspects of Bahá’í community life, so that through their accomplishments the friends will demonstrate the distinction of the Cause of God in this field of human endeavor."

International Women's Year is past, but we have now entered the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985). How easy for Bahá’í communities therefore to fulfill this goal of the Five Year Plan, while at the same time evidencing interest and cooperation in the work which the UN has been undertaking for over 25 years to improve the life of women on the planet.

As the Bahá’í International Community intensifies its cooperation with the United Nations, it is becoming increasingly clear that people are weary of ideals, no matter how generous and enlightened, and want to see action, to see results. How often the word "implementation" is used by UN delegates. Laws are on the books, but are not implemented; plans of action are formulated, but not carried out. Therefore, what in the long run will count most toward the recognition, prestige and influence of the Bahá’í Faith in UN and international circles, with statesmen, scientists, educators, etc., is the accomplishment of the Bahá’í institutions as they administer progressively larger and larger groups of people, in preparation for the day when a spiritual race of men and women will build a world society and a civilization unlike any that we can now imagine.

If the work of the United Nations—eighty-five percent of it in the economic and social areas—represents a preparation for the Lesser Peace, so does that of the Bahá’í world community. We are building the Most Great Peace; but as the Guardian explained so clearly many years ago, the work Bahá’ís do is also essential for the coming into being of the Lesser Peace: "He (The Guardian) cannot urge you all sufficiently, and through you the... believers, the importance of Bahá’ís realizing that direct, concentrated and efficiently carried out Bahá’í work is not only their supreme duty but the best way they can serve the interests of humanity and hasten the day when at least the Lesser Peace will become a reality. We must always bear in mind that Bahá’u’lláh’s Order is the sovereign remedy, and all other measures, inaugurated by the United Nations or various governments, are in the nature of palliatives, however sound and progressive they may be. We must concentrate in perfecting our characters as individual Bahá’ís and on maturing our still embryonic, and as yet imperfectly understood World Order; on spreading the Message, according to the provisions of the Divine Plan; and on building a tightly-knit, worldwide Bahá’í community. We are relatively few in numbers, and have such a precious, unique and responsible task to carry out, we must concentrate our full forces upon it."

A different view on crime prevention shared

A representative of the Bahá’í International Community attended a session of the UN Committee on Crime Prevention and Control for the first time, to explore the possibility of Bahá’í participation in international efforts to come to grips with growing lawlessness.

Discussion at the fourth session of the committee, held in New York between June 21-July 2, focused on five issues:
- public cooperation in crime prevention and treatment of offenders,
- the need to develop international machinery to handle inmate grievances,
- the need to develop multi-national research programs and cooperation on prevention and treatment,
- the need to develop effective programs to curb interpersonal violence,
- the emergence on the world scene of new types of criminal behavior, such as terrorism, art thefts, and drug traffic.

The fourteen member committee is comprised primarily of jurists, although three members are M.D.’s. The committee chairman, Giuseppe di Gennaro, is an Italian magistrate who in 1975 was kidnapped and held for ransom by terrorists. He personally bargained with his captors and was released after five days.

Joining the committee at this session were observers from eight UN member States, representatives of UN agencies and officials of the UN Secretariat, and representatives of 10 non-governmental organizations, including the Bahá’í International Community.

The Bahá’í representative was able to meet with judges, lawyers, and criminologists from Bolivia, France, Ivory Coast, Nepal, Norway, United Kingdom, Roumania, and the United States. In each encounter it was stressed that programs that proceed from the assumption that man is a spiritual and ethical being will provide the best prospects for solutions, and that Bahá’í communities, through their adherence to the laws of God, are effectively contributing to the elimination of crime in the world.

Most participants expressed interest in the aims and activities of the Bahá’í International Community, and some were aware of the work of Bahá’ís in their own countries.

At this session the committee took three basic actions. It drafted a set of procedures for implementing the Standard Minimum Rules For The Treatment of Prisoners, measure setting forth grievance procedures for prisoners adopted by the General Assembly in 1957. It drafted an international code of conduct for law enforcement officials (a code of conduct for judges, is
Summer school prompts new sense cooperation

The Nineteenth Annual Alaska Bahá'í Summer School held in Juneau from July 31 to August 3 was one of the most successful ever held. Although the number of participants was smaller than in previous years (about 80 registered), an unprecedented feeling of cooperation and love was present throughout the four days.

Along with the regular classes, there were new activities that were especially successful. In the morning before the first class the Southeast Child Education Committee presented a short program called “Early Morning Tidings.” A new attribute of God was discussed and examples on how to use this attribute in the family were given.

One morning as an example of cooperation Kay Larson tried to drive an uncooperative team of huskies around the room. (Her children played the part of the husky dogs.) Through this simple presentation both children and adults could see the value of cooperation and unity in the family or the Bahá'í Community.

At the end of each day everyone came together again to sing with our visiting musicians Red Grammer from Wisconsin and Tom Rockwell from Nevada.

The first class of the day was on administration given by Tod Jones of Wrangell. Tod stressed the need for specific goals to be set by Local Spiritual Assemblies. In addition, Vi Gilbert talked about Assemblies in Kenya, and Georgia Haisler gave some suggestions for consultation.

The class after lunch was entitled “Different Aspects of Teaching” with a different instructor each day. Daniel Lord, a travel teacher who has been teaching in Guam, talked about teaching in “primitive” areas. He advised would-be teachers to gain a knowledge of the culture and way of life of the people they intended to visit.

Auxiliary Board member Moses Hokafonu of Tonga spoke of the need for a simple, direct method that comes from the heart. He asked the Bahá'ís to show their happiness, to be absolutely truthful, and to visit people, especially those sick or in trouble. Red Grammer talked about teaching through musical proclamations. He gave advice to musicians and communities wishing to try this form of teaching in their home communities.

The Child Education Committee had the adults tour the children’s classes where they were shown the highly-successful “Learning Centers.” Many ideas were given that would help in setting up children’s classes in any community. They also told about youth classes and gave an example of a monthly dance sponsored by the youth group in Petersburg.

The last class of the day was devoted to the Central Figures of the Faith with Alice Dudley of Nebraska telling many unfamiliar stories about the Bab, Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi. She gave a very moving account of the beloved Guardian’s funeral which she attended. She told of other historic Bahá'í events that she also had the bounty of witnessing.
The Children's Classes were enjoyed by both parents and children. There were crafts, games and sciences all presented with a particular Baha'i principle in mind. In the afternoon there were recreational activities.

Leo Baldwin taught the well-attended youth classes where various Baha'i subjects were discussed. Many parents commented that teenagers who had previously never been interested in the Writings now were eager to read *Advent of Divine Justice* by Shoghi Effendi. In the afternoon they participated in recreational activities such as bowling, swimming and trips to the museum.

The fifth day was "Fun Day" with Walter Gnagy taking everyone who wanted to go on a geological tour of the Mendenhall Glacier. This was very successful and especially interesting to people from out-of-state. That afternoon there was a picnic and auction with all the proceeds going to the Fund. The youth had set up the picnic themselves and they also were in charge of the auction.

Evenings were devoted to musical proclamations starring Red Grammer. Red has a spectacular voice and composes most of his songs. He set many of the Writings to music accompanied by his superb guitar playing. From five to ten non-Baha'is attended each night. The proclamations were well-publicized and they also gave the Baha'is an opportunity to teach with the team or on their own.

The staff at the FM radio station where Red played one day were so impressed that they recorded the proclamation on their own and played it the following Sunday. After the music, firesides were given by Vi Gilbert, pioneer to Kenya, and Moses Hokafonu, Auxiliary Board member from Tonga.

The Austrian Dawnbreakers get ready for a street concert in Zug, Switzerland.

Teaching in provinces key facet of new plan

The Austrian summer school was held in Kranebitten near Innsbruck from Aug. 7-13, immediately following the International Baha'i Conference in Paris.

The wonderful atmosphere of the school was due in part to the presence of the Hand of the Cause John Robarts and his wife. Also attending were Continental Counselor Anneliese Bopp, the Chairman of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly Firuz Kazemzadeh, and Auxiliary Board members Anna Grossman, and Iradj Pourahimi.

The theme of this year's school was "Our Responsibility in the Divine Plan"; the talks given concentrated mainly on our responsibility to fulfill the goals of the Five Year Plan. The daily talks given by John Robarts on the meaning and rewards of prayer emphasized that the Concourse on High is waiting to come to our aid in fulfilling our goals, should we but ask.

A day of teaching, and a unity feast in the evening, brought nearly twenty contacts in the near-by goal city of Solbad Hall. Further results of the summer school: a twenty minute radio interview with a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Austria; a radio inter-
view with the Dawnbreakers, in which their new album was introduced; and a newspaper article with photos in the Tiroler Tageszeitung, about the Dawnbreakers and the Bahá’í religion.

On September 22 the Dawnbreakers performed at the headquarters of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna. The performance was in memory of Mehrdad Poostchi, a Bahá’í and former agency staff member, who died recently. More than 200 of the 2,500 people invited attended the concert. Most were non-Bahá’ís.

Invitations, explaining the teachings of the Faith, went to the staffs of most United Nations organizations in Vienna, including UNICEF, UNIDO, and IAEA. During the program itself, which lasted more than an hour, the audience was introduced to the beliefs of the Bahá’í Faith.

Performers tour in Europe to proclaim Faith

On the 24th of July, four autos left Vienna, Austria, with 15 Bahá’ís and piles of equipment. Their purpose was to bring the Message of Bahá’u’lláh to people in seven cities of Austria, Italy, West Germany, and Switzerland.

Part of the group was a theater company, The Comet. Their play, Five in the Heavens, done in pantomime, presented the idea of progressive revelation. The rest were members of Dawnbreakers, a Bahá’í musical group whose songs told about Bahá’u’lláh and His Message.

The many anticipated difficulties in the tour did not arise; there were no delays because of equipment at almost daily border crossings, as is normal in Europe.

Not only did the size of the group grow from day to day, as more Bahá’ís joined the project, but the spirit did also. Daily consultations were held to plan and improve the programs.

By the end of the tour, some 22 people had participated, among them, two friends from West Germany, who played wonderful Greek music, and a girl from Italy, who unexpectedly joined the group after the first performance. Other friends accompanied the tour for one or two days at a time.

The performances were shown on television, and the new Dawnbreaker’s album was played on the radio frequently. Several newspapers wrote very positive articles. One said: “...the group astonished through their well-groomed appearance and their disciplined behavior...”, “...no one could withhold their sympathy from the Viennese [group] during the spiritual songs, rather one was gripped and enchanted by this special music...”

At least one open-air meeting was held each day, where information on the Faith was given, and people invited for the evening performance. The results were quite good for this area of Europe; the attendance at the performances was excellent. After the show, discussions on the Faith were held with the visitors.

Bolivia

Unified approach to Quechua sought at unusual conference

A second International Quechua Conference was held in Cochabamba, Bolivia from August 13-15. More than 300 Bolivian Indians, clad in traditional dress, attended the session sponsored by the Continental Board of Counsellors for Latin America. The purpose of this conference, as of the first, held in Peru in 1975, was to explore ways to derive a standard for Quechua literature distributed to Bahá’ís in Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador. There are significant differences in the Quechua spoken in each of the three countries, as the conferees discovered in their first 1975 meeting in Cuzco. As in the earlier gathering, the Quechua believers in Cochabamba compared their distinctive dialects and in extended workshops, discussed ways they might better understand one another. They also studied recently completed translations of Bahá’í literature into Quechua. Quechua until recently, has not had a written form. There has been growing interest throughout the region in stimulating reuse of the ancient Indian language. Peru has now recognized Quechua, as a national language. Bolivia is expected to follow suit.

The workshops served as forums for consultation on expansion and consolidation of the Faith in Indian areas and for presenting information teachers would find necessary in carrying forward their work.

Counsellors Mas’ud Khamsi and Raul Pavon encouraged the Indian friends to take the Message to their kinsmen and neighbors. Their entreaty was enthusiastically applauded, the report of the event said, and many of the friends made a commitment to follow through with the request.

The gathering, held on a campus of the University of Bolivia, was given thorough coverage in local newspapers. Many students and their professors expressed interest in the aims of the Bahá’í Faith as well.

New teaching campaigns bearing fruit in Bolivia

Teaching teams are active in several areas of Bolivia attempting to enlist Indian peoples into the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh. In the tropical lowlands state of Santa Cruz, Bahá’ís for several months have been going on weekends into the countryside to tell about the Faith.

“The receptivity in many places has been amazing,” the Bahá’í News correspondent in Bolivia reports. “Schools and teacher’s colleges have opened their doors wide for the Bahá’ís to come and speak.”

During a trip to Bolivia in April, the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláh Muhájír was encouraged by the enthusiasm with which the Faith was being greeted in certain academic circles.

“He told us we must not relax our efforts for a minute—the people were ready now,”” the report on the project said. “It was from his last trip to Bolivia that the impetus was generated to start developing these special teaching projects.”

A highlight of the Santa Cruz campaign came in mid-Summer when a team of teachers visited the communities of Paso Verde and Paylon, about two hours by car from Santa Cruz.

“There the first seven souls from the Ayoreo tribe embraced the Faith,” the report said. “One of these new believers was practically raised by American missionaries, and spoke excellent English. He said that upon accepting Bahá’u’lláh, he had in one day found the happiness he had been seeking for many, many years. He enthusiastically offered to assist in translating Bahá’í literature into the Ayoreo language.”
"The rural districts of the State of Santa Cruz are showing great promise for the Faith," the report continued, "and the thirst of the masses to hear the new Message from God is most apparent. It is our hope that before long teaching teams will be organized which can remain in communities for days and weeks at a time."

A second area where teaching work is scoring advances is in the State of Loayza, in the La Paz mountain range. "As a preliminary to larger campaigns, teams of two traveling teachers were sent to this district to feel out the response of the people," the teaching report said. The people of the region are mostly Aymara Indians.

When the teams encountered an encouraging receptivity to the claim of Bahá'u'lláh, a larger group was sent into the field to attempt to capitalize on the new-found possibilities.

On September 10 a team of two pioneers and two native traveling teachers set out for Loayza from La Paz. In Caxata, they picked up a third native believer, and in Cairoma, a fourth.

On the 11th an unexpected snow storm forced them back to Cairoma, to find hospitality with one of the families studying the Bahá'í Faith.

"The snow storm was providential," the teaching report said, "for on that day and in that home 13 people declared their Faith in Bahá'u'lláh. As the snow continued to fall, the teaching team deepened their new Bahá'í brothers."

That night a special treat was in store for the people of Cairoma. The team had with it a copy of The Green Light Expedition, a film produced by Rúhíyyih Khánum on a teaching trip to isolated Indian communities along the navigable rivers of northern South America.

"In a town that had no movie theatre and no public amusements, the prospect of viewing a film was like sunshine cutting through the gloom," the report said. "More than 180 townspeople jammed into the local schoolhouse to watch that company of stalwart Bahá'ís foray into a tropical world they never even dreamed existed. A lively question and answer period followed the film, and soon 23 more people embraced the Cause, including two of the school's teachers."

On the following day, September 12, the team continued its journey to Loayza. In each of the towns they entered en route they arranged for a showing of Bahá'í films, each time drawing large and enthusiastic audiences. Films, the team reported, were effective aids in drawing people to meetings who might otherwise be reluctant to learn of a strange new religion in the world. The novelty of cinema was irresistible. People would enter the makeshift theater self-consciously, but would soon relax and begin to enjoy themselves.

Throughout its journey the team found that people were acquainted with the basic teachings of the Bahá'í Faith. Large numbers identified themselves as regular listeners of the Bahá'í radio programs broadcast each morning in Quechua, Aymara, and Spanish from La Paz, some 80 miles away. Having heard the broadcast message, and met Bahá'ís in person, many people were ready to enlist in the Faith. One local official said he was convinced of the authenticity of the Bahá'í teachings and would declare his faith publicly at the next town meeting.

In a neighboring town of Pucarani on September 13, the familiar proclamation format was repeated: Bahá'í films were shown and a discussion period was conducted. "Suddenly, without being asked, 12 people, mostly youth, declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh," the project report said. "It was indeed a heady experience for the team." For the rest of the evening they explained the nature of the Message brought by Bahá'u'lláh to mankind."

By the end of the weekend new localities had been opened to the Faith and 54 new believers had declared their Faith.

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**French language Bahá'í magazine seeks subscribers**

A Bahá'í magazine in French published quarterly under the auspices of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Switzerland is obtainable from La Pensee Bahá'í, P.O. Box 175, 1260 Nyon, Switzerland. It contains inspirational articles, deepening materials, discusses topical subjects in the light of Bahá'í teachings and provides news of general interest of the Bahá'í World Community. La Pensee Bahá'í is distributed throughout the French-speaking Bahá'í world. A two-year subscription cost SF 18 or the equivalent in foreign currency. This magazine is a useful aid in teaching the Faith, since its contents are aimed both at Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís. Back issues are obtainable on a limited scale. Volume II, bound in green artificial leather, contains all issues from 1969 through 1972. For full particulars, write: La Pensee Bahá'í, P.O. Box 175, 1260 Nyon, Switzerland.

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**Stress given to winning Five Year Plan goals**

A national teaching conference was held in Amsterdam August 22 to complement the recent International Teaching Conferences in Helsinki and Paris. More than 250 Dutch believers attended.

Counsellor Adib Taberzadeh was guest speaker for the occasion. He told the friends they could accomplish anything, if they had faith. Faith was the greatest power in the world, he said, and could move mountains for them. A new teaching plan for Holland was unveiled by the newly appointed National Teaching Committee. The emphasis of the plan was to stimulate activity in the provinces through Regional Teaching Committees.

The announcement that the province of Zeeland had been opened by Moroccan pioneer, A. Amrani, was greeted with enthusiastic applause. Zeeland has been a difficult region to open and had long been a goal of the Dutch community.

Not long after this conference the Dutch community was privileged to receive a visit from the Hand of the Cause Dhibru'lláh Khádem and his wife Javidukht. Their visit lasted from August 31 until September 6.

They traveled to the east and west, to the north and south of the country, visiting communities in The Hague, Utrecht, Arnhem, Vlaardingen, Amsterdam and Groningen, inspiring the friends and glad­dening their hearts.

He spoke with great feeling about the beloved Guardian, bringing a new love and understanding of the greatness of Shoghi Effendi. He brought a keener awareness of the role of the Western believers and of the wonders that have taken place throughout the Bahá'í World.
Nairobi: catapult for heroism
Believers in Khurásan, Iran brilliantly achieve objective Five Year Plan

The following message was cabled to Hand of the Cause William Sears, Representative of The Universal House of Justice at the International Teaching Conference in Nairobi, Kenya held October 15-17:

Rejoice share with friends at Nairobi Conference joyous tidings received from cradle Faith friends province Khurásan where mighty events took place early years heroic age have distinction. Every Local Spiritual Assembly even every group that province has formulated its local goals and every individual believer has adopted personal teaching goals. Objective envisaged Five Year Plan brilliantly outstripped. Fervently praying shrines Spiritual Assemblies groups individual believers every land will be inspired follow this example.

Universal House of Justice

Charlotte Linfoot, long-time member National Assembly USA, dies

Share grief passing dearly beloved Charlotte Linfoot. Her tireless selfless service wholehearted commitment teaching and administration of Cause she embraced nearly fifty years ago indelibly inscribed annals American Bahá’í Community. Convey loving sympathy assurance prayers her sister Gladys. Advise hold befitting memorial service Temple.

Universal House of Justice
31 October 1976

Conference Nairobi landmark irresistible march Faith African continent

To the Friends gathered at the International Conference in Nairobi

Beloved Friends,

The flames of enthusiasm which ignited the hearts of the followers and lovers of the Most Great Name in Helsinki, in Anchorage and in Paris are now being kindled in a city which occupies a central and envied position at the very crossroads of the vast African mainland and are destined to illumine its horizons. This Conference marking the imminent approach of the mid-way point of the Five Year Plan which coincides with the anniversary of the birth of the Blessed Báb, will no doubt go down in Bahá’í history as a further landmark in the irresistible march of events which have characterized the impact of the Faith of God upon that continent.

We recall that in addition to Quddús the only other companion of the Báb on His pilgrimage to Mecca was an Ethiopian, and that he and his wife were intimately associated with Him and His household in Shiráz. During the Ministry of Bahá’u’lláh a few of His stalwart disciples reached the north-eastern shores of Africa, and under His direct guidance, announced the glad tidings of the New Day to the people of the Nile, thus opening to the Faith two countries of the African mainland. Soon afterwards, His blessed person approached those shores in the course of His exile to the Holy Land. Still later He voiced His significant utterance in which He “Compared the coloured people to the black pupil of the eye”, through which “the light of the spirit shineth forth.” Just over six years after His ascension, the first member of the black race to embrace His Cause in the West, who was destined to become a disciple of ʻAbdu'l-Bahá, a herald of the Kingdom, and the door through which numberless members of his race were to enter that Kingdom, came on pilgrimage to the Holy Land with the first group of Western friends who arrived in ʻAkka to visit the Centre of the Covenant. This was followed by a steady extension of the teaching work among the black people of North America, and the opening to the Faith, by the end of the Heroic Age, of two more countries in Africa, under the watchful care of th Master, Whose three visits to Egypt have blessed the soil of that Continent. Prior to the conclusion of the first Bahá’í century, the number of countries opened to the Faith had been raised to seven, and the teaching work among the black race in North America had entered a new phase of development through the continuous guidance flowing from the
pen of Shoghi Effendi, who himself traversed the African continent twice from south to north, and who, in the course of his ministry, elevated two members of the black race to the rank of Hand of the Cause, appointed three more believers residing in Africa to that high office, and there raised up four National Spiritual Assemblies.

At the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade the number of countries opened to the Faith had reached twenty-four, including those opened under the aegis of the Two Year African Campaign coordinated by the British National Spiritual Assembly. The Ten Year Plan opened the rest of Africa to the light of God’s Faith, and today we see with joy and pride in that vast continent and its neighbouring islands the establishment of four Boards of Counsellors, thirty-four National Spiritual Assemblies—firm pillars of God’s Administrative Order—and over 2800 Local Spiritual Assemblies, nuclei of a growing Bahá’í society.

Africa, a privileged continent with a past rich in cherished associations, has reached its present stage of growth through countless feats of heroism and dedication. Before us unfolds the vision of the future. “Africa”, the beloved Guardian assures us in one of the letters written on his behalf, “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 peoples accept Bahá’u’lláh will they be blessed, strengthened and protected.”

The realization of this glorious destiny requires that the immediate tasks be worthily discharged, and the pressing challenges and urgent requirements of the Five Year Plan be wholeheartedly and effectively met and satisfied. As the forces of darkness in that part of the world wax fiercer, and the problems facing its peoples and tribes become more critical, the believers in that continent must evince greater cohesion, scale loftier heights of heroism and self-sacrifice and demonstrate higher standards of concerted effort and harmonious development.

During the brief thirty months separating us from the end of the Plan, Africa must once again distinguish itself among its sister continents through a vast increase in the number of its believers, its Local Spiritual Assemblies and its localities opened to the Faith, and by accelerating the process of entry by troops throughout its length and breadth. The deepening of the faith, of the understanding and of the spiritual life of its individual believers must gather greater momentum; the foundations of its existing Local Spiritual Assemblies must be speedily consolidated; the number of local Hazíratu’l-Quds and of local endowments called for in the Plan must be soon acquired; the basis of the recognition that the institutions of the Faith have succeeded in obtaining from the authorities must steadily be broadened; mass communication facilities must be used far more frequently to teach and proclaim the Faith; and the publication and dissemination of the essential literature of the Faith must be given much greater importance. Above all it is imperative that in ever greater measure each individual believer should realize the vital need to subordinate his personal advantages to the over-all welfare of the Cause, to awaken and reinforce his sense of responsibility before God to promote and protect its vital interests at all cost, and to renew his total consecration and dedication to His glorious Faith, so that, himself enkindled with the flames of its holy fire, he may, in concert with his fellow-believers, ignite the light of faith and certitude in the hearts of his family, is tribe, his countrymen and all the peoples of that mighty continent, in preparation for the day when Africa’s major contribution to world civilization will become fully consummated.

We fervently pray at the Holy Shrines that these hopes and aspirations may soon come true, and that the “pure-hearted” and “spiritually receptive” people of Africa may draw ever nearer to the spirit of Bahá’u’lláh, and may become shining examples of self-abnegation, of courage and of love to the supporters of the Most Great Name in every land.

The Universal House of Justice
September 26, 1976

Corrections

For the August, 1976, issue of Bahá’í News:
page four: The photograph in the bottom left corner is Auxiliary Board member Anna Grossman, Germany, not Counselor Dorothy Ferraby.
page eleven: Switzerland has four, not three, official languages. They are French, German, Italian, and Romansh.
page eleven: Switzerland’s Local Spiritual Assembly goal for the Five Year Plan is not 25, but 30, and not 25, plus the formation of a Local Assembly in Lichtenstein.
page twelve: Fritz Semli was not the first Swiss Bahá’í; Joseph Debons, who is mentioned in Bahá’í World, vol. XIII, p. 878 ff., was the first Swiss Bahá’í.
Nairobi: catapult for heroin
A total of 1,363 Baha'is from 61 countries congregated at the International Teaching Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, October 15-17, for the fourth of eight Bahai International Teaching Conferences called for in the Five Year Plan.

Four Hands of the Cause of God attended: William Sears of Canada, the representative of the Universal House of Justice, Rahmatu'llah Muhajir, Enoch Olinga and John Robarts. In addition to the Hands of the Cause were Aziz Yazdi of the International Teaching Center as well as 13 other Counsellors, 17 members of the Auxiliary Board, 58 representatives of National Spiritual Assemblies, 20 Knights of Baha'u'llah, numerous pioneers and 134 children.

Laban Wekesa, Chairman of the National Assembly of Kenya, officially opened the Conference on October 15th and introduced Mr. Sears, who read the message from the Universal House of Justice to the assemblage.

The message of the Universal House of Justice reminded the friends of the Guardian's statement in a letter written on his behalf, about the destiny of Africa, that "To the degree which her peoples accept Baha'u'llah will they be blessed, strengthened and protected," and called upon them to recognize that "As the forces of darkness in that part of the world wax fiercer, and the problems facing its peoples and tribes become more critical, the believers in that continent must evince greater cohesion, scale loftier heights of heroism and self-sacrifice and demonstrate higher standards of concerted effort and harmonious development."

The Conference was then addressed by the Honorable N.W. Munoko, M.P. and Minister for Works, who welcomed the Baha'is to Kenya and spoke warmly of the efforts of the Baha'is to establish peace. "I'd like to commend the local Baha'i community", he said, "for their good work in the promotion of unity and peace, education, equal rights, opportunities and privileges amongst men and women of this country. Promotion of the spiritual well-being of the community is central to the promotion of world peace, unity and prosperity."

Each of the Hands of the Cause addressed the gathering. Mr. Olinga on the theme "Arise and Serve", Mr. Robarts on the Distinctive Character of Baha'i Life." and Dr. Muhajir directed attention to the need to establish strong communities in rural areas.
Mr. Sears stirred the hearts of the friends by reminding them of the responsibility to teach placed upon the Baha'i in the Writings, and of the promised assistance. "Victory can be ours," he said, "for the promise is that if we arise to serve the Cause every deficiency in our lives will disappear."

Recommitment to the goals of the Five Year Plan and strengthening our desire to follow the will of God were central themes of Mr. Robart's address, in which he stressed the effect of prayer on our lives.

At another point in the program Mr. Robarts and Dr. Muhajir spoke on the subject "Life Blood of the Cause".

Two thrilling moments in the Conference were provided by the arrival of three cables from The Universal House of Justice, one describing the unique distinction achieved by the believers in Khurasan province; a second reporting on the status of pioneer settlements at the midway point of the Five Year Plan; and a third—the first received and historically the most significant of the three—announcing the first visit by a Baha'i reigning monarch to the resting place of Shoghi Effendi, which occurred on September 12, 1976, when His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II of Western Samoa, with members of his official party and accompanied by the Hands of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery, Dhiru'llah Khadem and 'Ali Muhammad Varqí, representatives of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom and other Baha'i friends, proceeded to the Great Northern London Cemetery, New Southgate and offered prayers.

Two women were among those who gave major addresses at the Conference—Thelma Khelgati of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Western Africa, who spoke on "Baha'i Family Life", and Catherine Mboya, a distinguished Kenyan Baha'i, whose remarks concerned the Baha'i understanding of the emancipation of women and their role in Baha'i community life.

Throughout the conference musical interludes were provided by singing groups, musicians and dancers from various parts of Kenya under the direction of Auxiliary Board member Festus Shayo.

The conference closed with an address by Mr. Sears, who challenged the friends to scale loftier heights of service.

A small measure of the success of the Conference may be gleaned from a cable received at the World Center which stated that outstanding publicity and media coverage had been obtained, including a special Baha'i supplement in a local newspaper; that more than 200 volunteers had arisen for pioneering and teaching; that generous contributions had been pledged and all in attendance and affirmed their resolve to hasten the achievement of the goals of the Five Year Plan.
Top row, left to right: 'Azíz Yazdi, Continental Counsellor, serves at the International Teaching Center in Haifa; The Bombas, a non-Bahá’í group from Kenya, entertained at a public meeting. Bottom row, left to right: On the evening of October 14 the Hand of the Cause William Sears appeared for 16 minutes on the "Voice of Kenya", a leading national program; A press luncheon was held at the Norfolk Hotel on October 14.
The seventh of eight International Teaching Conferences will be held at Bahia, Brazil, January 28-30, 1977. Bahia has many first-class hotels, the one shown here, overlooking one of Bahia’s beautiful beaches.

The friends gather around Hand of the Cause Rahmat’ulláh Muhájír during a session break.
New York Conference called by Continental Board of Counsellors

By Auxiliary Board Member D. Thelma Jackson

On the weekend of October 15-17 a conference was held in New York City with about 400 believers from the surrounding area, including a busload from Washington D.C., in attendance. The conference had been called by the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Protection and Propogation of the Faith in North America, most efficiently coordinated by Auxiliary Board member Javiduukht Khádem who had recently been assigned the State of New York as a part of her area, and graciously hosted by the Spiritual Assembly of New York City. This was to be the first such conference held in the newly acquired Bahá'í Center of New York City. The meetings enjoyed the distinguished presence of the Hand of the Cause of God Mr. Dhikru’lláh Khádem and Counsellor Edna True. Its theme: "1979 and Our Destiny".

Preceding the opening of the conference was a Unity Day Feast on Friday evening, at which Khádem spoke to the friends, inspiring them with his love and knowledge.

The Saturday morning sessions were opened with a warm welcome from a representative of the New York City Assembly, and greetings from the Hand of the Cause and the Counsellor. "How happy I am to be in this beautiful Center in the city of the Covenant, so blessed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. We are all serving one important purpose, serving the threshold of Bahá'u'lláh," were among the opening remarks of Mr. Khádem. Miss True recalled the great bounties bestowed upon New York in the repeated visits of the beloved Master during his travels in America, and added, "We hope that the fragrance of His presence will permeate each session of this Conference and go with us as we return to our homes and our responsibilities in the Five Year Plan."

Mrs. Khádem stated that the purpose of the conference was to energize the believers so that they may find their abilities and give their talents to the Cause and look to the harvest in 1979. In fulfilling the Five Year Plan objectives given to the United States Community by The Universal House of Justice, New York State has been designated by our National Spiritual Assembly as one of the states visited by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in which intensive teaching and consolidation efforts are to be carried out "designed to attract great numbers to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh thereby initiating a process leading to the entry into the Faith by troops alluded to by the Master." In addition to very ably and inspiring chairing the entire conference, Mrs. Khádem spoke in one of the sessions on "The Golden Chain, 1844-1979, Our Destiny," eloquently describing the Covenant of God as the golden chain connecting five stages in the unfoldment of the Faith, beginning with the Blessed Báb, concluding with the establishment of The Universal House of Justice, and now continuing in the execution of the Five Year Plan which terminates in 1979.

Also among those participating in the program were Auxiliary Board members Jane Faily, D. Thelma Jackson and Albert James, whose addresses covered the topics "The Bounties of God for Our Age," "Teaching and Pioneering," "The Universal House of Justice and Its By-Laws," "Enrollment - Its Quality," and "'Abdu'l-Bahá."

William Foster, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, spoke of "Translation of Love into Action," sharing his reminiscences of fifty-seven days in Haifa with the Guardian and his pioneering effort in Africa. As a result of reading a message from Shoghi Effendi addressed to the American believers, Mr. Foster had arisen to pioneer to Africa. His stories were moving and touched the heart.

The Saturday evening program was "An Evening with the Hand of the Cause and Counsellor." It began with Miss True speaking briefly to the gathering about the beloved Master. She pointed out that although it was an indescribable experience to actually be in His presence, the believers had no real conception of the true significance and importance of His visit to America, at which time "seeds of undreamt-of potentialities" had been sown in the fertile fields of the Western world. Mr. Khádem spoke of the "Mystery of Sacrifice", touching the hearts with his stories of the lives that had been given and suffering endured by the early martyrs of the Faith. He explained the mystery of sacrifice as the key for the rise and triumph of all religions, and that today, although of a different kind, Bahá'ís must be ready to sacrifice for the success of the Five Year Plan and the progress of the Faith.

Mr. Khádem said to the listeners that it is easy for us to say we love Bahá'u'lláh, but in two-and-one-half years we must complete the Plan and demonstrate our love for Bahá'u'lláh through sacrifice.

Nancy Mondschein, representing the Regional Teaching Committee of New York, began the last session of the conference with a discussion of their goals. She proceeded to give an enthusiastic and optimistic report on the progress of goals for New York, illustrating her remarks with a map.

During the last session, a question and answer period was held with the Hand of the Cause and the Counsellor, followed by some of the beautiful music which had run throughout the sessions. The music had been outstanding in its quality and selection, a definite contribution to the spirit of the conference.

The conference came to a close with the loving remarks of Mr. Khádem urging the friends to teach in response to Bahá'u'lláh's will.
The education of an editor:

Albert Windust and Star of the West

First of two parts

by Bruce Whitmore
He watched the twig somersaulting through the air as his collie ran beneath with single-minded determination. As the stick fell to the ground and was seized victoriously, the boy gazed about the vast openness surrounding his home. How he longed to have friends to play with and a real school to attend! As he threw the stick again he wondered about what he would do when he grew up. Certainly neither he nor any of his family had any inkling that someday an overwhelming diversity of talents would cause people to regard him as the remarkable Albert Windust.

Albert's father, Thomas, left his native land for America in 1871. New York was a marvelous place, but he found himself fascinated by the numerous stories of the Great Fire which had just reduced Chicago to ashes. A printer by trade, Thomas recognized that the rebuilding of the city would offer many employment opportunities and he immediately travelled westward.

In Chicago less than a year later he fell in love and married a young school teacher, Sarah Sheffield. On March 28, 1874, Sarah gave birth to twins, but one was still-born. The surviving baby was baptized Albert Robert Windust.

When Albert was still quite young the family moved into a new development south of Chicago, known as Woodlawn. This area was later used for part of the World's Columbian Exposition and today is the site of the University of Chicago campus.

Albert was a sickly child and Sarah constantly fretted about his health. She refused to permit his entrance into school, undertaking the task of education herself. With no playmates in the immediate neighborhood, young Albert's greatest moments of joy came from roaming the nearby woods and prairies accompanied by his collie. Undoubtedly it was this frequent intimacy with nature, as well as the influence of his father's fondness for gardening, that nurtured and expanded his life-long love of the outdoors and his sensitivity toward all things of beauty.

In 1885 Sarah became quite ill and it was decided at last to send Albert to school. Despite her poor health, Sarah, who was a deeply religious woman and a devout church worker, campaigned early in 1886 for the building of a community church and is accredited with founding the Christ Episcopal Church of Woodlawn. Albert's driving passion of never being satisfied with merely a superficial understanding of anything, an attitude toward life that contributed significantly to the development of the Faith in this country in later years, stemmed from Sarah's strong religious convictions and the extensive religious training she gave him.

Having attended the 5th grade and two-thirds of the 6th, Albert's life changed dramatically as Sarah's health continued to deteriorate. Albert's tender nature coupled with his youth must have made this ordeal very painful, possibly so painful that when he recorded each devastating event in his small diary only simple statements could be managed:

Jan. 4, 1887 - Mamma had a cancer removed.
March 22, 1887 - Moved to Evergreen Park.
April 8, 1887 - Mamma had a cancer removed.
May 11, 1887 - Mamma had 3 cancers removed.
Nov. 19, 1887 - Mamma died.
Fri. March 16, 1888 - Bob died (my dog).
Mon. May 28, 1888 - Went to work.¹

 Barely fourteen years of age, his formal education of less than two years at an end, Albert became an apprentice in the printing firm where his father worked. He spent the next three years living with Mr. Frank Pearson and his family. Music was a focal point in the lifestyle of that home since Mr. Pearson was both a well-known organist and the librarian of the noted Apollo Music Club of Chicago. Albert often helped Mr. Pearson with his librarian duties; one of his favorite chores was placing the sheet music on the singer's chairs before a performance. This environment spawned an enduring love for classical music. One particularly memorable occasion for Albert was the dedication of the Auditorium Theater in Chicago when Benjamin Harrison, then President of the United States, was the guest of honor. Another was the dedication of the World's Columbian Exposition for which the "Apollo Club constituted the nucleus of the large Exposition Chorus."² An account of the events surrounding that performance is found in Stephen Longstreet's book, *Chicago - 1860-1919*:

The Columbian Exposition, which brought news of the Bahá'í Revelation to the Western Hemisphere, opened May 1, 1893. The cornerstone for the House of Worship in Wilmette was laid May 1, 1912 exactly 19 years later. The superstructure of the Temple was completed May 1, 1931, at the end of a second 19 year period.

¹

²

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The conventional idea of Christians the world over is that Christianity is true, all other religions false. . . You know better, and can testify that there may be friendship instead of antagonism between religion and religion." This sentiment was expressed at the closing of the Congress of Religions, at which the name of Bahá'u'lláh was first heard in America.

Seven thousand men worked on the project. In 1891 alone eighteen were killed, seven hundred injured in accidents. But the conceptual dream went on. Not everything was ready on Dedication Day. The grounds were still muddy, some of the bridges were still temporary and rickety. But there were on hand, count them, five thousand singers, and enough visitors to fill twenty-five acres. The ticket holders, thirty thousand of them, many of them made it to see what their money had bought. Gate crashers came in droves. Some men and boys were hanging from the iron trusses, climbing higher. Theodore Thomas led the fair band in John K. Paine's "Columbian March." The singers launched into Haydn's "The Heaven's Are Telling," then the "Hallelujah Chorus" rang out in hysterical ecstasy its nonstoic acceptance of morality.

It was a day before public-address systems and microphones. Miss Harriet Monroe's "Columbian Ode" was hardly heard by anyone. Levi P. Morton (few can identify him today; he was the Vice-President of the United States) muttered with dignity and compassion, "I dedicate these buildings to humanity."

This famous Exposition, at which the existence of Bahá'u'lláh's Message was announced to the western world, officially opened on May 1, 1893, exactly nineteen years prior to May 1, 1912, when the Master placed a historic stone in a small hole a few miles to the north; an amazing coincidence considering that in another nineteen years, on May 1, 1931, the Temple's superstructure was officially completed.

It was quite common for Chicago's citizens to interact with the Exposition; nonetheless, Albert's involvements, considering the Exposition served as the platform for the formal introduction to America of the Faith he was to later espouse, are quite interesting. Not only did he participate in the musical presentations, but it was at this time that his talents as an artist began to unfold. He frequently carried a sketching pad, drawing many of the major buildings and attractions.

One such building was the Memorial Art Palace. Amid the material splendor and concurrent chaos and moral degredation that characterized most of the Exposition, this building was the scene of the celebrated Congress of Religions, witnessing not only the famed statement of the Reverend Doctor Henry H. Jessup concerning the "Persian sage—the Babi saint, Beha Allah," but also a remarkable demonstration of the unity of mankind which is the pivot of the Bahá'í Revelation. Never before had such diverse religious elements assembled to share ideas and philosophies. The harmony and goodwill was attested to by the following statements, made at the closing of this historic gathering:

By this parliament the city of Chicago has placed herself far away above all the cities of the earth. In this school you have learned what no other town or city in the world yet knows. The conventional idea of religion which obtains among Christians the world over is that Christianity is true, all other religions false. . . You know better, and with clear light and strong assurance can testify that there may be friendship instead of antagonism between religion and religion, that so surely as God is our common Father, our hearts alike have yearned for Him, and our souls in devoutest moods have caught whispers of grace dropped from His throne.

Another statement:

Fathers of the contemplative East; sons of the executive West—behold how good and how
pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. The New Jerusalem, the city of God, is descending, heaven and earth chanting the eternal hallelujah chorus.  

Only the mystery and power of God could have created such an atmosphere for the triumphant, albeit unrecognized, entry of our Faith into this land! Years later Albert took art lessons at the very building, renamed the Chicago Art Institute. In 1920 that same building, one of only two not demolished at the end of the Exposition, housed Louis Bourgeois' huge model of the House of Worship and witnessed 34,000 people stand in long lines to view the display. By 1894 the long hours of work and the continuing tendency to strive for perfection caused Albert's health to deteriorate so badly that Thomas sent him to Canada to recuperate. Throughout the summer Albert was lost to nature, drawing and painting numerous scenes of the rolling hills which surrounded him.

Upon returning to Chicago he joined another printing company, working as a typesetter. Here his knowledge of the contemporary world rapidly expanded, for every magazine article and book he helped assemble was read and re-read, the meanings of words not understood were learned and ideas thoroughly grasped. Through new acquaintanceships he also began preparing artwork for commercial advertisements and illustrating articles and stories, many by well-known authors of that time, such as Opie Read and H. Ryder Haggard.

Albert had joined the Methodist Church in 1892 and had been initially active in its affairs. However, his developing comprehension of the reality of existence, coupled with his inquisitive and questioning nature, soon placed him at odds with several of the Church's theological beliefs. His search for religious truth began.

Unfortunately there is no indication of what sects or movements were explored by Albert. We do know, however, that his health was still a problem and that he journeyed to North Carolina to avoid the winter of 1897. It was summer before he returned and secured work at another printing firm. One of his fellow workers was Arthur Agnew and slowly a friendship was kindled between the two that endured to their last days. It was Mr. Agnew who first told Albert of the Faith and encouraged him to attend a meeting.

Albert often recounted how, after departing from the classes conducted by Mr. Paul K. Dealy, he would walk home oblivious to time and space, filled with "the amazement, shock and happiness of that revelation."  

. . . I realized that I was confronted with the most important decision of my life. Either this

One of Albert's hobbies for much of his life was sketching the scenes of life around him. The three drawings shown here were done during his youth. On facing page, "Going for mail," was done on a visit to North Carolina in 1897, when Albert was 23 years old. "Street corner in New Berne, N.C.," left, was done during the same visit. "Germany Bldg.," right, was one of a series of sketches done at the Columbian Exposition in 1893.

In 1920, 34,000 visited Chicago's Art Institute to see a model of the House of Worship done by Bourgeois. Albert, with Charles Loas, drafted the petition to the Master seeking permission to build the Temple.
Before the turn of the century, Albert, Thornton Chase, Charles Greenleaf and other believers met for lunch at Kimball’s Restaurant, where business associates would join them to discuss the Bahá’í Faith.

was the truth or it was the most terrible untruth ever perpetrated upon the human race. It did not take long to make the decision... 8

Enamored with the ideals proclaimed by the Faith, Albert attempted to share his discovery with and seek the opinion of many of his friends, particularly those in his congregation. When the minister learned what was happening he prepared a harsh sermon on believing in and following false gods. Albert must have been greatly distressed sitting there "while the sermon thundered around his ears;" but suddenly his mind was flooded with the words of God to Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee." 19 The decision was made!

Albert did not immediately sever all ties with the church, probably because the woman he loved, Lucy Rutter Roberts, was also a Methodist. It was the same minister who gave the sermon on false gods that married Albert and Lucy on September 20, 1900, possibly, as Albert’s daughter Isabelle suggested, "... to see that my mother was not getting off on the wrong foot." If so, the minister’s plan failed. Shortly after her marriage Lucy accepted Bahá’u’lláh.

The Faith quickly became the pivot of Albert’s life and many lasting friendships were made. Several of the Bahá’ís men worked near the print shop and each day Albert would accompany Arthur to meet Thornton Chase, Charles Greenleaf, Goerge Lesch and others at Kimball’s Restaurant, where a large table was always set aside for them. Friends and business associates would often join them and, with Mr. Chase at the head of the table, the topic of discussion would always be the Bahá’í Faith. Several men accepted the Cause as a result of these fireside luncheons.

Chicago’s first Bahá’í institution (initially called the House of Justice, then the House of Spirituality and, finally, several years later, the Local Spiritual Assembly) was formed on September 15, 1900. Although not elected to it initially, Albert found himself a member of the institution early in 1902. From that point on, his life was constantly directed toward serving the Faith.

It was Albert who, on behalf of the House of Spirituality, was in communication with the Bahá’ís of ‘Ishqábád, receiving their letter describing the initial stage of construction of the first Bahá’í House of Worship.

It was Albert who with Charles loas (father of Leroy loas, noted secretary of the Guardian for many years), drafted the House of Spirituality’s petition asking ‘Abdu’ll-Bahá’s permission for the erection of the great American House of Worship.

It was Albert who located one of the three sites considered for the House of Worship, a beautiful tract of land just south of Jackson Park, sight of the World’s Columbian Exposition.

It was Albert who helped form the Bahá’í Publishing Society and who was responsible for the first English printing of The Hidden Words, and for the first English prayer book, known as Daily Communes.

It was Albert who, on behalf of the House of Spirituality, began collecting and preserving the Master’s Tablets, founding what would later become the Bahá’í National Archives where hundreds of thousands of precious documents are stored today.

And it was Albert who later assembled and produced those same Tablets into the three volumes of Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the first volume of the set was in March, 1909. All of these contributions, however, pale when compared to the one achievement that will affix Albert’s name in Bahá’í history for all time: the creation of Star of the West.

Two events of 1909 led to the establishment of the magazine. The first was a group of Chicago Bahá’ís, among them Albert, Arthur Agnew, Mary Lesch, Thornton Chase, Gertrude Buikema and Carl Scheffler, became excited by a proposal of Mirzá Ahmad Sohráb that a magazine entitled The East and the West be published. This magazine would contain sections in both English and Persian, and would be devoted to articles which would help proclaim Bahá’u’lláh’s Message. The idea failed when several interested individuals withdrew from the project.

The second event was the cessation, in the summer of 1909, of a news bulletin produced by the New York Board (forerunner of the Local Spiritual Assembly) and distributed to other communities. Its publication was apparently erratic and the news it carried mostly oriented to New York. Albert, concerned by the demise of the “Bulletin”, decided that, rather than a magazine like Sohráb proposed, some type of professional publication was needed for the Bahá’ís “... to read what people are doing—not thinking.” 12 He realized that if such a magazine was to be founded, it would be only through his efforts.

He found one ally, Gertrude Buikema. Not only was she enthusiastic about his idea, but, as an experienced secretary and as the principal Mid-West correspondent for the defunct “Bulletin”, she possessed the very capabilities needed to complement Albert’s skills.

He wrote the New York Board about the idea, stating he had no intention of proceeding if the “Bulletin” was to be reissued, but pointing out to them that “... we need a reliable medium of information now.” 13 Four agonizing months passed with no decision forthcoming. Finally, on February 19, 1910, an affirmation was received. Albert was ready. He immediately formed a legal partnership...
with Gertrude and filed for the necessary postal permits, etc. The publishing company he worked for did not print small orders, so he located two brothers, John and William Grier, who were opening a small print shop. On March 6th he wrote to Mountfort Mills:

"Your telegram so kindly sent, announcing the hearty cooperation of the New York Board, was received and acted upon at once. The first issue of the "Baha'i News" is in the hands of the printers and we expect to issue it within ten days. We thoroughly appreciate the hearty support of your Body and trust that the "News" will be well worthy of that endorsement."

The magazine made its debut on Naw-Ruz, 1910. The first page of the nascent publication bore a picture of the Purest Branch" in tombstone and by the hand-event of God, Peace, to the bonds in the bondsmen, the following excerpt from the "Life and Teachings of Abbas Effendi,

"Know ye that God will never suffer a branch of His Body to be cut off from the stem. If He be pleased to give an effect to an instrument that God will soon remove its impurity as in the garden of Baha'u'llah. Blessed God! Blessed, Most Bountiful is He. Amen.

Albert wrote the following explanation of the magazine in the first issue:

The need for a Baha'i News Service is apparent to those who are in touch with the progress of the Baha'i Movement throughout the Occident. To meet this need this humble publication has stepped forth from non-existence into the court of existence. Whether it shall remain and grow into a distinct department of service in this Glorious Day, we cannot foretell, knowing that "God doeth whatsoever He willeth." It is the purpose of those undertaking the initial step to do all within their power to make it a success, but the cooperation of all is needed that this Service may extend unto all . . .

We trust the Baha'i News will be a messenger of peace, in accord with the spirit of the Cause it hopes to serve. To this end its editors respectfully request that contributors of news endeavor to follow the Biblical injunction "to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."15

This new medium of communication played a significant role in advancing the Temple project to the stage where Foundation Hall could be built in 1921-22. The magazine frequently carried Tablets from the Master about the Temple and other subjects, and printed Temple financial and progress reports. The fourth issue, the largest published that first year, was devoted exclusively to the Temple Unity Convention. The practice of extensively reviewing the conventions continued for thirteen years, providing a marvelous chronicle of the development of Baha'i administration during that period.
Around the World

Alaska

National Teaching Conference: Alaska

Approximately 90 Bahá’ís from many parts of Alaska convened in Fairbanks October 1-3 for the National Teaching Conference. This was the third such conference called for in the Five Year Plan.

The conference was distinguished by wide participation of Bahá’ís from all age groups including those new to the Faith as well as long-time believers.

Jetta Brewer, representing the National Spiritual Assembly, reviewed the goals set by the National Assembly for the year.

The first goal is to form 11 Local Spiritual Assemblies, open 22 new localities, incorporate 3 more Local Assemblies and acquire one more local Bahá’í Center. Further tasks to be accomplished include translations, expanding and continued use of radio and television, further travel teaching internationally and on the home front. The goals concerning youth and children were reviewed. Personal goals were discussed, such as deepening in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, holding family prayers and striving to make the 19 Day Feast a joyous occasion.

Marshall Murphy presented a report from the International Travel Teaching and Pioneering Committee. He stressed the importance of working through the institutions when planning a teaching trip.

Marian Johnson reported on the state of affairs in the Bahá’í Information Office. Following the report several one-minute television ads prepared at the World Center were shown.

John Kolsto, chairman of the National Assembly, spoke on “The Role of the Bahá’í in Today’s World”. Today’s world problems are a result of an excess of materialism, he said. He went on to say that the job of Bahá’ís is to spread the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh. He said Bahá’ís can “prop up the old house” or use the blueprint given to us to “build a new house”. He said only we have the plan for a New World Order.

Ray Hudson, Auxiliary Board member, reviewed the new book High Endeavors. He explained the book’s uniqueness to Alaska, and its value as a memento of direct contact with the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi.

Herb Johnson managed the fund during the conference. By the end, over $1300 had been given, with over 90 per cent participation.

Canada

Conference stresses teaching native believers Arctic

The Inuit are a native people of the Arctic regions of Alaska and Canada. Inuit Bahá’ís assembled to discuss methods of teaching native peoples at the Inuit Policy Conference which was held in Inuvik, North West Territories, Canada, July 15-20, Jameson Bond, representative of the National Spiritual Assembly, and Ted Anderson, Auxiliary Board member, were present.

The friends spoke of their desire to find a dignified way to bring the Faith to the attention of their families and friends. They recognized the importance of Feasts in unifying and strengthening their communities. They realized the need for widening the avenues of communication between the Alaskan Inuit Bahá’ís and those of Canada, and of increasing the relationship between the northern and southern Bahá’ís of Canada. It was felt that a manual compiled by Bahá’ís living in isolated settlements could provide pioneers to the North with encouragement, hints on teaching and even recipes.

The conference received messages of encouragement from the National Assembly, the National Arctic Teaching Committee, and the love of the Hands of the Cause of God conveyed through William Sears.

Ecuador

International Bahá’í School Scheduled

At the request of The Universal House of Justice, an International Bahá’í School will be held in Cuenca, Ecuador, February 16-21, 1977, following the International Conferences in Brazil and Mexico.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador has designated the Bahá’í Community of Cuenca as host of this event and to handle all correspondence and arrangements in their behalf.

The cost for the duration of the school is 16 U.S. dollars, which includes meals and room on the premises of the Seminary of Monay where the school will be held.

Please advise the National Assembly of Ecuador by January 15, 1977, how many of the friends from your community will attend the school. The address is: Asamblea Espiritual Nacional de Los Bahá’ís del Ecuador, Apartado 2507, Quito, Ecuador.

El Salvador

Bahá’ís awarded United Nations Peace Medal

The Bahá’í Community of El Salvador has been awarded the United Nations Peace Medal by the United Nations Information Center for Central America and Panama for their help in publicizing the United Nation’s programs and activities in El Salvador.

In a special ceremony on July 21 at the Regional United Nations Office in San Salvador, Mrs. Dee de Lamb accepted the medal in the name of the Bahá’í Community. She is the Bahá’í representative at the United Nations Office in San Salvador. Special words of appreciation were directed to the Bahá’í Community by the director of the United Nations Office, Vincent M. Piola.

The ceremony was given considerable press and television coverage.

India

United Nations Day observed in Panchgani

The Bahá’í Youth Community of Panchgani gave support to the endeavors of the United Nations through a series of presentations at five Panchgani high schools, as well as at an open community meeting at the Bahá’í Center on October 24. The programs were in honor of the thirty-first anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

The United Nations currently has a membership of 144 nations and is involved in numerous efforts to further world peace and international cooperation. The Bahá’í International Community is a non-
governmental representative at the United Nations and has consultative powers.

The chief speaker at each of the Panchgani programs was Marc Vloebergh, a Bahá'í pioneer from Belgium and a former United Nations worker in Africa, Italy and Turkey.

In his talks, Mr. Vloebergh explained the organization and the function of the United Nations as well as its history. He explained that many of the goals and ideals of the United Nations such as international cooperation, world language, disarmament, and an international army can be traced back more than 100 years to Bahá'u'lláh's Letters to Kings, in particular the letter to Queen Victoria of Great Britain.

Approximately 75 persons attended the celebration at the Bahá'í Center on October 24, of whom roughly 25 were non-Bahá'ís.

Hawaii

Bahá'í float takes first prize

The Bahá'í float in the 1976 Aloha Week Parade in Honolulu took first place in the non-commercial category. Each year in October, Hawaii observes and celebrates Aloha Week to recall the days of Old Hawaii when it was ruled by kings and queens.

The theme of the parade this year was: The 50th Star... Hawaii's Contribution to the United States in Social, Culture and Economy.

The Bahá'í float was made of some 40,000 flowers. Approximately 200 Bahá'ís participated to build the float. The Bahá'ís worked the entire night before the parade to put on the final touches.

At one end of the float was a large five-pointed star representing the state of Hawaii, inside of which rotated a nine-pointed star representing the Bahá'í Faith. On this star was the number '75', which is how many years the Bahá'í Faith has been in Hawaii. At the front of the float a royal crown symbolized Old Hawaii and its contribution. On the sides of the float in a floral design was the Bahá'í theme: Unity in Diversity. The ideas of many Bahá'ís is contributed to the overall design of the float.

The float carried nine Bahá'ís from Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, Filipino, Pacific Islander, Caucasian and other backgrounds.

The Bahá'í float was seen by thousands of people who lined the parade route, and by hundreds of thousands more over local television. The parade was filmed for showing nationwide in the United States on Thanksgiving Day and for showing in Japan. Jack Lord, star of the Hawaii Five-O television series, made several television spots to promote the Thanksgiving Day showing, one of which was made in front of the Bahá'í float.

This is the tenth year that the Bahá'ís have entered a float in the Aloha Week Parade. They have won prizes nine times.
Around the World

Mexico

Presentation to Governor of Yucatan

Mrs. Carmen de Burafato of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Central America presenting The Proclamation of Baha'u'llah to the Governor of Yucatan, Dr. Francisco Luna Kan, September, 1976.

New Zealand

Bahá'ís participate in religion fair

The Bahá'í Faith was the only non-Christian organization which participated in a religion fair called Interact '76 in Dunedin on August 1. Two thousand people of different races and backgrounds attended the fair.

The Bahá'í booth was one of sixteen arranged around the town hall. Its theme, the Oneness of Religion and Progressive Revelation, promoted lively discussions. The booth was filmed for a television news item.

Philippines

Bahá'ís in Philippines for expansive teaching campaigns

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Philippines has issued an appeal for all Bahá'ís in the Philippines to attend teacher-training institutes, or "spiritualization courses" in various parts of the country to prepare for a mass teaching campaign which will be launched at the Post-Hong Kong Conference held December 3-5.

The mass teaching campaign planned by the National Assembly in conjunction with the Continental Board of Counsellors and their Auxiliary Board will cover the entire island of the Philippines.

It is expected that more than one hundred Bahá'ís will have attended the institutes by December. These Bahá'ís will provide the manpower for the teaching campaign.

Switzerland

National Teaching Conference: Switzerland

Following the Paris International Conference, approximately 200 friends proceeded to the goal city of Lenzberg to the very suburb of Gothenberg (Partille) where the conference was held.

Baha'is in Sweden had the privilege to welcome Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery to the National Teaching Conference in Gothenburg held July 16-18. The highlight of this conference was the formation of a Local Spiritual Assembly in

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attend the National Teaching Conference. Seventeen countries were represented at the conference which lasted August 9-15.

Hand of the Cause of God Adelbert Mühlschlegel, Jan Semple, member of The Universal House of Justice, Counsellors Adib Taherzadeh and Manuchehr Salmanpur, and Dr. Firooz Kazemzadeh, member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, gave reports from the two European International Conferences in Helsinki and Paris, and from the World Center.

Bahá’ís from the United States who had been at the International Teaching Conference in Paris and were on tour joined the conference in Lenzberg on the second day.

At the end of the National Teaching Conference, summer school began. Hand of the Cause Mr. Khadem attended a portion of the school. He explained the significance of the Administrative Order on the individual and collective points of view. Most of the summer school sessions were devoted to the history of the Faith and its first teachers.

Every afternoon at summer school teams went to the cities of Aarau, Dietikon and Lenzberg. They held meetings at night, spoke to people, distributed pamphlets and announced with posters a public conference to be held at the Castle of Lenzberg.

At the conference, the youth arranged prayers and songs. Joel Caverly spoke about Bahá’í history, and the significance of the times in which we live.

Peter Coward highlighted the spiritual principles of the Bahá’í Faith, stating truthfulness to be the most fundamental.

Dr. Harry Collymore talked about the spiritual intentions of Bahá’í administration in organizing the world. He said institutions serve as an organic framework through which the Spirit will flow throughout the world and result in changes for the better in world conditions. He related a conversation he had with a Hand of the Cause of God while he was on Pilgrimage, to the effect that Local Spiritual Assemblies must be strengthened.

Dr. Saeed Khadem, treasurer of the National Spiritual Assembly, gave a brief financial report and read from the Writings that only Bahá’í is may contribute to the Fund. He said that local donations received to August 22 from Rid ván were the greatest amount ever given during that period. He concluded by saying that the unity in the Faith is expressed by the universality of participation and the regularity of contribution.

Auxiliary Board member Lawrence Coward said all members of institutions should teach. He said Bahá’í should pray and teach every day.

Helena Frank spoke about homefront pioneering, and Balram Sarju, from Guyana, spoke about travel teaching. He said ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is our example, having taught the Message of Bahá’í llah from East to West.

Nikou Amarsingh talked about child education. She said children could not begin learning prayers or giving to the Fund too early, and that they should be included in 19 Day Feast.

Trinidad and Tobago

National Teaching Conference: Trinidad and Tobago

Approximately 75 friends from all five units of Trinidad and Tobago attended the National Teaching Conference in Perseverence Village, Couva, Trinidad, on August 22.

Goals of the Five Year Plan were presented, showing progress to date. Pledges toward fulfilling the goals of the Plan were requested. Nineteen pledges were received. Approximately $54 was contributed to the National Fund, $37 for the Seat of The Universal House of Justice, and materials in the amount of $132.50 were sold.

Approximately three persons stayed after the conference for the village teaching activity. They invited those they met to the Community Center that night for a public meeting.

Uganda

Silver Jubilee concludes with a U.N. Day observance

Twenty-five years ago the Bahá’í Faith reached Uganda. International teachers Musa and Samiheh Banání, Ali and Violette Nakhjavani and daughter Bahiyih, and Philip Hainsworth arrived on August 2, 1951. They brought the glad tidings that the Promised One of all ages had come. Today the fruits of His Light are seen in Uganda as Bahá’í strive to follow the teachings that God is one, mankind is one and all religions are one.

The Silver Jubilee Celebration, commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Bahá’í Faith in Uganda, concluded with a program in observance of United Nations Day, October 24. On that day, the Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga gathered with high-ranking official guests, believers who had come from the villages of Buso, Bukeki, and Teso; Bahá’í friends from the Kampala community, youth and many children in the Mother Temple of Africa for prayers for unity.

After a worship service, Mr. Olinga led the principal guest, Kwafe Apeadu, from Ghana, the resident representative of the United Nations, to the beautifully decorated garden in the shadow of the House of Worship.

In an inspiring talk, Mr. Olinga stressed that human happiness stems from spiritual happiness, which is developed through prayerful service to God and mankind.

Mr. Apeadu spoke of the United Nations charter: of striving for world peace universal human rights and full economic and social development for all peoples. He mentioned the relationship of the Bahá’í International Community with the United Nations and praised the Bahá’í long-standing support in these efforts.

Next, Dr. Hartwell emphasized the international aspect of the Bahá’í Faith in its representation of over 1600 ethnic groups living in over 70,000 localities in 330 countries and territories of the world.

The closing prayer was recited in Asçot, after the presentation of Bahá’í llah on the New Era to Mr. Apeadu.

The guests were then escorted by members of the National Spiritual Assembly and the friends to the Haziratu’l-Quds, where they viewed a display of Bahá’í books and a history of the Faith over 25 years in pictures and posters.

In sunshine the children lined the flower-bedecked walk leading to the Haziratu’l-Quds. As the Hand of the Cause of God escorted Mr. and Mrs. Apeadu away from the Center, the children sang “Allahu’Abha”, waved excitedly and thanked the guests for coming.

Then the children gathered in a great circle within the Haziratu’l-Quds to sing. Mr. Olinga shared a gift of pistachio nuts and candies from Iran with the friends.
The Remarkable Albert Windust

THE "PUREST BRANCH."

In reproducing the photograph of the "Purest Branch" so lovingly sent by the maid-servant of God, Béreza Khanum, to the friends in the Occident, the following extracts from the "Life and Teachings
Guardian's resting place visited by King Malietoa

His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II of Western Samoa, together with Hands of the Cause Dhikru’lláh Khádem and 'Ali-Muhammed Varqa, representatives of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom and other Bahá’í friends, visited the resting place of Shoghi Effendi, Great Northern London Cemetery, New Southgate, on September 12.
The Universal House of Justice has announced publication of Selections from the Writings of the Báb, the first of three compilations of Scripture to be published during the Five Year Plan as a goal of the World Center. It contains two Tablets to Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets to Muhammad Sháh, excerpts from the Qayyúmu'l-Ásma, the Persian Bayán and the Dálá'il-i-Sábi'ih (The Seven Proofs), and from the Kitáb-i-Ásma' (the Book of Names), a selection of various other Writings and a large selection of prayers and meditations. The House of Justice appointed its Research Department to make the selections and Habíb Taherzadeh was responsible for the translations, which were reviewed by a committee at the World Center.

Around the World

Australia

U.N. Day observed

On behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, the Bahá'í community of Warringah Shire held a special service at the House of Worship in Sydney to mark the conclusion of United Nations Week. Among the 450 attending the service on October 31 was Gilberto Rizzo, the Director of the United Nations Information Office for Australia, and several representatives of foreign embassies. Readings during the 45 minute service included selections from Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Moslem and Bahá'í Writings.

Attend the United Nations Week special service at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Sydney on October 31 were, from left to right: Peter Khan, Continental Counsellor of Australasia; Stella Cornelius, President of Sydney; Mrs. Gilberto Rizzo; Gilberto Rizzo, Director of the United Nations Information Office in Australia; and Beverly Stafford, Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia.

Baha'i News

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Cover photo:

Bahá'í News Magazine, which made its debut in at Naw-Rúz of 1910, was edited by Albert Windust an a year later was renamed Star of the West.
Around the World

The National Spiritual Assembly of Belgium purchased a building in Brussels on November 12 to serve as the National Ḥāẓiratu'l-Quds.

Austria

Bahá’í album released

A long-playing album of songs with Bahá’í themes was recently released in Austria. The songs are performed by the Dawn-Breakers, an Austrian music group.

A booklet of the lyrics of these songs and the basic tenets of the Faith was printed by a music publishing company. More than 1500 letters about the booklet, containing information about the Faith, were mailed to music stores throughout Austria.

The album and songbook, available from the National Bahá’í Library of Austria, have received favorable reaction. The album has been introduced and played several times on Austrian National Radio.

Belgium

Building purchased for Ḥāẓiratu'l-Quds

A three-story building in downtown Brussels was purchased by the National Spiritual Assembly of Belgium on November 12 to serve as the National Ḥāẓiratu'l-Quds.

The Ḥāẓiratu'l-Quds, “The Sacred Fold”, is the official title designating headquarters of Bahá’í administrative activity. This institution is complementary in its functions to those of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, which is for Bahá’í worship.

The Bahá’í national newspaper of Belgium announced: “The wonderful news has spread throughout Belgium in only a few hours. Our new Ḥāẓiratu'l-Quds is there... it’s true... we can touch it, we can see it. It isn’t a dream, but a marvelous reality, a hope for tomorrow.”

Botswana

Clubs for Bahá’í women organized

One of the Five Year Plan goals for Botswana is to organize more women’s activities. Recently five handicraft clubs for Bahá’í women were established in Botswana by Iran Sohaili, a Rhodesian Bahá’í travelling to teach the Faith.

Mrs. Sohaili went to a number of Bahá’í communities to form new clubs and to encourage existing ones. At the club meetings, Bahá’í women learn knitting, patchwork, exchange new patterns, pray, sing and discuss the Faith.

Mrs. Sohaili described a club meeting in Francistown. She said more than 10 Bahá’í women were there. “One dear woman wanted us to accept a gift of money from her and buy something for ourselves on the way back. We told her we would give it to the Fund, which made her very happy, said Mrs. Sohaili. She said that when she left, two of the women accompanied her for a long distance and walked back again. She said "touching moments like these" characterized her trip. "The village Bahá’í women are enthusiastic. With attention and encouragement they will be successful in attracting their friends and inquirers to their clubs," she said.

Brazil

Faith growing in Northeastern Brazil

“Between 2,000 and 3,000 people have recently been enrolled in the Faith in Northeastern Brazil,” the National Spiritual Assembly reports, “which is clear evidence of the divine assistance promised by Bahá’u’lláh to those who arise to serve Him.”

Two families and eight Bahá’í youth, for a nine month period, taught in the Bahia area and in the Northeastern states of Brazil as far away as Fortaleza, Ceará.

Auxiliary Board member Sergio Couto who, with his family, is serving in Northeastern Brazil, said the activities are extraordinary.

He said weekly morning prayer meetings in 13 locations are followed by children’s classes. Each class has 20 or more children. In Natal, a five-year-old boy who is a children’s class instructor has taught and enrolled his parents. An eight-year-old boy has volunteered to serve as an instructor. In Sao Caetano a daily institute for 15 instructors has been started and weekend activities for youth and women have begun.

He said the Nineteen Day Feasts are held regularly and well-attended. “They are the most beautiful I have ever attended,” Mr. Couto said. “The friends consult, they contribute, they pray, they sing and they are happy.”

Mr. Couto said, “The conversion of many is already a reality; it has come alive; it is our life. One must see with his own eyes the beauty and majesty of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh alive in the hearts of the humble, the poor, the sincere.”

A vigorous plan of consolidation ensures the flame will not be extinguished in the heart of the new believer when the Bahá’í teacher leaves.

“The gaining of Bahá’í homes,” the National Assembly said, “in which all members are believers, the mothers attend classes for instructing their children, all learn Bahá’í prayers and all are active participants in the Nineteen Day Feasts and other community activities, has become a major teaching goal. The formation of Local Assemblies will be a natural result, and some communities are now in the process of preparation for this step.”

Four new believers have volunteered to pioneer wherever they are needed in Brazil.
Cameroon Republic

80 attend Douala conference

As a follow-up to the Paris International Teaching Conference, the believers in the Cameroon Republic held a conference in Douala from September 10-12.

Zekrollah Kazemi and Muhdí Samandari, Counsellors for West Africa, attended. One-hundred-thirty believers from 30 localities in the Cameroons, both English and French speaking, were present. Approximately two-thirds of the participants were under 30 years old.

During the conference, a proclamation project was launched. Teams distributed invitations to an evening lecture and leaflets in French. For the first time in Douala a large printed poster about the Faith prominently displayed the Faith.

Approximately 80 people gathered at the lecture by Mr. Kazemi. The audience, mostly students, asked lively questions and participated in group discussion.

During the conference, the friends were introduced to a mobile institute, which tours communities in the Cameroon Republic to assist with teaching and consolidation work.

Cayman Islands

Radio programs and magazine article publicize Faith

Three members of the Kingston, Jamaica, community who visited the Cayman Islands in October to teach the Faith obtained a magazine interview and time for a weekly Bahá’í broadcast on one of two radio stations. Dorothy Harris, Irene Hollar, and Shahin Zohoori made contact with Norwester magazine, shortly after arriving, and with the International College of Cayman Islands radio station.

The director of the station invited the Bahá’ís to tape and interview for the college’s regularly scheduled broadcast.

Afterwards, he offered to air a 15-minute Bahá’í radio program each Sunday at 4:30 p.m. without cost.

Nahmy Zohoori, who helps prepare a Bahá’í radio program in Jamaica, used the station’s studio to adjust six Jamaican programs for use in the Caymans.

The group was interviewed by the social editor of Norwester, a magazine which has wide circulation in and around Grand Cayman. Norwester is read in schools and by passengers on Grand Cayman Airways. The article, with photographs, was printed in the December issue of the magazine.

The magazine expressed a willingness to print an article about Bahá’í teachings on the use of alcohol.

Central African Republic

Teachers visit Pygmy tribe

Two members of the week old Local Spiritual Assembly of Bogandou, in the Central African Republic, accompanied
Around the World

Brazil

Assembly forms nine others

Six members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil met with the Spiritual Assembly of Belo Horizonte, one of the fastest growing communities in Brazil, on October 9-10. Last year the community was responsible for the formation of nine nearby Local Assemblies. This year the goal is to form at least five Local Assemblies.

Nicaragua

Summer school held

The Third Annual Summer school for Baha'i's in Nicaragua was held in Las Flores September 15. The group included the oldest Native Baha'i in Managua, and nine members of the Spiritual Assembly of Masaya, which hosted the school.

Chad

Expansion of Faith evident

In Southern Chad 27 villages have been visited by Baha'i teachers in recent months, 14 of them more than five times. The Faith has been proclaimed to more than 550 people, the National Spiritual Assembly of Chad reported in September. Of these, 320 have embraced the Cause of God, including 78 youth. Seventeen Local Assemblies have been formed, seventeen localities opened, and the chiefs of six villages have accepted the Cause, the National Assembly said. They called this accelerated activity "gratifying".

In the regions of Mayo-Kebbi, Chari-Baguirmi and Logone, in Southern Chad, 27 people accepted the Cause, the Faith was proclaimed to more than 100 people, 7 teaching trips were made, 16 villages were visited more than 3 times, two institutes and one conference took place, two localities were opened and a Local Assembly formed, reported the National Assembly.

Seven deepening institutes held in bush
villages were attended by Local Assembly Secretaries and others. The duties of Local Assembly members were discussed.

Rito tribe members have embraced the Cause for the first time. They live on the border between Chad and the Central African Republic. Among the Rito tribe, six villages have been opened and two Local Assemblies formed.

Approximately 800 children have attended meetings conducted by selected teachers. They learned songs and recited prayers which drew their parents to the Bahá’í gatherings. Some of the children of Bahá’í parents are named for Bahá’í heroines and heroes. In one village a visiting teacher cried when greeted by a two-year-old child who called “Allâh-u-Abhâ’.

One of the goals of the Five Year Plan in Chad is to open 350 localities: 355 have been opened. The goal to form 75 Local Assemblies has been met. The National Assembly prays that Bahá’u’lláh will strengthen all the friends so that they may arise and consolidate these victories and expand the Cause.

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French Guiana

Local Assembly elected

Before the election of its first Local Spiritual Assembly of September 19, villagers of Saramacca Village on the upper reaches of the Surinam River were joined by those from French Guiana and Surinam for a viewing of part two of The Green Light Expedition. The slides depict the visit of the Bush Negro tribes along the Surinam River.

The villagers were delighted to recognize on the screen their families, friends and familiar villages, the National Assembly reported. The audience was touched and impressed to realize that white people travelled into the jungle to make a slide program to show the rest of the world how the Bush Negro lives, not for exploitation but for human brotherhood and understanding. Before the showing, the Captain of the village, who is a Bahá’í, spoke briefly about the Faith, said the National Assembly report.

Following the election, the entire village viewed the slides once more.

France

National Hazíratú’l-Quds opened

A new National Hazíratú’l-Quds has been opened by the National Spiritual Assembly of France in one of the most fashionable districts of Paris. The address is 33 Rue de la Faisanderie, a residential section where many of the foreign embassies are located, the National Assembly reports.

The funds for the building were donated by Mr. and Mrs. Husayn-Quí Kíyání, residents of Italy. During their pilgrimage in 1953 the Guardian spoke of the need for a Bahá’í Center in Paris, located in the 16th district, the quarter where ‘Abdúl-Bahá resided during his stay in France.

After their pilgrimage the Kíyání’s purchased a building at 11 Rue de la Pompe, which served as the National Hazíratú’l-Quds until the dedication of the new building at the time of the Paris Conference in August 1976.

“We are moved by the very touching manner in which this gift has been offered to the Bahá’í community of France,” the National Spiritual Assembly said. “This donation is closely linked to the memory of the Master and the beloved Guardian and we hope to be worthy of this gift through our using of the Center for the intensified promotion of the Cause of the Blessed Beauty.”

The three-story structure is built on 475 square meters of choice Paris real estate. It has approximately 500 square meters of interior floor space.

Malaysia

Bahá’ís attend Asian Conference on Religion and Peace

Ten Bahá’ís from nine countries participated as observers at the first Asian Conference on Religion and Peace, November 25-30, in Singapore.

The Bahá’ís were not allowed to speak officially, but had the opportunity to mix with others and explain Bahá’u’lláh’s Message and principles of the Faith. Many of the approximately 300 delegates and 21 observers had not heard about the Faith until this conference.

Most Bahá’í observers left the conference before it was over to attend the Bahá’í International Teaching Conference in Hong Kong. Only four Bahá’ís, from Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand remained for the rest of the Asian Conference. When the head of the Pakistani delegation of three Muslims, retired Chief Justice Hamdoor Rahman, addressed the gathering, he said proudly “... The fourth participant from Pakistan is not a Muslim, he is a Bahá’í.” People holding important positions and a few government officials now know of the Faith, fulfilling an important goal of the Five Year Plan.

Bahá’ís attending the conference were Anthony Rush Thompson of Australia; Lawrence Ip W. C. of Hong Kong; R. Shah of India; Kimoko Schwerin of Japan; Fazil Kayani of Pakistan; Fe Samaniego of the Philippines; Shirin Fozdar and Re Freddy Tan of Singapore; Chandrasekera of Sri Lanka; and Prapart Suthinan of Thailand.

Four nations—Burma, Korea, New Zealand and Vietnam—were unable to send observers because of travel difficulties.

Nicaragua

Summer school held

More than thirty Bahá’ís from various communities in Nicaragua assembled under the shade of a large tree for the Third Annual Summer School in Las Flores September 15.

The day-long institute was hosted by the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Masaya, and consisted of a series of talks about the Central Figures of the Faith, The Universal House of Justice, and the role of Bahá’í women.

The many children present attended classes and sang Bahá’í songs at intervals throughout the day. A group of Bahá’í youth from Granada performed a drama to illustrate the healing effects of Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings regarding abstinence from alcohol and drugs.
New Hebrides

Youth travelling teach in New Hebrides

Three Bahá’í youth from the Solomon Islands — Sibri Karotu, Selena Lakueta and Eddy Wouhania — recently made a six-week travelling teaching trip through the New Hebrides.

The original idea for the trip came from Alick Soalo, Auxiliary Board member in the New Hebrides, during his stay in the Solomons in 1975. He said the vitality of the Bahá’í youth there could stimulate the believers in the New Hebrides.

The proposal was communicated to both National Spiritual Assemblies involved, that of the Solomon Islands and that of the South West Pacific. Arrangements were made for a team to travel during September, 1976. The itinerary of the team was planned by the National Teaching Committee of the New Hebrides.

Prior to their departure, Mr. Karotu, Miss Lekueta and Miss Wouhania prepared music, action songs and talks in English, Gilbertese and Pidgin. Mr. Karotu and Miss Lekueta are Gilbertese and Miss Wouhania is a Solomon Islander from Malaita. Mr. Karotu and Miss Wouhania are members of the National Spiritual Assembly, and all three are members of the National Youth Committee.

The youth arrived in the New Hebrides on September 30. They visited four islands: Efate, Malekula, Santo and Tanna — spending time in all Local Assembly areas and in four localities where Local Assemblies are to be formed in 1976-77.

They proclaimed the Faith through musical shows; taught and confirmed individual souls; and encouraged and consolidated Bahá’í communities.

They stayed with Bahá’í families throughout their travels.

They presented the musical show 27 times to an estimated 1,700 non-Bahá’ís, held five fire-sides, conducted at least eight official deepening sessions and more unofficial ones, and attended two Feasts.

Radio Villa made several announcements about the team’s movements in its news bulletins, and broadcast a ten-minute live interview with Mr. Karotu.

The team remained in the New Hebrides until November 14.
The Word spreading "like wildfire"

The National Spiritual Assembly of Nigeria called for special prayers to be said on July 9 for the progress of the Faith in Nigeria, reported the Nigerian Bahá'í News. The next day, a Bahá'í from Lagos joined the believers of Ife-Ife to teach in a nearby Ekarun village. The friends prayed, then followed a narrow dirt trail branching from the Ife-Ilesha road. Along the way they encountered a man returning to his home in Ekarun village. The man escorted them to the village, where men, women and children listened to the Bahá'ís. Fourteen adults and several youth declared their acceptance of the Faith.

The religious leader of the village told the Bahá'ís that what they taught was a confirmation of what he had read earlier that day in the Qurán. The foundation of the Day of God has now been laid in Yorubaland, he continued, for in this new teaching the Christians and Muslims are united for the first time in Ekarun.

Since that day, said the Nigerian Bahá'í News, 15 more localities have been opened to the Faith in the Ife-Ife area and more than 160 believers have espoused the Cause. The word is "spreading like wildfire" through the villages with the assistance of a number of enthusiastic new Bahá'ís. Local Assemblies have been formed in Ekarun, Oluwada and Ife. Translations into the Yoruba language have been made. Several meetings for dawn prayers and children's classes have been held. Two communities have had the first Nineteen Day Feast. A Teacher Training Institute held in Ekarun in early September was attended by 13 Bahá'ís from 7 localities, where various aspects of the Faith were studied through visual aids designed by the Ife believers.

The Ife Bahá'ís say the receptivity on the part of the villagers in exciting. Not only has enrollment been spontaneous and rapid, but the new Bahá'ís have been at the heart of the expansion activities. One new believer has opened several localities and assisted in expansion and consolidation in areas already opened. Several teachers have dedicated their time to the expansion of the community and to deepening. The villagers insist many other centers await the Message, some of which have been prepared for future visits by Bahá'í teachers, said the Nigerian Bahá'í News.

"The word is spreading so fast that the believers in Ife can no longer keep up with the demands of the masses who are thirsty for this water of life," reported the Nigerian Bahá'í News. A great wave is sweeping over the West of Nigeria and its force is increasing rapidly."

Six declare at summer school

The Hands of the Cause Ugo Giachery and Rahmatulláh Muhajir, and travelling teachers from different parts of the world were among 60 Bahá'ís who attended the Bahá'í Summer School in Rio de Mouro, a village 20 kilometers from Lisbon. The school was held on a farm in the countryside August 16-20.

Children's classes were planned by the National Children's Committee and attended by 20 children, some from the neighboring village. In the evening, after classes, the friends gathered around a campfire. The townspeople of Rio de Mouro were attracted by the friendliness of the Bahá'ís and the campfire, and came nightly to sing and hear about the Faith. One night six townspeople, including a 70-year-old woman, declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh.

A teaching plan directed toward gypsies and African refugees from Angola and Mozambique was presented at the end of the school. Twenty-five Bahá'ís volunteered to devote their free time to the plan.

Before the Bahá'í Summer School, there were no Bahá'ís or public meetings in Rio de Mouro.

Seychelles

Bahá'ís recognized in Independence Day celebrations

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Seychelles sent greetings and assurances of loyalty to the President and Prime Minister of the Republic of Seychelles, which achieved independent status on June 28.

Bahá'ís entered a float in the Independence Day parade, and won first prize—three large silver cups. The float, seen by hundreds, bore the message "We are Dawn-breakers of our Destiny" and carried a large sign reading "Bahá'í".

At a national exhibition celebrating Independence Day, the Bahá'ís set up a booth displaying photographs, audiovisual material and literature. Hundreds of visitors passed by the booth, including a Roman Catholic Bishop who requested and was given a Bahá'í book.

A local Bahá'í craftsman was awarded a prize for the best individual exhibit, a piece of hand-made furniture.

Portugal

Six declare at summer school

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Faith broadcast for first time

For many years the National Spiritual Assembly of the Solomon Islands attempted to call public attention to the Faith through radio. Their opportunity came only recently when a non-Bahá'í addressed questions to the National Assembly through a local radio station. "Do Bahá'ís believe in Jesus?" and "Do they believe He is God?" the man wanted to know.

A simple, dignified response based on Bahá'í teachings was prepared by the National Assembly and presented September 12 in a broadcast lasting 15 minutes.

Taiwan

Teaching team active in Taiwan

A teaching team composed of Bahá'ís from Taiwan, Korea, Malaysia, Iran and the United States participated in a summer teaching campaign sponsored by the National Teaching Committee and National Youth Committee of Taiwan. The team took the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to 6 cities, 2 towns and 1 village, had an influence on various other centers, opened to the Faith two new localities in which three new believers enrolled, stimulated
Around the world

isolated believers, brought the Faith to the notice of an estimated 9,000 people and left a dignified impression on the populace wherever they went, it was reported.

The diversity of the team and the songs with Bahá'í themes in Malay, Chinese and English attracted even shy passersby, many of whom stayed for a short Bahá'í address and a slide program. "Children and adolescents flocked to the team" one observer noted. "In rural villages and in the larger centers, whether firesides or public meetings were being held, youth and children were the first to arrive, outnumbered adults several-fold and paid close attention throughout the entire presentation."

Highlights of the campaign were a public meeting in Hwalien attended by 40 people, mostly youth between the ages of 13 and 17; a friendly interview with the head of Tat'ung village; a Nineteen Day Feast in Beifu village where the local Bahá'ís held a stimulating consultation on teaching in their village; and successful public meetings in Changhwa and Chiayi attended by 20 youth and 4 adults, and 20 youth and 8 adults, respectively.

For many of the team members it was their first opportunity to serve as full-time travelling teachers. A vital part of the experience was the dawn prayers followed by consultation, it was stated, and the team greatly appreciated the help of Auxiliary Board member Roxanne Gardner, whose abundant experience in teaching in the South Sea islands enabled her to lend valuable assistance.

United States

Pioneering Institute held

The Pioneering Institute held October 28-31 was the first to be held at the John and Louise Bosch Bahá'í School in Santa Cruz, California. Thirty Bahá'ís attended in preparation to fill pioneering posts in Bermuda, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guana, Guatemala, Mariana, the Marshall Islands, the Philippines, Portugal, Surinam, Tonga, Venezuela and Zambia.

Australia

Bahá'ís join others in regional conference

On the weekend of December 10-12 at Point Lonsdale, Victoria, over 40 Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís attended a regional conference. The program, co-sponsored by the National Youth Committee, the Melbourne Metropolitan Committee and the Aippsland Regional Goals Committee, emphasized the need for love for Bahá'u'lláh and teaching the Faith.
The Remarkable Albert Windust:

Education of an Editor

Part II
by Bruce Whitmore

Albert Windust, as he appeared in 1931 when he traveled to Haifa to meet the Guardian.
Albert wrote the inevitable letter of resignation from Star of the West

By the latter half of 1915 several letters from 'Abdu'l-Bahá had miraculously, considering the circumstances of World War I, reached America. Two themes dominated these communications: firmness in the Covenant and teaching ("tell everyone now is the time to teach and spread the Cause!").

"Tablets of the Divine Plan" consists of fourteen Tablets written in 1916-17. The preface of the current edition states these Tablets did not arrive in America until after the signing of the Armistice. Five of them, written in February through April, 1916, did arrive during the war and appeared in Star of the West in September, 1916.

The pages of Star of the West are overflowing with such an abundance of exciting events and profound comments printed nowhere else that an adequate review of the magazine could never be made. There is, however, one additional editorial of Albert's eloquence and so moving that it must be shared:

"His Holiness 'Abdu'l-Bahá ascended to Abhá Kingdom."

With these words the Bahá'ís of the whole world are stunned.

Some years ago His Holiness 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: "These great days are swiftly passing and once gone can never be recalled, so while the rays of the Sun of Truth are still shining and the Center of the Covenant of God is manifest, let us go forth to work, for after awhile the night will come and the way to the Vineyard will not then be so easy to find."

In this world the night has come—

And with it—weeping.

And in the heavenly world?

O for the pen of a Milton, the brush of a Doré and the music of a Handel, to convey a fleeting glimpse of what is transpiring!

If it were according to Divine Wisdom that such a scene be pictured, only the vision and Word of Him who has ascended could describe it!

But His utterance is stilled—

And our pen broken.28

Several months before the Master's Ascension a transition within the magazine had begun which would drastically alter the course of Albert's life. In one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets, originally included in the group called the "Divine Plan," it was urged that the magazine's circulation be dramatically expanded and that materials presented be more universal in scope, such as had been originally designated for the "East and the West." In July, 1919, an editorial regarding the future of the magazine noted:
Hailed by gathering inside the auditorium of the House of Worship in Wilmette on May 1, 1931, nineteen years to the day from when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá laid the corner stone, at the dedication of the superstructure.

For nine years, it has been like a small tree in the garden of the Cause, more or less overshadowed by other important institutions. But today—through the sustaining power of God and the bounty of Bahá’u’lláh descending in the Tablets and Words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá unveiled at the recent Convention and Congress—it is illumined by the Orb of the Covenant.

Stunned by this sudden blaze of light, we are slowly responding to its radiance. A “foundation” consisting of representatives from throughout Canada and the United States was formed at Albert’s suggestion. Although this helped broaden the scope of creativity, the burden of work for Albert and Gertrude was not lessened. This burden, coupled with continuing financial problems that resulted from attempts to keep subscription charges low, made it difficult to initiate rapid changes. Many persons felt Albert lacked the ability to achieve what the Master desired and this weighed heavily upon him. To the harsh criticism of one group he responded:

My only answer is: let them write what they believe to be the faults and the remedy and what they would do to accomplish a cure, and send it to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for confirmation . . . that he may correct the faults and remove the difficulties. A tree is helpless to water and fertilize itself. If it droops, there is a reason for it; if it is dead it must be cut down.

At the 1921 Convention it was decided to form a committee to oversee the publication. This afforded some relief but still failed to address the main problem that after all those years the continuing efforts of Albert and Gertrude was destroying their physical well-being. Only the assistance of Arthur Agnew, hired by Albert as treasurer of Grier Press in 1919, kept the publication solvent in its last two years. Even the Grier brothers were becoming increasingly agitated by Albert’s commitment to the magazine. On one occasion, John Grier angrily wrote:

Today when I called, you were busy with other things—things that in a way are beneficial to the Grier Press, but I am inclined to think that you give the Bahá’í Movement more thought and attention than the business that gives your family its daily bread.

Albert’s numerous pleas to the Executive Board of the Bahá’í Temple Unity for assistance virtually unanswered, he wrote the inevitable letter of resignation, dated May 9, 1922, which said in part:

Conditions beyond the control of both Miss Buikema and myself surround us, and we find that immediate relief must be sought. In a business way, I must devote my entire time to it, and as for Miss Buikema enough to say that it is her physician’s orders that she must give up all this extra day and night work. Her family, too, insist that this be done. Sunday she and Mrs. North worked all day and until 11:30 p.m.—mailing the new issue of the Star. It was a beautiful spring day and they should have been resting.

A major chapter of Albert’s life closed. There must have been feelings of frustration and sorrow. But there was no bitterness. Albert, perhaps more than anyone else, recognized the underlying cause of
Albert read a devotional selection at the dedication of the superstructure of the House of Worship in Wilmette in 1931.

these events: the initial thrust in the development of the Administrative Order under the guidance of the Guardian.

Two months prior to Albert's letter of resignation, the Guardian had written his first major communication regarding the administration of the Cause, one paragraph of which stated that efforts of national implication must be under the control of the "National Body" (i.e. the National Spiritual Assembly) rather than a local Assembly or a group of individuals. Albert fully recognized that the transition process for the magazine could be more speedily and effectively realized if his close personal ties were severed.

Both the magazine and the Bahá'í Publishing Society were merged under a Publication Committee. The departure of Albert and Gertrude was strongly felt. One loving tribute came from Leroy Ioas:

There is always a time when the true side and the deep spiritual fortitude of a real Bahá'í stands forth, and that is when the hopes and endeavors of sincere effort seems to apparently turn to other paths. But whatever the new events bring forth we know it is surely for the welfare and advancement of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, which we all love so much, and which we are all ready to sacrifice everything for.

The example of your pure faith in the present transition period, when all the Bahá'í Activities are taking a new aspect, is very inspiring, and I am sure endearing to yourself, of all the Friends, as has been the long years you have so impersonally served for that Heavenly Magazine.

To me, it is a great inspiration. From the early days of my life, when I first became actively interested in the Cause, a few of the Bahá'ís have particularly stood out as Guide Posts and examples of unending faith and untiring sacrifice. Such a one have you always been to me, and I know always will be, but the present gracious attitude of submitting to 'the Will of God' with 'Radiant Acquiescence' calls from me this meager statement of deep love and affection which has been growing for many years.33

Another letter of praise was written by May Maxwell shortly after meeting with members of the National Spiritual Assembly:

... They spoke of you and the relation you have always borne throughout the years, to the Cause and to the friends, in a way that made me realize how deeply you are loved and honored.

I thank you from my heart for your wonderful brotherly love and kindness to me and for the way in which you have granted my least request in the loving service of our blessed Guardian.

I love you and your wife dearly and I hope that God will grant that in this life that love may find some expression in service to you as you have always served me.34

The notion that "tests and difficulties" often descend in rapid succession is certainly supported by the
"In a few moments Shoghi Effendi came to welcome me to Haifa. Not tall, nor small, vigorous, smiling - all that you expect to see, and more, such is the Guardian."

ordeal which confronted Albert immediately after the transfer of the magazine. Illness was nothing new to his family. Lucy Windust had not been well since 1918 and the family had to spend its summers in cooler climate for her benefit. Christmas of 1922, however, witnessed the beginning of an incredibly dismal year for the family. Ethyl, the youngest of the three daughters, contracted diphtheria. Within days Lucy was also infected and health officers quarantined the house. Three weeks later Albert was rushed to the hospital for an emergency appendectomy. In March Ethyl's tonsils became inflamed and, because of the quarantine, the doctor performed the surgery on the dining room table. The next several months were spent recuperating and, just as it seemed as if everything was stabilizing, Albert, in January of 1924, was again hospitalized, this time for a hernia operation. Albert was essentially "inactive" for more than a year. It was the only time between 1902 and 1954 (two years before his death) that he was not a member of Chicago's Assembly (he also served for more than thirty years as that institution's chairman).

In the first years after Albert's resignation the new staff of the Star of the West experienced difficulty in making the transition. It became increasingly apparent that Albert's effort had been monumental indeed. He was asked to assist the publication in a variety of ways including, in June of 1924, reassuming editorship with a staff of ten writers ("contributors"), a manager and any other assistance he would require. Albert had to decline because of his health.

From the time of the transfer, the magazine published mostly articles on various Bahá'í subjects, attempted to attain the objectives expressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. There was, however, a small section entitled "Bahá'í News And Notes" which continued to provide condensed information on a few Bahá'í events. In December, 1924, a new publication first called Bahá'í News Letter and then Bahá'í News assumed the news reporting aspect of the original magazine. Star of the West, meanwhile, continued to develop into a publication devoted to "what people are thinking" in the mid-1930's, evolved into World Order magazine. Published until the late 1940's, the magazine was then suspended because of a crisis in the fund, for some eighteen years and was finally reintroduced in 1966. The Bahá'í News continued, as a news organ for the international community. In the mid-1960's The American Bahá'í, was introduced to provide a nationally-oriented newspaper. Of the present periodicals published in the U.S. only Child's Way magazine did not evolve directly from Star of the West; however the first children's publication, The Magazine of the Children of the Kingdom, received extensive guidance from Albert. What an incredible heritage we have been given by one man!*

Albert's association with Bahá'í publications did not cease when he disassociated himself from Star of the West. His health much improved, he accepted appointment in 1925 to the Publication Committee and later The Bahá'í World Editorial Committee. He was instrumental in the production of the first five volumes of The Bahá'í World and the accuracy of these books is due largely to his conviction that nothing short of perfection was tolerable for any Bahá'í publication. Even after everyone else was satisfied with a project, Albert would always insist on one more galley proof being run and one final reading being made. The Guardian wrote Albert on several occasions expressing appreciation for his efforts; the following are examples:

Shoghi Effendi wishes me to drop you this note especially to congratulate you for the wonderful work you have displayed in the future generations and a signal proof of your devotion and ardent services to this Blessed Movement. Though a copy of it, which I believed

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At the mansion at Bahji, Shoghi Effendi and Albert spent three days and three nights editing The Bahá’í World.

You had mailed, reached us only a few days ago, he has already gone over it and admired the taste and esthetic beauty that you have put into it.\(^{35}\)

Again:

Your touching letter has breathed a fresh spirit of love and devotion which has greatly heartened me in my work. Your past services are engraved upon my heart and your present work in connection with the Year Book is of extreme importance. I shall go over the Vol. II manuscript most carefully and will send every suggestion I feel I should make. I feel this is the special favor and grace promised to you by the Master and I will pray for you and your dear ones that you will be enabled to visit the Holy Land in the near future where you are assured of a most hearty welcome.

Your true brother, Shoghi\(^{36}\)

The Guardian’s comment on going to the Holy Land stems from repeated attempts by Lucy and Albert, for more than twenty-five years, to make that trip. Lucy’s dream, however, was never realized for she died during the spring of 1929.

In September of 1931, after nearly two years of struggling with the economic upheaval of the Great Depression, the Grier Press was liquidated. While John Grier attempted to reorganize the company, Albert was at last free to journey eastward. He carried with him the twenty original Tablets of the Báb, addressed to the Letters of the Living and to Bahá'u'lláh. These were being returned to the Guardian after reproductions had been made for inclusion in Shoghi Effendi's translation of The Dawn-Breakers, published in New York in 1932. Albert also carried a small package containing two pair of warm bed socks, a gift from May Maxwell to the Greatest Holy Leaf.

He arrived in Haifa on November 22, 1931:

In a few moments Shoghi Effendi came to welcome me to Haifa. Not tall, nor small, vigorous, smiling—all that you expect to see, and more, such is the Guardian. He said He was going to the Shrines of the Báb and 'Abdu'l-Bahá up Mt. Carmel—would I like to come along. I hastened to Pilgrim House to get my hat. As I came around the fence he was about 75 feet up the street. I was struck with his resemblance of the Master at that distance and from the back (I recalled the photograph we published of 'Abdu'l-Bahá when we announced His Ascension in the "Star of the West"). When about 25 feet away, he turned and called out, "Are you a good walker?" I replied, "Yes, but I will have to learn to climb!" And it was a climb to the Shrines. There were two other pilgrims with us. Shoghi Effendi talked freely with me all the way up, but I was not registering the words—only the effect of His Utterance seemed to sink in.\(^{37}\)

For Albert the visit was like a dream; a series of magnificently painted scenes indelibly imprinted within his mind. While at Bahji he wrote:
One of Albert's early drawings portrays the ferris wheel at the World Colombian Exposition in 1893. Each car on the ferris wheel could hold 20 people.

... I hope some day a great artist will paint a panorama of the land and sea, surrounding Bahji as seen from there, that those who cannot make the pilgrimage may have some idea of its wonderful location—then if they could imagine the soft warm breeze that blew from the hills this day in December—could taste the oranges in the gardens—could hear the skylarks singing—could hear the tinkling of bells as trains of camels move by—even hear the braying of the tiny beasts that carry men upon their backs—hear the sighing of the wind through the pines of Bahji—then we could somehow sense the physical contact with this historic spot. But it is the heart that sees, hears, feels the spiritual contact—one must bring that awakened heart to enjoy to the full all that Bahji gives to the pilgrim. 38

Just prior to his scheduled departure the Guardian received several bundles of material from Mrs. Nellie French which contained the manuscript for Volume IV of The Bahá’í World. Shoghi Effendi asked Albert to delay that departure for two weeks and help him edit the material. After working several days at Haifa, the Guardian, desiring quieter surroundings for the intense concentration required, took Albert to the Mansion at Bahji where the two of them spent three days and three nights alone, constantly working on the book.

Shortly after Albert's arrival, Shoghi Effendi had penned "The Goal Of A New World Order," one of a series of communications which "unfold a clear vision of the relation between the Bahá’í community and the entire process of social evolution under the Dispensation of Bahá’ulláh." 39 When Albert left, Shoghi Effendi asked him to travel through Switzerland, Germany and England, conveying the Guardian’s love and sharing this most important document. Shortly after his return, Albert received the following letter from the Guardian:

The days of our companionship under the shadow of the holy shrine, our collaboration, our discussions, and our prayers at the sacred threshold, will long linger in my memory. Much as I had heard, and through correspondence learned, of your tenacity of faith, your thoroughness, your passionate devotion to our beloved Cause, the intimate experience of our meeting in this sacred spot has served only to heighten my admiration for the spirit that animates you in the service to the Cause. The sequel of your pilgrimage, your journey to Europe, I regard as an added blessing and invaluable service which I greatly value. The letters I received regarding your visit to the Bahá’í centers testify to the deep impression you have made upon the believers. I will from the depth of my heart supplicate for you and your dear daughters, the Almighty's richest blessing. 40

The transition which had begun with the transfer of Star of the West now began to finalize. The Grier Press was not reformed and Albert worked at several jobs over the next two decades. Even though he felt wholly inadequate to teach the Cause, primarily because of his limited education, he arose to the challenge and became one of the most prominent Bahá’í lecturers of the 1930’s and 40’s. A glimpse at one page of his date book for 1938 demonstrates the incredible pace that he, at more than sixty years of age, endured:

Sunday, 2nd Talk at Elam Club - “The New Holy Land”
‘Abdu’l-Bahá beckoned me to sit beside Him, and slapping my left thigh three times, said with each blow: ‘There are many wolves in Chicago!’

Monday, 3rd Begin classes for Chicago group
Tuesday, 4th Spiritual Assembly
Wednesday, 5th Class at room
Thursday, 6th to Grand Rapids
Friday, 7th Grand Rapids - “Christ’s Second Advent”
Saturday, 8th Grand Rapids - “The Bahá’í Age of Light”
Sunday, 9th Grand Rapids - talk
Monday, 10th 2nd lesson for Chicago group
Tuesday 11th Mrs. McCormick - 6 p.m.
Wednesday, 12th Class at room

Albert gave continuous classes to new believers, developing a program for their early education in the meaning and implications of the Faith. He taught many classes on the Covenant and, in 1942, compiled a four-part article on the Covenant which appeared in World Order magazine. In the introduction he explained:

It was my privilege and bounty to become awakened by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to a new consciousness of the meaning of The Covenant. It was not accomplished in a short period of time. It began from the hand as well as the divine bounty of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá when He was in Chicago in the year 1912, in the waiting room of the Northwestern railway terminal on the day of His departure for St. Paul, when He beckoned me to sit beside Him and there administered three stinging slaps upon my left thigh, saying with each blow: “There are many wolves in Chicago!”

From this startling experience, it was apparent that we needed to be awakened to something happening within the Bahá’í fold or to some fundamental phase of the Faith of which we were unaware. Whatever it might be it was important that an effort be made to understand and to correct it, as we were editing and publishing the Star of the West...

That we did awaken is evidenced by the fact that in that same year, 1912, we began a presentation of this subject of The Covenant in the Star of the West, beginning with the November 23rd issue—the date nearest to the Day of the Covenant—and continued to do so in every issue of that date until the Ascension of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in 1921...

It is my belief that this subject is the most vital and fundamental of all Bahá’í teachings, and that every follower of the Faith, sooner or later, must come to an understanding of it.

During the years when Albert was leading many people to the Faith he was also establishing friendships which later proved beneficial to the Cause. One of these was Marcus Bach, with whom Albert collaborated in 1937 to produce a pageant honoring the centennial of Chicago’s incorporation. As thousands watched, the program ended with a huge choral presentation, the backdrop for which was a gigantic mural of the House of Worship. Mr. Bach published a book in 1946, They Have Found A Faith, which was “a sympathetic study of eight contemporary religious groups.” The section on the Bahá’í Faith was reviewed and edited by Albert. Mr. Bach later wrote him:
After a man has tramped around for nearly ten years both in the lecture and research field he unwittingly becomes immune to people's reactions. But I assure you that slumbering strains of deep appreciation sang in my heart upon receipt of your gracious letter. I sincerely hope that my copy of the book has reached you. The inscription best expresses my opinion. You will, however, never know how the spirit of your comment on They Have Found a Faith has inspired me and how it has lured me further into the deeper realities and concepts of the faith which is so vitally yours.  

A decade later Mr. Bach wrote another book, The Circle of Faith, which reported his interviews with Shoghi Effendi, Therese Newmann, Hellen Keller, Pope Pius XII and Albert Schweizer. After the Guardian's death, that portion of the book was republished under the separate title, Shoghi Effendi: An Appreciation.

As the final days of his life approached, Albert's one great wish was to see the dedication of the House of Worship in 1953. Not only had he been involved in the early days of the project, but he had served on the Temple Committee in the late 1920's, participated in the dedication ceremonies when the superstructure was completed in 1931 and, in 1944, been a member of the Centennial Committee for planning the centennial commemoration and dedication of the completed exterior of the House of Worship.

Late in 1952 Albert became quite ill, but refused to admit it. Although in need of a doctor's care, he stubbornly forbade it, determined he would be in Wilmette for that historic gathering. After weeks of suffering he achieved his goal, but just barely. Shortly afterwards he collapsed and was in a coma for five days. He was destined to survive awhile longer, however, and after two operations for cancer of the prostate he miraculously recovered. At 80 years of age he resumed his Bahá'í activities and even returned to work on a limited basis.

On March 9, 1956, Albert's soul ascended. It is difficult to find appropriate words to close the story of this man's remarkable life; however, the following comments of the Guardian to Albert as he was leaving Haifa in 1931 are offered as a final tribute:

You are always with me, and I am with you in spirit. I shall not forget you. You are one of the pioneer Bahá'ís—one of the connecting links between the old and new phases of the organic growth of the Cause in the West. Your devoted services have been many and my prayer is that you will render even greater services. I will remember you at the Holy Shrines when I go to supplicate for the friends . . . . Now, I embrace you as they do in the Orient, and wish you a safe and happy journey. Good-bye.  

32. Albert Windust, letter to the Executive Board of the Bahá'í Temple Unity, dated May 9, 1922, Albert Windust Papers, National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Ill.
33. Leroy Ioas, letter to Albert Windust, dated May, 1924, Albert Windust Papers, National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Ill.
34. May Maxwell, letter to Albert Windust, dated August 7, 1922, Albert Windust Papers, National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Ill.
44. Marcus Bach, letter to Albert Windust, dated November 12, 1946, Albert Windust Papers, National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Ill.
45. Shoghi Effendi, quoted in Albert Robert Windust, pp. XXI-XXII.
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Universal House of Justice
6 January 1977

Message to Hong Kong Conference

To the Friends assembled at the International Teaching Conference in Hong Kong

Dearly-loved Friends,

With grateful and joyous hearts we extend our warmest greetings and express our highest hopes to the followers of Bahá’u’lláh gathered, at this critical point of the Five Year Plan, in this Conference on Asia’s eastern shore. This great continent has nourished mighty civilizations; above its horizons the suns of major Revelations of God have risen; on its soil many of the heroes of this New Age have shed their blood and offered their lives in token of their love for Him Who is the Beloved of the World and the Desire of the Nations.

What an imperishable glory has been bestowed upon the people of Asia, the first to be illumined by the rays of God’s Faith, the first recipients of His Call and the first promoters of His Cause. Their spiritual capacity is extolled and the great role they are destined to play in the strengthening of the foundation of the New World Order of Bahá’u’lláh unhesitatingly affirmed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His Tablets of the Divine Plan.

This great continent contains within its boundaries the heart of the Faith and its Cradle, the lands wherein its Founders toiled and suffered, and not only the great majority of the human race but the great majority of the followers of Bahá’u’lláh. The potentiality of such a situation cannot be underestimated, nor must the great force latent within so large a proportion of the Army of Light be neglected. They must be mobilized to accelerate the expansion of the beloved Cause, to consolidate its victories, to enhance its prestige and to augment its influence. We appeal to every participant in this historic Conference to become conscious of these tremendous but hidden potentialities which, if properly tapped and directed, can hasten the process of the spiritualization of the nations of Asia, the influence of which will extend far beyond the confines of that continent—even to the entire planet.

We eagerly await news that from this Conference will surge throughout Asia a wave of vigorous activity devoted to the execution on the individual, local and national levels, of systematic plans designed to attract the great masses of that continent to the life-giving, all-embracing Message of Bahá’u’lláh. Such plans must provide opportunities for those thousands who in recent years have swelled the rank and file, as well as for those veterans who have, for so many years, striven in the path of service to the Cause. It is through active participation of more and more new believers in both teaching and administration that the consolidation of the Bahá’í community can best be achieved.

In a continent so richly endowed, so greatly blessed, new generations of Bahá’ís must continually be raised up, trained from childhood in the love of God, and nurtured under the shadow of His Cause. Bahá’ís in every country must be constantly urged and, wherever necessary, assisted to pass on to their children as their most cherished legacy, the precious Faith they themselves have embraced. Those new generations of Bahá’ís will have a vital role in consolidating the Cause of God on a firm foundation.

The establishment of Local Assemblies as the basic administrative unit of the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh and as rallying points for the Bahá’ís of every community should, in accordance with the objectives of the Five Year Plan, be multiplied no matter at what cost of effort and endurance. The process of invigorating the Local Assemblies requires, during the Five Year Plan, the consultation of all the institutions of the Cause.

Publication of literature in many languages as part of a determined campaign to win thousands upon thousands of diverse peoples in all spheres of life must be vigorously pursued. Participation of all believers in supporting the Bahá’í Funds, the life-blood of the Cause, must be given adequate attention, and the blessings which reward the act of voluntary giving for the promotion of the Faith, no matter how small the amount may be, must be lovingly and wisely explained.

May this Conference become a landmark in the process of attracting vast numbers of the great Chinese race scattered throughout the world. May it be a prelude to the unprecedented expansion of the Faith in all the countries of Asia. May it become a source of strength to the supporters of the Most Great Name so that despite the rising tide of trials and upheavals afflicting the world, and whatever forces of opposition may be mounted against the Cause of God itself, the believers will not waver or become diverted from their course, but be ever more confirmed in their determination to raise the edifice of the Faith of God as the last bastion of hope to a lost and wayward humanity.

The Universal House of Justice
November, 1976
New Books

Two children's books from United Kingdom

*Let Thy Breeze Refresh Them* is a compilation of excerpts from tablets and prayers for children. It is published by the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of the United Kingdom, bound in cloth and illustrated with full-page color photographs of flowers, animals, birds and landscapes.

Another book published by the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of the United Kingdom is *Pokka's Stories*, written by Betty Reed of the Continental Board of Counsellor's of Europe. The book contains seven stories written in language suitable for very young readers or children who cannot read.

The main character is a Finnish child named Pokka, who tells stories of the early days of the Faith and the life of Bahá'u'lláh, including His journeys and exile, and His passing and burial at Bahji.

Around the World

**Bahá'ís sponsor quiz program on U.N. Day**

In observance of United Nations Day, October 24, the National Spiritual Assembly of Belize organized a quiz program for students of secondary schools. Participating were teams from Wesley College, St. Hilda's College and Government Secondary Schools 1 and 2. The teams competed in correctly answering questions on the subject of the United Nations its main bodies, their duties and functions, their activities and achievements in preserving peace and aiding developing countries.

A representative of the United Nations Organization in Belize was present to answer questions after the quiz from the audience of close to 300 teachers, parents and students.

The quiz was publicized by three newspapers and over Radio Belize.

**Remembrance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá given to Canadian Bahá'ís**

The National Spiritual Assembly of Canada has been bequeathed the shoes of 'Abdu'l-Bahá by the Donald Kinney family at the request of the Hand of the Cause Rúhíyyih Khánum.

*Bahá'í Canada* called the gift "an exquisite token of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presence in Canada: the shoes in which he paced the streets and walks of Montreal."

The shoes will be permanently on display at the Shrine in Montreal as soon as a fit place for their safe keeping is made. Until that time, according to instructions from Rúhíyyih Khánum, the gift will be kept in the vault at the National Hazíratul-Quds in Toronto and brought out on special occasions for the friends to view, said *Bahá'í Canada*.

**Bahá'í book month held**

October was Bahá'í Book Month at the municipal library of Sainte Foy, Quebec. The Spiritual Assembly of Sainte Foy displayed most of the Bahá'í literature available in French and some in English.

A representative of the mayor of Sainte

Bahá'í News

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Cover photo:

Cover photo: A poster from the Bahá'í International Teaching Conference in Hong Kong, where over 600 Bahá'ís from 34 countries gathered. Story page 8.
Foy attended the official opening of the display, and was presented with *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*.

Two public meetings were held in conjunction with Bahá'í Book Month. The first meeting was on the topic of Bahá'í literature, and the focus of the second meeting was the book *The World is One Country* by André Brugiroux, a French Bahá'í who spent six years hitchhiking around the world and who discovered the Faith in his travels.

Six Bahá'í books were donated to the library.

**Congo Republic**

Bahá'ís teach in Kinkala

Brazzaville Bahá'ís and travelling teachers from France and Switzerland have been visiting the nearby village of Kinkala to teach the Faith and deepen believers there.

The visiting Bahá'ís said meetings have been held in Kinkala several times in the past months, often lasting three hours. They said children from the village would approach them calling “Alláh’u’Abhá.”

The Bahá'ís visitors made a courtesy call to the chief of the district. “Although it was Sunday, his day of rest, he greeted us warmly, and asked questions for more than an hour,” they reported. The chief encouraged them to return to Kinkala to teach and offered to assist the Bahá'ís in the construction of their local center.

**Guyana**

Bahá'í media workshop for more effective proclamation of Faith

A Bahá'í Radio-Television Workshop was held in Georgetown, Guyana, in December, attended by 27 representatives.

**Cyprus**

First Bahá'í School held

Friends at the first Bahá'í School in Cyprus held in Nicosia December 27—January 2. The Hand of the Cause Adelbert Mühlschlegel and Counsellor Hooper Dunbar of the International Teaching Center are standing second and first from right on first row.
from several Caribbean countries and the United States. Some of the countries represented were Belize, Guyana, Netherlands Antilles, Puerto Rico, Surinam, and Trinidad.

The purpose of the workshop was to bring together Bahá'ís who, in their own countries, are involved in the production and distribution of radio and television programs about the Faith. The friends shared experiences and ideas for more effective proclamation of the Faith through radio and television.

One representative said it is "no exaggeration that the Message will be spread on the mountaintops and in the villages." He said radio, more so than television, is a part of daily life in even the most remote villages.

He said most countries represented at the workshop have a national radio service which airs all programming, and that programs are often repeated. Broadcasts reach entire countries and often neighboring countries.

Most countries air weekly Bahá'í programs on a regular basis. The Bahá'ís usually produce their own material but sometimes exchange material with other countries. He said this is possible because of similar languages and cultures in many of the Caribbean countries.

The representative said an import result of the workshop was the increased willingness on the part of the participants for international collaboration in programming. The friends at the workshop consulted on the idea of a radio and television program clearinghouse to be located in San Salvador, El Salvador, so that programs could be used by more than one country.

The Bahá'í programs are usually a combination of talk and music.

One idea which resulted from the workshop was that the development of deepening through radio and television is important, especially because of the lack of printed matter in many areas, and the easy accessibility of broadcast media into people's homes.

Hawaii

75th Anniversary celebrated

The Bahá'í community of the Hawaiian Islands observed the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Faith in the islands by a banquet held on December 26th in Honolulu. The dinner was attended by more than 270 people including the Hand of the Cause William Sears; Elena Marsella and Ruḥu'lláh Muntází of the Continental Board of Counsellors in North-

Twenty-six Bahá'ís learned about effective use of the media at a Radio-Television Workshop held in Georgetown, Guyana, in December.

Hilo Hattie, a famous Hawaiian entertainer, received a Bahá'í award for service to humanity.
Around the World

eastern Asia; the Governor of Hawaii, George R. Ariyoshi, and Mrs. Ariyoshi; a member of the United States Senate; two United States Congressmen; a State Senator and many other distinguished guests.

During the evening a presentation was made of the Agnes Baldwin Alexander Award for Service to Mankind. Recipient of the honor was Clara Haili Nelson, known as "Hilo Hattie", a well-known and much-loved entertainer whose performances, the citation stated, "bring joy everywhere and cross racial and age barriers" and whose life "exemplifies a concern for the happiness of others." The award piece was carved in wood by Bahá'í sculptor Louis LeClaire.

During the banquet an exhibit of new paintings of the Holy Land and other paintings inspired by Bahá'í themes by Bahá'í artist Leanord Herbert were on display. A painting of the Hand of the Cause Agnes Baldwin Alexander, who first established the Faith in the Hawaiian Islands, was part of the exhibit.

Mr. Sears, principal speaker at the banquet, discussed the role of the Bahá'í Faith in changing the world, and received an enthusiastic ovation at the conclusion of his talk.

The award, the painting exhibit and the banquet were given publicity in newspapers throughout the islands.

media workshop held

An International Radio and Television Workshop was held in Otavalo, Ecuador, December 17-21. Two members of the Continental Board of Counsellors in South America, Auxiliary Board members and representatives from many countries attended.

India

500 new believers in twelve villages

A one-month teaching project in Lucknow, organized by the State Teaching Committee of Uttar Pradesh, resulted in

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A one-month teaching project in Lucknow, organized by the State Teaching Committee of Uttar Pradesh, resulted in
acceptance into the Faith of 500 new believers in 12 villages, said the National Spiritual Assembly of India.

A 30-day deepening institute held simultaneously with the teaching project was attended by representatives of Local Assemblies in all parts of Uttar Pradesh. The Secretary of the Assembly of Phuntsoling, Bhutan, who is Bhutanese, was also present.

Follow-up consolidation meetings and continued teaching activities are taking place, reported the National Assembly of India.

Niger

**Twenty believers enrolled**

Many participants at a recent National Teaching Conference in Niger responded to a call by the National Spiritual Assembly to spend part of their holidays on teaching trips.

One team, comprised of a member of the Auxiliary Board, two pioneers and five Niger Bahá'í youth, spent 22 days traveling 1,500 kilometers. They visited isolated Bahá'ís, and taught and proclaimed the Faith in several villages. They enrolled approximately 20 new believers and formed two Local Assemblies.

Pakistan

**Bahá'ís active in Minority Week**

At the invitation of the government, the National Spiritual Assembly of Pakistan participated in the official observance of Minority Week from June 1-7. The press and other media reported the activities of the Bahá'í community in connection with this event. Because of Minority Week, the Bahá'ís had the opportunity to present the principles of the Faith in the Gorji language in a radio broadcast.

Rhodesia

**Travelling teachers on national television**

Two New Zealand Bahá'ís recently spent ten days in Rhodesia, teaching in the villages, and offering encouragement to the friends to continue their efforts. They held more than 13 meetings between August 24 and September 4, addressing audiences of up to 100 people.

While in Salisbury, Russ and Gina Garcia were interviewed on national television. They described their careers as musicians in Hollywood, their travels to the

Winter School held in goal town

The first Bahá'í Winter School in Liechtenstein was held December 26-January 2 in the capital city and goal town of Vaduz.
Around the World

Polynesian islands aboard their boat *The Dawn-Breaker*, their present life in New Zealand, and in response to direct questions about religion, gave a summary of the Faith. "Everywhere they visited," said the National Spiritual Assembly, "the Garcias charmed the friends with their Bahá'í songs. They left behind in Rhodesia some new Bahá'ís and many songs, gifts by which we shall warmly remember them."

Seychelles

**Bahá'í teacher visits President**

Lea Nys, a travelling teacher from Belgium, visited the first President of the newly independent Seychelles, James R. Mancham, on November 11. She explained to him the route of Bahá'u'lláh's long exile and imprisonment.

Sierra Leone

**Hand of Cause visits Sierra Leone**

During his recent visit to Sierra Leone, the Hand of the Cause Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir consulted with members of the National Spiritual Assembly and National Teaching Committee on measures for promoting the process of entry by troops into the Faith. Encouraged by his suggestion that whole villages could be taught at once, teams of believers visited a number of small villages to make the effort.

In each village the headman was approached and asked to summon the people for a presentation on the Faith. After prayer and songs, the Teachings were presented. The Bahá'ís then broke into small groups to answer questions and present additional information.

In the village of Kebbie Town, consisting of 19 houses, 13 people embraced the Cause, including the headman In another village, 11 adults and 20 children accepted the Faith within a week.

Accompanying Dr. Muhájir on these projects were representatives of the National Spiritual Assembly and of the Auxiliary Board, as well as local believers, including women and children.

"Dr. Muhájir's simplicity in presenting the Teachings and his wisdom in not speaking on controversial issues or allowing others to be discouraged by traditions of the past that would hinder them from recognizing the new Messenger of God was an example to all of us," said the National Spiritual Assembly.

South and West Africa

**White stone teaching reminder**

The National Teaching Committee of South and West Africa has come up with a novel idea to encourage the friends to teach the Faith. They have given each believer a white stone as a symbol of the individual's Covenant with God to live the Bahá'í life and teach. When the Bahá'í teaches someone, he passes the white stone along to the new Bahá'í. He tells the new Bahá'í that the white stone is a reminder for him to teach one new person every year, and that he should pass the white stone along to the person he teaches.

The National Teaching Committee said the idea for the white stone came from a verse in the Bible found in Revelations 2:17: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh, will I give of the hidden manna and give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."
Spain

Spanish Bahá'ís attend winter school

The Bahá'ís of Spain met in Liria, Valencia, for Bahá'í Winter School, where they saw The Green Light Expedition and heard talks by Betty Reed, Continental Counsellor for Europe.

The friends were encouraged to arise and fulfill the goals of the Five Year Plan. Mrs. Reed encouraged the believers to pioneer, travel teach, and “find new fields of service to the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh.”

As a result of the school, teaching teams were formed to reach three goal cities.

Tobago

Two hundred declare after teaching project

Two hundred Tobagonians became Bahá'ís during a thirteen day teaching project which began December 11. Travelling teachers arrived from Canada, Iran, Trinidad and the United States to teach from town to town.

By the end of the teaching and consolidation project, five communities, Canaan-Bon Accord, Charlottesville, Glamorgan, Pembroke and Speyside had attained Assembly status, said the Bahá'í Bulletin of Trinidad-Tobago.

Togo

First Women’s Institute held

The National Spiritual Assembly of Togo reported in September that a Bahá’í Women’s Institute has been held there for the first time. Twenty-five women attended, drawn mostly from three villages situated in one of the most populated Bahá’í areas of Togo.

Thelma Khelghati, Continental Counsellor for the West Africa Board, stimulated discussion on the education of children, teaching the Faith to other women, and the role of women in Bahá’í communities.

“The responsiveness and enthusiasm of the participants was high,” the National Assembly said. “As Bahá’í women begin to imbue their homes with the spirit and principles of the Faith, the progress of the Cause in Togo will be greatly increased.”

United States

Birthday greeting from President

David Brockington, Sr., the oldest Bahá’í in the United States, celebrated his 101st birthday on December 24th. Among his birthday greetings was a telegram from Gerald R. Ford, President of the United States. The message said:

“Mrs. Ford and I were delighted to learn that you will be celebrating the grand occasion of your hundred and first birthday, and we want to be sure to be included among those expressing congratulations to you at this time.”

Zaire

Pygmy Bahá’ís contacted

Two Bahá’í pioneers recently returned from a one-month teaching trip through the jungles of Ituri in Zaire where they located five camps of nomadic Pygmy Bahá’ís and helped to deepen the friends further.

“The Pygmies, who live by hunting, are truly kings of the jungle,” the pioneers wrote. “Their camps change often because they follow the animals.

“We found the Pygmies to be noble and spiritual, and they have a deep belief in God,” the pioneers reported.

Due to changing economic circumstances, many Pygmies have left the jungle, the teachers reported. Five members of a Local Assembly that was formed a year and a half ago have now moved, the report said. However, the pioneers were still able to hold deepenings in five small Pygmy camps.

In one of these camps the Bahá’ís were very receptive and had a thorough knowledge of the Faith because one village believer devoted time to teaching them and to reading to them from available Bahá’í Writings. In general, however, the report said, village dwellers treat the Pygmies badly. In one Pygmy camp, having been informed that the Bahá’ís had arrived, two chiefs, though very apprehensive, presented them with a gift of eggs and mushrooms, saying they were happy to see Bahá’ís and that the message of love the Faith brought was true.

During the teaching trip, the pioneers opened 15 villages. In eight of these, the Cause was embraced by all the residents.

In Haut-Zaïre the Cause was accepted by people of different religious backgrounds. A number of youth were included among the new believers.

“The result,” the pioneers reported, “was a gift of land to build a Center and a spirit of joy mixed with tears, as if they had discovered the mysteries of the New Kingdom.”

Zambia

Five villagers declare

In the village of Mpuka, near Chilanga, two Zambian believers recently spoke with the village chief and were given permission to hold a meeting to teach the Faith.

The visitors were encouraged by the attitudes of their audience and decided to return to Mpuka a second time. When they arrived, the chief called the villagers together to hear about Bahá’u’lláh. Approximately 50 people attended the meeting. After a lively discussion, five villagers, including the chief, accepted the Faith.

Bahá’í Center to be built

The Bahá’ís of Kachenge, Zambia, have set themselves the goal of making 2,000 bricks with which to construct a Bahá’í Center for their community. Through the combined efforts of the believers, 1,400 bricks have already been made.
Hong Kong:
Foundation for victory

More than 600 Bahá'ís from 34 countries congregated in Hong Kong November 26-28 for the fifth of eight International Teaching Conferences called for in the Five Year Plan. Twenty-one National Spiritual Assemblies were represented.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Hong Kong, which was formed in 1974, was host for the conference. Most sessions were held in Chinese, with English and Persian translations.

The Hands of the Cause present at the conference were 'Ali-Akbar Furútan, representative of The Universal House of Justice; H. Collis Featherstone and Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir.

The results of the Conference were cabled to the World Center: "... over 60 friends forward to pioneer, travel teach; 3 public meetings; 8 radio interviews; 2 press conferences; 1 VIP luncheon for 100
Hands of the Cause present at the conference were Ali-Akbar Furutan, representative of The Universal House of Justice, center; H. Collis Featherstone, left; Rahmatu'llah Muhajir, right. Bottom left: William Maxwell officially represented the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States. Bottom right: More than 600 Bahá'ís from 34 countries met in Hong Kong.

Many Asian countries reported on the state of their goals. Malaysian believers have completed their goals and hope to double their accomplishments by the end of the Plan. The believers in the Philippines are well on the way to victory and report a winning spirit dominant in the community. The Bahá'ís of Iran achieved their financial goal the day they received the Plan and by the midpoint had achieved 85 per cent of their foreign goals. Hawaii reported that all overseas pioneer goals are achieved. Hawaii enjoys a high level of proclamation and the Faith is mentioned regularly on television. Due to government restrictions, Burma could not send delegates to the conference, but it was stated that the youth there have taken on the responsibility of achieving their goals and are confident that these will be won quickly. There are now more than 8,000 non-Bahá'ís, 20 Bahá'ís...
Baha'is in Burma, it was stated.

It was frequently stressed in the keynote addresses that women must play an increasingly important role in teaching work and in service on institutions. Baha'i women were urged to go to other homes in friendship and introduce other women to the Faith.

The conference organizers reported that proclamation in Hong Kong prior to and during the conference had been excellent. Several public meetings were held and these were attended mainly by people who had not heard about the Faith. An estimated 30,000 pieces of Baha'i literature were distributed to the general public and five displays of Baha'i material were on view.

By the end of the conference, over $17,000 had been donated to the Fund.
Top: The friends socialized over meals.
Below right and left: Bahá'í women were urged to go to other homes in friendship and teach other women the Faith.
Top left: Hand of the Cause Ali-Akbar Furutan addressed the gathering. Top right and bottom: Six continents and thirty-four countries were represented at the conference.
Nearly 500 Persian Bahá’ís currently residing in the United States attended a special conference in Wilmette, Illinois, on December 25-26, called by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States to inform the Persian believers about pressing homefront needs of the Five Year Plan and ways they can assist in winning the goals of the American community.

An estimated 100 of the participants were Persian Bahá’í youth, most of them in the United States to pursue degrees at American colleges and universities. The National Assembly encouraged them to become fully integrated into the American Bahá’í community and to beware of political involvement in the affairs of any government.

A message sent to the conference by The Universal House of Justice depicted the critical needs of the Five Year Plan in international fields of service. The Universal House of Justice requested four volunteers for each of six zones to spend three-to-six months travelling teaching. The zones named were Australasia; Central and South America; Central, East, Southern and Western Africa.

Before the end of the conference, 40 people volunteered for travelling teaching. About half volunteered to travel on the homefront and half internationally. Two volunteered to resettle pioneer posts abroad.

As each volunteer walked to the front of the conference, he or she was personally greeted by the Hand of the Cause Dhikru’lláh Khádem. The volunteers were joined by the remaining Bahá’ís in an old Persian Bahá’í song, singing “Take my hand, ’Abdu’l-Bahá, take my hand . . .”

One of the Persian friends said the conference gave him a feeling reminiscent of “the spirit in the old country”. He said because of that spirit, the conference was precious to him, even more so because he
knew he could teach freely when he left the conference.

The friends met Saturday morning in the House of Worship for a memorial service for Adelaide Sharp, who spent nearly 50 years in Iran. She educated Bahá’í children, enriched the spiritual life of the youth, translated the Writings, and consolidated the administrative institutions. She was the first woman elected to the National Assembly of Iran. She died in September, 1976.

Speakers for the conference, which was conducted in Persian, included Mr. Khádem; Continental Counsellor Edna True; members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States Firuz Kazemzadeh, Chairman, Glenford Mitchell, Secretary, and Soo Fouts, Assistant Secretary; Auxiliary Board members Javidukht Khádem and Jalil Mahmoudi, and trustee for the Huququlláh in North America, Kazem Kazemzadeh. Hormoz Bastani, assistant to the Auxiliary Board, and Vahid Rafati also addressed the conference.

Hand of the Cause Ali-Akbar Furútan sent a taped message to the conference, and the National Assembly of Iran sent a letter to the Persian believers residing in the United States.

Mr. Khádem told the friends they must think about their duty to teach now that they are in the United States. He told them they will be blessed and assisted by God if they make a serious effort to teach.

Mr. Mahmoudi spoke on the absolute requirement for non-involvement in politics. He said Bahá’ís have their own world plan and are interested in solving problems on a universal scale rather than piecemeal or nationally. Bahá’ís’ participation in politics in one country might work against Bahá’ís in another country, he said. Sometimes we do not understand Bahá’u’lláh’s wisdom, he said, but we obey His teachings out of love for Him and because of His station as a Manifestation of God.
travelling teaching was manned by members of the International Goals Committee. The forty-two children who attended the conference met in classrooms for stories, games and entertainment.
Australasian Bahá'ís “vanguard of the Army of Light”

To the Friends assembled at the International Teaching Conference in Auckland,

Dearly-loved Friends,

With hearts full of love and admiration for the followers of the Most Great Name in Australasia we send our warmest greetings to all assembled in this historic gathering in the heart of the Antipodes.

How great is your place in Bahá’í history! How bright are the prospects for the future of the Cause so lovingly nurtured for more than half-a-century by hundreds of stalwart steadfast believers, spiritual heirs of Hyde and Clara Dunn, who in direct response to the Tablets of the Divine Plan forsook their home and went to pioneer in Australia, and whose names Shoghi Effendi wrote, were “graven in letters of gold” upon his heart. In March 1951, when in the entire Pacific area there was but one National Spiritual Assembly, the beloved Guardian predicted that “The prizes destined for the heroic warriors, battling for the Cause for Bahá’u’lláh throughout the Southern Hemisphere, and particularly Australasia, are glorious beyond compare. The assistance to be vouchsafed to them from on high in their struggle for its establishment, its recognition and triumph is ready to be poured forth in astonishing abundance.”

Now, twenty-five years later, the achievements are truly astounding. Beginning with the establishment of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of New Zealand at Rídíván 1957, the number of National Assemblies has increased eleven-fold; the Mashriqu’l-Adhkar of the Antipodes has been erected near Sydney; His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II of Western Samoa has become the first reigning monarch to embrace the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh; the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies now stands at over 360; and the number of localities where Bahá’ís reside in this vast oceanic area covering well-nigh one-eighth of the earth’s surface is more than 1,800. These accomplishments doubtless have been a source of great joy to the immortal soul of Shoghi Effendi, whose esteem and affection for the followers of Bahá’u’lláh labouring for His Cause in the Antipodes was frequently expressed in glowing terms in his letters to the Assemblies and friends in Australasia.

Dear friends, we have now passed the mid-point of the Five Year Plan. You are met in the beautiful city of Auckland to take stock and to make plans for attaining the victories which will surely be yours.

The National Spiritual Assemblies of the New Hebrides and of the Marshall Islands are to be raised up next Rídíván; plans for the soon-to-be-erected Mashriqu’l-Adhkar of Samoa are in process; but although the goal of establishing Bahá’í centers totalling 2,188 is within easy reach, the Local Assembly Goals assigned to each national community, totally 613, need prompt and decisive attention. The divine assistance spoken of by the beloved Guardian in 1951 has ever been available, and is still “ready to be poured forth in astonishing abundance”. It is within your power during the coming year to win all assigned teaching goals, leaving the final year of the Plan for consolidation and the winning of supplementary victories.

This will be achieved, not by resting on laurels, but by manifesting those qualities of faith, judgment, vision, loyalty, courage and self-sacrifice which earned the Guardian’s praise so frequently in past decades. Let the valiant Australasian Bahá’í communities vie once more with their sister communities throughout the world for the palm of victory and maintain their position in the vanguard of the Army of Light.

Pioneers, travelling teachers and a fresh outpouring of funds are essential ingredients to the onward march of the Cause throughout Australia, New Zealand and the islands of the South Pacific. Let those who can offer their valued services to the teaching work arise without delay; let those who cannot travel or pioneer deputize those who can go in their stead.

We cherish the highest hopes for the success of your endeavours and it is our constant prayer that Bahá’u’lláh will shower His richest blessings an confirmations upon you.

The Universal House of Justice
January, 1977

Call for dedicated effort

To the Followers of Bahá’u’lláh gathered at the International Teaching Conference in Bahia, Brazil

Dearly-loved Friends,

With joyous hearts we hail the convocation of this first of the twin Latin-American Conferences closing the series of eight International Bahá’í Conferences held during the midway period of the Five Year Plan.

The ringing call of Bahá’u’lláh in His Most Holy Book to the Rulers of America and the Presidents of the Republics therein was followed after an interval of more than four decades by the revelation of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Tablets of the Divine Plan in which the beloved Master stressed the importance of the Republics of the South American Continent.

The first believer to respond to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s divine call was that star-servant of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh, valiant, indomitable Martha Root, who in 1919 visited many important cities in South America. Two years later Leonora Holsapple Armstrong, mother of the Bahá’ís of Brazil, settled in Bahia. The teaching work in the continent progressed steadily to the point where, in 1937, the beloved Guardian launched his first Seven Year Plan paving the way for the raising in subsequent Plans of the institutions of...
Bahá'u'lláh’s Administrative Order in every one of its republics and its islands. It was in the course of that first Seven Year Plan that ’Abdu’l-Bahá’s beloved handmaid, May Maxwell, in 1940 won a martyr’s crown when she laid down her life in Argentina, thereby adding further lustre to the spiritual history of South America.

How truly fitting, then, that this auspicious Conference have its venue in the city of Bahia, singled out for special mention by ’Abdu’l-Bahá in His Tablets of the Divine Plan. And how timely it is at this crucial point in the Five Year Plan that the friends gathered in Bahia from many lands prayerfully consider, and arise to prosecute expeditiously all measures aimed at achieving glorious victory in all goals of the Plan.

Noteworthy progress has been achieved in many fields of service throughout the South American Bahá’í community, particularly in attracting to the Cause large numbers of its indigenous peoples. But myriads of pure-hearted souls have not yet heard the clarion call of Bahá'u'lláh and hungrily await the spiritual nourishment that only His followers can give them.

Steps must be taken to attract members of every stratum of society to the divine circle of the Faith through effective proclamation and teaching. Greater utilization of radio broadcasts is necessary, not only to reach all levels of society but also to deepen the believers themselves. The valuable and dynamic services of Bahá’í youth must be applied in the fields of pioneering and travel teaching. A far wider dissemination of Bahá’í literature must be accompanied by a continuous programme of translation of the Sacred Text into the major indigenous languages of the continent.

The continental goals for South America of 8,670 centers and 2,293 Local Spiritual Assemblies must be won, and may even be surpassed, for every country must achieve the goals assigned to it. This calls for the dedicated effort of every National Spiritual Assembly, every Local Spiritual Assembly and indeed every believer. All the divinely ordained instruments of the Administrative Order of Bahá’u'lláh must now unite in executing a symphony of victory in all the unfinished goals of the Five Year Plan, winning thereby the good pleasure of the Blessed Beauty.

Beloved friends, go forward with complete assurance that a continent so rich in spiritual promise, so diverse in its peoples and races, so fertile for the planting of the seeds of Bahá’u'lláh’s Faith will yield a brilliant harvest for all who labor in that Divine Vineyard.

It is our fervent loving prayer at the Sacred Threshold that Bahá’u'lláh’s bountiful confirmations and richest blessings may be showered upon you.

The Universal House of Justice January 1977

Wholehearted support of Plan needed

To the Followers of Bahá’u'lláh gathered at the International Teaching Conference in Mérida; Mexico

With joyous hearts and eager anticipation we send warmest greetings to you the participants in the last of the eight great International Teaching Conferences marking the halfway point of the Five Year Plan.

The convening of this Conference in the Republic of Mexico, in the capital city of a state that was once an important part of a great Indian empire, provides a unique opportunity to initiate what may well become the widespread reawakening of a people whose ancestors more than 1,200 years ago developed one of the most brilliant pre-Columbian civilizations known to modern man. These present-day descendants, many of whom have already embraced the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh and who consider the Yucatán Peninsula and the seacoast lowlands and rugged spine of mountains joining North and South America to be their homeland, are
among the very people mentioned by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Tablets of the Divine Plan as having a great destiny once they have accepted His Father's Cause. Here too, and throughout Middle America, are those whose forefathers came from the Iberian Peninsula, Africa and the Far East linking the Old with the New World.

Conscious of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's impassioned plea to promulgate the oneness of mankind to a spiritually impoverished humanity, a handful of itinerant Baha'I teachers set forth four decades ago, traversed the land bridge connecting the two continents of the Western Hemisphere and carried the healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the Spanish-American Republics. Their dedicated efforts were rewarded when, in 1938, the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Latin America was formed in Mexico City. This initial triumph at the inception of the first of the teaching plans formulated by Shoghi Effendi spearheaded other victories leading to the formation of two, then of four Regional Spiritual Assemblies and ultimately to the establishment of National Spiritual Assemblies in each of the republics of Latin America and in the islands of the Caribbean.

Praiseworthy indeed were these achievements but the Bahá'í communities of Central America and the West Indies must not be content to rest on these laurels. The beloved Guardian during the last months of his precious life continually urged the friends of Latin America to pursue what he described as "the paramount task", the teaching work. How much more does that injunction apply today! In less than thirty months, approximately 900 groups and isolated centers and over 400 Local Spiritual Assemblies must be added to those already existing in the mainland and island nations of Middle America! To accomplish this challenging task, intensive effort to attract new believers, be they black, brown, red or white, from all strata of society, must be exerted. Hand in hand with this endeavour, particularly in local communities, goes the development of the distinctive character of Bahá'í Life. Prompt attention must also be given to the acquisition of Local Hazíratu'l-Quds and endowments, and the translation and publication of Bahá'í literature, especially in indigenous languages, must be accelerated.

Dear friends, if at the close of the Five Year Plan we are to witness the ensigns of victory lifted high, the wholehearted support of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh must be enlisted now and their energies systematically channeled into areas most in need. We cherish the hope that at this final Conference the friends will arise with enthusiasm and determination not only to win the remaining goals of the Plan but to carry out Shoghi Effendi's injunction to win the allegiance of members of the various tribes of American Indians to the Cause, thereby hastening the period prophesied by the Master when the Indian peoples of America would become a source of spiritual illumination to the world.

Our hearts, our hopes and our prayers will be with you during all the days of your deliberations. May Bahá'u'lláh inspire each and every one of you.

The Universal House of Justice
February 1977

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New Books

**Goal of World Center won**

The Universal House of Justice has released a volume of Writings of the Báb fulfilling one of its goals for the Five Year Plan.

**Selections from the Writings of the Báb** is the first comprehensive selection from the Writings of the Báb to be published in English. Previously, Shoghi Effendi translated passages from the Writings of the Báb, which are to be found in *God Passes By*, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, and the *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*. Two prayers were also translated previously.

Arranged in seven sections, the new book begins with tablets and addresses to
Meaning of constructing Seat of Supreme Institution

Address by Hand of the Cause Paul Haney to the Bahá'í International Teaching Conference in Merida, Mexico, February 4-6.

The destiny of the Holy Land in relation to our Faith, as every Bahá'í knows, has been foretold in the sacred Writings of the prophets of old, in Tablets revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá and in the writings of Shoghi Effendi.

The fulfillment of these prophecies and allusions began with the banishment of Bahá'u'lláh and His arrival in 'Akká in 1868. Since that historic event the spiritual heart and the nerve center of the Bahá'í world have been located in the Holy Land, first in 'Akká, and then in both Haifa and 'Akká, following the transfer of the remains of the Báb to Mount Carmel and their interment in the bosom of that Holy Mountain.

From the Holy Land, the world spiritual center of the Faith since 1868, the Master, and later the Guardian, as the divinely-appointed Centers of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, fostered and directed the spiritual and administrative development of the Cause throughout the Bahá'í world.

During both the early and later years of His ministry, Shoghi Effendi gradually disclosed to the believers the future evolution of the World Center and the glory of the divinely ordained Institutions which would be established there. In these successive and majestic messages the beloved Guardian described the relationship of these Institutions to the Shrines and Holy Places which had long comprised the world spiritual center of the Faith. Of these the Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel stands preeminent, surpassed only by the Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahji. The Guardian referred to the resting-place of the Báb as "a focal center of divine illumination and power" which would, as the institutions comprising the World Administrative Center of the future Bahá'í Commonwealth became established, continue to flourish and expand "until the full measure of its splendor will have been disclosed before the eyes of all mankind."

In referring to the International Archives building, standing in the shadow of the Shrine of the Báb, Shoghi Effendi told us that the completion of this edifice would in turn herald the construction of several...
other structures which would serve as the administrative seats of the divinely ordained institutions of the Faith at its World Center. He stated that these edifices would be in the shape of a far-flung arc and would surround the resting-places of the Greatest Holy Leaf, the Purest Branch and the Holy Mother, and that their completion would mark the culmination of the development of the world-wide, divinely-appointed administrative order of the Faith, and would fulfill the glad tidings and promises revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in the Tablet of Carmel.

It was the Tablet of Carmel which generated the spiritual impulse for the rise and establishment of the Bahá'í International institutions in the Holy Land, a process which Shoghi Effendi told us "may be traced as far back as the concluding years of the Heroic Age of the Faith," and which will attain its final consummation in the Golden Age, "through the raising of the standard of the Most Great Peace and the emergence in the plenitude of its power and glory of the focal center of the agencies constituting the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. The final establishment of this seat of the future Bahá'í World Commonwealth will," he told us, "signalize at once the proclamation of the sovereignty of the Founder of the Faith and the advent of the Kingdom of the Father..." Thus it was the Tablet of Carmel which is the charter for the development of the institutions of the Faith at its World Center, including the establishment of the supreme edifice of The Universal House of Justice.

Let us attempt to understand, through these majestic words of our beloved Guardian, the extent of the blessing conferred upon the entire world through the establishment of The Universal House of Justice, and particularly the significance of the seat of that mighty institution which the Bahá'ís of the world are now called upon to build. In explaining the significance of the Tablet of Carmel as the charter for the establishment of the Universal House of Justice, Shoghi Effendi stated that:

"In this great Tablet (of Carmel) which unveils divine mysteries and heralds the establishment of two mighty, majestic and momentous undertakings... the Spiritual and Administrative World Centers 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 Center of the Mighty Covenant is the body which should legislate on 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,..."

In another message the Guardian referred to the Supreme Body of the House of Justice as "the dome of the Edifice" (of the Administrative Order of the Faith) that would have to be raised "on its prescribed
site on the slopes of the divine Vineyard, the 'Mountain of the Lord, to adorn the institutions of God's New Order with this crown of high distinction.'

Therefore the construction of the building which will be the seat of the House of Justice on Mount Carmel is really an instruction, a command, from our beloved Guardian, as well as from the House of Justice, to which all of us, the Bahá'ís of the world, must respond, and in so doing hasten the dawn of that glorious era so clearly foreshadowed in these majestic passages from the writings of Shoghi Effendi:

"This World Administrative Center of the Bahá'í community constitutes the pivot of the New World Order of Him Who is the Vivifier of moulder bones and the Source of infinite grace and bounty. It stands as the emblem symbolizing the basic unity of all nations, governments and peoples, and as the seat of sovereignty and the dawning-place of both spiritual and temporal power. It is the supreme Center to which the followers of His most sublime and glorious Faith must turn and the focal point which will mirror forth the effulgent splendors of the Kingdom of God, the Almighty, upon all regions. It is the fountainhead of divine civilization, the fairest, the noblest fruit of the Bahá'í Revelation—a civilization whose effects will, during the third, the Golden Age of the Bahá'í Dispensation and in the course of the future Dispensations, become clearly manifest, and whose bountiful outpourings will, like unto a torrential flood, burst forth upon all mankind.

And in other messages referring to the time when the Supreme Institution of the House of Justice would be established and function from the Holy Land, Shoghi Effendi told us that:

"Through it the pillars of the Faith on this earth will be firmly established and its hidden powers be revealed, its signs shine forth, its banners be unfurled and its light be shed upon all peoples. . . . Then will be unveiled before our eyes the inauguration of an era the like of which has never been witnessed in past ages. . . . Then will the throne of Bahá'u'lláh's sovereignty be founded in the promised land and the scales of justice be raised on high. Then will the banner of the independence of the Faith be unfurled, and His Most Great Law be unveiled and rivers of laws and ordinances stream forth from this snow-white spot with all-conquering power and awe-inspiring majesty, the like of which past ages have never seen. Then will appear the truth of what was revealed by the Tongue of Grandeur. 'Call out to Zion, O Carmel, and announce the joyful tidings: He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come. His all-conquering sovereignty is manifest. His all-encompassing splendor is revealed . . . O Carmel . . . well is it with him that circleteth around thee, that proclaims the revelation of thy glory, and reckoneth that which the bounty of the Lord, thy God, hath showered upon thee.'"

Crates of marble for The Universal House of Justice Seat arrived in Haifa in January.
International Conferences attract 16,000 believers

Nearly 4,500 people attended the last three International Teaching Conferences that were held in New Zealand, Brazil and Mexico. There was a total attendance of more than 16,000 in the series of eight teaching conferences.

A report on the worldwide progress of the goals of the Five Year Plan was given at the last conference. Some of the achievements were: 64 percent of the assigned pioneer goals have been filled; 54 percent of the anticipated Local Spiritual Assemblies have been formed; and 73 percent of the anticipated localities have been opened.

The Southeast Asian nation of Malaysia completed all of its goals given by The Universal House of Justice. It was reported at the last conference that the National Spiritual Assembly of Malaysia has asked for an additional assignment of goals.

The island of Singapore also finished its initial plan given by The Universal House of Justice. This Assembly now wishes to teach 500,000 Chinese people before the end of the Plan.

Hawaii has completed its goals, it was reported.

In addition, it was reported that the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador has received a license to operate the first Bahá’í radio station in the world.

Left: Roberto Santos, the governor of Bahia, addressed the Bahá’ís. Top, left to right: Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga, left, spoke with the Carib Indian Chief from Surinam, right. Indigenous Bolivian believers arrive at the Bahia Conference. Bottom: Believers met outdoors under a large orange tent at the Merida Conference.
The Sixth International Teaching Conference was held January 19-22, in Auckland, New Zealand. Twelve hundred Bahá'ís from 27 countries, including Bahá'ís of Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian ancestry, attended.

Hands of the Cause A. Q. Faizi, representative of The Universal House of Justice, and H. Collis Featherstone were present.

The training of children and youth was emphasized at the conference, as was the idea that South Seas Islanders should teach their own people.

The call for pioneers resulted in 49 volunteers to fill 28 posts. Fifty-one Bahá'ís volunteered to teach in countries other than their own. Over $6,000 was contributed to the Fund.

Singers and dancers from Iran, Malaysia, New Hebrides, Samoa and Tonga performed at the conference.

In pre-conference activities, the believers met at a Unity Feast, where prayers and readings were shared in eleven languages.

In 1919, Martha Root visited Bahia, Brazil. She was the first Bahá'í to do so. Fifty-eight years later, on January 28-30, 1977, thirteen hundred Bahá'ís from all over the world visited Bahia to attend the seventh Bahá'í International Teaching Conference. Some 5600 people declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh during pre-conference teaching activities. Sixty more declarations were obtained during the conference.

In the message to the conference from The Universal House of Justice, as read by its representative Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga, the Bahá'ís of South America were called to “unite all the divinely ordained instruments of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh in executing a symphony of victory in all the unfinished goals of the Five Year Plan.” The importance of “attracting to the Cause large numbers of indigenous peoples” as well as “members of every stratum of society,” the “greater utilization of radio broadcast,” the “increase of the number of pioneers and travelling teachers” and the “wider dissemination of Bahá'í literature” were also stressed.

Indian teaching was reviewed extensively during the program. Hundreds of
new Indian believers are being enrolled in Ecuador, where regular Bahá’í broadcasts in Quechua, an Indian dialect, are heard. The Mapuche Indians of Argentina have been reached for the first time as well. During the conference, representatives of the 17 tribes present were called to the stage to tell their experiences in the Faith and sing native songs.

The first pioneer to Bahia, Leonora Holsapple Armstrong, was presented to the friends gathered at the conference by Hand of the Cause Mr. Olinga. Then a letter was read. The letter was written by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in June, 1921, and addressed to the Maidservant of God Leonora Stirling Holsapple. Under the guidance of Shoghi Effendi, Mrs. Armstrong was the first to translate Bahá’í literature into Portuguese and Spanish. The translations were used throughout South America, confirming the Guardian’s words that “Bahia will become a light-house which will illumine all these regions.” Mrs. Armstrong is presently a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South America.

An account of the accomplishments of the goals of the Five Year Plan was presented by a panel of 11 National Spiritual Assemblies and indigenous believers, coordinated by Counsellor Masu’úd Khamsi. The communities in Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, and Paraguay have won their locality goals.

A call for pioneers and Bahá’ís to travel and teach the Faith resulted in 111 volunteers, some of whom would fill goals immediately after the conference.

The remarkable sum of $290,000 was contributed to the Bahá’í Fund by the believers present, and 465 contributions were made for the construction of the Seat of The Universal House of Justice.

In addition to Mr. Olinga, Hands of the
Hand of the Cause Paul Haney annoints indigenous believers in Bahia with attar of rose. The role of Bahá'í women was the topic of a talk by Mercedes Sanches, Auxiliary Board member from Peru. Bolivian believers sang for the conference.

Members of National Assemblies address public meeting

A public meeting, the subject of which was "God's Plan for Mankind," was held during the International Teaching Conference in Bahia and publicized via radio and newspapers. Those who attended were addressed by representatives of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, as well as Victor de Araujo, representative of the Bahá'í International Community at the United Nations. Publicity and coverage for the conference included seven radio and nine television programs, and 18 newspaper interviews.
Top: Thirteen hundred Bahá’ís participated in the International Teaching Conference in Bahia. Hands of the Cause Enoch Olinga, Paul Haney and Rahmatullah Muhajir are seated in the front row. Bottom: Seventeen indigenous tribes were represented at the conference.
Merida: prelude to expansion

More than 2,000 Bahá’ís attended the last Bahá’í International Teaching Conference held in Merida, Mexico, February 4-6. They represented 44 countries and 32 minorities and Indian tribes, ranging from a three-year-old Mayan child who recited a prayer in front of the conference to 77-year-old Edna Ford, the pioneer who opened Merida to the Faith.

Hand of the Cause Paul Haney represented The Universal House of Justice at the conference. Hands of the Cause Rahmatu’lláh Muhájir and Enoch Olinga were also present. Counsellor Florence Mayberry, a resident of the World Center, represented the International Teaching Center at the conference. She was a member of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico, which formed in 1961. Four more Continental Counsellors were in attendance, as well as six Auxiliary Board members.

One-third of the Bahá’ís present were indigenous believers, 150 of whom were Mayans. Some had travelled for seven or eight days to attend the conference. Others rode a bus chartered by the National Spiritual Assembly of Belize which stopped for Bahá’ís along the Corozal Road by pre-arrangement.
For the first time at an international teaching conference, Bahá'ís were permitted to bring family members who are close to the Faith, largely because of the close family life among many indigenous peoples.

The point of emphasis at the Merida Conference was that the Indians should be taught in all countries where the Faith is represented. The native believers, when deepened, will precipitate the entry by troops, it was said.

An insistent call for 50 believers to make teaching trips to Central and South America was made. Trips lasting from three to nine months were especially requested, with concentration on Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico. At the same time the call was raised for eight Persians to pioneer to the Antilles and Windward and Leeward Islands. An appeal was made for deputization of those who would travel abroad to teach.

More than 200 Bahá'ís volunteered to pioneer or teach abroad. Over $136,500 was contributed or pledged to the Fund. A boat was donated for use in the 80 San Bias Islands, where 2500 Cuna Indian Bahá'ís live. Three buses were donated for use in Guatemala, Haiti and Mexico.

**Child's goals for Plan shared**

At the Merida conference, a seven-year-old Iranian girl’s personal goals for the Five Year Plan were shared:

1. I will say a prayer each morning for the success of the Five Year Plan.
2. I will read my Bahá'í children's magazine each month.
3. When I finish reading my children's magazine, I will send it to children of pioneers in other countries.
4. When I receive my allowance each week, I will give it to the Fund.

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*Above: Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga greets believers at the International Teaching Conference in Merida. Above right: Hand of the Cause Rahmatu'llâh Muhâjir introduces Edna Ford, the first pioneer to the Yucatan. Bottom: One-third of the Bahá'ís at the Merida Conference were indigenous believers.*
Hand of the Cause A. Q. Faizi spoke to the friends at the Assembly Hall, Bahá’í Temple grounds, Sydney, during his tour of Australia in December and January, which took him to Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

The work of sculptor Janson Jannu, a Bahá’í, was exhibited at the University of New South Wales. Many viewers asked questions about the Faith.

Alaska

Children host teaching events

In Petersburg, Alaska, Bahá’í children ages 10-13 are hosts at a monthly teaching event at the Bahá’í Center.

Three children prepare for the events which are usually attended by at least 25 children who are not Bahá’ís. They are responsible for inviting the non-Bahá’í guests, teaching them and deepening their friendships with them.

The parties are supervised by an adult Bahá’í. The children have asked to have more than one party per month.

Australia

Youth Conference attracts diverse group of Bahá’ís

More than 150 Bahá’í youth from Australia, the United States, Canada, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands attended the Eighth Australian Bahá’í Youth Conference. Organized by the National Youth Committee, the conference was held at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, from January 14-17, 1977.

The youth were privileged to meet the Hand of the Cause A. Q. Faizi, who addressed the conference twice and also attended the children’s program. Counsellor Florence Mayberry, member of the International Teaching Center in Haifa, spoke to the youth during the conference, her first visit to Australia. Counsellors Howard Harwood, Peter Khan and Thelma Parks were present, as well as two members of the National Assembly and two Auxiliary Board members.

On Saturday, January 15, the conference was opened to the public and presentations included slides of “The Bahá’í Faith in Diverse Cultures,” and talks on morals and building a new civilization.

The program on Sunday included a widely-publicized youth service at the Bahá’í House of Worship and a public lecture by Dr. Khan.

Faith taught on university campus

Three teaching events have been held recently on the campus of the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia.

In the first event, the Bahá’í Society of the University displayed Bahá’í literature at the entrance of the campus library. Hundreds of pamphlets were distributed to students over a five week period.

In a second teaching effort, a dozen Bahá’í books were presented to the university library to add to the small collection which had been there for several years.

A few weeks later the Bahá’í Society hosted a display of 22 sculptures in the campus library. The sculptor, Jason Jannu, is a native of India who became a Bahá’í in Australia. Many people were interested in the way the sculptures reflected basic Bahá’í principles.

Chile

Proclamation results in hundreds new believers

In the Santiago, Chile metropolitan area a program for teaching large numbers of people was launched in August and September. By October, there were 148 enrollments in Pudahuel, 100 in Los Condes and 83 in San Miguel.

As part of the teaching program, “The Green Light Expedition” was shown at the National Library of Chile. The projector operator was so impressed by the Bahá’ís present and the content of the film that he joined the Faith when the film concluded.
Several regional conferences were held in conjunction with the teaching program. At the final conference, held in Santiago and attended by many new Bahá'ís, 50 believers pledged to contribute a fixed monthly amount to the Fund until Ridván to support the continuing activity of the teaching program.

Children's classes part of teaching project

Four members of the Bogota community, including a new Bahá'í, visited Sogamoso, a city of 60,000 in Central Colombia on November 18. Their purpose was to teach and make preparations for additional teachers who would arrive the following day.

After trying unsuccessfully to meet with the mayor of Sogamoso, the teaching team went to the teaching area where they enrolled ten new Bahá'ís.

Four more teachers arrived the next day as expected and a class was held with 34 children. Many of the mothers came to the class and talked with the Bahá'ís.

By the end of the teaching project 23 people accepted the Faith.

The Gambia

Goals won among Jola tribe

Twelve villages have been opened to the Faith in The Gambia in the last ten months due to village believers teaching neighboring villagers.

The villages opened have been in the Foni District, where the Jola people reside. The Jola were visited by Rúhíyyih Khánum in 1971 during the Green Light Expedition.

At the recent National Teaching Conference 20 villages were represented and pledges were made to open at least 20 new villages before Ridván.

The National Spiritual Assembly has issued an appeal for Bahá'ís from other countries and pioneers to assist in consolidating the goals won among the Jola people.

Guyana

National Assembly incorporated

Another goal of the Five Year Plan was achieved last December when the National Spiritual Assembly of Guyana was incorporated by an act of Parliament.

Nearly 60 people attended an evening celebration of the incorporation. Henry Dolphin, Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly, welcomed the guests and read a cable from The Universal House of Justice which congratulated the National Assembly. A brief history of the Bahá'í Faith in Guyana was presented.

Edward Widmer, Auxiliary Board member, was among the guests.

Honduras

Family education focus of conference

A conference dedicated to women, where the men prepared the food, washed the dishes, and cared for the children, was held December 24-26 in Siguatepeque, Honduras.

The conference, sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly, focused on the role and experience of women in the Bahá'í Faith, education of children, and the development of children's classes and women's clubs. Twenty adults, thirteen youth and eight children attended, as did Auxiliary Board member Edith McLaren of Nicaragua.

Villagers unexpectedly respond to Bahá'í teachers

One of the villages visited by Bahá'ís during a village teaching project in Northern India recently was Tababoi. Here they went from house to house inviting the women to attend a Bahá'í meeting. They were doubtful that the meeting would be well-attended, however, because the women of Tababoi seldom venture from their homes.

A few minutes after the meeting was scheduled to begin, as the Bahá'ís were discussing their plans, a young boy excitedly approached them: "Aren't you going to the women's meeting? Everyone is waiting."

The Bahá'í teachers were surprised to find a crowd of women waiting for them. They listened intently to the talk about the Faith, and asked many questions. Each
Around the World

person was given a copy of The New Garden and a prayer book. They promised to meet each week to discuss The New Garden.

Ireland

Winter school attended by 36 Bahá'ís

Thirty-six Bahá'ís from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland attended a Bahá'í Winter School December 24-28, held in the Londonderry District of Northern Ireland.

As a part of the program, the friends studied The Seven Valleys, and visited the District of Strabane, a goal area, to say prayers for teaching.

Members of the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom were present at the school.

Leeeward and Virgin Islands

Bahá'í Center acquired

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Leeward and Virgin Islands, with the assistance of the National Assembly of the United States, recently acquired a three-story building to serve as the Bahá'í Center for Martinique in accordance with the Five Year Plan.

The building, located at 18 Rue Pierre and Marie Curie in the center of town, is a cement structure. The Bahá'ís hope to renovate the top floor to serve as an apartment for the caretaker. The middle floor will contain offices and conference rooms and the ground floor is to serve as an area for receiving the public.

Malawi

Prayer book translated

An introductory pamphlet to the Faith and a prayer book have been translated into Chitonga, reported the National Spiritual Assembly of Malawi. The Chitonga language is spoken by tribes in Malawi, Rhodesia and Zambia.

Pakistan

Hazíratu’l-Quds under construction

In a report on the progress of the Faith in Baluchistan Province, Pakistan, the Continental Board of Counsellors said the Hazíratu’l-Quds of Siryab is under construction. The building is located near several colleges and the business district of Siryab.

The report said the goals of the Five Year Plan have been achieved in Baluchistan Province as far as the formation of Local Spiritual Assemblies and the establishment of Bahá'í Centers.

Philippines

Rotarians hear talk on Faith

Three Bahá'ís from Quezon City, Philippines, were invited to speak at an

India

Bahá'í visits Dalai Lama

Jamshed Fozdar, a Bahá'í who travelled to India to teach the Faith, presented his latest book, Buddha Maitrya-Amitabha Has Appeared, to His Eminence the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, India, on January 22. The meeting was arranged by the National Spiritual Assembly of India. Mr. Fozdar was accompanied by R. N. Shah, Secretary of the National Assembly.
International Rotary Club luncheon in celebration of World Understanding Week September 12-18.

Scott McNear, Jim Sloan and Sue Sloan attended seven different meetings and spoke about the Faith at each one. They were able to teach Rotarians as well.

The club members were so curious and interested in the Faith that Bahá'ís have been asked to speak at future club meetings.

Puerto Rico

14 declare during proclamation project

Ten adults and four youth have become Bahá'ís on the island of Culebra, off the east coast of Puerto Rico.

They were taught the Faith during a proclamation project on November 6 and 7, in which 34 Bahá'ís participated.

As part of the proclamation project, the Bahá'ís presented three children's books to the school library, accepted by the Mayor of Culebra.

Italy

Bahá'ís sponsor public conference on civilization

Sixty-eight non-Bahá'ís heard a talk on the renewal of civilization, given by Alessandro Bausani on December 11 in Rome, Italy, at the hall of the Italian Society for International Organizations.

Rhodesia

Thirty attend Women's Conference

Thirty women from 15 localities met at the National Haziratu'l-Quds in Salisbury, Rhodesia, December 26-29 for a Bahá'í International Women's Conference.

The conference stressed the need for Bahá'í women to set an example by living the Bahá'í life.

The program, introduced by Amos Zauyamakando, Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly, touched on several

Laos

Bahá'í youth of Laos active for Faith

Bahá'í youth in Laos have adopted Each One Bring One as their motto. Here they study an album used in the teaching work.
Around the World

topics. Included were health, hygiene and family planning; teaching children; famous Bahá’í women in both the East and the West; the role of Bahá’í women in the local community; the emancipation of women; and basic moral laws.

Through demonstrations, the participants learned how to bake a cake, cut a dress pattern, make a turban-style hat, and sew a long wrap-around skirt.

The International Women’s Conference Committee expects that the women will return to their homes and with their new knowledge begin Bahá’í women’s activities, helping to fulfill one of the goals of the Five Year Plan.

Sierra Leone

Bahá’í teachings broadcast in five languages

The National Spiritual Assembly of Sierra Leone reported that media coverage of the Faith has increased during the past year.

During the National Teaching Conference in October, six Bahá’ís taped radio interviews in five languages: English, Krio, Limba, Mende and Tenne. The interviews were broadcast at least twice within the period of a month.

Another set of interviews were conducted with members of the American Bahá’í singing group “Sounds of Light” during their visit to Sierra Leone after the International Teaching Conference in Nairobi in October. The interviews were broadcast on both radio and television.

Solomon Islands

Women’s conferences held

Three conferences for Bahá’í women were held recently in the Solomon Islands. Each conference was hosted by a community with a strong Local Spiritual Assembly, and Bahá’ís from surrounding communities attended. The host Local Assemblies received guidelines for the conferences from the National Assembly; the women in each community organized the conferences.

A number of women travelled for as long as 12 hours to reach the conferences, where discussion centered around historical women in the Bahá’í Faith, the equality of men and women, the contribution Bahá’í women can make in teaching and living the life, and the Nineteen Day Feast.

Attendance at the three conferences ranged from 12 to 86.

Tonga

Faith proclaimed at agricultural show

An opportunity for proclamation of the Faith in Tonga which occurs annually is the Agricultural Show each October. Last October the National Spiritual Assembly and the Local Spiritual Assembly of Kolomotu’a worked together to build a booth to display Bahá’í posters and materials at the show.

The Agricultural Show is a popular event in the islands and is always attended by the King of Tonga and other dignitaries, the National Assembly reported.

Trinidad and Tobago

Increase in Local Assemblies

In Trinidad and Tobago, three new Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed in November and December, bringing to 91 the total number of Local Assemblies under the jurisdiction of the National Assembly. The goal for the Five Year Plan is 120 Local Assemblies.

Four Carib Indian believers have been enrolled recently as well. The Continental Board of Counsellors reports that these believers are thought to be the first Carib Indians to become Bahá’ís in Trinidad.

United Kingdom

Renowned baritone recognized by Queen

Internationally renowned baritone Norman Bailey has recently been honored by being named a Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

Mr. Bailey has won particular acclaim for his interpretation of Wagnerian roles and was the subject of an interview published in the September 1976 issue of the British magazine Hi-Fi News and Record Review. The full-page article, accompanied by photographs, stated in part that through his work in the United Kingdom, in Europe and particularly in Germany, Mr. Bailey has laid “secure foundations for what has become a brilliant international career”. The article added that he is a “religious man; both he and his wife have been members of the Bahá’í Faith for over 20 years and for him music is essentially a spiritual experience.”

Chinese taught in New York

Efforts to reach the Chinese in New York City are being moderately successful.

A number of believers there are actively engaged in teaching the Faith in Chinese neighborhoods, and regular weekly firesides are underway. Three Chinese youth have declared since April.

Particularly active in the teaching efforts has been Ahmad Sobhani, a Persian youth studying in the United States.

In the fall of 1975 he went to a park in a Chinese neighborhood of the city and struck up a conversation with a Chinese youth. In time he invited him to his home for a Persian meal. The young man came with three friends, which began a regular Tuesday fireside in the Sobhani home.

Recently, when the Local Spiritual Assembly learned that a certain Chinese couple planned to marry, they offered the Bahá’í Center as a location for the engagement party. Seventy-five Chinese attended and Bahá’í prayers were read.

Approximately 90 Chinese attended a farewell party at the Bahá’í Center in March for a departing teacher from a local Chinese school. On that occasion the visitors presented a banner to the Bahá’ís, which read: “Presented to the Bahá’í Center in recognition of their loving service to the community and to our school.”
Construction of the Seat of The Universal House of Justice on Mt. Carmel is underway.

The first concrete for the foundation level was poured February 17, the World Center reported. A contract for construction of the main structure was signed by The Universal House of Justice on January 5. At that time it was reported that shipments of Italian marble for the five-and-a-half story building had begun to arrive in the Holy Land. Project engineers have set April 1979 as a target for completion of the main structure. The project has been called the greatest single undertaking of the Five Year Plan by The Universal House of Justice.

The first concrete was poured on February 17. Husayn Amanat, the architect, looks on, standing fifth from right to left.
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Cover: In the early days of June, 1877, Bahá'u'lláh's confinement in 'Akká was terminated, thus ending nine years of imprisonment there. The Blessed Beauty moved just north of the city, to the palace called Mazra'íh, and remained there for two years before going to Bahjí.
Approximately sixteen thousand believers from all parts of the Bahá'í world attended the eight Bahá'í International Teaching conferences called by The Universal House of Justice to be held at the midpoint of the Five Year Plan. Two of those believers have submitted articles about their respective experiences and impressions to Bahá'í News.

The conference held in Nairobi, Kenya in October is the subject of the article by H. Elsie Austin, an American believer. Robert Walker wrote the article about the conference in Bahia. He is a pioneer in Brazil, and teaches at the university in Porto Alegre.

Their reports follow in chronological order.
Atmosphere of challenge
by H. Elsie Austin

Inspiring words of The Universal House of Justice which stated the purpose of the International Teaching Conference in Kenya during this Bahá’í year characterized the setting and the atmosphere of the African Conference held during October 15-17.

"In Nairobi, the challenge of Africa and the tremendous potentialities of that Continent for the development of the Bahá’í community should be in the forefront of the participants’ deliberations, linked with the consideration of similar opportunities of the Indian Ocean . . . ."

The atmosphere of challenge was everywhere. It was in the atmosphere of the conference site, that fast growing capital city of Kenya, 1,828 meters above sea level, turbulent with the changes, the dislocations and the adjustments of old and new Africa. One sensed challenge in the structure of the magnificent Nairobi Conference Center so symbolic in its architecture of Kenya’s past and present, combining in the architectural design the massive avant garde cylindrical structure with the ancient cube of Kenya’s traditional rural hut. Again, challenge was in the spirit of the Bahá’í conference, a warming inclusive esprit, which linked persons from 61 countries with the solid representation of Africans, in its way symbolically ending the historic isolation of that continent and firmly linking it in destiny and aspiration with all continents, nations and peoples of our world. And finally, challenge was apparent in the fact that in the infinite and interesting variety of colors, cultures, concepts and languages, there was an unusual presence and participation on the part of African men and African women which seemed to signify their growing awareness of their responsibility in collaboration with the friends of all lands, to carry forward the progress of human civilization in the light of Bahá’u’lláh’s principles of Unity and Justice.

The Nairobi Conference was structured to provide a wealth of information and deepening. Talks by the representatives of The Universal House of Justice, by the Hands of the Cause, and by the Counselors and Board members gave the friends a very realistic view of what was needed in African areas to achieve the Five Year Plan goals. The conference sessions, chaired by African friends from various areas, gave us an opportunity to comprehend the differences and yet to appreciate the dignity, sincerity and thoughtfulness of African friends who have taken leadership roles in the Faith. Conference translations were given in four official languages: English, French, Persian and Swahili. A team of translators functioned for each language and in their excellent

Clockwise: Hands of the Cause William Sears, Rahmátu’lláh Muhájír, John Robarts and Enoch Olinga attended.
Nairobi, Kenya

operations managed to convey to their respective audience segments all the fire and enthusiasm of each speaker.

The African friends from various areas in their own special and delightful ways gave us creative intervals of relaxation from the tightly structured sessions. They presented the colorful and sparkling traditional dances and songs of their areas. These presentations not only afforded eye and ear enjoyment, they also made us reflect upon the basic importance and role of songs and dances in African cultures and stimulated creative thinking on the tremendous teaching potential they may have for spreading the concepts and principles of the Bahá’í Faith.

The Conference Committees had done their work well. Registration went off smoothly and efficiently. The many visitors were never without help from an efficient, courteous and thoughtful group of young Bahá’í guides, distinguished by bright yellow bands that said “Nairobi Bahá’í International Conference.” Well acquainted with the conference and city facilities, they helped everyone.

Bus transportation to carry the friends from one point to another for programmed events had been thoughtfully arranged and operated smoothly. The Conference Committee seemed to have thought of everything.

Publicity for the Bahá’í conference was effective. The two important daily papers carried special feature articles and an excellent program of interviews was developed for the radio-television coverage. The East African Standard, one of the widely circulated dailies, carried a fine special supplement on the Faith which in pictures and lead articles brought out its world aspects and its attractiveness for all nations and peoples.

The Bahá’ís themselves attracted publicity. Charged with that unique and special spiritual electricity which is generated whenever a large company of friends get together, the Bahá’ís, in and out of the conference, generated a spirit of such elation and happiness in being together that they attracted attention wherever they were, by their willingness to include others instead of excluding them.

The evening before the conference formally opened, a Unity Feast had been arranged at the large State Fair grounds, known as Jamhouri Park. Many of the Bahá’ís were accommodated in the quarters for guests and exhibitors. Others coming from the hotels and places in the city of Nairobi rode a procession of buses to the park. It was evening and when we reached

The friends visited with Dr. Muhájjír between sessions.
Members of The Universal House of Justice were linked with the conference in prayer at the Holy Shrines.

the park not a light was on because of an unfortunate incident in which a fallen tree had severed the main power line. Though in the terms of the outside world we were all a host of strangers, the fire and enthusiasm of Bahá’í love replaced the electric lights. No one seemed fearful or dismayed to the extent of leaving or feeling very unhappy. Instead the buses kept their lights on and the friends seated themselves in audience stands and with most loving courtesy and cooperation heard the much loved Hand of the Cause, Dr. Muhájir, who in spite of the difficulties spoke to us most impressively on the worldwide teaching efforts of the Faith. The Bahá’ís one and all displayed that event in the most beautiful ability to adjust to unforeseen difficulties with discipline, courtesy and kind humor. The conference began the following morning.

Early on the opening day African friends and children were at the conference bringing in songs their enthusiasm about the Faith. After prayers, the chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Kenya, Mr. Nekesa, presented the four Hands of the Cause attending the conference: Rahmatu’lláh Muhájir, Enoch Olinga, John Robarts and William Sears. Each of the Hands of the Cause had at one time been pioneers, three of them on the African continent. Mr. Olinga represented The Universal House of Justice. Representatives of the International Teaching Center, fourteen Counselors and Auxiliary Board members were presented to the friends.

The high point of the first session of the morning was the reading of the Message from The Universal House of Justice. Before Mr. Sears began reading, he informed the friends that even as the Message was being read, the members of The Universal House of Justice were linked with the conference in prayer at the Holy Shrines. The assembled friends in Nairobi listened raptly.

Later, on the opening day, the conference received an official welcome from the State of Kenya given by the Prime Minister, N. Munoko. Mr. Munoko observed that the Bahá’í International Conference was the fourth in a series of religious conferences held in Nairobi, where religious tolerance is practiced. He said it is encouraging to have a community like the Bahá’ís aiding the government through promotion of unity and peace among people. The Minister closed with the famous official “Harambe” salute to the President and to the Bahá’ís. Mr. Sears presented
three Bahá'í books to Mr. Munoko. As the Minister left the hall, the friends softly sang "'Alláh-u-Abhá'.

'Aziz Yazdí, representative of the International Teaching Center, addressed the friends concerning the history of the Faith in Africa. He recalled the historic services which the great and esteemed martyr teacher of the Faith Hayder Ali had given in Africa, of the persecutions and torments he had received in Egypt and in the Sudan, where he went to teach the Faith in accordance with the Báb's instructions. He recalled the services of Sheik Abdí Yazdí, a Persian Bahá'í who became the first non-African Bahá'í to die in Africa, and spoke of the Tablet which Bahá'u'lláh wrote upon hearing of his death, a Tablet in which he poured great bounties upon the people of Africa.

Mr. Yazdí also mentioned the heroic souls of the West who had arisen to answer to the call from the Beloved Guardian. He mentioned that the first teaching plans in Africa had united four National Spiritual Assemblies, those of Britain, the United States, Iraq and Persia. These National
In areas hit by political crises the African friends have shown great courage and perseverance.

Assemblies were responsible for planning the first African conference. Today there are 34 National Assemblies in Africa.

During the afternoon of the first day, members of the Continental Board for Africa discussed the challenges awaiting Bahá’ís in Africa. In some areas Local Assemblies have grown, but in others Local Assemblies have been lost because of extreme need for teachers and settlers to work with the friends, especially in village areas. Important statistics were given on the needs in West, East, and the Indian Ocean areas of Africa.

In areas hit by political crises the African friends have demonstrated great courage and perseverance. An example of this is seen in the friends from such countries as Ethiopia and Uganda. The Ethiopian friends could not attend the conference, but they cabled their determination to achieve their goals and pledged themselves to victory. The same message came from Reunion Island, in the Indian Ocean. In many of these areas Bahá’ís are carrying on with almost no outside help.

The second day

Saturday, October 16, continued the momentum of the first conference day. During the morning session Hands of the Cause Dr. Muhájjir, Mr. Robarts and Mr. Sears addressed the friends with messages that were at once deeply stimulating and urgent.

Mr. Sears recalled the Guardian’s words to him on one of his visits to Haifa. The Beloved indicated that teaching was the answer to every problem the believers encounter. “If you have personality difficulties on a Local Spiritual Assembly, the need is for more new believers. New believers through individual teaching is the answer for every problem. Drown your troubles in a sea of new believers.”

Mr. Robarts, who had spent 13 years as a pioneer in Africa, told the friends that giving is a spiritual responsibility. He said
the amount given is not the most important factor, but rather the degree of sacrifice and the unity of the friends.

Dr. Muhájir urged the friends to consider the importance of the opportunity in our times to contribute to the building of the Houses of Worship in India and Samoa. He said building is the theme of the kingdom and it is the privilege of our generation to build.

Dr. Muhájir reminded the conference that ninety percent of the populace in Africa, Asia and India live in rural areas. That is where the teachers need to go. It is a very good thing for the Faith to have entire villages become Bahá'í.

He stated that every five years the Faith has doubled its membership and will continue to do so if teaching is vigorously pursued. If we work with the momentum of this force, we can surpass our teaching goals, he said. He stated that teaching families has brought results on several continents. In Korea, 1600 new believers resulted from six months of teaching by this method. Again in southern Chile 200 families brought in 2000 Bahá'ís. In Bahia, Brazil, through this vigorous teaching campaign there are now areas where streets have Bahá'í names and many children know Bahá'í prayers by heart.

At the end of the second day, Mr. Olinga called for those who had volunteered to pioneer, and soon the stage was full of friends who were willing to serve and had served. It was an inspiring thing to see the dear faces of many colors, from all parts of the world who had left their homes in the service of the Faith.

The third day

Sunday, October 17, the final day of the conference, brought presentations on the distinctive characteristics of Bahá'í life, the role of Bahá'í youth, the emancipation of women and the Bahá'í family.

Thelma Khelghati, recently appointed Continental Counsellor for West Africa, spoke of the standards of the Bahá'í family as evidenced in the lives of the early believers.

The historic and deeply significant Nairobi conference was closed with remarks by Mr. Sears that the friends return to their respective areas and win the goals.

Left: Believers chat at the Unity Feast. Below left: Bahá'í is wait for a session to begin. Below: A scene from the Kenyan country side.
The efficacy of Bahia
by Robert Walker

Truly, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s promise has been and continues to be fulfilled. Bahia, which opened her arms to the first stalwart pioneer to the virgin soil of South America, and whose sons and daughters were among the first to enter the Cause of God in troops, has gathered together “the believers and maid-servants of the Merciful” from the five continents of the earth for the seventh International Teaching Conference of the Five Year Plan, over sixty years after the Master’s momentous call was issued in the first of the Tablets of the Divine Plan.

Over 1300 believers from 37 countries gathered at the Castro Alves Theater from January 27 to 30. Seventeen indigenous tribes of the Americas were represented, including the Bush Negroes of Surinam.

The Conference was illumined by the presence of three Hands of the Cause of God: Mr. Enoch Olinga, the official representative of The Universal House of Justice; Mr. Paul Haney; and Dr. Rahmatu’lläh Muhäjir. Also in attendance were six members of the Continental Board of Counsellors in South America: Mrs. Lenora Holsapple Armstrong, Mr. Paul Pavón, Mr. Athos Costas, Mr. Donald Witzel, Mr. Masu’d Khamsi, and Mr. Peter McLaren. Twenty Auxiliary Board Members and 47 National Spiritual Assembly representatives were also present.

The first session of the conference was opened by the Governor of the State of Bahia, Professor Roberto Santos, who expressed his profound admiration for the unity shown by the Bahá’ís of different backgrounds and races, coming from all

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"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."

—’Abdu’l-Bahá
parts of the world. He said "This Conference will be an historic event for Bahia."

In the inspiring message from The Universal House of Justice, a call was raised to the believers of South America to "unite all the divinely-ordained instruments of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh in executing a symphony of victory in all the unfinished goals of the Five Year Plan, winning thereby the good pleasure of the Blessed Beauty. The importance of "attracting to the Cause large numbers of indigenous peoples" as well as "members of every stratum of society," the "greater utilization of radio broadcasting," the "increase of the number of pioneers and travelling teachers" and the "wider dissemination of Bahá'í literature" were also stressed.

Mr. Enoch Olinga gave an outline of the progress of the Five Year Plan throughout the world. As a high point, at the end he offered to Mr. Habib Taherzadeh, in the name of The Universal House of Justice, a copy of the newly published Selections from the Writings of the Bab. Mr. Taherzadeh, the compiler and translator, pointed out the timeliness of its publication, referring to the promise of the Bab that when the Cause of Him Whom God

Top: Hand of the Cause Mr. Olinga paid a courtesy call to the governor of Bahia, Roberto Santos, right. Also present were Elisabeth Olinga, Continental Counsellor Masud Khamsi, Margot Worley who represented the Bahá'ís of Bahia, and Valiollah Vahdat, Bahá'í Press Officer. Left: Habib Sabet, shown with Ecuadorian believers, appealed for contributions to the Fund. Above: A young Persian couple were among those who attended the conference.
In recognition of his devoted services to the Faith, Dr. Muhajir offered him his Bahá'í ring, and Mr. Olinga offered him his gold pen.

will make Manifest (Bahá'u'lláh) will be widespread throughout the world, then the people of the world will come to appreciate His own writings.

Mrs. Leonora Holsapple Armstrong, the dearly loved "Mother of South America," traced the early history of the Cause in these countries. She recalled the arrival of Martha Root, the first person to pronounce the name of Bahá'u'lláh in this continent. She arrived in 1919, travelling at the request of the beloved Master. Mrs. Armstrong, deeply moved, said that her whole life would not be enough to thank Bahá'u'lláh for that day, the day of the Conference.

A panel coordinated by Counselor Masu'd Khamsi, with the participation of eleven National Spiritual Assemblies and many indigenous believers, presented an account of the accomplishment of the goals of the Five Year Plan. Mr. Khamsi mentioned especially the communities of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Paraguay as having won their locality goals.

On the first day of the Conference, Counselor Paul Pavón raised a call for pioneers and travelling teachers in order to hasten the accomplishment of the remaining goals.

"The Great Plan of God for Mankind" was the title of the Public Conference, announced on the local radio stations and in the newspapers of Bahia. Panelists included members of the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, Argentina, Peru and Brazil, as well as Dr. Victor de Araujo, representative of the Bahá'í International Community at the United Nations.

Mr. Dorian Seabra, member of the Brazilian National Spiritual Assembly and currently serving in the mass teaching area in Bahia where 5,600 new believers recently enrolled, spoke on proclamation of the Faith and the need for using mass media for this purpose. He mentioned that the first step toward success in a mass teaching is to believe in its effectiveness.

A well planned and complete set of literature for expansion and consolidation was presented by Mr. Gustavo Correa, representative of the Audio-Visual Department of the Colombian NSA.

Auxiliary Board member Sergio Couto, who, heeding the call of the beloved Hand of the Cause Dr. Muhajir, arose to begin mass teaching in Bahia, pointed out the importance of having a well-trained and organized teaching group, preferably living at the Ḥazíratu'l-Quds of the mass teaching area. In recognition of his devoted services to the Faith, Dr. Muhajir offered him his Bahá'í ring, and Mr. Olinga offered him his golden pen. With these two precious gifts Mr. Couto said that he would feel protected and enabled to enroll many, many more Bahá'ís. A tender moment occurred when Mr. Couto called to the stage a little girl of seven years of age, from the mass teaching area, who had offered to pioneer to Africa, inspiring her mother and sister to follow suit.

At the next session, Mr. Olinga praised the glorious future of the indigenous people in the Faith. Representatives of seventeen tribes were called to the stage to tell of their experiences in the Faith and to present some native songs. A bouquet of beautiful flowers was offered to them by the Persian friends.

Mr. Glenford Mitchell, Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, spoke on the need for the education of children and the role of Bahá'í youth in the Five Year Plan. He quoted Bahá'u'lláh's words: "Teach unto your children the words that have been sent down from God, that they may recite them in the sweetest of tones. This standeth revealed in the mighty Book."

"In his inmost desire and as his sacred obligation to serve this Cause and to construct with all his power a divine civilization on earth, each Bahá'í transforms money into the life-blood to lay the cornerstone of the Institutions of the Cause." This was the message of the Treasurer of the Brazilian National Spiritual Assembly, Mr. Shapour Monadjem, in a slide program.

Another call for pioneers, travelling teachers and contributions to the fund, with special emphasis on the needs of the
Amazon region, was raised by Mr. Olinga and Dr. Muhajir. As a result, there were 111 offers of pioneering and travel teaching. Some teaching trips commenced immediately following the Conference.

With the encouragement of Mr. Habib Sabet, who addressed the friends in an energetic way, 465 contributions toward the construction of the House of Justice were made, and $290,000 was offered to be used for various funds. Universal participation was stressed, and besides the large offers of some of the wealthy friends, many contributions of handicrafts, land, cattle, and jewelry, as well as money were received.

One of the highlights of the conference was the presentation by Hand of the Cause Paul Haney on the spiritual meaning of the erection of the seat of The Universal House of Justice. Mr. Habib Taberzadeh, with the help of visual aids, described the progress that has been made.

An interesting slide program on the development of radio communication was given by Mr. Dean Stephens, radio broadcast consultant of The Universal House of Justice. This presentation showed the importance of this medium in reaching the masses and the most remote areas, for both teaching and consolidation.

Representatives of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ecuador, pioneers in the field of radio communication, made a brief report on program development. Bahá'í programs are now broadcast by seven Ecuadorian radio stations, covering almost fifty percent of the population.

Miss Mercedes Sanchez, Peruvian Auxiliary Board member, awakened the women to their important role in the Faith. In her inspiring and enthusiastic speech she mentioned many woman pioneers who opened countries in South America.

Excellent publicity was obtained during the Conference, with coverage by nine television and seven radio programs and eighteen newspaper articles. After the Conference, a report appeared on a national television program, and features are expected in two national magazines.

A unique feature of this Conference was the extensive utilization of publicity materials. Three color posters were produced in Portuguese, and one was produced in an English version for world-wide distribution. Through a silk-screen process, one thousand copies of each were reproduced. Five thousand stickers, both transparent and opaque, were prepared, showing the Bahá'í/Bahia conference symbol. Fifty thousand small stickers (usable as decorative stamps) were also made. Two picture post cards were created and three thousand of each were printed. Two thousand name tag holders were prepared for the Conference, together with 2100 folders and 500
Bahá'í programs are now broadcast by seven radio stations in Ecuador, covering half the population.

banners were posted throughout the city, and there was an attractive display at the airport. Through the self-sacrificing collaboration of the Bahá'ís, the total cost for materials production was kept to under $4000.

Sixty new believers was the immediate harvest of the Conference. Who can calculate the future results?

On the last evening, Mrs. Leonora Armstrong said that this had been a happy Conference, a meeting of the hearts which like mirrors reflect the attributes of the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh. She mentioned the first message the Guardian sent to the Bahá'ís of Bahia asking them to persevere in their efforts, not considering the smallness of their numbers, because the time would come when Brazil itself would recognize the call of "Ya-Baha'u'll-Abha!"

Dr. Muhájjir pointed out that each country had contributed to the success of the conference in a different way: Bolivia with indigenous teaching, Ecuador with radio programs and mass teaching, and Colombia, Brazil and Argentina with literature, and that the result of these experiences had been an exchange of valuable information which will contribute to the spread of Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings in South America.

Hand of the Cause of God Paul Haney mentioned five key words from a Message of the Guardian: the honor conferred by Bahá'u'lláh upon the people of the Cause, the obligation to obey his laws, the power released to remove obstacles, the opportunities created to teach the Cause and the promise of guidance to all who would arise for this purpose.

A "captain" of one of the jungle areas of Surinam, speaking in Arawak, expressed the sentiments of all the believers present: "As I am here and I look around, I see that I would have been a stranger in this land. But it is not so. What has brought us together is the message of Bahá'u'lláh."

This truly was an historic conference, bringing together in unity peoples of many nations and races. Surely, it will be a cause of inspiration to the friends in South America and throughout the Bahá'í world for decades to come.

Below: Members of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil meet after many years. On the left is Habib Taherzadeh, and on the right is Margot Worley.
New Books

Bahá'í education topic of compilation

The Universal House of Justice has compiled a selection of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi which relate to child-rearing and education. Bahá'í Education: A Compilation also contains excerpts from the talks of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

In the introduction to the book, The Universal House of Justice said: "The proper education of children is of vital importance to the progress of mankind." The book contains practical advice concerning classroom structure and other aspects of formalized education.

Around the World

Alaska

Feast topic of conferences

Simultaneous Nineteen Day Concept Conferences were held on December 4-5 in Anchorage and Juneau, Alaska. The conferences were attended by over 40 representatives from 22 Bahá'í communities.

The friends deepened on the Writings regarding Feast, studied segments of a dramatized Feast, discussed personal preparation for Feast, administrative responsibilities, readings, report presentation and refreshment ideas.

The suggestions resulting from consultation on these topics will be compiled and distributed to believers in every area of Alaska, said a spokesman for the National Spiritual Assembly.

Musical program attracts attention of NAACP

A program called "The History of the Negro through His Music" was sponsored by the Bahá'í of Tanana Valley, Alaska, on December 28, and attended by 50 people, 20 of whom were not Bahá'ís. The program was a musical history of the Negro, as sung by Blu Mundy.

At the end of the program, the minister of a local church, the majority of whose members are Negro, thanked Blu saying that she had taken the Negro cause further than he had himself. As a result of the Bahá'í-sponsored program, Miss Mundy appeared on two local television stations in four programs.

Two of the programs, 15 minutes in length, were sponsored by the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and featured interviews with Miss Mundy by the show host. Another program, also sponsored by the NAACP, was a half hour of Miss Mundy at the piano, telling part of her musical story. The fourth program on which Miss Mundy appeared was a daily interview show.

Besides having the opportunity to mention the Faith on four programs, Miss Mundy was able to build bonds of respect with several members of the local chapter of the NAACP. These same individuals, who are not Bahá'ís, expressed interest in buying the video-tape of Miss Mundy for re-broadcasting on other special occasions throughout the year.

Austria

World Religion Day celebration geared to young and old

Austrian Bahá'ís celebrated World Religion Day (January 16) at the Hilton Hotel in Vienna, where Bahá'í materials were displayed in several conference rooms.

The afternoon portion of the celebration, intended for youth, attracted over 100 people. Ingo Hofmann of Munich, Germany, spoke on the history of religion; a film on the Bahá'í International Teaching Conference in Paris was shown; and two Austrian Bahá'ís played modern guitar improvisations.

The evening program was also attended by over 100 people. Dr. Hofmann spoke on the unity of mankind, and a piano and violin recital of classical music followed.

Public concerts part of winter school

The Austrian Bahá'í Winter School, held January 1-9 in the Youth Hostel of Salzburg, was attended by 110 Bahá'ís from several countries, including Continental Counsellor Anneliese Bopp and Auxiliary Board members Anna Grossman and Iradj Pourahimi.

While the school was in session, two public concerts were given by the Dawnbreakers, an Austrian music group. One was given in the goal town of Mattsee, and the other was given at the youth hostel itself, where Dr. Schmitt, a German Bahá'í, also spoke. These activities were reported in the press and over national radio.

Belize

Bahá'í marriage laws recognized

The National Spiritual Assembly of Belize has reported that in a recent speech before Parliament, portions of which were broadcast over Radio Belize, the Premier of Belize, George C. Price, said that the marriage laws of the Bahá'í, Christian and Muslim religions are recognized by the government.

He said that a number of religions are practiced in the country, Belizeans enjoy freedom of choice in matters related to
Around the World

religion, and that this human right is protected by the Constitution of Belize.

Canada

First Western Arctic Winter School held

The eight members of the Bahá’í group of Inuvik, in Canada, organized the first Canadian Western Arctic Winter School which was held in their community on December 24-27.

Twenty-two believers attended the four-day session, thirteen from other towns, which meant journeys of thousands of miles in some cases.

A projected goal of $1,000 for the Fund was achieved on the third day and doubled by the end of the school.

During the conference, Ruth Eyford, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, conveyed a message from The Universal House of Justice that prayers for the school were being recited at the Holy Shrines. The Bahá’ís sent a message of appreciation to the World Center, and received a reply on the final day of the school which said The Universal House of Justice hoped “that waves of teaching will bring great strengthening to the Arctic communities.

Bahá’í books to be available in public bookstores

Three selected Bahá’í books will soon be available in bookstores in Canada. The books are Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era, The Divine Art of Living and A Thief in the Night. A promotion package which may be used by Local Spiritual Assemblies and Groups contains posters, brochures, newspaper and radio advertisements, and a display featuring A Thief in the Night.

Bahá’ís ordering the books for their placement in bookstores receive an instruction manual on how to contact bookstore managers and make arrangements for selling the books.

India

Assembly formed

The first Spiritual Assembly of Maksi, Shajapur, India, located in an area where intensive teaching is happening, was formed in February. The sign in the background reads “Bahá’í Local Spiritual Center.”

Liberia

Summer school attended by 48

The West Africa Summer School, held December 16-21, attracted 42 believers from Liberia and 6 from Sierra Leone.

The topics stressed at the school were the history of the Faith, characteristics of Bahá’í life, and the social teachings of the Faith.

In the middle of the week, the believers broke into four groups and taught in the nearby town of Bomi Hills. They also invited people to a public meeting to be held the following night.

Approximately 138 people attended the public meeting, where they saw a Bahá’í film and heard a talk on the basic tenets of the Faith.

The children learned a skit on progressive revelation during their classes, and presented it on the final day of the school.

Columbia

Child teaches Faith via radio

A three-year-old Bahá’í child was interviewed on a half-hour radio show along with her parents during a teaching trip in Colombia. When asked to say something about the Bahá’í Faith, she quoted from The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh: “O Son of Spirit! My first counsel is this . . .” The interviewer interrupted her, asking what her “counsel” was. She continued: “Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting,” and ended by saying “Bahá’u’lláh.”

The interviewer finally commented after a moment of silence that it was incredible that a three-year-old should know such things.

Mariana Islands

Bahá’í Center site acquired

The site of the Hazíratu’l-Quds for the Mariana Islands has been acquired in Guam in the Sinajana-Ordot area. The Bahá’ís in the Mariana Islands contributed the funds and bought the land themselves.

They are now in the process of beautifying the site. A building will be raised on the land, which will serve as a District Hazíratu’l-Quds until the National Assembly of the Mariana Islands is elected, at which time it will become the National Hazíratu’l-Quds.
Around the World

Portugal

Minority group opened to Faith

Many declarations have resulted from the plan initiated in Portugal last August to teach the Faith among minority groups. The first family to accept the Faith in Troia, Portugal, as a result of intense and regular teaching trips to the area. New Baha'is of Troia, Portugal, with the pioneers and teachers who taught them the Faith.

Efforts have been concentrated among the thousands of refugees who have arrived in Portugal from Angola and Mozambique. One community in which local believers and pioneers taught the Faith was Troia, where 700 Angolans live.

Twice a week for five months the Bahá’í teachers taught and made friends with the people of Troia. During the first few months, 25 people became Bahá’ís. The teachers continued to visit Troia, deepening the new believers and teaching those who had not yet heard the Message of Bahá’u’lláh.

Gradually, the new believers began to teach. They formed their own Bahá’í community. Each time the original Bahá’í teachers returned, they found the new believers had taken on more responsibilities. The Bahá’ís of Troia have since enrolled 10 believers.

Sierra Leone

21 accept Faith

Judith Conteh, the first Bahá’í woman to attend the Women Teachers College in Port Loko, Sierra Leone, was the hostess for a Bahá’í exhibition there on November 27. As a result of the exhibition and the public meeting that followed, twenty students and one lecturer became Bahá’ís.

Believers from Freetown, Magouraka and Makeni attended the exhibition and were warmly welcomed by the principal of the college, who offered her assistance to the Bahá’ís.

The exhibit opened at 10 a.m., but very few students stopped to view it. By late afternoon, Mrs. Conteh decided to personally invite students to the exhibition and the public meeting to be held that evening.

The invitation caused more students to view the exhibit, and to stay for the meeting, where a talk was given by Charles Bullock, Auxiliary Board member. That evening 21 people declared their belief in Bahá’u’lláh. Even after the meeting was over, the new Bahá’ís stayed to sing song after song.

South West Pacific

Local Assembly result of teaching efforts

Three radio messages invited the friends of New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands to a Regional Teaching Conference called by the National Spiritual Assembly of the South West Pacific for January 29-30. Twenty-five Bahá’ís attended.

During teaching activities at the conference, one person declared in a town which had eight Bahá’ís, allowing the group to form a Local Spiritual Assembly and achieving a goal of the National Teaching Committee. Another declaration occurred in Noumea, where a woman of an ethnic minority accepted the Faith.

A public meeting was held at the conference which drew 45 people, six of whom were not Bahá’ís.

Twelve believers volunteered to travel to villages to teach the Faith, and the call for a Melanesian pioneer to Laroche was met.

United Kingdom

Youth volunteer talent for summer project

Each summer, under the guidance of the National Teaching Committee of the Un-
United Kingdom, Bahá'í youth volunteer to form a teaching group which tours the country and proclaims the Faith through music, mime, slides and song.

Last summer the teaching group of 12 youth called itself Daystar. They toured South Wales and South-West England, performing in Bristol, Newton Abbot, Torbay, Bovey Tracey, Modbury and Plymouth.

Both in Wales and the South-West, local Bahá'ís found the show so impressive they travelled with Daystar to the next town to see the show a second time. Several Bahá'ís encouraged communities which had not yet hosted Daystar to give the group increased publicity.

When Daystar reached Torbay, the local government said the group could only perform outdoors, at Babbacombe Down. The Bahá'ís were delighted to learn that the Guardian had visited Babbacombe Down, and was inspired by the red soil in the gardens to choose red paths for the World Center.

Many Bahá'í communities asked for repeat performances. The show differs each summer, because the combination of talent differs with each set of volunteers.

**Bahá'í opera star radio guest**

Norman Bailey, a Bahá'í who is an opera star, was able to mention the Faith while a guest on the British Broadcasting Company's radio show “Desert Island Discs” October 23.

Each week a different celebrity is featured, who must imagine himself lost on a desert island. He is asked to name eight records he would like to have with him in such a situation, and to talk about his ideas and career.

Mr. Bailey chose Seals and Crofts *Year of Sunday* as one of the records to take to the island “because it deals with the principle of progressive revelation.”

Toward the end of the half-hour program, Mr. Bailey was asked about his religious convictions. He explained the basic teachings of the Faith, and said that he became a Bahá'í in South Africa twenty years earlier after hearing about the Faith from his piano accompanist.

At the close of the program, Mr. Bailey was asked to choose any writings other than the Bible or William Shakespeare which he would like to have with him on the island. Mr. Bailey chose *Bahá'í Revelation* and explained that it is a compilation of Writings by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The program was repeated nationally two days later. As a result of the program, enquiries about the Faith were received at the National Center.

**Falkland Islander visits Wilmette Temple**

A Bahá'í resident of the Falkland Islands was invited by the National Spiritual Assembly to visit Wilmette on his way home from the International Teaching Conference at Bahía, Brazil to refresh his spirit at the Temple.

The Falkland Islands, more than 6,000 miles distant from Wilmette, is under the sphere of administration of this National Spiritual Assembly. The object of the proposed visit was to help that island's community understand the operation of Bahá'í Administration in the United States and to develop a sense of relatedness with it.

The believer invited was Dr. Robert Watson, a dentist who joined the Faith in the Falkland Islands a little less than three years ago.

In Wilmette he met with staff of the National Center, viewed video portions of the Local Spiritual Assembly Development Program, was informed of bookkeeping methods used by treasurers of Local Assemblies around the country, and toured the facilities of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust.

"I felt put in touch with how everything is done," Dr. Watson said of his visit.

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**Bahá'í students present variety show**

Students of the New Era Junior College in Panchgani, India, presented a variety show in February which played to a full house three nights in a row.

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India

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United States
Early believers of the West: Kenosha, Wisconsin
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Kenosha had either the first or second Spiritual Assembly in the United States. Pictured on the cover is the Spiritual Assembly elected in 1910.
Kenosha:

The history of the second Bahá'í community in the United States

Part I
by William P. Collins

Early in this century, a message from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Center of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and Interpreter of His teachings, arrived in a small Wisconsin city:

"A good fragrance is coming from the rose-garden of Kenosha and a pleasing breeze is blowing from the orchard of the hearts of the friends and maid-servants of the Merciful.

"Praise be to God, that town, by the presence of the beloved ones and the Maid-servants of the Merciful, hath become a veritable paradise and its space, like unto the heavens, is illumined with radiant lamps. If this conflagration and attraction continue for a period, Kenosha will soon attain great provisions, will travel with speed through the degrees of existence and make great progress in the orders of the Kingdom.""
The essential tenets of the Faith were given in a series of twelve lessons.

During the final years of the 1890’s, the introduction of the Bahá’í Faith into the United States took place, with few exceptions, in such large cities as New York and Chicago. One of the exceptions was Kenosha, Wisconsin. It was the second city in America opened to the Faith; it had either the first or second Local Spiritual Assembly in the United States; and it was the only city in Wisconsin ever to be visited by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. The history of the Kenosha Bahá’í Community, now in its 80th year, is an important source of knowledge about the early foundations of the entire American Bahá’í Community and the development and diffusion of the Bahá’í Faith in the United States.

Although the first mention of the Bahá’í Faith in the West took place at the World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, a systematic teaching of the Faith did not begin until 1894 when Dr. Ibrahim Khayru’lláh, a Syrian convert, actively began to promulgate the Bahá’í Cause in Chicago. Shoghi Effendi states in God Passes By, his history of the first hundred years of the Bahá’í era, that Dr. Khayru’lláh was visiting Kenosha as early as 1895, but it appears that no Kenoshan accepted the Bahá’í teachings until two years later.

Byron S. Lane, a Kenosha engineer, embraced the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh in 1897, having learned of the Faith through Paul Kingston Dealy (deceased 1937) of Chicago, one of the first Bahá’ís on the American continent. Mr. Lane wrote of his conversion:

“We were living in Kenosha at the time and on visiting a friend in Chicago, by the name of Paul Kingston Dealy, I heard of a great Wise Man who came from the Holy Land, who had a true Message of God, the Truth. We investigated and found that he (Dealy) surely had the Truth and we got him to come to Kenosha and give the Message to all who were ready to receive it.”

After satisfying Mr. Lane’s inquiries into the nature of the Cause, Mr. Dealy began making regular visits to Kenosha along with Dr. Khayru’lláh, who seems to have been in charge of the content of the lessons received by the seekers who were studying the Faith. Meetings to learn about the teachings were held regularly at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lane at 566 West St. (now 6317-11th Ave.) where hundreds investigated the Faith.

The essential Bahá’í tenets were given in a series of twelve separate lessons which began with teachings on the soul and mind, progressing through various stages until the last lesson, at which time those who had accepted all that they had been taught would be given the knowledge of the Greatest Name, that is, they would be told about Bahá’u’lláh. It is this knowledge of Bahá’u’lláh which was the truth referred to in the very first of the Bahá’í lessons:

“It is your desire Mr. Truthseeker, to take these teachings, is it not? What is your object? To know the truth? Well, Mr. ———— the truth is and has always been for the truth seeker and for no one else. As Jesus taught. We follow the example of Jesus. He said: ‘Knock and it shall be opened, ask and thou shalt receive, he that seeketh, findeth,’ showing that you have only to ask for it. It costs nothing, only the asking for it.

“But when you get it you will prize it higher than anything on this earth for it is the greatest thing that man can get in this world.”

Although the knowledge of the teachings and recognition of the station of Bahá’u’lláh was a great prize, one requirement of those taking the Bahá’í lessons was that

“...these teachings are private and you are not to mention them to anyone; they are not secret but private, and we trust to your honor. We do not ask you to take any obligation or oath. These teachings are private for many reasons. You will remember that Jesus talked to the masses in parables. When He was alone with His [apostles] they asked Him why He talked to the masses in parables. He said: ‘To them I talk in parables but to you only is given to understand the mysteries of the Kingdom of God…”

“When they attempted to expound the teachings He rebuked them and told them that they must not cast their pearls before swine. This was to show them that the truth was only for truth seekers... So you are not to mention the teachings until you are given permission.”

Since Dr. Khayru’lláh was giving a similar series of lessons in various localities, it is evident in the need to have his permission to speak of the teachings that he exercised a subtle control over the seekers and early American believers, the detrimental effect of which would be belatedly recognized a few years later. In any case, the silence observed by the Bahá’ís was so nearly complete that the public, from 1897-1900, referred to the Bahá’ís as “Truthseekers” or more often “Truth-knower,” which led to considerable confusion and speculation as to the true nature of Bahá’í beliefs.

The “Truth-knower” lessons in Kenosha were quite successful, resulting in the enrollment of 18 believers in 1897. In that same year an embossing seal for stamping documents and papers was purchased by those Bahá’ís in Kenosha who had charge of such items. The inscription on the seal read: “The Assembly of Behaists in Kenosha, Wis. * 1897 **”, and in its center was an imprint of the Greatest Name symbol. The Bahá’ís in those early years of the Faith in the United States often referred to themselves as Behaists until about 1900.

At this point, a difficult but important question about Bahá’í history in Kenosha surfaces. The use of the term “assembly” in the first years of the Faith’s development in this country usually referred to the
entire Bahá'í membership in a given locality. Thus, "Assembly of Behaists in Kenosha" may refer to the whole Kenosha Bahá'í community and not to an elected body. The question of when Kenosha's first elected Bahá'í institution came into being is an important one, however, because establishing a clear date would show whether Kenosha had the first or second Bahá'í Local Spiritual Assembly in America. In God Passes By the Guardian indicates that "as far back as the year 1899 a council board of seven officers, the forerunner of a series of Assemblies which, ere the close of the first Bahá'í century, were to cover the North American Continent from coast to coast, was established in the city of Kenosha." The Kenosha records still in existence include a minute book for 1899 showing the election of a "Board of Counsel" on May 26th of that year. However, a treasurer's record book dated January 1898 is also in the Kenosha archives, indicating the possibility, though not directly documented, of an Assembly in 1898 or 1897. A manuscript "History of the Kenosha Bahá'í Community" compiled in 1933 by Louis J. Voelz, then secretary of the Kenosha Spiritual Assembly, indicates the view of early Kenosha believers that 1897 was the year in which an elected body was formed. Without direct and clearly documented evidence, however, the issue of whether Kenosha had an elected Local Spiritual Assembly before or after New York City (1898) will continue to remain in doubt.

The year 1898 brought continued successful meetings in the home of Byron Lane, where he witnessed the declarations of belief of many prominent Kenosha businessmen and women. The new Bahá'ís suffered much criticism from relatives and friends, but such opposition did not prevent the Bahá'í Community from growing to 77 believers during that year. Though the exact reasons are unclear, there may be several possible explanations for such ready acceptance of the Bahá'í teachings among Kenoshans. First, acceptance of Spiritualism, Mesmerism, Christian Science and various reform movements may have opened the way for investigation of other unorthodox or non-Christian religious ideas. Second, many Kenoshans were descendants of immigrants from upper New York State which had a 19th-century tradition of being a center of religious ferment, witness the Millerites and Mormons. Third, the 1893 World Parliament of Religions had a tremendous effect on the more educated Americans, and Kenoshans may have been more moved by proximity to Chicago. Fourth, Kenosha was a city of tremendously mobile population, being a port on Lake Michigan. It nearly doubled in size, from 6,532 in 1890 to 11,606 in 1900. Fifth, the 'private' nature of 'Truth-knower' lessons may have drawn the curious, especially the business and upper classes who might tend to be attracted to such secret movements as Freemasonry.

Dr. Khayru'lláh, whose successes in
teaching brought great commendation from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and the designation of "Baha's Peter" and "The Second Columbus," embarked in 1898 with the first Western pilgrims to the Holy Land and a visit to the Bahá'í Shrines. Already emboldened by his triumphant successes and the control which he exercised over the American believers, Dr. Khayru'lláh hoped to receive 'Abdu'l-Bahá's blessing on several doctrines which he had introduced into his promulgation of Bahá'í principles in America. Not content with having taught the falsehood that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was Jesus Christ incarnate, Dr. Khayru'lláh sought the Master's approval of a book he had written which advocated the doctrine of reincarnation.10 When 'Abdu'l-Bahá attempted to correct Dr. Khayru'lláh's mistaken notions of Bahá'í teachings, he developed a burning antagonism which was to smolder for several more months before bursting forth in the gravest test to be faced by that early band of American Bahá'ís.

As already mentioned, a Board of Counsel was elected by the Kenosha believers on May 26, 1899, with Byron S. Lane as president and Minnie Lane, his wife, as vice-president. The tremendously effective "Truth-knower" lessons resulted in a total enrollment of 212 Bahá'ís by the end of the year, a phenomenally large Bahá'í population for a city of Kenosha's size (1900 pop.: 11,606), even by present standards.

Such vitality could not long go unchallenged by the established Kenosha churches. Alarmed at the rapid spread of the "Truth-knowers", the Baptist, Methodist and Congregational churches secured the services of a Bulgarian Christian, Stoyan Krstoff Vatralsky (1860-1935), who took some of the Bahá'í lessons for his future use and then embarked on a lecture campaign against the "Truth-knowers."

Mr. Vatralsky was educated in Bulgaria by Protestant missionaries. In 1884 he came to the United States to study, taking an A.B. degree from Harvard in 1894. A writer, lecturer and farmer, Mr. Vatralsky's published works included hymns and eighteen volumes of prose and poetry on philosophical, ethical and religious subjects.11 He spent six years in the United States after his graduation from Harvard, and was in Chicago just as the Kenosha Protestant churches were in need of aid to combat the "Truth-knowers."

The first hint that Vatralsky's visit to Kenosha was about to be turned against the Bahá'ís came in an October 19th article in the Kenosha Kicker entitled "Kenosha's Future Glory..."

"Is it in envy of Milwaukee 'made famous' by beer, that our Kenosha town is harboring another, although quite different, 'spirit,' which promises to make us even more infamously notorious? I refer to our blooming 'Truth-knowers.' Mr. Vatralsky... has lately been studying this cult by taking their secret lessons. He says that it is an Oriental sect, called Babi, from Bab, its founder, a Mohammedan fanatic. Mr. Vatralsky seems disinclined to talk about them; but in answer to my question he said: 'Your self-styled Truth-knowers are an esoteric Mohammedan sect, more pantheistic than Christian Science, more absurd that Mormonism and by far the most dangerous cult that has as yet made its appearance on this continent. And your city has the enviable distinction of being the first to give its doctrine harbor in America.'" 12

The article concluded by urging Mr. Vatralsky to deliver an address upon the subject of the dangers of the "Truth-knowers."

The week following the appearance of this article brought rebuttals by several believers, including Mrs. Lane and Frederick A. Slack. Several points become clear in view of the first article and the letters from believers addressed to the charges raised by Mr. Vatralsky: First, the secret or "private" nature of the "Truth-knower" lessons only served to arouse suspicion of the Faith. Second, many of the believers themselves were either not completely informed as to the true nature of the Faith and its teachings, or they were unwilling to tell. For instance, note the following reference to the Koran (Qur'an), a Holy Book whose divine origin is recognized by Bahá'ís:

"He says we are teaching Mohammedanism. I will say right here, we are teaching God's truth and teaching it from the Bible. If this is so how can we be teaching Mohammedanism? Mohammedanism is not taught from the Bible, but from the Koran, which is the most corrupt of all bibles and the most corrupt of all religions." 13

This comment is not a surprising one considering that the Bahá'ís had no publications, only a few typed extracts of the Writings, and some short Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Third, Mr. Vatralsky had taken some, though not all, of the lessons. He had the Bahá'í in an awkward position and he knew it. Although the believers had in good faith followed Dr. Khayru'lláh's instructions of silence about the teachings, it ultimately put them in a position of having to defend what appeared to be duplicity on their part.

The blow came in an open letter from Mr. Vatralsky to Byron Lane in the Kenosha Gazette:

"I have often heard you declare your certainty that you teach the truth, and once or twice you personally invited me to prove wherein you are wrong... This I purpose to fulfill next Sunday evening at Park Avenue Church... It is needless to add that I do not intend to denounce you—as you know I have no personal grievance against you—but merely to point out where and why I believe you are awfully mistaken, hence grievously misleading others, and sowing dangerous seeds. Believing
you, however, to be as sincere as you are mistaken, I both invite you and expect you to be present."14

Mr. Vatralsky's talk, to be delivered on October 29th at the Park Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, was entitled "The Kenosha Truth Knowers: the Few Truths They Know and the Many Errors They Teach." A dramatic account of the event was printed in the Gazette of October 31 under the headline "Was Almost a Riot." The Congregational, Methodist and Baptist churches had all given up their Sunday evening services so that their congregations might attend. By 6:30, one half hour before the service, the building was packed to the doors. Mr. Vatralsky's sermon played upon Protestant fears of "Mohammedanism." There was little indication of the storm brewing in the audience until the talk was finished. At that point, Reverend Naylor of the Park Avenue Church announced that all those who would like to receive the "Truth-knower" lessons could get them from Mr. Vatralsky. This was the trigger for a general uproar as the Baha'is took exception to this statement. Thornton Chase, the first American Baha'i, was in the audience. With great dignity he arose, pointed to Mr. Vatralsky, and in a dramatic voice said: "That man cannot give the teachings to anyone because he does not know them himself. Anyone can get them by applying to those who are qualified to give them, but that man does not know the first principles about them."15 This resulted in a general hubbub throughout the church with cries of "impostor" being heard from several parts of the audience, apparently directed at Mr. Vatralsky. It seemed that some trouble was likely to occur unless someone intervened.

"At this point the cries of the 'Truth Knowers' reached Mr. Naylor and he appeared at the front of the platform and said that in the light of the statements made by the speaker during the evening it was evident that Dr. Khreilla [Khayru'llah]... was a

Hundreds of people heard about the Faith in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Byron S. Lane (above) at 6317 11th Avenue (below).
An apology for using the term "liar" appeared in the newspaper the next day.

liar. This statement on the part of the minister added fuel to the flame and members of the sect in all parts of the house arose and declared their allegiance to the principles of the sect and denounced the speaker... In order to put an end to the disagreeable wrangling Mr. Naylor signaled the organist to go on with the hymn. At this time Mrs. Frank Lane, one of the local leaders in the sect, arose and asked the people to disperse, as they were in the house of God and the wrangling was disrespectful.

"Mr. Vatralsky seems willing and ready to continue the fight... The matter has aroused a great deal of interest and the debate would undoubtedly be the greatest religious event ever held in the city."16

The remark directed by the minister toward Dr. Khayru’llah is indicative of how Mr. Vatralsky and many of the Christian ministers believed that Dr. Khayru’llah used subterfuge to teach the Faith in Kenosha. Nevertheless, an apology for having used the term liar appeared in the following day’s papers over Reverend Naylor’s signature. He did not, however, apologize directly for having called Dr. Khayru’llah a liar, but rather for having offended those who were present at the lecture.

The address by Mr. Vatralsky was only the first round in a very tense struggle over a period of several weeks, a struggle which aroused the populace and the newspapers to take sides, many asking why the Christian churches should embark upon such a vendetta.

"Can it be that Kenosha is to go through another religious crusade? Is it possible that the supposed liberal churches of this city are to make war on another supposed religious sect? Has it come to this that the houses of worship are to be made the rendezvous from which assaults are to be made on other religious beliefs?

"It is a fact, old as the world itself, that religion grows by persecution. Nothing so increases religious influence with impressionable people as the notion that its votaries are ready to suffer for their faith. Persecute a religious belief and you attract to it."17

Only two days after the lecture in the Park Avenue Church, Mr. Vatralsky issued an open challenge to Thornton Chase and Byron Lane to meet him in public debate in order to prove: "First, that the chief points of my address consisted of falsehoods. Secondly, that, in regards to character, I am an impostor."18 The debate between Mr. Chase and Mr. Vatralsky never took place, but Mr. Chase did send a lengthy reply to the major Kenosha newspapers. In this concise apologia for the Faith, Mr. Chase showed the highest respect for Mr. Vatralsky’s learning, while neatly demolishing the charges he had made in his talk, to wit: that the "Truth-knowers" taught that immortality ended in a sort of Nirvana; that the Fatherhood of God was denied, and hence the brotherhood of man also; that the "Truth-knowers" had no use for the Apostle Paul; that they considered Muhammad to be greater than Jesus; that God could not do what He willed; that after the promulgation of the Bábá teachings, the believers propagated them by the sword; and that their teachings were opposed to Jesus Christ.19 Mr. Chase strongly asserted the falsehood of such statements.

Less than a month later, the Bahá’í community responded to the attacks of Mr. Vatralsky by bringing Dr. Khayru’llah himself to Kenosha. Some of the local newspapers erroneously called Dr. Khayru’llah "a native prince from India and leader of the religious sect known as Truth Knowers." On November 28, 1899, Dr. Khayru’llah gave a talk at the Rhode Opera House in Kenosha, during which he discussed the search for truth, the unknowableness of God, the reality of the prophets "bearing the same wine in different colored cups," the sacrifice of Christ, and the spiritual interpretation of Biblical parables. This exposition of "Truth-knowers" beliefs was greeted with warm applause by the packed house. The newspapers, hoping for a harangue, announced that "the lecture proved considerable of a disappointment."20 Dr. Khayru’llah did not mention Muhammad, the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh or 'Abdu’l-Bahá throughout the entire lecture, yet he presented the Bahá’í view of Bible teaching quite soundly.

If Dr. Khayru’llah’s talk was a disappointment for the reporters, it was not so for Mr. Vatralsky. The December 13 Kenosha Evening News carried this announcement:

"On next Monday evening, December 18, 1899.

"In reply to Ibrahim Kheiralla [Khayru’llah], the speaker will touch on:

"1. The leading and misleading points of his lecture. The difference between ‘secret’ and ‘private,’ ‘Truth-Knowers’ and ‘truth-tellers,’ Persia and America, Constantinople and Kenosha, persecution and discussion, words and swords.

"2. The words used before outsiders to conceal their thoughts.

"3. How the name Christ... has, for the initiated, two meanings, neither of which is a conceivable conception in Christendom.

"4. Why the speaker is against this double-faced Moslem monstrosity...

"5. Why he regards it worse, more pernicious than Mormonism.

"6. Why he calls it a Mohammedan sect, and why no student can call it anything else."21

Vatralsky’s December 18th attack on the "Truth-knowers" turned out to be the flattest failure in the whole controversy. The Kenoshans were becoming tired of the question, as witnessed in several editorial statements in the newspapers. This final round of the "Truth-knewers"—Vatralsky encounters was summed up in colorful language in the Kenosha Daily Gazette of
December 19th: "Vatralsky Defeated; Goes Down In Defeat Before a Vast Con­course of Fifty-five people."

"Vatralski, [sic] the great, the only exposcer of the Truth Knowers, gave a lecture at the Rhode Opera House last night and at the end went down to defeat before the debating prowess of an unknown follower of Bab, a sect akin to the Truth Knowers. And this before a mighty audi­ence of fifty-five persons who crowded and jammed their way into the auditorium, to list enchanted to the discourse of this noted exposer [sic] of the truth, revealer of the fallacies of the new sect, the ‘‘Truth Knowers.’’

"...The audience...listened with what patience they could to his pot­pourri of statements containing neither rhyme nor reason.

"And when he finally concluded and invited questions there arose, in all his glory, from his seat in the par­quette, a mighty follower of the faith of Bab, who proceeded to smite him, hip and thigh. Poor Vatralsky’s specious arguments were dissected, torn assunder [sic], and thrown tauntingly back in his face by this believer of a kindred faith to the Truth Knowers, while the Bulgarian squirmed and expostulated, and at last revolted openly.

"And then pandemonium broke loose—both men talking at once at the highest pitch of their voices, while Vatralsky gestured wildly in impotent wrath at his inability to make himself understood...

"Little more can be said. Vatralsky’s arguments were refuted in toto; but little to enlighten the unin­itiated as to the religion of the Truth Knowers, or their brothers, the Bab­bites was offered, and when finally the meeting broke up...we were no wiser than when we first took our seats."**22

Despite the reporter’s final statement, it was at this meeting that George Khayru’llah (son of Ibrāhīm Khayru’llah), the ‘‘Bābi’’ mentioned in the above ex­cerpt, finally admitted that in America the ‘‘Truth-knowers” and ‘‘Babists” were one and the same [i.e. Bahá’í’s]. He made clear, however, that it was not an Islamic sect, having undergone a tremendous struggle against Islamic orthodoxy.**23

Following this final defeat, Stoyan Krstoff Vatralsky returned to Bulgaria to live out the rest of his days. He did not fail to make one last attempt to discredit the Bahá’ís by writing an essay for the American Journal of Theology entitled "Mohammedan Gnosticism in America: the Origin, History, Character and Esoteric Doctrines of the Truth-Knowers."**24

Ultimately, these impotent attempts to attack the Faith brought only ridicule upon the churches which had instigated them. An illustration of how farcical the whole situation seemed to those observing it from a distance was afforded by an editorial comment from the Chicago Journal:

"The Koran In Kenosha"

"There is disquieting news from Kenosha. According to rumors that thrifty and erstwhile well behaved suburb is threatened with an epidemic of Mohammedanism. A sect known as Truth Knowers are said to hold the tenets of the prophet.

"What might result if Moham­medanism were to gain a foothold in Kenosha it is awful to contemplate. Kenosha is so close. Possibly we can stand a little of that sort of thing in the Sulu islands, if we have to and we
may even be able to endure a session of congress with a Mormon in it, but the idea of polygamy at our back gate, so to speak, is distressing.

"Who would care to face a large and determined Kenosha jury dressed in his white robe de nuit, armed with a case knife, and sworn before a Wisconsin muzzin or cadi or a notary public or something to die killing Christians...?"

"Before Mohammedanism gets beyond control, and Kenosha people take to running amuck to show their hatred of the infidel dogs about them, something ought to be done to hold the thing in check. The churches might send missionaries into Wisconsin, and perhaps if the president's attention were called to the matter he would dispatch a commissioner to make a treaty of peace with the reigning sultan."25

For the believers of Kenosha, now numbering nearly 300, any humor in their situation was soon to be dissipated before the most challenging test to face the infant American Bahá'í Community. On March 8, 1900, the Board of Counsel [i.e. Spiritual Assembly] of Kenosha arranged a meeting for all the believers at the K. of P. Hall to hear Dr. Khayru'llah, who had recently returned from the Holy Land and a visit with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Before the assembled believers, Dr. Khayru'llah renounced his allegiance to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, saying that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was not the Interpreter of the Bahá'í teachings. Another meeting was held on March 9th at which many questions were asked of Dr. Khayru'llah. At the end of the gathering, Byron S. Lane, the first Kenosha believer, "announced that he himself will still continue to teach that Abbas Effendi ('Abdu'l-Bahá) is the Master as he has found nothing to convince him otherwise."26

This crisis, spawned by Dr. Khayru'llah's boundless ambition,27 caused the Kenosha Bahá'ís and the entire American Bahá'í Community great pain and distress. Unaware of the exact nature of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant with the Bahá'ís, a large number of the believers, bewildered and confused, returned to their old churches or to spiritualism. Perhaps one-third remained steadfast and firm in their loyalty to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and faithfulness to the provisions of Bahá'u'lláh's Will. A handful followed Dr. Khayru'llah, forming an incorporated society known as "The Society of Behaists" with Frederick A. Slack, the former corresponding secretary of the Assembly, as its head and "minister."28

'Abdu'l-Bahá responded swiftly to this crisis by sending to America Hájí 'Abdu'l-Karim, the Bahá'í who had taught the Faith to Dr. Khayru'llah. 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent this emissary both to protect the nascent American Bahá'í Community, and to convince Dr. Khayru'llah of the error of his ways. At the same time Muhammad-'Alí, the faithless half-brother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Arch-breaker of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, having obtained Dr. Khayru'llah's support, sent his son Shu'áu'lláh to Kenosha to try to spread the violation and dissension.

Word arrived in April 1900 that 'Abdu'l-Karim was coming to Kenosha. The newspapers, always quick to catch wind of trouble, published confusing stories about "Reports that Truth Seekers were breaking up not true," "Kreilla [Khayru'llah] to lead," "'Abdul Karin ['Abdu'l-Karim] finds failure." The covenant-breakers, seizing upon local ignorance of the teachings, used the newspapers to spread the falsehood that 'Abdu'l-Karim had been head of the Faith and was coming to Kenosha to create division among the "Truth-knowers" by deposing their "true leader," Dr. Khayru'llah. Chicago Inter-Ocean of October 14, 1900, even carried an article claiming that 'Abdu'l-Karim, a faithful and dedicated believer, had stolen thousands of dollars from wealthy "Truth-knowers."29 It is interesting to note that at this time the facts of the history of the Faith were becoming better known; articles in newspapers were more clearly identifying "Truth-knowers," Bábís and Bahá'ís as being members of the same religion. As a matter of fact, Dr. Khayru'llah, who had so adamently desired that the "Truth-knowers" not speak of the teachings without his permission, was now openly speaking of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and their teachings to further his own ends, despite his earlier insistence that these truths could not be given to everyone. Dr. Khayru'llah's statements of "Truth-kower" teachings, now being constantly sent to the Kenosha press, always contained attacks on 'Abdu'l-Bahá, distortions of Bahá'í principles, and a surfeit of self-aggrandizing statements about how he had come from a pure Christian background, rather than an Islamic one, which in his view somehow entitled him to leadership of the Bahá'í Faith in America.30

The constant machinations of Dr. Khayru'llah and his followers caused 'Abdu'l-Bahá to send two more Persian Bahá'ís, Hájí Mirzá Hasan and Mirzá Asadu'lláh-i-Iṣfahání, to strengthen the faithful American believers. Both of them came for a week in January 1901 to deepen the Kenosha Bahá'ís and to hold public lectures on the Faith. Byron S. Lane, who had moved to Chicago from Kenosha in late 1900, returned for a short time to Kenosha to make arrangements for them. The Daily Gazette of January 16 headlined the preparations as "B.S. Lane comes to Kenosha to unite the factions of the Kenosha Truth-Knowers," and reported that the advent of Mirzá Hasan and Mirzá Asadu'lláh "to this country has resulted in the opening of the teachings of their be-

8 Bahá'í News/April 1977
From 1909, Bernard Jacobsen of the Kenosha community was elected to the Bahá'í Temple Unity, forerunner of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States.
Lama tribesmen at winter school

The Sixth Bahá’í Winter School of Bangladesh was held during ‘Ayyám-i-Há, February 25-27 at the National Ḥāẓíratu’l-‘Uqūd in Dacca. Six members of the Lama tribe were among the 120 friends in attendance. Two members of the Lama tribe attended as observers and became Bahá’ís by the end of the Winter School.

Continental Counsellor Burhán-i’d-Din Afshin, one of the speakers, addressed the friends on the topic of non-participation in politics by Bahá’ís. Other topics at the school were “Living the Life”, “Bahá’í Administration” and “Bahá’í History”.

Each morning everyone gathered for dawn prayers and study of the Writings before breakfast. In the evenings, ‘Ayyám-i-Há celebrations were held.

The National Spiritual Assembly presented plans and proposals, and the friends agreed to fulfill the goals of the Five Year Plan by Ridván 1978.

Conference causes teaching trip

Thirty Bahá’í women participated in the First Bahá’í National Women’s Conference held January 28-30 at the National Ḥāẓíratu’l-‘Uqūd in Dacca, Bangladesh. In response to a talk on the urgent need for Bahá’ís to travel to teach the Faith, a trip was organized to visit the Chittagong and Cox’s Bazaar areas.
Hand of Cause Olinga visits Belize

A satellite conference to the Bahá'í International Teaching Conference in Merida was held in Belize City, Belize, on February 19-20. Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga, Continental Counsellor Hedi Ahmadiyeh and Gayle Woolson, a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, were among the speakers.

During the conference it was announced that in the two weeks following the Merida Conference eleven localities had been opened and 53 believers enrolled. Of the 150 localities to be opened in the Five Year Plan, only 17 remain.

The Saturday afternoon session opened with 30 Bahá'ís, several from remote villages to the south, and several pioneers and visiting Bahá'í teachers. The Bahá'í teachers voiced their amazement to find people so ready to hear about the Faith; Bahá'ís in Belize attributed the willingness to Bahá'í radio programs which have been broadcast on Radio Belize for the past three years.

On Sunday, private transportation to the conference was augmented by a bus which had been chartered by the National Spiritual Assembly of Belize. The majority of communities in the country were represented by the 80 adults and 44 children who attended.

Mr. Olinga called for volunteers to form teaching teams to travel to an area an hour's drive away, while the conference continued. The teams opened two localities and enrolled 32 believers.

Youth actively teaching

"The Bahá'í youth have been in the vanguard of teaching projects planned by the National Teaching Committee," the National Spiritual Assembly of Benin has reported. "They made teaching trips to several provinces during their school holidays, served diligently on various national committees and were of great assistance in the formation of Local Assemblies."

"The youth in the North have been most active in extension teaching, helping their Local Assemblies and Regional Teaching Committees to form new Local Assemblies."

Bolivia

298 attend National Teaching Conference

The Third National Teaching Conference of Bolivia to be held during the Five Year Plan was attended by 298 friends from 26 provinces on February 12-13 in the city of Cochabamba. Enthusiastic reports of the International Teaching Conference in Bahia, given by 33 Bolivian...
Role of Brazilian women growing

Bahá’í women in Brazil are active in all phases of Bahá’í administration and teaching, reports the National Spiritual Assembly.

The Bahá’í women of São Paulo hold monthly deepening sessions and visit individual believers who need deepening or encouragement. They recently spoke about the Faith at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, at the request of that organization. Their teaching efforts resulted in the formation of a Spiritual Assembly at Porto Feliz. They visit the city of Cotia monthly to address a group of women about Bahá’í teachings and to conduct classes in cooking, sewing, child care and arts and crafts. They visit hospitals and other institutions to cheer the patients, and when asked, to present Bahá’í beliefs.

The Bahá’í women of Belo Horizonte are organized for social service work with hospitals and orphanages.

Those in Salvador teach their children, meet for Sunday morning prayers, study the Writings together, and are also very active in the teaching work.

One woman believer in Rio de Janeiro has volunteered to teach English without charge in a school for the blind.

Nylza Taetz of Porto Alegre recently served as the Bahá’í representative to the United Nations non-governmental conference held in Buenos Aires.

Hazíratu’l-Quds acquired

Through the cooperative efforts of a number of believers, many of them newly enrolled, a regional Hazíratu’l-Quds has been acquired in Kumba, a town which is the hub of several Bahá’í communities.

The building is situated in a central part of Kumba and is close to the main road.

Faith taught to villagers

A four-day teaching trip in the Bouenza area of the Congo Republic was undertaken by Fatanih Maher recently. She began by searching for one of the Bahá’ís in the area. After going to two villages, she encountered his family and explained the purpose of her visit. They opened their home and nearly 15 people listened to the teachings for two hours. Miss Maher then met the village chief and told him and others in the tribe about the Faith.

One man in the gathering asked her to go to his village and tell the people there about her beliefs. A man went throughout the village announcing, “Come, come all to hear the Word of God; come to pray!”

Four meetings were held during that day and the next, and a total of 85 adults and 40 children heard about the Faith. Of that number, 28 declared their belief in Bahá’u’lláh.
including Hand of the Cause Ugo Giachery and Continental Counsellor Louis Hénuzet.

The National Spiritual Assembly launched a year-long teaching project calling on every believer to adopt personal goals. At the end of the conference, 28 friends arose to serve as traveling teachers or pioneers.

The Gambia

Goal set to open 20 villages

A National Teaching Conference was held January 1-2 at the new regional Bahá’í Center in Latrikunda-Sabij, the Gambia. A highlight of the conference was the dedication of the Center.

For the first time Bahá’í village women participated in a conference. The gathering consisted of 10 women, 48 men and 15 children. Auxiliary Board member Muhammed Al-Salihi was present as well.

The friends discussed expansion of the Faith in the Foni area, and agreed to open 20 new villages by Ridván, which in some cases would require teaching in neighboring Casamance, Sénégal.

Bahá’í Centers and children’s classes increased

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Gambia reports that Local Assemblies in 72 villages have appointed teachers for children’s classes, and that over 2,000 children are attending classes regularly. Nine lessons in a 19 lesson series have been published and are in use in the classes.

More than the 20 local Hazífratu’l-Quds called for in the Five Year Plan in the Gambia age reported to be in the process of construction. Local centers have been completed and dedicated in Doubouti, Godogo, Moussongo, Moussoumeré and Tarangara.

Ghana

Divine assistance aids believer

A Bahá’í in Accra, Ghana, recently decided to pioneer to Northern Ghana, an area where the Faith has been reported to be in the process of construction. Local centers have been completed and dedicated in Doubouti, Godogo, Moussongo, Moussoumeré and Tarangara.

Guyana, Surinam, French Guiana

Hand of Cause meets with National Assembly

Hand of the Cause Paul Haney met with the National Spiritual Assembly of Guyana, Surinam and French Guiana while on a visit to Guyana in February. He also met with Auxiliary Board member Edward Widmar and twenty-nine of his assistants in a one-day session in Plaisance.

During the session the institution of the Hands of the Cause of God was discussed by Mr. Haney, as well as the Covenant and protection of the Faith.

Several of the assistants to Mr. Widmar received their assignments.

Teaching increases

The National Spiritual Assembly of Guyana, Surinam and French Guiana reports an upsurge in teaching activities in Guyana for the past few months.

Eighty-four people have declared their belief in the Faith after visits from traveling teachers in the Northwest and the Rupununi areas for periods ranging from two to ten weeks. In addition, five localities have been opened and one Local Assembly formed.

Regional Teaching Committee efforts have resulted in the formation of Local Assemblies in Leguan on the Essequibo River, and in Cané Grove and Mahaicony, on the east coast of Demerara.

Haiti

French Bahá’í visits Haiti

A travelling teacher, Andre Brugiroux from France, visited Haiti for a weeklong teaching project in December. The Bahá’ís contacted the French Institute to show a film by Mr. Brugiroux about the Faith. The Institute declined, saying it was their policy not to use films with religious themes, but after meeting Mr. Brugiroux the Institute invited him to show the film twice.

An estimated audience of 670 saw the film. In addition, the Institute arranged newspaper and radio publicity. Interviews were granted by four radio stations, and during two of these, the Faith was discussed in great detail. A television interview was also taped and shown.

Hawaii

Faith proclaimed through civic project

Cleaning a community cemetery was used as a proclamation event by the Hawaiian friends in the Puna district last December. The project was arranged with the local Filipino residents, since the cemetery had been donated by a sugar company for use by the Filipino population.

Bahá’ís from Ka’u and South Hilo joined in the project, and worked shoulder to shoulder with the Filipinos on the Sunday that the project was carried out.

As a result, the friends of all three communities were invited to the baptismal dinner for the daughter of the caretaker of the cemetery. In return, the Bahá’ís invited their new friends to the open house which will take place when the Puna Bahá’í Center is completed.

The Bahá’ís plan to help maintain the cemetery on periodic work days.
Youth addresses state senate

Susan Pelle, a youth member of the Koolauopoko Bahá’í Community in Hawaii, gives the opening prayer at the Senate of the State of Hawaii on March 21, 1977. She read the Prayer for Mankind to the assembled Senators after telling the significance March 21 has for Bahá’ís. March 21 is also Miss Pelle’s birthday.

Baha’ís improve hospital

Seven members of the Wahiawa, Hawaii, community painted the television room and dining room of the Extended Care Unit of Wahiawa Hospital over the weekend of February 19. This is the sixth year the Wahiawa believers have done this as their service project for Intercalary Days.

On March 1, more than one hundred beautifully wrapped oranges were given to the patients, each with a card containing a Healing Prayer by Bahá’u’lĺáh and an expansion of the meaning of Intercalary Days.

Active teaching part of conference

The emphasis at the conference in La Ceiba, Honduras, on February 12-13, a satellite to the International Teaching Conference in Merida, was teaching. Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga and his wife Elizabeth were guest speakers at the gathering, which was attended by 150 Bahá’ís from 12 localities.

The first day of the conference, following a talk on the importance of the individual believer in teaching work, a workshop using an illustrated book for teaching was held. Small groups were formed and each individual was given the opportunity to teach non-Bahaí members of the group. The session concluded with the formation of teaching teams. Each team was assigned a locality and a specific objective to be accomplished by the following morning.

After dawn prayers and a talk by Mr. Olinga the next day, the teams were ready to spend the morning teaching. After lunch, each group reported the results of their efforts. There were a total of 47 declarations, seven newly opened localities and one endowment.

Iceland

300 see Bahá’í film

The Bahá’ís of Iceland recently welcomed Andre Brugiroux of France on a teaching visit to their country. Mr. Brugiroux was accorded a number of press interviews about the showing of his film about the Faith and his book, *Le Terre n' est qu'un seul Pays*. Two showings of the film were necessary in Reykjavik, due to the size of the audience, estimated to be 300.

The Bahá’í is of Njardvikur sponsored a private showing of the film, to which they brought their friends.

Italy

Entire nation supports special project

Dawn prayer meetings were held in all Italian Bahá’í communities and local Bahá’í activities were suspended for the weeks of January 29-February 6 and February 19-27. All efforts were directed to intensive teaching in Brescia, Cosenza and Salerno the first week, and in Lipari, Mes-
Cosenza, in Southern Italy, was one of six goal towns visited by Bahá’ís in January and February during two weeks of intensive teaching efforts.

The National Spiritual Assembly said that a wonderful result of the efforts was the nearly total participation by all members of the Bahá’í Italian community, and expressed its gratitude to The Universal House of Justice for its prayers at the Holy Shrines in support of the activities.

The towns chosen to visit were goal towns. The National Teaching Committee organized the proclamation campaign, making an eight-meter long banner with “Bahá’í” written on it to be hung across the main street of each town visited. Hundreds of posters were placed in store windows and invitations sent informing the public of the conferences and concerts that would be held each night. Local newspapers listed information about the activities on a daily basis, and book displays were set up in the streets of all six towns.

Prayer sessions were held each morning before the day’s activities began. In every town Bahá’ís spoke on two or more radio programs and played songs from the Italian Dawn-Breakers’ album.

The Faith was presented to several religion classes at local high schools. In Salerno a one-hour lesson was held in each of twenty-two classes, reaching five hundred students. Many classes asked to have Bahá’í speakers on a weekly basis.

During the two weeks, six people declared, and more declared in following weeks. Regular firesides in the goal towns are well-attended. A Local Spiritual Assembly was formed in Salerno at the beginning of April. Particular receptivity to the Faith was noted in the South and the National Assembly has called for pioneers or extended teaching trips to the Southern cities.

Proclamation events held

For at least six months the Spiritual Assembly of Trieste, in Italy, has rented a showcase for the display of Bahá’í books and literature at a bus terminal in Muggia, close to the Yugoslavian border.

In other teaching efforts, the Local Assembly awarded two trophies for service to humanity, one of which was presented to the Book Donor’s Association, together with a parchment scroll on which one of Bahá’u’lláh’s Hidden Words was beautifully lettered. The inscription was read in the presence of more than 1,000 people and a photograph of the cup appeared in Piccolo, the local daily newspaper.

An American believer in the city presented The Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh, in English, to the United States Vice-Consul in Trieste and a copy in Italian to the Chancellor of the university.

Priest shares prayer for unity with congregation

The Bahá’ís of Cagliari, Sardinia report that on Sunday, January 16 a Roman Catholic priest who is a friend of the Faith read a Bahá’í prayer for unity at all three morning masses and explained to his congregation that Bahá’í communities all over the world celebrate World Religion Day.

Christians invite Bahá’ís to pray at peace rally

Representatives of the Bahá’í community of the Sicilian island of Gela, at the invitation of a group of Roman Catholics, recently read two Bahá’í prayers and a passage from Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh before a silent and respectful crowd of worshippers, at a peace rally held in a city church. The event was fol-
Honduras

**Children celebrate Ayyám-i-Há**

Twenty-four children enjoyed and intercalary Days party held in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on February 27.

Marshall Islands

**First National Convention picnic topic**

Four Baha'i communities in the Marshall Islands had a picnic one Sunday in March to discuss the upcoming First National Convention and the importance of Local Spiritual Assembly elections. Thirty-five Baha'is and their children were present.

Malawi

**Filmstrip showing attended by 500**

"The new Spiritual Assembly of Nsurupi is an example to us all," the National Spiritual Assembly of Malawi has reported. "Alone and unaided, they have already erected a large Baha'i Center." It was also reported that recently the Baha'is of Thyolo invited people from the surrounding area to see a filmstrip about the Baha'i Faith. They were surprised and pleased that more than 500 guests came to the program.

**Youth enroll in Faith**

The Spiritual Assembly of Blantyre, in cooperation with Auxiliary Board member Gary Melendy, hosted a two day Youth Conference recently, which resulted in six new Baha'i youth. Two Mankhumba youth walked to Blantyre to attend.

**80 attend National Teaching Conference**

A second National Teaching Conference was held recently in Malawi as a follow-up to the Nairobi International Conference. The Malawi Conference was held in Amalika with more than 80 believers in attendance. All the participants provided their own transportation, travelling to the site by bus, by bicycle or on foot. One Local Spiritual Assembly hired a small truck to transport members of its community to the gathering. In addition to studying the message from the House of Justice to the Nairobi Conference, the friends studied the Covenant of Baha'u'llah. Fred Locke spoke of the need for personal commitment to the Cause,
and Auxiliary Board member Gary Melendy encouraged self-sacrifice in spreading the Message throughout Malawi.

The Conference concluded with the Bahá’í wedding of Montifort Chipala and Efelo Pensulo, who is an assistant to the Auxiliary Board and the sister of the village Chief. The wedding was attended by an estimated 300 people and proved to be not only a means of proclaiming the Faith but of providing a splendid example of the Bahá’í teachings on unity.

New Zealand

Youth spearhead teaching efforts

The Bahá’í youth of New Zealand are spearheading teaching activities in various parts of the country.

Every week the Whangarei youth hold a social evening and fireside, and every fortnight travel 60 kilometers to Kar­gaville for a teaching project.

The youth of Kairanga County hold regular study classes and a unity feast - a devotional gathering - once each month. They find that the only time they can be together, because of other demands on their time, is early morning, so they gather for prayers at 6 a.m.

The youth of Napier and Hamilton play a large part in running the children’s classes.

In various other centers the youth serve capably on community committees and play a leading role in the teaching work.

Singapore

“Education for Peace” conference theme

A regional conference with the theme “Education for Peace” is scheduled to be held in Singapore December 1-4, 1977, the Conference Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of Singapore has announced. A secondary theme of the conference will be the use of audio-visual materials in promulgating the Faith in Southeast Asia.

Portugal

Teaching trip made

Twenty-three friends went to Evora, Portugal, on March 12-13 to proclaim the

Paraguay

Pioneer teaches children

Fourteen children, all from non-Bahá’í families, attended an Intercally Days party on February 28 in P.J. Caballero, Paraguay. Some of the children attend a weekly Bahá’í class taught by pioneer Josephine Johansen, shown here with the

Children.
Bahá'í News

The Gleaming Angel of Sydney
Mother Temple of the Pacific
To All National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Baha'i Friends,

Rejoice outstanding events and achievements marking mid-year Five Year Plan; publication in English selection Writings Blessed Báb opening to eyes Western followers Faith a priceless treasury His immortal utterances, a bounty which cannot fail draw hearts ever nearer youthful Martyr-Prophet; successful holding eight International Conferences, blazoning name Cause God before a receptive public, knitting more closely ties linking friends all lands, resulting upsurge intense activity teaching pioneering, conferring awareness urgent challenge presented by goals Plan this critical period; profoundly significant visit to resting place beloved Guardian by first reigning monarch to accept Faith Bahá'u'lláh; departure former tenants house 'Abdu'lláh Páshá enabling Faith obtain possession recently purchased Holy Place initiate process restoration preparation eventual opening to visits by pilgrims; arrival Haifa first four consignments marble and initiation actual construction Seat Universal House Justice Mount Carmel; appointment three additional Counsellors North Central America, Australasia; attainment goal settlement midway point Plan majority pioneers called for during first phase accompanied great outflow international travelling teachers; dramatic resurgence teaching work Cradle Faith by individual believers under local plans; finally, election this Ridván six new Pillars Universal House Justice, National Spiritual Assemblies of Upper Volta in Africa, of the French Antilles in the Caribbean, of Surinam and French Guiana in South America, of the Marshall Islands and of the New Hebrides in Pacific Ocean, and of Greece in Europe, raising total number National Spiritual Assemblies to 123 to take part in fourth election Universal House Justice in Holy Land during Ridván 1978.

National Conventions in 1978 will be on weekend preceding or following 23 May feast Declaration Báb. Call for formation at that time six more National Spiritual Assemblies; Burundi and Mauritania in Africa, the Bahamas in America, Oman and Qatar in Asia, and the Mariana Islands in the Pacific.

Present rate growth Community prospect acceleration process entry by troops its spread new areas impel us strengthen still further the Auxiliary Boards whose services so vital sound development Community.

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.

In early days of June 1877 Bahá'u'lláh left city 'Akká and took up residence in Mazra'íh. To mark centenary this termination confinement Ancient Beauty within walls Prison City we call upon His followers all lands devote nineteen day feast of Núr commemoration historic event, rededicating themselves urgent tasks before them, so that pent-up energies His precious Faith may be released to reach ever greater number seeking souls in ever wider circle their fellow men.

Greatest challenge facing followers Bahá'u'lláh last two years Plan is in fields expansion consolidation. Tremendous upsurge needed in services individual believers on whose deeds ultimately all progress depends. Momentum generated by International Conferences must be accelerated without delay and spirit released must permeate all communities. Great increase must take place in enthusiastic teaching carried out with confidence, imagination and perseverance by young and old, rich and poor, learned and illiterate, whether at home or travelling. Particularly call upon Bahá'í women, whose capacities in many lands still largely unused, and whose potential for service Cause so great, to arise and demonstrate importance part they are to play in all fields service Faith.

Bounties in abundance waiting descend from Supreme Concourse. That the friends of God will now surge ahead with resolute radiant spirits in every continent islands of the seas, to bring Message of Bahá'u'lláh to waiting souls win their allegiance His Cause, ensuring overwhelming victory Plan to which they are now committed, is our high hope and ardent prayer at Sacred Threshold.

The Universal House of Justice
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Cover photo

The Mother Temple of the Antipodes, in Australia, shines forth.
Please see page 8.

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Despite solid accomplishments, the Kenosha Bahá'í Community experienced little growth, since the Khayru'llah episode had so badly damaged the community's strength and its prestige in the eyes of non-Bahá'ís. No more fitting commentary on the despondency of the Kenosha believers can be found than the following draft of a letter to 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

'Ye are the Angels'

Part II of the history of the Bahá'ís of Kenosha

by William P. Collins

Yeare
Part II
Kenosha on September
of the Baha'is of Kenosha
'Abdu'/-Baha
Angels'
by
2
the
Baha'i
William P.
News/May 1977

'To the Center of the Covenant of God,
'Abdul Baha Abbas.
'Our beloved Master!
'We are a little band of believers in Kenosha, who are trying to hold together through [sic] all difficulties caused by the Nakazeen [Covenant-breakers] of this town. This is their stronghold in America. We humble [sic] beg that Thou wilt intercede for us that we may be strengthened through the confirmations of the Spirit, to keep our numbers together, to hold to the Center of the Covenant, and be enabled to draw these deniers nearer to Thee. We also beg that we may grow more and more spiritually, and that we may be characterized by Thy characteristics, and by our lives and deeds declare the Kingdom of God to our Fellow Man. We thank God that we were enabled to withstand the tests and to pass through them victoriously..."\[35\]

That 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent at least 10 Tablets\[39\] to this beleaguered band of faithful followers is a clear indication of His undying love for them: "Ye will see your faces shine as stars in the horizon of guidance and your heads crowned by the crown of success in the Supreme World."\[37\]

'Abdu'l-Bahá’s missionary tour of the United States in 1912 was the fulfillment of the above prophecy. Nothing could make the faces of the Kenoshah Bahá'ís "shine as stars" except the visit of the Beloved to their city. Mrs. Henry L. Goodale had long cherished the hope that the Master would visit Kenosha, and sent Him a letter of invitation. He graciously accepted to take a day from His stay in Chicago in order to spend time with the Kenoshah friends.

In comparison with the attacks on the Faith in 1899, the far more significant visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá received little publicity. The newspaper articles that did appear were generally quite favorable. The Kenosha Union warmly reported the upcoming visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, asserting that "it is not often that Kenosha people have the opportunity to see and hear the head of any great religious movement and it is expected that there will be a large crowd at the services tomorrow evening."\[38\]

Before leaving for Kenosha on September 15, 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke several times to the Chicago Bahá'ís about the need for firmness in the Covenant of Bahá'u'llah, and that violators of that Covenant must be shunned. He spoke of this because Dr. Ibrahim Khayru'llah was then residing in Chicago and had attempted to stir up discord over 'Abdu'l-Bahá’s visit. One of Dr. Khayru'llah’s associates, a Dr. Knott, was told by 'Abdu'l-Bahá that if Dr. Khayru'llah’s intention was pure, he would come to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in all sincerity like everyone else. The Master took Dr. Knott with Him to Kenosha to witness all that transpired as evidence of the triumph of the Covenant.\[39\]

Thus on the morning of September 15, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His entourage arrived at the station of the Chicago North Shore and Milwaukee R.R. (Electric Line) at Evanston. Among those accompanying the Master was Saichiro Fujito who was to serve in Haifa throughout the ministry of Shoghi Effendi and under The Universal House of Justice until his death in 1976.\[40\] When the awaited train pulled into the station, 'Abdu'l-Bahá paced the platform unconcerned and never boarded his railroad car. To the dismay of His companions, the train for Kenosha left without them. After boarding the next train for Kenosha, the Master’s party came upon the wreckage of the first near Waukegan. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "The protection of the Blessed Beauty [Bahá'u'llah] was with us." He narrated how some of the Bahá’ís had wished Him to sail to America on the maiden voyage of the Titanic, but Bahá'u'llah had guided Him to come direct via the S.S. Cedric.\[40\]

'Abdu'l-Bahá was met at the Kenosha train station by Bahá’ís who transported Him by automobile to the Bahá'í Center in Gronquist Hall (616 57th Street) where a feast was prepared for them. 'Abdu'l-Bahá stood at the head of the stairs and shook hands with each person who came into the hall. Grace Anderson, who was 19 at the time of the visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, described the moment of meeting:

"It’s something you can’t explain exactly. It’s not for anybody to describe unless they have themselves experienced it. I don’t think I can describe it, the moment when He shook my hand. The only thing I can
After boarding the next train for Kenosha, the Master's party came upon the wreckage of the first. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, 'The protection of the Blessed Beauty was with us.'

On the evening of September 15, 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk to a capacity audience at the First Congregational Church pictured below. He said, 'The Holy Manifestations were one in essence.'

Heavenly light may illumine the hearts so that all may be in the greatest love and unity. That they may have spiritual bonds, and become the cause of spreading the oneness of humanity, through the aid and favor of Bahá'u'lláh. That all who are on the surface of the earth may become united; all races become harmonized together; all religions find unity and fellowship. So that through the power of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh the banner of the oneness of the world of humanity may be raised, and Universal Peace may pitch its tent. That the fragrances of holiness may be diffused; the breath of the Holy Spirit revive the hearts; the nostrils become perfumed; and the eyes may be seeing, the ears be blessed with hearing; that they may acquire eternal happiness and obtain everlasting life, and become the cause of ideal and material attainments. Through the bestowal of the divine call, become believers in God, and under the shadow of the Blessed Beauty Bahá'u'lláh you have advanced. Then be ye in the greatest happiness that such a blessing has been granted and that such a bounty has surrounded you...

'Praise be to God! Ye are all confirmed, full of cheer, and walking in the divine path. I was 40 years in the prison of two kings [Persia and Turkey] who were in the direst enmity. They closed all the roads. Not a single person was able to go out of the fort of 'Akka... They did not allow anyone to come near nor did they let me go out... No one thought that I could go on with such hardships and severe persecution. I trusted, and in the Blessed Beauty Bahá'u'lláh I had confidence, until suddenly God removed the chain from my neck, and chained the neck of 'Abdu'l-Hamid, the Sultan of Turkey.42 I came out of the fort. He entered it. I became free. He became a prisoner. All that he did to me, all the conditions of the past, have become reversed. Praise be to God! Through the favor of Bahá'u'lláh I have come to America. I have seen your faces. It surpasses
the imagination; but through the favor of the Blessed Beauty Bahá'u'lláh all the doors were opened, the divine banner was raised. The fame of the Cause of God has enveloped the East and the West. The influence of the word of Bahá'u'lláh has surrounded the world. 44

After He had finished speaking, 'Abdu'l-Bahá went to a long table be-decked with flowers and laden with food. It had long been a custom that two empty chairs be placed in Kenosha's Bahá'í meetings, one in commemoration of Bahá'u'lláh, the other for 'Abdu'l-Bahá, hoping for such a day as this when He would arrive. The Master went directly to the chair which had always been set for Him, saying: "This is where I am to sit." 45 He then thanked the Bahá'ís for the opportunity to visit them:

"I too desired that matters be so arranged that I might come to Kenosha to meet the friends. God has upset heaven and earth that I might come to America and Kenosha. He has changed two kingdoms that I might see your faces. I am hopeful, I am hopeful that from this meeting great results may be obtained, a new motion may appear in the souls, a new spirit may be acquired, and that the Bahá'í activity here may become very great." 46

Following this meeting, 'Abdu'l-Bahá went to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry L. Goodale (6108 Sheridan Road) where He stayed through most of the day. A contemporary narrative records that "after the arrival of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His party at the Goodale home, they visited in the first floor apartment and received the many believers and friends who came to pay their respects to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and hear His words of wisdom. Later, He and His party went for a short walk accompanied by myself, Louis Voelz. We all walked at a respectful distance behind 'Abdu'l-Bahá. While walking through a small park I remarked to the interpreters that a believer [Mrs. Frank Harmon] living across from the park intended coming to our home to see 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but due to sudden illness could not come. 'Abdu'l-Bahá overheard me and asked the interpreters what I had said, and upon being informed of the believer's illness, He immediately left the sidewalk, crossed the grass and crossed the street and walked up the steps of the ill one's home [6219 10th Avenue], to visit her. However, no one was home and I was much embarrassed. We went back home and there we found that the ill one had recovered sufficiently to come over to see Him. This incident illustrates how keen 'Abdu'l-Bahá is in visiting the ill." 47

On the evening of September 15, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk to a capacity audience at the First Congregational Church [5934 8th Avenue]. His address concerned the oneness of the Messengers of God and the differences arising among their followers. "The Holy Manifestations," He said, "were one in essence. But their followers differed, owing to their attachment to false dogmatic imitations." 48 'Abdu'l-Bahá remained overnight in Kenosha, lodging in the Goodale apartment at 6108 Sheridan Road. The Bahá'ís were able to speak further with Him in the evening. The Master left by train for Chicago on the afternoon of September 16, 1912. The Kenosha Union of that date reported:

"An audience which filled the entire auditorium of the church gathered at the Congregational church Sunday evening to listen to an address by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, head of the Bahá'í religion. The Bahá'í Assembly in Kenosha was one of the first formed in this country. The speaker of the evening filled all the preconceived ideas of what the leader of a religious movement should represent in his own person, being a man of commanding presence and great personal magnetism. Although he spoke in Persian and his remarks had to be translated to the audience, he held the closest attention of his hearers to the end of his address, and his exposition of the scriptures was clear and concise from the standpoint of the believers in the new religion. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has been in this country since spring and his lectures and addresses have greatly strengthened the Bahá'ís of America. The spread of Bahá'í is one of the wonders of the modern world and already the new faith or rule of living numbers its converts by the tens of thousands in the Orient and is gaining in numbers rapidly in the western world." 49

The visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, though short, was the confirmation of, and reward for, the faithfulness to the Bahá'í teachings exhibited by the Kenosha believers in the face of the fierce opposition of ambitious...
The Master went directly to the chair which had always been set for Him, saying, ‘This is where I am to sit.’

‘Abdu’l-Bahá walked in this park during His visit to Kenosha. The visit of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, although short, was the confirmation of and the reward for the faithfulness of the Bahá’ís of Kenosha.

and vacillating souls who had attempted to seize their allegiance. Dr. Knott, the Khayru’l-Láh associate who accompanied ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, witnessed the deference with which the Master was treated by the Kenosha clergy, and the strength of a Bahá’í community which had faced so many severe external and internal tests in its short 15 year history.

Achieving unity in Bahá’í communities is a process requiring slow and painful growth toward maturity. In this process, groups of believers often suffer as much at the hands of friends as at the hands of ill-wishers. The Kenosha Bahá’ís underwent serious difficulties in preserving community unity in 1916 as a result of the domineering attitude of one of the members, who was able to undermine true Bahá’í consultation and to prevent the immature Spiritual Assembly from exercising its collective authority. The community’s membership declined by nearly half, many of whom later returned to active participation in the Faith; but unwisdom and individual imperfections had once again caused great damage to the morale of the believers.50 In 1920 Jináb-i-Fádíl, a highly learned Persian Bahá’í, was sent by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to the United States.51 He visited with the Kenosha Spiritual Assembly to aid it in solving community problems and to offer outside encouragement.

During this period immediately after World War I many Bahá’ís were responding to the call for pioneers and traveling teachers which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá issued in His Tablets of the Divine Plan.52 One of those who arose was Kenosha’s August Rudd, who, with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s approval, laid the foundations for Bahá’í communities in Boviken and other localities throughout Sweden.53

At the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in 1921 the Kenosha Bahá’ís is all remained faithful to the provisions of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, turning to His grandson Shoghi Effendi as Guardian of the Cause of God. The following year, in response to the oft-expressed wishes of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi for more international communication, the Kenosha Spiritual Assembly became the first to establish regular 19-day newsletters to all Bahá’í communities in the world. Inspiring correspondence was received from many communities, but after three years letters were sent only every three months, and after eight years the project was discontinued due to a poor response and limited funds.55

Kenosha was also the first Bahá’í community to hold a service in the foundation of the Bahá’í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, on June 4, 1922. Louis J. Voelz described the scene: “We of Kenosha entered the foundation amongst all the timbers that were still erected like a forest for the purpose of supporting the foundation dome molds, and there we held a regular Bahá’í service, sitting on any piece of timber that was handy, while the Chicago Bahá’ís had gone to Chicago to their Hall for their regular meeting.”56

Through the decade of the 1920’s the Kenosha Community was still struggling against the blows it had received in its youth, declining to as few as 16 believers in 1925. Determined to attract the public through more than lectures hidden away in upstairs halls, the Spiritual Assembly of Kenosha rented a vacant store in a prominent business street where many citizens passed every day. The store-front was rented for six weeks and decorated with descriptive cards, photographs and statements of basic Bahá’í principles. A series of lectures was offered for six weeks and decorated with descriptive cards, photographs and statements of basic Bahá’í principles. A series of lectures was offered each evening and twice Sundays. Among those speaking in this series were Mrs. Robert Lee Moffett and Dr. Zia Bagdadi,57 both of whom achieved sustained publicity in the local
After His talk at the Congregational Church, 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited further with the Bahá'ís in the home of the Goodales.

media. The result was six new Bahá'ís and the return of nine former members to active participation in community activities. The youth also conducted a bi-monthly lecture series on such topics as “Idolatry past and present” and “Is atheism tenable?” By 1938, the community had once again reached 50 believers.

It was a source of amazement to non-Bahá’ís in the 1930’s that the Bahá’ís could be building a Temple during the Depression. It was a source of unity among the Bahá’ís to be sacrificing for the construction of what they considered to be the holiest Bahá’í House of Worship ever to be erected to the name of Bahá’u’lláh. The secretary of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Kenosha, Louis J. Voelz, built two cardboard models of the House of Worship, one of which was exhibited at the Century of Progress exhibition in Chicago in 1933 and seen by 20,000 people every day. The other model was constructed at the request of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, who placed it in Bahjí, the mansion of Bahá’u’lláh near ‘Akká, where it remained until the mid-1960’s.⁵⁹

Kenosha, which had already shown itself to be a pioneering Bahá’í community through introduction of the 19-day newsletter and the holding of the first Bahá’í service in the foundation of the House of Worship, became in 1937 the first incorporated Local Spiritual Assembly in Wisconsin.⁶⁰

The Second World War severely limited Bahá’í activities around the planet. Nevertheless, Kenosha’s Bahá’í community was able to send Flora Hottes as a pioneer to Bolivia in 1942, followed by Lauretta Voelz to Regina, Saskatchewan, in 1943. Flora Hottes remained in South America for five years, and Lauretta Voelz spent four years in Regina until a Local Spiritual Assembly was securely established. Work on the Temple in Wilmette was progressing well enough that nearby communities, including Kenosha, were asked to prepare believers to serve as guides there on a regular basis. The 1940’s and 1950’s also saw a galaxy of prominent Bahá’í speakers come to Kenosha, including Dorothy Baker, Horace Holley, and Louis Gregory.⁶¹

The golden anniversary of the establishment of the Kenosha Bahá’í Community which was celebrated in 1947 called forth paens of praise from the National Spiritual Assembly, which addressed the Kenosha Assembly as “a stalwart and loyal pillar of the blessed new World Order” whose “ardent services have spread the holy fragrances far and wide.”⁶² Shoghi Effendi himself cabled the community that he was “moved express dearly beloved steadfast devoted members community heartfelt congratulations warm admiration spirit animating them service Faith. Ardent hope extension range meritorious labors.”⁶³

In the 30 years since that golden anniversary, the Kenosha Bahá’í Community has not grown significantly. Though there have been more youth entering the Faith, the stigma of the Vatralsky attacks in 1899 and the defection of Khayru’lláh in 1900 have continued to color the Christian view of Bahá’ís in that city, and have prevented many from investigating the Bahá’í Revelation.⁶⁴

At its 75th anniversary, the Bahá’í Community of Kenosha was honored by loving messages from well-wishers around the world, from the National Spiritual Assembly, and from The Universal House of Justice. The followers of Bahá’u’lláh in Kenosha have undergone the flush of success, the fire of ecclesiastical opposition and internal attack, the reward for faithfulness bestowed by a loving Master, and emergence into the continuous struggle to persevere and remain steadfast. Louis Voelz summarized the state of the Kenosha community in 1947—a statement as applicable today:

“We have not increased in numbers as we apparently should have, yet we have remained firm and steadfast, patient and hopeful and have contributed our abilities and sacrifices far outside of the confines of our city limits, even into other countries.”⁶⁵

Perhaps it is these attributes of firmness, steadfastness and patience which have characterized the Kenosha Bahá’ís that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was addressing when He wrote these words to the Bahá’ís of that small Wisconsin city:

“Ye are the angels, if your feet be firm, your spirits rejoiced, your secret thoughts pure, your eyes consoled, your ears opened, your breasts dilated with joy, and your souls gladdened, and if you arise to assist the Covenant, to resist dissension and to be attracted to the Effulgence! Verily, I say unto you that the Word of God has assuredly been explained and has become an evident sign and a strong and solid proof, and its traces shall be spread in the East and West, and to these all heads shall bow, and all souls shall submit and kneel down with their faces to the ground.”⁶⁶
‘God has upset heaven and earth that I might come to America and Kenosha. He has changed two kingdoms that I might see your faces.’

‘Abdu’l-Bahá arrived at the Kenosha train station nearly 65 years ago. He stayed in Kenosha September 15-16, 1912.
Mother Temple of the Pacific
by Scott Stafford

The Mashriqu’l-Aqîkh of the Antipodes, the Mother Temple of the Pacific, was completed in 1961 and dedicated on September 16, by Amatu’l-Bahá Ruhíyyih Khánum.

Since that time, an average of 30,000 people per year have visited the “Silent Teacher.” The House of Worship auditorium is open daily to all people for prayer and meditation. Regular weekly services are held each Sunday with selected readings from the Sacred Writings and a capella music.

Other buildings on the grounds are the Assembly Hall, which serves as a general information center; the National Office, which serves as an administrative center and houses the Council Chambers where the National Spiritual Assembly meets; and the Pilgrim Hostel, which accommodates visiting Bahá’ís.

Top, this page: Standing nearly 40 meters high, the House of Worship was constructed between 1958 and 1961 at a cost of 210,000 pounds sterling. The Temple has steel-reinforced concrete dome and walls, molded cement decorative panels with inserts of glass around the windows and doors, and an exterior finish in opaque quartz. The Temple’s base is 37.8 meters. Bottom, this page: The auditorium and gallery seat 600 people. The diameter of the auditorium is 23.3 meters. Opposite page, top: The Greatest Name, an Arabic inscription, is etched in glass inside the dome above the House of Worship auditorium. It is illuminated during the day by sunlight. Center left: The Mother Temple of the Pacific is situated 31 kilometers north of the center of Sydney in the sparsely-populated suburb of Ingleside, an old Scottish word for “fireside.” Center right: The moon is seen through the open door of the Temple. Bottom: The aluminum fleche (lantern) was lifted into place by helicopter. It weighs approximately 360 kilograms and is approximately five meters high.
Pictorial Essay

Top left: The interior walls, columns and dome are a soft green color. Top center: Dawn breaks over the House of Worship. Top right: The Temple is illuminated at night. Bottom left: The National Haziratu'l-Quds contains administrative offices, a council chamber and offices for the National Secretary and Treasurer. The Haziratu'l-Quds, Pilgrim Hostel and Assembly Hall were built in 1974. Their brown brick exteriors blend well with the natural surroundings. Bottom right: The nine-sided Assembly Hall, close to the main entrance of the House of Worship, functions as a general information and inquiry center, where books and pamphlets about the Faith may be obtained. It is shared by the Book Sales department, which distributes Baha'i literature throughout Australia.

May 1977 Baha'i News
A statement containing suggestions on the kind of education needed to implement the principle of the equality of men and women was presented by the Bahá’í International Community to the 26th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (see box). This statement, which was circulated as an official United Nations document in English, French and Spanish, to all participants in the session, was the Bahá’í contribution to the Commission’s consultation on the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985).

The Decade for Women was adopted at the end of 1975 when the United Nations realized that much remained to be done to make the equality of men and women a reality. The Decade will continue to focus on the three goals for International Women’s Year (1975): the promotion of the equality of men and women; the integration of women in the total development of their countries and of the planet; and the contribution of women to the strengthening of world peace.

In 1980, at the midpoint of the Decade for Women, the United Nations will hold a world conference. The Bahá’í International Community, as a Non-Governmental Organization in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council, representing Bahá’í communities around the globe, will be invited to participate. A full delegation will be sent.

Our representative at the United Nations writes, “We hope, therefore, that Bahá’ís everywhere will seize the daily opportunities offered by the United Nations Decade for Women to promote the Bahá’í principle of equality of the sexes, at the same time that they implement in their own lives this most vital principle of Bahá’u’lláh.”

The statement presented to the United Nations Commission appears below.

**Statement presented to United Nations**

The Bahá’í International Community, concerned with bringing about change in the thinking and acting patterns which have hindered the advancement of women, would like to make the following observations bearing on the implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women:

There would seem to be general agreement that the status of women is deeply affected by the many prejudices - religious, racial, cultural, political, or economic - preventing unity of conscience. This unity of conscience, which the Bahá’í International Community sees as an essential prerequisite to long-range and lasting achievement of the goals of International Women’s Year and the United Nations Decade for Women, is the coming together of the minds and hearts of men and women in devotion to the common good, a willingness not only to cooperate, but even more, to sacrifice selfish interests for the happiness of others. This can only be achieved through the awakening of human beings to the spiritual reality of life. The knowledge that prejudices are destructive and lead only to contention, strife, and ultimately, war, is not sufficient for their eradication, as the condition of our present world testifies. In the same way, a desire for the full social and economic development of all peoples is not sufficient motivation for a constructive change in attitude.

Recognizing that religion has been a most powerful influence in establishing behavior patterns, and is indeed at the core of most customs and traditions, we wish to comment on a quite new dimension in religion which, while not denying past contributions, expands and deepens the understanding of the role of religion in the life of humanity.

As materialistic pursuit and attachment increase in the world, humanity becomes ever more a captive of nature, struggling for physical existence and well-being. Concern for material wealth alone, while it may seem to bring temporary security and freedom, finally can be seen to have entrapped all people in a maze of insecurity, doubt, and lack of freedom, as the competition to achieve positions of advantage and power intensifies.

It is the view of the Bahá’í International Community that these materialistic attitudes must be balanced by the realization that the goal and reality of human life is spiritual in nature. Awareness of our humility before the Creator, and our desire to acquire the highest moral virtues and qualities - honesty, trustworthiness, justice, love and compassion - as expressed in the fundamental teachings of all religions, is the beginning of spiritual awakening. Only as men and women free themselves
Baha'is represented at U.N. session on status of women

The Bahá'í International Community was represented at the 26th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women last fall by Marco G. Kappenberger, Counsellor Anneliese Bopp and Lea Nys.

The Commission on the Status of Women ended its session with an important accomplishment: it drafted a Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. The Convention is another step towards the legal achievement of equality for men and women. After it is approved by the United Nations General Assembly, which will probably occur this fall, the Convention must be signed and confirmed by at least 30 nations before it has the power of law. When this happens, its many articles will be binding for those countries that have accepted the Convention; equal rights, privileges and opportunities for members of both sexes will become world-wide law. (In 1967, the United Nations approved a Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. A Declaration, unlike a Convention, is a statement of intention without the force of law.)

The representatives of the Bahá'í International Community participated in the meetings at the Session, lunched with delegates from many countries, attended several official receptions, and made many friends, offering constructive comments and suggestions based on the Bahá'í Writings. They were often asked about the concern of Bahá'ís for the status of women, and shared information with the delegates on the principle of the equality of the sexes and on many other Bahá'í teachings.

from the materialism which today dominates all aspects of life can they begin to experience true dedication to the whole of humanity, and to recognize the organic oneness and absolute interdependence of all members of the human family.

To this end, education, beginning in childhood and extending throughout life, should place great emphasis on the following principles:

The unfettered investigation of truth. Every person has not only the right but the responsibility to make his own search for truth, reaching his own conviction so that the source of his actions will not be an imitation of the thoughts and beliefs of others.

The agreement of science and religion. An awareness of the essential harmony of science and religion, as aspects of one reality, abolishes the unscientific concepts which grow out of human interpretations of religion and cause misunderstanding and superstition.

A universal standard of justice. As minds unite in the recognition of the organic oneness of mankind, a truth which is above partisan interests, discrimination because of sex, race, religion, economic and social status gradually disappears.

The fundamental oneness of religion. The basic truths of every faith should be taught and fully accepted, since the religions are stages in the unfoldment of a divine plan - each religion awakening, in different places and times, deeper insight of truth in the human mind, and establishing new social laws and teachings necessary for the progress of peoples.

The equality of men and women. Equal opportunities, rights, and privileges, must be advocated for members of both sexes. The education of women is, in fact, so important that if both boy and girl cannot be educated equally in a family, preference should be given to the girl as a future mother, since the education of children in the early years determines in great part the level of achievement which humanity can attain.

Through these principles, the Bahá'í International Community has made considerable progress toward the elimination of obstacles preventing the advancement of women, as may be seen in the desire of women for education, in their full participation in the process of Bahá'í election, consultation, and decision-making, in their service on Bahá'í administrative bodies, and in community service. This progress has been made possible through the Bahá'í administrative system, which provides for the free expression and consideration of all points of view - of youth and adults of both sexes - maintains unity and encourages continued growth in understanding of the principles and laws which today are essential to human growth and development. In the Bahá'í International Community the changing attitudes of men and women from over 1,600 ethnic and indigenous backgrounds are leading to an ever greater realization that human happiness comes from dedication to the oneness and wholeness of the human race.

May 1977/Bahá'í News 13
Opinioni Bahá’í is a new quarterly magazine in Italian edited by the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy with the aim of proclaiming and spreading the Teachings to non-Bahá’ís as well as deepening and increasing the knowledge of believers.

The magazine is intended for Bahá’í communities in those countries where people of Italian origin reside: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, the United States, and others.

The subscription rate for four issues is 5,000 lira, which includes postage, and should be sent to your National Spiritual Assembly along with full name and address, for forwarding to Italy.

The editorial board of Opinioni Bahá’í poses in their office.

### Around the World

**Australia**

**Weekly teaching efforts spreading Faith**

A dozen Bahá’ís in Melbourne, Australia, decided a year ago that they would like to meet in a public park every Saturday at 2 p.m. to pass out Bahá’í literature.

On the first Saturday, the friends began with a round of prayers, collected pamphlets and worked in pairs to approach people. Most people listened for a few moments when the friends told them about the Faith, and accepted a pamphlet.

Later in the afternoon one of the Bahá’ís noticed a man reading a pamphlet given to him by another team member. He said he would like to know more about the Faith and that he had visited the House of Worship in Wilmette. He later attended a fireside.

The teachers met a few days later to review their progress, and decided to change their meeting place to a park with a coffee shop nearby, so they could invite individuals to discuss the Faith over a cup of coffee.

The following Saturday the friends tacked posters on a picnic table in the park, letting that serve as an information headquarters. They worked individually this time, and met a person whose brother is a Bahá’í. She accepted information about the Faith, and said she would accompany her mother to a public meeting to be held later in the month.

Bahá’ís of Melbourne, Australia, meet each Saturday for a day of teaching the Faith.

One hundred twenty-five people attended the public meeting, and most of them bought Bahá’í books. The Melbourne Bahá’ís ask that prayers be said each Saturday for the success of their teaching efforts, and have decided that teaching in the parks “has come to stay in Melbourne.”

**Belize**

Hand of Cause visits Belize

The one week visit of Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga and his wife Elizabeth to Belize resulted in many advancements for the Faith there. Knight of Bahá’u’l-Ábah Gayle Woolson was also there.

During the visit, Bahá’ís were granted
an interview over Radio Belize - the only radio station in the country - after two years of denial of air time. The only other Bahá’í interview during the two-year period was with Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláh Muhajir a year earlier.

The news coverage of Mr. Olinga’s visit was extensive. From the day of his arrival, Radio Belize covered Mr. Olinga’s activities in every broadcast, followed his movements each day and reported on his actions the morning of his departure. The Bahá’ís provided the station with press releases about activities that week, but reporters called for more information. Newspapers also covered the visit.

At a banquet given in honor of Mr. Olinga, the Minister of Home Affairs commended the Bahá’í for their universal concept and their close association with the United Nations. The book Divine Symphony, by Mrs. Woolson, was presented to the mayor and Chief of Police at the banquet.

The mayor quoted from Divine Symphony the following evening in an introductory speech at a public meeting. He affirmed the truth of progressive revelation, the unity of God’s Messengers, and Bahá’u’lláh’s station. He called the Faith “this great religion” and urged all to investigate its claims and teachings.

In a two-hour visit with the Commissioner of Police, the Bahá’ís were told that if they ever encountered any difficulties they were to contact him immediately. The Commissioner also insisted that the Assistant Commissioner and the rest of the staff read Divine Symphony.

Mr. Olinga made a courtesy call on the Governor, who said he was reading Volume XIV of Bahá’í World, which had been presented to him by the National Spiritual Assembly. The Governor had once lived in Africa and was delighted to converse in Swahili with Mr. Olinga.

Before his departure, Mr. Olinga visited the Deputy Premier of Belize, who expressed the hope that the Hand of the Cause would return soon.

Baluchistan site of teaching trip

An extensive teaching trip was made to Baluchistan, Pakistan, in December, by three Indian believers. Baluchistan is an arid and mountainous region.

The first town visited in the province of Baluchistan was Kalat. Nasir Shah, a new believer there, welcomed the travellers and arranged a meeting which was attended by many inquirers. The report of the travelling teachers said, “We held long discussions on many aspects of the Faith and during the course of these conversations, Bahá’u’lláh’s unfailing confirmation blessed the region of Baluchistan with a new Spiritual Assembly, the first in Kalat, where nine souls enrolled in the Army of Light.”

The team also visited the four local believers of Pasni, addressed some inquirers who had been studying the Faith, answered questions they had prepared, and had the joy of witnessing the formation of the first Local Spiritual Assembly as a result of the acceptance of the Faith by some of the inquirers.

Through the enrollment of an inquirer in Jiwini and in Khudzar, two new localities were opened to the Faith.

Youth from 16 countries gather

The Third West Asian Youth Conference, held in August, 1976, in Lucknow, India, was attended by over 200 Bahá’ís from 16 countries.

Highlights of the four day conference were the address by Counsellor Shirin Boman on behalf of the Board of Counsellors in which she extolled the enthusiasm and vigorous achievements of Bahá’í youth; talks by Farideh Farhang, Dr. A. Rastogi and Dr. I. S. Narula, Auxiliary Board member.

In pre-conference activities, a Unity Feast was held. The governor of Uttar Pradesh, Dr. M. Chenna Reddy, addressed the Feast. The event was covered on both radio and television, and filmed by the Films Division of the Government of India.

Baluchistan
Around the World

lage of Manito. Chief Kintoki Joseph, a Bahá’í, gave the opening address.

On the second day, teams of Bahá’í teachers went to the nearby island of Romalum and to other villages on Udot. Other Bahá’ís stayed in Manito where deepening classes were held for two days. One group went to Moen for proclamation activities there.

The conference ended with a public meeting in Moen, with the teams meeting there the afternoon of the public meeting.

Cuna Indians learn of Faith

Hedi Ahmadiyeh, a member of the Central American Continental Board of Counsellors, and Manuel Flores, who is a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Panama, visited the San Blas Islands, which have a population of 2,000 Cuna Indians, in December. Dr. Ahmadiyeh writes: “We spoke to a meeting of the Indians in their ‘Congresso’ and many were interested in the Faith. The Chief of the Indians in this island, who also has a government position, invited his people to return at 4 p.m. the next day if they wished to ask questions about the Bahá’í Faith. Around that specific hour, the Chief and many people came and we had person-to-person contact and discussion. Twenty-three accepted the Faith, in-

Delegates elect National Assembly

The newly elected members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Hawaii are pictured here. Front row, left to right: Ben Ayala, Treasurer; Elizabeth Habermann, Recorder; Claude R. "Chief" Mauldin; Elizabeth Hollinger, Secretary. Back row, left to right: Craig Quick; Brad Hollinger, Assistant Treasurer; Michael Woodward; Tracy Hamilton, Chairman; Tony Pelle, Vice-Chairman.

Delegates and visitors to the Bahá’í National Convention of the Hawaiian Islands met May 1 at the Bahá’í National Center in Honolulu, Hawaii.
excluding the Chief himself and a brilliant young man, the Secretary of the 'Congresso' who translated our talks from Spanish to Cuna.

"Earlier the same day, another Chief accepted the Faith. He recommended that the people investigate the Faith and asked to speak to the gathering. There was a wonderful spirit of love and harmony and we welcomed the new believers and encouraged the others to investigate the Cause.

"These beautiful, dignified Cuna Indians are living according to the standards of the Faith and are characterized by honesty, lack of violence, and kind and loving relationships with people. We did not observe anyone drinking alcoholic beverages and we felt a great sense of morality and respect for the women among these purehearted people. The children were uninhibited, as well as the adults, in asking us who we were and why we were on the island. As we talked to them, we found that they were very interested in the teachings of the Faith."

Rhodesia

Five Year Plan goal won

The National Spiritual Assembly of Rhodesia has joyfully announced that by January its Five Year Plan goal of establishing the Faith in 500 localities in Rhodesia had been surpassed by 26, and that plans for consolidation of the achieved goal and for further expansion are being vigorously pursued.

Surinam

Message spread during river trip

Three believers in Surinam were joined by Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga for their journey up the Marowijne and Tapanahony Rivers December 25-28 to visit the Granmans or chiefs of two Bush Negro tribes.

They started up river from the town of Albina, travelling in a canoe with an outboard motor. The first night was spent in a village where the Village Captain gave them his own shop in which to tie their hammocks for the night.

The next day, the group reached Drietabbetje (Three Islands) in the Tapanahony River, the home area of the Granman of the Aucaner tribe. After spending the night in one of the government houses, the Baha’is received a message that the Granman was waiting to see them. They were cordially received by the Granman, who was surrounded by tribal dignitaries. Following a warm and courteous conversation with Mr. Olinga, the Granman granted permission for the Baha’is to teach the Faith in his village.

The following day, the group reached Langatabbetje (Long Island) in the Marowijne River, where they were met and embraced by the Granman of the tribe, who is now a Baha’i. The Granman asked Mr. Olinga to take his Baha’i greetings to all his brothers and sisters in Africa and other places. He also gave the Baha’is permission to teach his people.

The two boatmen, Bush Negroes of the Paramaccaner tribe, became Baha’is by the end of the journey. One of them said, "I have never before made a trip with city people who shared everything with us, who let us eat off their own plates, who cooked and served us food, and who included us so completely in their group."

Sweden

Faith taught at winter market

One of the goals of the Five Year Plan in Sweden is to teach the Faith to the Samish people, a minority group in the Lapland regions of the country. In accordance with this goal, a Baha’i booth was displayed at the annual Jokkmokk winter market in February, where large numbers of Samish people gather to sell their goods. Approximately 15-18,000 people from all over Lapland congregated at the 371st Jokkmokk market.

Baha’is have participated in two previous Jokkmokk markets, but the number of visitors to this year’s Baha’i display was greater than in previous years.
Six new pillars of Universal House of Justice are formed at Riḍván
On June 10 the National Spiritual Assembly received the following message from the Universal House of Justice:

"The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran has reported that a 37-year-old man, Mr. Ruḥū'lláh Taymúri-Muqadam, a steadfast pioneer for some 20 years in Fáṣil Abád in the Province of Gurgán, has been martyred at the hands of misguided people of that village.

"Some members of a fanatical element of the area had been plotting against the Faith and had collected money to finance a large-scale attack on the Bahá'ís.

"In starting the campaign they went to the house of Taymúri and attacked him and his sister. The blows of a knife and other weapons caused the death of Mr. Taymúri and serious injury to his younger sister, Miss Parvín Taymúri.

"Fortunately, the authorities in Iran have arrested the assassins and they now await trial. At present, the area is calm and the government has the situation under control.

"The National Spiritual Assembly reports that it is confident that this persecution in the cradle of the Faith will attract divine confirmations and will bring new victories to the steadfast and devoted believers in the land of Bahá'u'lláh."
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Cover

The healing rays of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh grew stronger at Ridván as six new pillars of the Universal House of Justice were formed: one in Africa, one in the Caribbean, one in Europe, two in the Pacific Ocean, and one in South America.

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The following is an address by the Hand of the Cause of God Paul Haney at the Bahá’í International Conference, Mérida, Yucatan, Mexico, February 5, 1977.

'The following is an address by the Hand of the Cause of God Paul Haney at the Bahá’í International Conference, Mérida, Yucatan, Mexico, February 5, 1977.'

Every Bahá’í knows that our beloved Guardian has referred to our contributions to the various Funds as the lifeblood of the Bahá’í institutions ordained by Bahá’u’lláh, which we are striving to develop and strengthen.

It is a self-evident truth that no organism can function without its lifeblood, and the rapidly expanding institutions and activities of the Cause are no exception to this physical law.

However, the concept of giving our material means for the advancement of the Faith has been raised to a new dimension and a new concept in this Dispensation. When a new Manifestation of God appears, a transformation takes place as a result of the spirit released by His life and teachings, and even words take on new meanings.

Two of the words that take on new meaning and significance in this great Day of God are Funds and Contributions. Another is work, which has been raised to an act of worship when performed in the spirit of service.

The compensation we receive for our work is a material thing, but when we contribute a portion of it to the Funds of the Cause in a joyous spirit of love, and above all with the element of sacrifice, those contributions become spiritualized and the material substance transformed into something that confers a spiritual bounty upon the giver.

Our beloved Guardian has told us that contributions to the Fund constitute a practical and effective way whereby every believer may test the measure and character of his faith, and prove in deeds the intensity of his devotion and attachment to the Cause.

Shoghi Effendi also has given us certain basic principles to be applied in relation to contributions to the Funds of the Cause. I shall mention four of these and quote briefly from his writings on these subjects:

1. The voluntary character of Bahá’í contributions.

"...I feel urged to remind you of the necessity of ever bearing in mind the cardinal principle that all contributions to the Fund are to be purely and strictly voluntary in character. It should be made clear and evident to everyone that any form of compulsion, however slight and indirect, strikes at the very root of the principle underlying the formation of the Fund ever since its inception. While appeals of a general character, carefully worded and moving and dignified in tone are welcome under all circumstances, it should be left entirely to the discretion of every conscientious believer to decide upon the nature, the amount, and purpose of his or her contribution for the propagation of the Cause."

2. No pressure must be exerted.

"Shoghi Effendi has repeatedly stated that no pressure should be used upon the friends, and psychological pressure falls under that category. But there is much difference between such gatherings often used by religious bodies and a true, quiet,
prayerful atmosphere when a person is, of his own accord, aroused to make some sacrifice."

3. Only Bahá’is may contribute to the Funds for the work of the Cause.
   "Non-Bahá’is cannot contribute to our work or do it for us, so really our first obligation is to support our own teaching work, as this will lead to the healing of the nations."

4. Universal participation.
   "The institution of the . . . Fund, so vital and essential for the uninterrupted progress of these activities must, in particular, be assured of the wholehearted, the ever-increasing and universal support of the mass of believers, for whose welfare and in whose name these beneficent activities have been initiated and have been conducted. All, no matter how modest their resources, must participate."

We all know the power of prayer, but I wonder if we realize how we can draw upon this power to enable us to give more to the Cause. We can not only pray for greater means in order to support it more liberally, but we can also pray to have the things in us, in our characters, that hinder us from giving—be they fear of the future, worry, greed, selfishness, or self-indulgence—transmuted into their opposite qualities—trust in God, reliance upon Him, generosity, unselfishness, and self-sacrifice.

The duty and privilege of giving lies squarely on the shoulders of every Bahá’í because our Faith is the spiritual ocean that has bathed us with its healing and life-giving waters, and back into the ocean should go some token of our love for the Cause—some tangible thing that will enable it to spread out further, and reach other souls, and quicken them with its water of eternal life as it has quickened and transformed and revivified us.

In closing, I should like to leave you with these words from the Master, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in which He reveals to us the meaning of the mystery of sacrifice:

"Verily, the Beauty of Abhá has destined for the servants who are pure and holy, a Station before which the greatest of the earth shall bow, and the necks of heroes bend in humility.

"Is there any blessing greater than this high Station? But the magnet for this glorious gift from the Majestic One is attained by the mystery of Sacrifice in the Path of God.

"A man should sacrifice all things—even his spirit, his body, his glory, his possessions, his self and his identity, and he should become humble and lowly, and then extend his wings over every believer in the world—nay, rather over all men in the Universe.

"This is the Station of the servants who believe and are pure and holy in the Kingdom of their gracious Lord. When the ray reaches the sun it becomes annihilated and vanishes; the drop when attaining the sea disappears, and a true lover when seeking the loved one becomes extinguished.

"So long as a man has not reached the Station of Sacrifice, he is deprived of every gift... The place of sacrifice is the field of severance, and when one reaches it, the verses of immortality will be chanted.

"Be ye entirely quit of yourselves as much as you can, and be ye attached to the Luminous Face; when ye attain to this Station of adoration, ye will find that all the world is under your shadow."

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The Hand of the Cause of God Paul Haney (upper photo) spoke movingly of the privilege of sacrificial giving to the Bahá’í Fund during an address at the Bahá’í International Conference at Mérida, Mexico, in February. The conference was attended by many indigenous peoples (opposite) who had the bounty of seeing and hearing three Hands of the Cause: Mr. Haney, Dr. Rahmatullah Muhajir, and Mr. Enoch Olinga.

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Progress report
Construction:

Seat of the Universal House of Justice

Work is progressing well on construction of the seat of the Universal House of Justice on Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel. Since Ridvan 1976, when the excavation work was completed, the upper and lower basements and the foundation have been started. Photo 1 shows the upper and lower basements of the building which, when finished, will be approximately 230 feet long, 110½ feet wide, and 85 feet from the ground floor to the top of the dome. Photo 2 is another view of the upper basement wall. The drawing (3) is of work on the lower basement, looking toward 'Akka. Photo 4 is a view toward the east of the general construction. Photo 5 shows a completed section of the upper basement walls.
## New Hebrides

The historic formation of the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the New Hebrides took place at the National Convention held at the Bahá'í Center in Port Vila during the weekend of April 22-24. Hand of the Cause A.Q. Faizi could only attend the last few hours of the Convention, having been delayed by a severe earthquake in the Solomon Islands. His presence added rich blessings to the occasion and constituted a fitting reward for those who had labored so valiantly to prepare for the birth of the new National Assembly.

The erection of this new pillar of the Universal House of Justice came almost 24 years after the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, Bertha Dobbins, first set foot in these islands in 1953. It was appropriate that she could be present to witness the coming of age of the community that she has served so steadfastly over the years. Also in attendance were Auxiliary Board members Arthur Dahl, Alick Soalo and Palene Hnaloane; Jean Sévin, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh to the Tuamoutou Islands in French Polynesia; Madge Featherstone, representing the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia; and some 60 Bahá'ís from the islands of Efate, Malekula, Santo and Tanna in the New Hebrides, and from New Caledonia. Counsellor Owen Bat­rick and his wife, Jeannette, were unable to attend at the last moment, owing to Jeannette's ill health.

The National Assembly was elected by 19 delegates who represented 10 Local Spiritual Assemblies. Every delegate was present, and each contributed to the consultation and made suggestions to the incoming National Assembly. The Convention opened on Friday evening with a session led by the Auxiliary Board, representing the institutions of the Hands of the Cause and the Continental Board of Counsellors in Australasia. Talks on the nature of a National Convention and the responsibilities of delegates were followed by music and singing. Saturday began with the arrival just after dawn of a planeload of delegates and

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In accordance with the provisions of the Five Year Plan, six new National Spiritual Assemblies came into being at Riḍván 1977—one in Africa, one in the Caribbean, one in Europe, two in the Pacific Ocean, and one in South America.

Listed here are the Hands of the Cause who represented the Universal House of Justice at the inaugural Convention, the name of the National Spiritual Assembly, its seat, the “parent” or sponsoring National Assembly and the dates of the Convention. The entries are listed chronologically.
friends from the island of Tanna, and the Convention began just after 9:30 a.m.

It was agreed to use Pidgin as the language of communication, to save translation time.

In the absence of the Hand of the Cause, the messages from the Universal House of Justice to the Convention were read by Dr. Dahl and Mr. Soalo. It was pointed out that the newly-elected members of the National Assembly would take part in the election of the Universal House of Justice at Riddwan 1978.

The annual report of the National Assembly of the South West Pacific was presented. Hearts were uplifted by the news that not only had the number of Local Assemblies in the New Hebrides been raised from five to 10 in five months, but that all 10 Assemblies had been re-elected at Riddwan, together with a new Assembly in Port Resolution.

After a brief discussion of the report, the election of the National Assembly took place. Elected to the first National Assembly of the New Hebrides are Tony Deamer, Munawar Delshad, Ken Harisson, Ann Kalfabun, Georges Kalo, Kalman Kiri, George Pakoa, Charles Pierce and Jean-Ben Sablan.

The chairman is Mr. Kiri; vice-chairman is Mr. Pakoa; secretary is Mr. Pierce; treasurer is Mr. Harrison; and assistant secretary is Miss Delshad.

The Convention continued on Sunday morning with reports from 10 Local Assemblies and consultation on implementing the points made in the message from the Universal House of Justice.

Toward midday, the delegates and assembled friends listened to congratulatory messages and telegrams received from the Universal House of Justice; Hand of the Cause Collis Featherstone; Counsellors Battrick and Violet Hoenke; the National Assemblies of Australia, Canada, France, Gilbert Islands, Lesotho, Puerto Rico, Samoa and the Solomon Islands; and from three individuals: Irene Williams, Ivan Olivari and Daniel Caillaud.

Various photographs and audio-visual gifts were presented to the National Assembly by the Battrick, Dahl and Sévin families.

Hand of the Cause Mr. Faizí arrived in time for the evening session. The friends eagerly absorbed his words during the last few hours of the memorable weekend. He stressed the need to strengthen Local Assemblies, and the importance of educating one’s children in the Bahá’í teachings for the sake of the Faith.

Following the Convention, further congratulatory telegrams were received from National Conventions that had been held simultaneously in the Solomon Islands and in New Zealand.

The Universal House of Justice cabled this reply to the news sent from the New Hebrides:

“Hearts filled with joy news successful formation National Spiritual Assembly New Hebrides at Convention, blessed presence Hand Cause Faizí. Praying Shrines added blessings confirmations dearly loved New Hebridean Bahá’í community.”
French Antilles

The first National Convention of the French Antilles opened April 22, 1977, with the dedication ceremony of the national Haziratu'l-Quds in Pointe-a-Pitre, Guadeloupe.

Among the guests present for this historic event were the Hand of the Cause 'Ali-Muhammad Varqā', who represented the Universal House of Justice; Continental Counsellor Rowland Estall; Lea Nys of Belgium, whose frequent visits to the French Antilles over the years give her a special place in its Baha'i history; Henriette Samimy, representative of the National Spiritual Assembly of France; and Eve Johnson, representative of the National Spiritual Assembly of Barbados and the Windward Islands.

Approximately 50 Baha'is and friends also attended, along with members of the local media.

Jody Owens, vice-chairman of the "mother" National Assembly of the Leeward and Virgin Islands, officially opened the Convention with prayers. He then introduced the Hand of the Cause Dr. Varqā'.

Dr. Varqā' shared thoughts on the important role the Haziratu'l-Quds should play in the life of the community, particularly for the youth.

Mrs. Nys gave a talk about the Faith, and assisted with the introduction of all the friends present.

Everyone was then invited to share refreshments and explore the two upper floors of the Haziratu'l-Quds, which are yet to be remodeled.

On Friday evening, after the dedication ceremony, the wife of a Baha'i journalist from Martinique declared her belief in the Faith.

The following morning, the Baha'is gathered at Ecotel in Gosier for the election of the first National Spiritual Assembly of the French Antilles.

Fifteen of the 19 elected delegates were able to attend the National Convention. Represented were the islands of St. Martin, the French and Dutch sectors; St. Barthelemy, Guadeloupe and Martinique.

Elected to the first National Assembly of the French Antilles are Aurel Andre, Florence Bagley, Marian Barnes, Daniel Caillaud, Allan Fuller, Barbara Guy, Robert Hanevold, Darlene Hodge, and Jose St. Prix. Four members of the National Assembly are from the French Antilles, three and North American pioneers, and one is from France.

The chairman is Mrs. Bagley; the vice-chairman is Mr. Fuller; the secretary is Mr. Caillaud; the treasurer is Mr. Andre, and the recording secretary is Miss Hodge.

Following the announcement of the election results, Dr. Varqā' read the message from the Universal House of Justice, restating the goals to be won by the Baha'is of the French Antilles during the last two years of the Five Year Plan.

A second letter to the new National Assembly arrived from the Universal House of Justice saying that a gift of $1,000 soon would arrive.

There was an emotional moment when Mr. Owens, representing the National Assembly of the Leeward and Virgin Islands, read from a list that comprised the legacy

The first National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the Marshall Islands was elected at Ridyván, 1977.

The first National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the New Hebrides was elected at Ridyván, 1977.
of the ‘mother’ National Assembly to its new ‘sister’ National Assembly. Among the items on the list was a check for $500, of which $150 was earmarked for the Temple land and $100 was a gift from the Spiritual Assembly of St. Thomas.

A message from the Continental Board of Councillors in Central America was read in both French and English by Councillor Estall.

During the first day of the Convention a prayer for healing was said for Guy Marital, the first Bahá’í in the French Antilles.

On the evening of the first day dinner was held for the mayor of Gosier and all the Bahá’ís and their friends. The mayor was busy elsewhere and was unable to attend, but the dinner proved to be a joyous unity Feast for the friends. A reporter from the newspaper France-Antilles wrote a favorable article.

The Sunday morning session was devoted to consultation on the Five Year Plan, and a plea by Councillor Estall for all Bahá’ís to lend their loyal support, love and constant prayer to the nascent National Assembly.

The Convention closed at noon Sunday when Dr. Vargá chanted a prayer of thanksgiving and praise by Bahá’u’lláh.

**Greece**

The historic first National Convention of the Bahá’ís of Greece was held April 23-24, 1977, in Athens in the presence of Hand of the Cause Adelbert Mühlischlegel, who represented the Universal House of Justice.

A report of the occasion said, “The Convention was characterized by a spirit of love, unity and gratitude to Bahá’u’lláh, and a deep awareness of the significance of the long-awaited erection of yet another pillar of the Universal House of Justice.”

The Convention was further enriched by the presence of Councillor Erik Blumenthal of the European Board of Councillors; eight members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany, the ‘parent’ body; and four of the six Knights of Bahá’u’lláh who opened Greece to the Faith.

The Knights of Bahá’u’lláh present were Dr. Dwight Allen, Carole Allen, Sheila Banani and Rolf Haug. The two Knights of Bahá’u’lláh who were unable to attend were Dr. Amin Banani and Elizabeth Golmohammadi.

Congratulatory messages were received from a number of National Spiritual Assemblies, Local Assemblies, groups and individuals.

During the Convention, affection and appreciation were expressed to the German friends for the care expended over the years in the development of the Faith in Greece.

**Surinam and Fr. Guiana**

The National Convention held April 23-24, 1977, in Guyana by the National Spiritual Assembly of Guyana, Surinam, and French Guiana marked the end of that body and the formation of the first National Assembly of Surinam and French Guiana.

By this act the Five Year Plan goal of the Universal House of Justice was realized,
Honduras: "... announce formation 70 Assemblies, 17 properties offered, 3 Centres begun, 5 planned; adopted plan complete all goals Rídvan 134 . . ."

(57 Local Spiritual Assemblies were reported in June 1976)

giving birth at the same time to the National Spiritual Assembly of Guyana.

The parting of these bodies was a painful experience after seven years of working together and sharing one another’s problems, hopes and aspirations, building at the same time fond memories of that association and fellowship.

Present at this historic meeting were Mr. Peter McLaren, representing the Continental Board of Counsellors; Auxiliary Board member Edward Widmer, 19 delegates, representatives from numerous localities, and observers.

The chairman and secretary for the Convention were Mr. Henry Dolphin and Mr. Ivan Fraser, respectively.

The Rídvan message from the Universal House of Justice was read by Counsellor McLaren, and a message from the Continental Board of Counsellors was read by Mr. Widmer.

Those elected to serve on the first National Spiritual Assembly of Guyana are Mrs. Sheila Dolphin, Mr. Henry Dolphin, Mrs. Ellen Widmer, Mr. Frank Sheffey, Mr. Ivan Fraser, Mrs. Eileen Hill, Dr. David Morris, Mr. Rooplall Doodnauth, and Mr. Krishna Seegopaul.

The secretary’s report indicated that the goal of 115 new locations opened to the Faith was achieved.

Of the 36 Local Spiritual Assemblies called for, 29 were achieved, and the remaining seven are within easy reach. The incorporation of two Assemblies is in progress.

Of acquiring two Hazírat’U’l-Quds, one is achieved, the other in progress. Of the three endowments, one is achieved, and one is in progress.

Children’s activities were increased to include 15 regular classes, and a Children’s Conference was held with more than 200 in attendance.

Youth activities were heartening, especially in the fields of propagation and expansion, and during the year a Youth Conference was held that attracted nearly 200 youth from Trinidad, Surinam and French Guiana along with the local friends.

Bolivia: "... announce formation 900-plus Assemblies, 4,644 localities, 19 Hazírat’U’l-Quds, initiation distribution correspondence courses . . ."

(806 Local Spiritual Assemblies and 4,509 localities were reported in January 1977)

Remarkable expansion and proclamation were made in the Amerindian village areas, and the stage set for wonderful achievements in the coming year. Bahá'u'lláh’s name was mentioned more than 500 times over radio during the year, and every opportunity was taken to have newspaper publicity and insertions.

Women’s activities are taking place in at least one location. There are general increases in propagation throughout Guyana, and the friends are confident that with the help of Bahá'u'lláh the goals of the Five Year Plan will be surpassed before the specified time.

The friends were inspired by the results of the year’s activities, and 34 pledges were made to travel teach, three more for homefront pioneering.

The sum of $270.75 was donated voluntarily and through the sale of three articles given by the friends who were present. A parcel of land was donated by Mrs. Claudia Simpson, and 39 recommendations were made.

The first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the French Antilles was elected in Guadeloupe on April 23, 1977, in the presence of Hand of the Cause 'Ali-Muhammad Varqá and Counsellor Rowland Estall. In the back row, left to right, are Robert Hanevold, Darlene Hodge, Marian Barnes, Daniel Caillaud and Allan Fuller. In the middle row, left to right, are Dr. Varqá, Attrel André, Jose St. Prix and Mr. Estall. In the front row are Florence Bagley and Barbara Guy.
Italy

Radio program features Faith

Bahá'ís have been able to increase radio publicity for the Faith in Italy since private stations achieved legal status there about a year ago.

Late last year, A. Parsa, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, was invited to start a weekly one-hour broadcast called “Programme Bahá'í” on a station in Pisa.

French Antilles

Approximately 50 Bahá'ís and friends attended the dedication of the new Ḥáẓíratu’l-Quds of the French Antilles on April 22.

Delegates and visitors attending the first National Convention of the French Antilles April 23-24 in Guadeloupe. Hand of the Cause 'Ali-Muhammad Varqá is on the left in the front row.

When speaking on subjects such as “Bahá’u’lláh,” “The Search for Truth,” or “The Abolition of Prejudice,” the Bahá’í host, alone or with other Bahá’ís, presents the Bahá’í viewpoint.

In dealing with other subjects, secular but topical, the discussion is led by a qualified guest speaker and the Bahá’í position is outlined.

The program is interspersed with recorded music by outstanding Bahá’í musicians, including Seals and Crofts, John “Dizzy” Gillespie, England Dan and John Ford Coley, Pancho and Kamal, Dia Prometido, and various Dawnbreaker singing groups.

During each broadcast Mr. Parsa makes it clear that the ideas he is relating are not his own but are contained in the Message of Bahá’u’lláh. The program has become popular with the public.

Bahá’í programs also are regularly aired in Bologna, Bolzano and Trofarello.
Gilbert Islands and Tuvalu

Baha’i-built catamaran attracts public attention

Approximately 100 townspeople gathered in April near the Bahá’í Center at Betio, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Gilbert Islands and Tuvalu reports, to watch the launching of a 40-foot catamaran built by John Thurston, a Bahá’í.

The event, which was covered in the April 7 issue of the daily newspaper Atoll Pioneer, described the launching of the catamaran and stated that the name “Erena Roe” was “chosen by the Bahá’í community of Tuarabu village, Abaiang. Tuarabu is the village where Elena and Roy Fernie first settled when they arrived in the Gilbert Islands in 1954.”

Mr. and Mrs. Fernie are the Knights of Bahá’u’lláh for the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, as they were then known. Mr. Fernie died in 1964.

The newspaper account, accompanied by a photograph of the catamaran, continued: “The maiden voyage will be made to Tuarabu, where it will be welcomed by the Bahá’ís of Abaiang. The boat is powered by two Diesel engines as well as by sail, and carries a crew of two besides the owner. It contains a galley, sleeping quarters, cargo space, and a large cabin that will be used for classes, film shows and meetings.

‘Mr. Thurston plans to use the catamaran to travel throughout the Gilberts and sometimes to nearby island groups such as the Marshalls, to visit Bahá’í communities,’ the newspaper article said.

On April 9 a celebration was held aboard the “Erena Roe,” attended by Bahá’ís and their friends.

Chad

Faith progresses through teaching, classes

New localities were opened to the Faith and an institute was held to deepen 40 new believers after several teaching trips were made in the Mayo-Kebbi and Chari-Baguirmi areas of Chad.

At the deepening institute instruction was given on how to elect a Local Spiritual Assembly. Two people who attended, an American and a Lebanese, subsequently embraced the Faith.

Also in Chad, 1,600 children attend Bahá’í classes where they learn to recite prayers and sing. Some classes consist of as many as 54 children.

The children’s class curriculum has been prepared by the National Committee for Women and Children. Sometimes the 65 teachers who were selected for the classes give lessons to village women, using materials provided by the committee.

The Bahá’í Center in Sarh was the site of the First Bahá’í Women’s Conference, held January 28-30. Twelve of the 40 women in attendance became Bahá’ís.

Two weeks following the Women’s Conference, 110 people, half of whom are women, declared their belief in Bahá’u’lláh.

Other conferences that have been held recently include a regional conference in the village of Gourourou, attended by 60 people from 25 villages, and a National Teaching Conference in Banda, in southern Chad, attended by 44 from 13 villages, with members of the Rito tribe present for the first time.

Of the 20 Hazíratu’l-Quds required to be constructed in Chad during the Five Year Plan, 10 have been completed.

Sweden

70 libraries order Bahá’í book

Approximately 70 state libraries throughout Sweden have ordered the recently published Swedish edition of Dr. J. E. Esslemont’s book, Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era.

Bahá’í literature in state libraries is classified under “Bahá’í” and is readily recognizable.

A number of Local Spiritual Assemblies, groups and individual believers have presented copies of the book to municipal authorities.

University members study Faith at seminars

At the request of the Department of History of Religions and Theological Studies, the Faith has been presented at a postgraduate seminar at the University of Uppsala.

Auxiliary Board member Hádi Afsahi, in response to an invitation by the Local Spiritual Assembly of Uppsala, spoke at the seminar for two hours.

Other professors and students expressed
interest in knowing more about the Faith, so a second session was arranged by the professor who teaches the history of Oriental religions.

At the second session, Mihri Afsahi, a graduate of the University of Uppsala and a member of the Bahá'í Student Committee, was invited to give a talk on the Faith. The presentation was received with great interest and the university faculty became increasingly curious about the teachings and history of the Cause.

This resulted in a special seminar for the professors of religious studies, which was arranged by the university administration and presented in February. One of the main sessions of the seminar was devoted to comprehensive study of the Faith. The responsible professor asked Mrs. Afsahi to give the presentation.

In other activities, the Bahá'í Student Committee arranged a Bahá'í book and literature exhibit to mark the 500th anniversary of the founding of the university.

Northernmost Assembly hosts proclamation

The most northerly Local Spiritual Assembly in Sweden, that of Umeå, on the 64th parallel, recently launched an extensive proclamation and teaching project. The Message of Bahá'u'lláh was brought to the attention of many people during a week-long period in which proclamations and firesides were held, literature and posters displayed, and articles about the Faith printed in the local newspaper.

One aspect of these efforts, reports the National Assembly, "has been the willingness of secondary schools in various centers to open their doors to presentations on the Faith. Several thousand students have heard lectures on the Faith and seen color slides showing Bahá'í activities around the world."

Leeward and Virgin Islands

Hand of Cause visits Islands

During the recent visit of the Hand of the Cause Paul Haney to the Leeward and Virgin Islands, he met with the friends in a number of localities and attended the Nineteen Day Feast held in St. Thomas, along with 55 of the friends; including children, and Bahá'ís visiting from St. Croix, St. John and Tortola.

On March 1, while in St. Thomas, Mr. Haney was interviewed on the popular television show, "Conversation." The entire hour-long broadcast was devoted to speaking with Mr. Haney, who had just returned from the Bahá'í International Teaching Conference in Mérida, Mexico, at which he represented the Universal House of Justice.

Madagascar

Thirty declare during conference

A Regional Teaching Conference was held in Manakara, Madagascar, on March 5-6.

After some initial difficulty was caused by the absence of a local government official, the National Teaching Committee was able to obtain government permission for holding the conference and was given, free of charge, the use of the Hotel de Ville, a government building, for that purpose.

The Bahá'í friends of Manakara were instrumental in organizing and promoting the conference, which resulted in the enrollment of 30 new believers, the establishment of good relations with a number of government officials, and the creation of a favorable impression upon those who came in touch with Bahá'ís during the course of activities associated with the conference.

South West Pacific Ocean

Faith grows by 15 per cent

Fifty-four believers were enrolled during a nine-week period in the South West Pacific Ocean, the National Spiritual Assembly noted at its March, 1977, meeting.

Twenty-two of the new believers are from the New Hebrides, which formed its own National Assembly at Rîdván; 29 are from New Caledonia, 12 being from the town of Thio alone; and three are from the Loyalty Islands.

"There has been a 15 per cent increase in the number of believers on the homefront alone in the South West Pacific area since January 1, 1977," the National Assembly said.
Expansion of women’s role is aim of UN seminar

The Bahá’í International Community was represented in Kathmandu, Nepal, on February 15-22 at the United Nations Regional Seminar. The title of the seminar was “The Participation of Women in Economic, Social and Political Development with Special Emphasis on Machinery to Accelerate the Integration of Women in Development.”

Serving as Observer on behalf of the Bahá’í International Community was Zena Sorabjee, a Continental Counsellor in South Central Asia. Dr. Penelope Walker of Nepal attended the seminar as an unofficial alternate.

The seminar was opened by Her Majesty Queen Aishwarya Devi of Nepal and was attended by leading women from various countries in the world.

Mrs. Sorabjee presented a statement on behalf of the Bahá’í International Community and later was invited to circulate copies among the participants.

The delegates also accepted literature prepared by the Bahá’í International Community on themes such as the equality of men and women, and some asked questions, in informal moments, about the Faith.

Canada

Newspaper ads lead to television show

The imaginative newspaper advertisements about the Faith that the Spiritual Assembly of Longueuil, Quebec, placed in the newspaper Le Devoir last summer were noticed by the producer of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s television program “Second Regard.”

The producer approached the Bahá’ís about taping a half-hour program.

The project began in January when a number of interviews were filmed with individual believers, both French- and English-speaking.

Aspects of the Faith covered were Bahá’í administration, the Bahá’í calendar, the role of women in the Faith, the Nineteen Day Feast, and the celebration of Naw-Rúz.

Faith is proclaimed after 30-year wait

Almost 30 years ago, at the request of the beloved Guardian, Melba Loft, the first Canadian Indian Bahá’í, returned with her husband from Detroit, Michigan, to their home reservation, Tyendenaga, in Ontario.

Throughout the years they attempted to reach their people with Bahá’u’lláh’s Message. After the death of her husband, Jim, in 1973, Mrs. Loft remained steadfastly at her post.

For 30 years the Indian Band Council had been unsympathetic toward the Faith. No public meetings could be held and the village meeting hall was closed to Bahá’ís.

Members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Thailand are (front row, left to right): Victor Greenspoon, Sunantha Smith, Sawai Thongsoot, Fazlollah Faridian. (Back row, left to right): Nasir Jaffari, Chavalit Manjikul, Boonsong Indrawoorth, Sawat Chungguen, Ken Robinson.
As the time for the International Teaching Conference in Mérida, Mexico, approached, which Mrs. Loft would attend, she asked the Chief and the Council if they wished to send a message with her to the Mayan Indians of Mexico. To her great joy, the Chief responded to her request by writing a letter.

Not only did the message reach the Mayan Indians, but it echoed all over the Caribbean when Mrs. Loft was invited, along with other Canadian Indian participants at the Mérida Conference, to be interviewed on television. During the interview, she read the Chief’s letter, a greeting that spanned continents.

Mrs. Loft’s long years of patience were rewarded when she returned from the Mérida Conference. Permission was given for holding a public Naw-Rúz observance on the Tyendenaga Reserve. One hundred-fifty people attended.

The second annual meeting of the Canadian Association for Studies on the Bahá’í Faith took place recently in Bolton, Ontario, and was attended by 100 Bahá’ís from all the provinces of Canada and a few from the United States.

Three original papers were presented by Dr. John Hatcher, Dr. William Hatcher, and Douglas Martin. Dr. John Hatcher’s paper, entitled “The Metaphorical Nature of Reality,” received enthusiastic acclaim and was considered a splendid example of the way in which the work of the Association can draw on scholarly resources to assist Bahá’is in deepening their understanding of various aspects of the Cause. In addition, other papers were presented on highly original subjects.

The executive meeting of the Association decided to publish John Hatcher’s paper, as well as a compilation of three articles written by William Hatcher on the relationship between the Faith and sciences.

A number of Association members were appointed to act as its representatives in calling on university departments to acquaint them with the work of Bahá’í scholars and the Association itself, so that lecture tours may be arranged.

The Association is considered the means by which the Canadian community actively pursues the goal of the Five Year Plan specifically assigned to it to establish courses and lectureships on the Faith in institutions of higher learning throughout the country.

A group of five Australian Bahá’í musicians, who call themselves “1844,” toured New Zealand following the International Teaching Conference in Auckland in January.

The members of the group range in age from 20 to 24, and are of American, Australian and Persian origin. They compose most of their music and hope to contribute to the growth of the Faith by playing at Bahá’í proclamations and by releasing a recording this year.

During the New Zealand tour, the group’s activities were reported in newspapers and on radio.

More than 50 Bahá’í youth attended the 3rd National Youth Institute in May at the Yerrinbool Bahá’í School south of Sydney. One of the five non-Bahá’ís present declared during the institute. Continental Counsellor Peter Khan led classes in public speaking and teaching the Faith. Bahá’í moral teachings were the topic of a talk by Dr. Janet Khan, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Dr. John Davidson, an Auxiliary Board member, led a study on those religions that preceded the Bahá’í Dispensation.

The week culminated with the performance of a science fiction musical, “Mission to Plutonia 2,” about an intergalactic teaching trip in the year B.E. 1345. Children from a nearby orphanage attended the social evening.

The 3rd National Youth Institute, held in May near Sydney, Australia, was attended by 50 Bahá’ís. One of the five non-Bahá’ís in attendance declared his belief in the Faith by the end of the institute.
Summer schools are tripled

Three summer schools recently were held in Samoa, one in each of the major islands—Savai‘i, Tutuila and Upolu—replacing the usual central summer school held in Lelata, Apia.

The purpose in increasing the number of summer schools and decentralizing the location was to enable a greater number of the friends to attend.

Eighty believers attended the Savai‘i school, and as many guests attended the evening sessions at which Bahá’í films were shown. An overflow of 150 guests watched the showing of “The Green Light Expedition.”

Classes for all age groups were held at the Tutuila school, which drew an attendance of 50 registered students.

Almost 70 Bahá’ís registered for the school in Upolu. One newly-enrolled believer was so impressed with the session on the equality of men and women that he refused to make a decision concerning participation in a future event until he went home and consulted with his wife.

Presentations by teachers at all schools revealed that much study, thought and effort went into preparation of the classes.

Continental Counsellor Suhayl ‘Ala‘í participated in the schools at Tutuila and Upolu, and Auxiliary Board members William White and Farsbod Taefi participated in various sessions at the schools as well.

Botswana

National Assembly meets despite bad weather

“An interesting and inspiring event occurred recently,” the National Spiritual Assembly of Botswana reports.

“One morning, due to bad weather, only four National Assembly members were present for our meeting.

“A fifth member was about 60 miles away in Palapye. The four members decided, in spite of heavy weather, to proceed to Palapye and meet with the fifth member, thus forming a quorum so that the National Assembly could meet.

“The four of us left in two cars, taking along two children of two members. After about three hours of driving in difficult circumstances, and one broken-down car which had to be towed, we reached Palapye. On the way we had met the fifth member.

“The National Assembly meeting finally started in the afternoon and ended late in the evening. All felt inspired and happy that the effort had been made to meet.

“The trip, instead of being strenuous, was one filled with joy and gratitude for the great, ever-present assistance granted to us.”

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Trinidad and Tobago

His Excellency Sir Ellis Clarke (center), the first President of the new Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, receives a delegation of representatives of the National Spiritual Assembly of Trinidad and Tobago on January 27. Lady Clarke is seen standing, second from the left. During the hour-long visit, discussion centered around the progress of the Faith throughout the Caribbean. The Bahá'ís of Trinidad and Tobago have paid a number of courtesy calls on Sir Ellis commencing in 1973 when he was appointed Governor General.

United Kingdom

British broadcaster wishes Bahá'ís 'Happy Ridván'

A broadcast that mentioned the Faith was aired four times between May 2 and 3 on the British Broadcasting Corporation’s “Report on Religion.”

The Feast of Ridván and a brief account of the history of the Faith were discussed, followed by interviews with three Bahá'ís.

Interviewed were Philip Hainsworth, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom; Gerald Warren, a believer in the United Kingdom; and author David Hofman, a member of the Universal House of Justice.

Half of the 15-minute program was spent on the Faith.

The announcer concluded by wishing Bahá'ís everywhere a happy Feast of Ridván.

Teachers’ handbook mentions Faith

A reference book on world religions that contains six pages of accurate information about the Faith has been published by the United Kingdom Community Relations Commission, reports the National Spiritual Assembly.

The book, World Religions—a Handbook for Teachers, may be used by Bahá'ís parents when approaching teachers in connection with the recognition of Bahá'í Holy Days.

The book also has been useful in proclamation programs at schools.

‘Teaching trips a confirmation,’ says British Bahá'í

Following a teaching trip that lasted for four and one-half months, Meherangiz Munsiff has returned to her home in the United Kingdom.

The trip took her to 19 countries in the Caribbean and Central and South America.

“Teaching is easy, but we must consolidate the interest and knowledge of the seeker and believer, ” she told a group of British Bahá'ís after her return. She urges the friends everywhere to pray for the pioneers and to write to them.

In Guyana, Mrs. Munsiff visited a community in which there were many Bahá'í youth of Indian origin whose parents had not accepted the Cause. She was gratified, after a public meeting, when the adults became Bahá'ís en masse.

At another village public meeting, 37 people accepted the Faith.

Mrs. Munsiff says that those who are able to travel to teach the Faith should not deprive themselves of the opportunity to do so, for the confirmations are beyond measure.

Bolivia

Writings translated into Indian language

The complete text of The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh has been translated into Quechua, an Indian language, and published by the National Spiritual Assembly of Bolivia.

Linguists say that Quechua “is the most widely spoken of all American Indian tongues, with at least six million speakers.”

The language is spoken in a wide number of dialects, many of them mutually intelligible, by the Quechua in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru.
Iceland

**Group works to attain Assembly status**

The Bahá'í group of Neskaupstaour, comprised of four adult believers, is working hard to achieve Local Spiritual Assembly status before the end of the Five Year Plan. The group says, "Isolated in the east, it has proved a difficult goal."

During Intercalary Days the group sponsored a social event as a means of attracting the townspeople. The event was advertised in the local newspaper and by posters displayed in shop windows. An invitation was extended to all residents of Neskaupstaour to celebrate a day of hospitality with the Bahá'ís.

In preparation for the event, films were ordered from the educational library in Reykjavik, a hall was booked and baking was done.

From 10 a.m. until noon on the day of the celebration, 60 children attended a program that featured films and songs.

An afternoon program of films was attended by 50 adults, youth and children. Light refreshments were served on both occasions.

"The programs were enjoyed by all, and not least by the Bahá'ís," reports the National Spiritual Assembly. "We felt it was an excellent way to demonstrate a Bahá'í atmosphere, and even those who did not ask questions were given food for thought."

Alaska

**Faith is subject of radio show**

Two believers in Kodiak recently were interviewed about the Faith on a radio program. The program usually features interviews with Christian church leaders about their beliefs.

"We were the first non-Christians to be interviewed on that program," the Bahá'ís reported. "We were questioned by a fundamentalist Christian for about 90 minutes."

The friends said they had ample opportunity to present the Message of Bahá'u'lláh and describe His Station.

Several church leaders who heard the interview praised it, saying it helped them understand the Faith.

The Bahá'ís have been asked to speak on additional radio programs. They are also looking into showing the Hawaiian television series that features the Hand of the Cause William Sears. The series already has been shown once.

Cameroon Republic

Some Bahá'ís of Kumba, Cameroon Republic, stand outside their newly-acquired Hazíratu'l-Quds.

India

**All-India Radio announces Naw-Rúz**

The Minister of Information and Broadcasting in India recently issued the necessary instructions for the proper coverage of Bahá'í Holy Days and festivals by All-India Radio.

The National Spiritual Assembly advised Local Assemblies to make use of the facilities provided by the government. Bahá'í communities, acting on this advice, contacted the directors of All-India Radio at their respective stations. Consequently, news of the celebration of Naw-Rúz was broadcast. The regional news broadcast from Delhi, in mentioning the observance, stated that the Bahá'í Faith was founded in 1844 in Iran.

The All-India Radio evening broadcast for West Asia on March 21 — in the Pushto, Persian, Arabic and Urdu languages — announced the headline, "Bahá'í community in India celebrates Naw-Rúz today." A brief and accurate account of the central principles of the Faith, its historical origin and the significance of Naw-Rúz followed.

Pakistan

**Faith represented at Cultural Council**

The Bahá'í Faith was represented at the inaugural meeting of the Cultural Council of Minorities in Pakistan, held recently in Rawalpindi. The meeting, which was presided over by the Federal Minister for Religious Affairs, favorably considered a number of suggestions offered by the Bahá'í representative, Anisur Rehman Dehlavi.

His suggestions included granting minorities the right to be represented on radio and television programs, in appropriate circumstances.

Some of the Council members, who regularly receive the monthly magazine published by the Bahá'ís of Pakistan, expressed warm appreciation for the publication and asked for Bahá'í literature.

The Council is considering the inclusion of Bahá'í articles in its monthly newsletter, "Hamwatan."

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Journey to Mazra’ih

Centenary of Bahá’u’lláh’s release from prison city of ‘Akká

In early days of June 1877 Bahá’u’lláh left city ‘Akká and took up residence in Mazra’ih. To mark this termination of confinement Ancient Beauty within walls prison city we call upon His followers all lands devote Nineteen Day Feast of Núr commemoration historic event, rededicating themselves urgent tasks before them, so that pent-up energies His precious Faith may be released to reach ever greater number seeking souls in ever wider circle their fellow men.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, Ridván 1977

The observance at the World Centre

In the early afternoon of Saturday, June 11, 1977, the pilgrims and friends serving at the World Centre made their way to Mazra’ih to visit the Mansion that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had rented a century ago for the use of Bahá’u’lláh, His first residence after leaving the prison-city of ‘Akká. While there, each was privileged to visit and offer prayers in the very room occupied by the Blessed Beauty; later, they repaired to the gardens at Bábí.

Meanwhile, the Hands of the Cause present in the Holy Land, the members of the Universal House of Justice and the Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre were paying their respects to the memory of Bahá’u’lláh at the House of ‘Abbud in ‘Akká and at the Garden of Ridván. The rooms Bahá’u’lláh had occupied were visited and prayers of thanksgiving for His release from confinement were offered in these Holy Places. They then journeyed north to Mazra’ih for prayers at that Holy Spot, and afterward joined the other friends in the Haram-i-Aqdas at Bábí for the formal program of the Commemoration of this great event in the history of the Heroic Age of the Cause.

Prayers were recited; ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s account of the end of Bahá’u’lláh’s confinement and Shoghi Effendi’s narrative from God Passes By were read; and finally, just as the sun was casting its last light over the Mediterranean, the friends made their way in the utmost reverence to the Most Holy Shrine for the chanting of the Tablet of Visitation:

"The remembrance of God and His praise, and the glory of God and His splendour, rest upon thee, 0 Thou who art His Beauty! I bear witness that the eye of creation hath never gazed upon one wronged like Thee. Thou wast immersed all the days of Thy life beneath an ocean of tribulations. At one time Thou wast in chains and fetters; at another Thou wast threatened by the sword of Thine enemies. Yet, despite all this, Thou didst enjoin upon all men to observe what had been prescribed unto Thee by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."

—BAHÁ’U’LLÁH

"The observance at the World Centre"
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Cover

In 1902, only 10 years after the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, 23-year-old Kanichi Yamamoto became the first Japanese to embrace the Bahá'í Faith. A warm, friendly and personable man, Mr. Yamamoto served the Faith with courage, steadfastness and vigor until his passing in 1961.
What is the true nature of man's history? Is it merely the same process repeated again and again, Iron Age succeeding Golden, Golden succeeding Iron? Is it a steady evolutionary climb from beast-like to humane, from simple to complex? Is it a Hegelian see-saw moving from action to reaction, or a Toynbeean one alternating between challenge and response?

The Baha'i worldview encompasses all three visions of history, and the Guardian of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi, weaves them into a single powerful braid in God Passes By.

The Guardian shows how the periods associated with the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá each had its beginning, its rise to a zenith, and its consummation; how these periods paralleled those of previous Dispensations, and how the present Iron Age of building a World Order that succeeded them is to be succeeded in turn by the Golden Age of the Baha'i World Commonwealth.
He further demonstrates how the stages the Faith has gone through form part of "one stupendous whole," a "single evolutionary process, vast, steady and irresistible." And he shows how the pattern out of which these periods and this growth have been formed is one of "the swift interweaving of seeming reverses with evident victories," of "disasters that have so often proved themselves to be the prelude to fresh triumphs."

When Shoghi Effendi refers to the lives of the Twin Founders of the Bahá'í Faith, he uses metaphors of periodicity: the seasons of the year, the ebb and flow of the tides, the daily path of the sun. He speaks of the "wintry desolation" at the beginning of Bahá'u'lláh's prophetic Mission, of its "vernal years" in Baghdád, of the "summer glory" achieved with its wide-spread proclamation from Adrianople, and of the "maturing process" when gathered in 'Akka its "choicest fruits."

The lowest ebb in the fortunes of the Cause is identified with Bahá'u'lláh's self-imposed two-year isolation in Sulaymáníyyih; after His return, the Guardian writes, it began "to surge back, and was destined to roll on, steadily and mightily, to a new high-water mark, associated this time with the Declaration of His Mission, on the eve of His banishment to Constantinople."

Finally, the resplendent sun, used by Bahá'u'lláh Himself to symbolize the appearance of Divinity in the world, becomes the most pervasive image in God Passes By, appearing again and again in the magnificent summary passages in which the Guardian discloses the significance of the events he has been describing, as in the chapter on "the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh":

"The Sun of Truth, the world's greatest Luminary, had risen in the Siyah-Cháil of Írán, had broken through the clouds which enveloped it in Baghdad, had suffered a momentary eclipse whilst mounting to its zenith in Adrianople, and had set finally in 'Akka, never to reappear the lapse of a full millenium."

In this same passage Shoghi Effendi amplifies the cumulative nature of Bahá’í history, its continuous rise, by summarizing the heights attained by the time of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh; the Faith proclaimed, prophecies of its coming fulfilled, its laws and principles given, its relation to its parent religions defined, its major institutions established, its Covenant bequeathed, its promise of unification given, its warnings and summons issued, its contact with the family of the first member of royalty to espouse it made, its influence on Mount Carmel initiated, and the spiritual conquest of the planet begun.

As we plod along each day with one more meeting to attend, one more mailing to make, one more effort to spread the Cause of God a little farther, it is heartening to pause and look back, as the Guardian enables us to do through his comprehensive account, to see how far we have come.

It is also heartening, when seemingly catastrophic reverses threaten, to recall Bahá'u'lláh's assurances in The Hidden Words that His calumny is in truth His providence, and then to see chronicled by the pen of Shoghi Effendi how often the Cause has emerged from these seeming deathblows miraculously resurrected and strengthened.

Thus, the cruel captivity of the Báb gave Him the time to write in full His Teachings, and prompted His followers to gather in the village of Badaght to proclaim the day of new laws. The crazed attempt on the life of the Shah led at first to a bloodbath, but its culmination was Bahá'u'lláh's vision in the darkness of the Siyáh-Cháil. The rebellion of Bahá'u'lláh's half-brother, Mírzá Yahyá, resulted temporarily in the weakening, splitting, and exile of the Bahá'í community, but faded into insignificance beside the light produced by the proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission to the world. The attempt of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's half-brother to produce a schism after the death of their Father paled before the ascendency shown by Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant as His Faith was established in the West. The intent on the part of the Sultan of Turkey's emissaries to arrest 'Abdu'l-Bahá was miraculously thwarted, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá was enabled instead to accomplish the interment of the Báb's remains on Mount Carmel and to make His fruitful journey to the West.

The recurrent crises that have characterized Bahá'í history to date and that may be expected to characterize it in future years have consisted of events, sudden and generally unexpected, that sharply eroded the progress of the Faith for a time; yet each of them, the Guardian says, is "a blessing in disguise, affording a providential means for the release of a fresh outpouring of celestial strength, a miraculous escape from imminent and still more dreadful calamities, an instrument for the fulfillment of age-old prophecies, an agency for the purification and revitalization of the life of the community, an impetus for the enlargement of its limits and the propagation of its influence, and a compelling evidence of the indestructibility of its cohesive strength."

God Passes By is not a book to be hastily skimmed for facts, but to be read aloud so that the full implication of every analogy may be realized, the full weight of every parallel structure felt.

This volume, with an entire history compressed into every vibrant sentence, has as its modest aim "a review of the salient features" of the birth and rise of the Bahá'í Faith, "as well as of the initial stages in the establishment of its administrative institutions."

The key word is "salient." Only Shoghi Effendi could know what is salient in the mass of historical fact surrounding the birth of the Bahá'í Faith; only he could know how each piece could be fitted neatly into place to form a complete picture. In this respect he is the Bahá'í historian's historian, and his single volume a mega-history, the frame of reference into which all future Bahá'í histories, amplifying detail but not vision, must fit.
Kanichi Yamamoto

By MARION YAZDI

The world's first Japanese believer served the Faith with steadfastness and courage until he drew his final breath.
Kanichi Yamamoto has a place of never-ending honor as the first Japanese Bahá’í in the world.

By 1902—only 10 years after the Ascension of Bahá’u’lláh—Thornton Chase, an American, had become the first person from the western world to believe in Him; Robert Turner, the first American Negro; Thomas Breakwell, the first Englishman; Hippolyte Dreyfus, the first Frenchman—and Kanichi Yamamoto, a 23-year-old “youth of God,” the first Oriental believer in the world.

Industrious, self-reliant, earnest and adventurous, Kanichi had left his parents in the rural village of To-saki in the prefecture of Yamaguchi, Japan, and set out to see the world.

In Hawaii, on his way to America, “Moto,” as he was affectionately known, found work in the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Owen Smith.

The Smiths’ son, Clarence, and Agnes Alexander had recently returned to the islands from Paris where they had attended the meetings of May Bolles and accepted the Bahá’í Faith.

Living with the Smith family was Miss Elizabeth Muther who helped Moto with his English. When Miss Muther also became a Bahá’í, her first thought was to speak about it to Mr. Yamamoto.

The story was recorded by Miss Alexander, who later was to become a Hand of the Cause of God, in an unpublished manuscript, Forty Years of the Bahá’í Faith in Hawaii:

‘‘...the power of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Tablet to her (Miss Muther), and her own earnest prayer, brought about a great event in the spiritual world, as God used her as His instrument to confirm the first Japanese Bahá’í... When she asked him (Kanichi) how he knew that it was the truth, he answered by placing his hand to his heart, and said he knew there.’’

Miss Muther herself, in a letter dated September 8, 1902, recounted the circumstances of Moto’s acceptance of the Faith:

‘‘...how he knew that it was the truth, he answered by placing his hand to his heart, and said he knew there.’’

When Mr. Yamamoto wrote to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá he was so deeply affected that he composed the letter four times but still thought he had not adequately expressed his thoughts in English. Finally, Miss Muther asked him to write in Japanese, for she felt that the Master would surely understand.

He wrote then in his own language, humbly confessing his belief in the Manifestation of God for this day, and asking for the ability to teach the people of his native land.

When he received a Tablet from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in reply, Mr. Yamamoto’s spirit soared to new heights.

In February 1903, he received a second Tablet from the Master: ‘‘...the power of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Tablet to her (Miss Muther), and her own earnest prayer, brought about a great event in the spiritual world, as God used her as His instrument to confirm the first Japanese Bahá’í... When she asked him (Kanichi) how he knew that it was the truth, he answered by placing his hand to his heart, and said he knew there.’’

Attending the Bahá’í National Convention of the United States in 1948 were Kathryn Frankland, left; Kanichi Yamamoto, center; and his son, Hiroshi Yamamoto.
Moto is a beautiful believer and carries out the Master’s wishes in his everyday life—so patient and faithful. He is surely unique, as the Master called him in His last Tablet.

It was important to Yamamoto that his five children attend the Bahá’í Junior Classes in Berkeley, California, taught by Kathryn Frankland. Four of his sons are in the front row. Left to right: Hiroshi, Michiaki, Masao, Shinji. In the back row are Mahmoud Amerie; a niece of Ella Cooper; Marion Carpenter; Mr. Milad; Helen Frankland; a niece of Ella Cooper; and Kathryn Frankland.

The Master said to him jokingly, “Well, do you not know Japanese?”

The secretary bowed and replied, “No, Master, I hardly know English.”

“Then what shall we do with this letter?” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá asked, smiling.

“Perhaps you should do with it as you did with the others (from Mr. (Yamamoto),” Dr. Afrukhtih replied.

“Very well,” said the Master. “I will turn to Bahá'u'lláh, and He will tell me what to say.”

Accordingly, on August 4, 1904, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá revealed a Tablet, and an English translation was sent to Mr. Yamamoto:

“O thou who art the single one of Japan and the unique one of the Extreme Orient!

That country hath been deprived of the divine breath until this time; now, God be praised! thou art initiated in the mysteries...

Do not wonder at the favor and bounty of the Lord. By the favor of God, how often a drop hath become undulating like a sea, and an atom hath become shining like the sun!”

A few months after the Tablet was received, Mrs. Goodall wrote to Agnes Alexander and Elizabeth Muther: “Moto is a beautiful believer and carries out the Master’s wishes in his everyday life—so patient and faithful. He is surely unique, as the Master called him in His last Tablet.

It was a miracle that the Master knew what Moto’s letter contained when it was written in Japanese. He answered all his questions.”

The familiar words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on marriage were revealed in a Tablet to Mr. Yamamoto:

“O thou youth of God!... As to the question of marriage, according to the law of God: first you must select one, and then it depends upon the consent of the father and mother. Be-
fore your selection they have no right of interference."

Mr. Yamamoto was married in 1908 in the ballroom of Mrs. Goodall’s Oakland home. An elaborate American wedding was given by the Goodalls; all the Bahá’ís and the Japanese friends of the couple were invited.

After the ceremony, according to Ella Cooper, Moto said to his bride, with characteristic humor, “I don’t want you to be like a Japanese wife, always bowing. I want you to be like an American wife and boss me!”

Five sons and a daughter were born to this union. After his wife’s death in 1919, Mr. Yamamoto married her sister, Fumiko, with whom he had six children.

In 1909, upon the death of her husband, Mrs. Goodall moved to her daughter’s home in San Francisco but kept the Oakland house open for meetings, with Moto in charge.

Among the 40 or so women and one man (John Bosch) who attended these gatherings was Mariam Haney who wrote of Mr. Yamamoto:

“He looked forward to these meetings and it was his great pleasure to prepare the tea, hot biscuits and cakes which were always served. He and his wife and children were very dear to the Bahá’ís.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá arrived in California during His visit to America on October 3, 1912. His first talk was at the Oakland home later that day.

Other memorable events also took place there including the Feast given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the children’s gathering with the Master.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá stayed in San Francisco at 1815 California Street in a house prepared for Him by Helen Goodall and Ella Cooper. It was Mr. Yamamoto’s privilege to live in the home and serve Him during those never-to-be-forgotten days.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá dearly loved Mr. Yamamoto’s three young sons. He held them on His knee, talked to them, and gave each one a special name: Hiroshi, the oldest, he called Hassan; Shinji, Husayn; Masao, Farok.

The meeting arranged by Mr. Yamamoto for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to address the Japanese YMCA at the Oakland Japanese Independent Church gave the Master special pleasure because the members were Orientals. The women brought their babies for His blessing, and “He showed great favor to the Japanese friends.”

After the Oakland home passed into other hands in 1919, Moto made a trip to Japan, then took up landscape gardening and moved to Berkeley, California.

It was important to him that his five children attend the Berkeley Bahá’í Junior Classes of Mrs. Kathryn Frankland at 1199 Spruce Street. It was there that I met the Yamamotos in 1920 when I came to the university and helped to teach those delightful youngsters.

Moto enjoyed hearing Hiroshi, Shinji, Masao, Fumiko and Michiaki recite the prayers and The Hidden Words and give talks.

A report in the Magazine of the Children of the Kingdom in 1922 described the classes:

“The Bahá’í Junior Group of Berkeley is very much alive! Under the guidance and careful cultivation of Mrs. Frankland, it is blossoming like a beautiful flower garden.”

Other issues said that “addresses” given by the Berkeley Juniors at the First Western Teaching Conference, November 24-26, 1922, were “wonderful”; that the children “told about their meetings and Feasts, and delivered the Message, and demonstrated beyond doubt that the future of the Cause depends upon their training.”

A picture of the youth session shows Helen S. Goodall, seen on the porch of her home in Oakland, California, employed Kanichi Yamamoto as a butler in 1903.

July 1977/Bahá’í News
Mr. Yamamoto seated proudly with his five children.

After Pearl Harbor, when Japanese living in America were being taken to detention camps, the Yamamotos telephoned me to say goodbye. They had only a few hours in which to pack.

Moto’s attitude was cheerfulness itself: ‘The WPA is moving us. Isn’t that wonderful! We can take our own clothes. Everything is fine. Hiroshi and Shinji can stay and come later. Perhaps we can be pioneers like Mrs. Frankland!’

I remarked on his courage and optimism. He replied: ‘Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá were 40 years in prison, so we can’t mind this.’

To Fumiko, his wife, I said we would pray for their safety and comfort. She expressed her gratitude: ‘Now I know we will be all right.’

Shinji Yamamoto wrote a revealing account of their life in camp in World Order magazine, Winter 1975-76.

When Mr. Yamamoto returned to Berkeley after the war, we were relieved and happy to have him with us again. He always served the Berkeley friends; in time of need he was there with help, concern and flowers.

On May 1, 1961, Kanichi Yamamoto passed away. His children, now successful in business and the professions, came from several areas of the country to attend the Bahá’í service.

Mr. Yamamoto belonged to the generation that was richly blessed to have known the Master. And his is the imperishable honor to have been the first Japanese believer.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá said of him, ‘There hath come a soul from the remotest horizon who hath entered the Kingdom of God.’

And again: ‘...Thou wert a roving bird, thou hast reached the Divine Rose-Garden.’

REFERENCES AND NOTES

3. Ibid., p. 15.
5. Ibid., pp. 559-560.
6. Agnes Alexander, Forty Years of the Bahá’í Faith in Hawaii (unpublished manuscript), p. 16.
9. Forty Years of the Bahá’í Faith in Hawaii, p. 16.
15. Ibid., March 1923, p. 30.
17. Ibid., p. 561.
Sikkim

Counsellors visit two Bahá’í schools

Two Bahá’í primary schools were visited by Continental Counsellors Shirin Boman and Zena Sorabjee during the first week in February. They were accompanied by a prospective pioneer from Gwalior, Mr. Khare.

The first school visited was in Ranipul, where seven members of the National Spiritual Assembly met the bus on which the visitors were traveling. The school building had been rented and freshly painted, with classes scheduled to begin on February 14. Three classrooms were ready for nursery school, three teachers were available, and 45 children were to be admitted initially.

The school is totally self-supporting. The residents of Ranipul, where the Temple land is also situated, are enthusiastic about having a Bahá’í primary school in their area.

Mrs. Boman, Mrs. Sorabjee and Mr. Khare then visited the Bahá’í primary school held at the Bahá’í Center in Tadong. Additional structures to house the classes are planned to be constructed. The central, older building will be retained as the Bahá’í Center.

During the visit, the Tadong school held a concert for the entire community, which the governor attended. After an explanatory talk about the Faith, the Bahá’í children recited prayers.

Before the prayers began, one small child, repeating the daily instruction given the children, delighted the audience by stepping forward and instructing them: “Close your eyes and fold your hands!”

The visitors to Tadong report that they heard a number of expressions of appreciation from people, other than Bahá’ís, who attended.

Guyana

The National Hazíratu’l-Quds of Guyana was the site of the Third Annual Children’s Conference held March 27. One hundred eighty-five children attended, representing 15 communities and 20 children’s classes.

Sierra Leone

First Women’s Conference delights House of Justice

The first National Bahá’í Women’s Conference ever to be held in Sierra Leone was attended for three days, from April 8-10, by Bahá’í women who discussed the principles and commandments of the Blessed Beauty.

Specifically, topics of discussion were women and Bahá’í administration; Bahá’í laws; children’s classes, and what it means to be a Bahá’í.

In a cable to the conference, the Universal House of Justice said it was “delighted” at the news of the conference and was praying at the Holy Shrines for the success of efforts to win the goals.

One of the women who attended the conference taught a children’s class on April 17, just one week later. Four children attended.
Around the World

Hong Kong and Macau

Lawrence Ip, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Hong Kong and Macau, was married at the Bahá'í National Center of Hong Kong on March 31 to Veamora Cornejo, who has been a full-time Bahá'í traveling teacher in the Philippines for the past two years. The nationalities represented by the 350 Bahá'í guests at the reception were American, British, Canadian, Chinese, Indian, Iranian and Malaysian.

Ghana

Chief wishes all mankind could understand Faith

The letter of a Paramount Chief in Ghana, who is not a Bahá'í, is shared by Sue E. Badie, who with her husband was a pioneer in Ghana for 3 1/2 years. She said the Chief is "someone whom we befriended," and that he is in charge of several other chiefs.

The Paramount Chief wrote:

"I have to acknowledge with sincere thanks the Air Mail parcel of books dispatched to me. The two books, Selected Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh are so interesting and uplifting that I devoted a whole day to reading them without thinking of any food.

"...I wish all mankind, especially my people, could have a clear understanding about this sublime teaching of the Great Bahá'u'lláh.

"I have for many years been reading books of various religions but could not come to a definite understanding why God should have different names. Bahá'u'lláh's teachings have thrown more daylight upon my understanding that there is but one God...

"As I am writing early this morning, I have already gone through The Hidden Words and Selected Writings and all is color within me. I have forgotten myself as a Paramount Chief. I have taken God as the most Paramount Chief in the world..."

Benin

Bahá'ís deepen during institute

A two-day Deepening Institute, sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of Benin and conducted by West African Continental Counsellor Thelma Khelghati, was attended by 30 believers representing 10 Local Assemblies.

The Institute was held May 28-29 at the Bahá'í National Center in Cotonou, Benin.

Using the Writings for reference, the Bahá'ís discussed why Bahá'u'lláh accepted to suffer, God's destiny for humanity, and the station of the Universal House of Justice.

After general discussion, four work groups were formed for intensive study of the Writings.

At the conclusion of the Institute, Mrs. Khelghati invited each Bahá'í to make individual plans to promote and consolidate the Faith. Many completed personal goals for the Faith.

Assembly members make individual goals

In response to the Ridván message to Benin from the Universal House of Justice, which encouraged all Benin believers to make personal teaching, deepening and consolidation goals, each member of the National Spiritual Assembly has made individual plans for this Bahá'í year.

Leslie L. Gottert, secretary of the National Assembly, said, "The members of the National Assembly hope that by their example they can encourage all members of Local Assemblies, and each Bahá'í in Benin, to make and accomplish individual plan goals for this year."
3 National Assemblies in historic meeting

The National Spiritual Assemblies of the United States, Alaska and Canada met the weekend of June 17-19 at the new Haziratu'l-Quds in Toronto to discuss the major challenges the condition of society in North America presents to the Faith at this time.

Each of the National Assemblies expressed concern about the rapid decline of society and its impact upon Bahá'ís, the stagnation of youth activities, and the need for the Bahá'í community to become more distinctive and resist compromising its high standards of conduct.

While at the joint meeting, the National Assemblies discovered that each of them had planned major events for the month of September, coinciding with the anniversary of the first mention of the Faith in North America in September 1893.

The National Assemblies feel that the Faith is on the brink of widespread advancement in North America.

In a message to the Universal House of Justice on June 20, the National Assemblies said they are "keenly conscious" of their "responsibilities" as "co-executors Divine Plan Beloved Master" and are "determined" to "exert every effort early achievement of all goals." In its reply, the Universal House of Justice said it was delighted by the spirit of devotion and cooperation manifested at the meeting.

Besides meeting jointly, two working sessions were held. National Assembly members broke into three groups to discuss specific issues facing North American Bahá'ís. Recommendations were based on these discussions.

Topics explored during the first working session included native and minority teaching, administrative development and information sharing among the three National Assemblies, and the roles of children and youth in the Faith.

In the second working session, the groups discussed deepening, consolidation of Local Spiritual Assemblies, and individual teaching.

A letter resulting from the joint meeting was addressed to the Bahá'ís in North America. It was the first time that three North American National Assemblies had addressed the Bahá'ís throughout the continent.

Speaking of the meeting, Soo Fouts, assistant secretary of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly, said later, "The biggest need is to stimulate the individual Bahá'í to rise to his destiny in the 20th century."

Ecuador

Hand of Cause Muhájír attends conference, first summer school

A satellite conference to the International Teaching Conferences in Bahia, Brazil, and Mérida, Mexico, was held February 16-21 in Ecuador at the request of the Universal House of Justice. The conference, held in the town of Cuenca, served as the inauguration of the first annual Bahá'í summer school in Ecuador.

The Hand of the Cause Rahmatu'llah Muhájír, who was present for two days, inspired the friends to make plans that would insure the speedy accomplishment of the Five Year Plan goals.

Approximately 75 attended, including four Persian believers who had come to Ecuador following the International Teaching Conferences to visit their families who are pioneering.

A monetary gift was made during the conference that will enable the community of Cuenca to begin construction on its Haziratu'l-Quds. The construction had been delayed previously for lack of funds.

The National Spiritual Assembly has designated the Cuenca Bahá'í community as the sponsor for future annual summer schools.

Jamaica

After the International Teaching Conference in Mérida, Mexico, the Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga traveled to Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago. He is seen here in Kingston, Jamaica, on the day of his arrival, February 21. To Mr. Olinga's left is his wife, Elizabeth.
Around the World

Dominican Republic

The friends in the Dominican Republic gathered April 29-May 1 at the Alianza

United Kingdom

University seminar focuses on Faith

Since no less than six people in Europe are currently engaged in doctoral research on aspects of the Baha'i Faith, a Baha'i Studies Seminar was held at the University of Lancaster in the United Kingdom on April 16-17.

Scholars from Belgium and The Netherlands, as well as the United Kingdom, attended the seminar, which was held with the cooperation of the Religious Studies and Sociology departments at the university.

Topics with which the papers dealt included the reformation of Shi'ism, the Yazd episode of 1850, and a review of American sociologist Peter L. Berger's commentary on the Baha'i Faith.

Cibaena in Santiago for the 17th Baha'i National Convention of the Dominican Republic.

Members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Dominican Republic for B.E. 1345 are shown here with Auxiliary Board member Feliz Ramon Gomez of Puerto Rico (front row center). In the front row, left to right, are Caridad Martinez, Sheila Rice-Wray, Mr. Gomez, Caroline Hoff and Elina de Pimental. Back row, left to right, are Leidio Duran, Alejandro Perez, Rowell Hoff, Rafael Felipe Peña, Pedro de Jesus.
Aim of Swiss is victory

Swiss Bahá'ís met in Geneva May 21-22 for a Victory Conference. The 90 friends who were gathered there "pledged to teach with greater confidence and a heightened sense of urgency in order to win the goals," said a report received from Switzerland.

The Hand of the Cause Rahmatu'lláh Muhájjír, who was present at the conference, said our lives are fulfilled by telling others the Healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

After Dr. Muhájjír's talk, 55 of the friends volunteered for special teaching activities.

Reminiscences of five of the Bahá'ís who had attended the first European Teaching Conference held 29 years earlier in Geneva gave others present an insight into the spread of the Cause.

The report said the Victory Conference "has already resulted in new activities, and will no doubt produce many more."

Fifty women confer on role in Faith

Fifty Bahá'í women of different ages from 14 Bahá'í communities learned about Bahá'í women in the family and the community, prayer, and the meaning of the Bahá'í principle of the equality between men and women at a National Women's Conference held in San Salvador in March.

At the close of the conference, which was co-sponsored by the Continental Board of Counsellors for Central America and the National Women's Committee for El Salvador, members of the National Assembly had lunch with the participants at the conference.

Some prominent non-Bahá'í women
Around the World

were invited to attend a tea and special meeting to discuss the role of Bahá'í women in the Faith, the family and the community.

United States

Bahá'í community prepares to launch Victory Campaign

The American Bahá'í community has been challenged by the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears to win a resounding victory in the remaining months of the Five Year Plan.

The proposal for victory presented by Mr. Sears calls for personal study, individual teaching, and consolidation of victories won. The aim is to heighten teaching and deepening activities while inspiring the friends to redouble their efforts to win or surpass each and every goal of the Five Year Plan.

Scheduled to be launched in early September, the Victory Plan, as it is called, includes a weekend of intensive study of the teaching compilation, The Individual and Teaching, recently released by the Universal House of Justice; a national fireside month from September 20 to October 20; and a period of nationwide deepenings from October 20 to November 12, the anniversary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh.

The “victory weekend” of study classes is to be held September 10-11. Mr. Sears has developed an inspirational four-part cassette tape program to assist the study classes, and plans to make brief visits to classes that weekend in Washington, D.C., New York City, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles. These cities were chosen by the National Spiritual Assembly at the beginning of the Five Year Plan for special teaching emphasis.

The mobilization begun with the “victory weekend” will shift into even higher gear on September 20 when the month of firesides begins.

The National Spiritual Assembly has set a goal of 20,000 firesides to be held during that period.

The entire Victory Plan, says Glenford E. Mitchell, secretary of the National Assembly, “is perceived as an integrated teaching cycle bringing together the elements of study, expansion, and consolidation in a unified program that provides a complete experience the friends can carry forward.”

Liberia

American pioneer speaks about Liberia

Africa has been good to Laura Hill. Mrs. Hill, the daughter of Christian missionaries from the United States, spent most of her childhood in Angola. Later, after meeting and marrying Jim Hill, she returned to Africa—this time to Liberia—because of his work.

That was 23 years ago, and the Hills have lived in Liberia ever since.

It was there, some years after their arrival, that the Hills first became aware of the Bahá'í Faith.

Mrs. Hill became a Bahá'í in 1964, and her husband accepted the Faith in 1975.

Actually, the Faith preceded the Hills in Liberia by only three years. From the infant community formed in 1951 by pioneer William Foster has come a National Spiritual Assembly formed in Rádván 1975.

The city the Hills live in—Monrovia—was named for an American President, James Monroe. Unlike most African nations, Liberia has no history of colonization, having been created in 1820 as a homeland for former slaves.

On stepping off an airplane in Liberia, says Mrs. Hill, one notices lush tropical vegetation in the rainy season, swirling dust in the dry season.

The people of Liberia speak “a sort of English,” she says, or else one of 28 tribal languages.

Pioneers are needed in Liberia, she says, but because of government employment policies that favor Liberians, it often is difficult for an outsider to find work.

Mrs. Hill says that in general, the pioneer must have special skills. Even foreign medical doctors must have a specialty if they hope to practice medicine in Liberia. Areas outside of Monrovia, she says, “are crying” for self-supporting pioneers.

Surinam and French Guiana

The first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Surinam and French Guiana was elected at Rádván, 1977. The Hand of the Cause Dhikru'lláh Khádem, who represented the Universal House of Justice at the inaugural convention, is seen in the center of the front row. An article about this National Assembly's formation appeared in the June issue of Bahá'í News.
At present, consolidation work in outlying areas is being done on weekends. Only a single pioneer lives in the interior of the country.

Traveling to outlying areas “almost requires a four-wheel drive vehicle,” says Mrs. Hill. However, buses and taxis are available.

The Liberian Bahá’ís are relying heavily on the help of traveling teachers to win the Five Year Plan goals. Of the 45 Local Spiritual Assemblies to be formed by the end of the plan, 30 are now in existence.

But progress is being made, says Mrs. Hill. Liberians are attracted by the Message of the Oneness of God. Those who belong to churches are disheartened by the sometimes commercial aspects of religion.

“‘This religion (Bahá’i) speaks to the heart, and so has great appeal to the Africans,’” says Mrs. Hill. “‘The Message is presented with simplicity by Bahá’ís of various ethnic backgrounds, which appeals to the Liberians.’”

The Bahá’ís began a 15-minute radio show in January that is broadcast weekly in Monrovia and also reaches the surrounding areas.

Since 1971 a five-minute Bahá’i television program has been on the air. The time is devoted to readings from the Writings.

Canada

Downward trend in Assembly numbers undergoes reversal

In its preliminary Ríḍván report, the Canadian Bahá’í News said, “Much has happened since the National Spiritual Assembly set the goal of 300 Local Spiritual Assemblies for us to achieve by this Ríḍván!”

In October, the midpoint of the Five Year Plan, the goal seemed nearly out of reach. The high victories of the Nine Year Plan, when Canada had 200 Local Assemblies, 46 more than the goals that had been set, seemed dim and far off.

During the intervening year between the Nine Year Plan and the Five Year Plan—which began at Ríḍván 1974—the number of Assemblies had dropped to 192.

In the following year, 1975, instead of making progress, the number of Assemblies declined to 186.

But 1976 was the nadir of achievements. Besides falling back to 180 Assemblies at Ríḍván, ground continued to be lost. In July of that year, just before receiving a cautionary letter from the Universal House of Justice, the number had reached a low of 175.

It is since October, 1976, that Canadian Bahá’ís have seen an encouraging reversal in the downward trend. Month by month the total number of Assemblies has increased until at the time of the preliminary Ríḍván report, the number was up to 219.

The Canadian Bahá’ís are confident the upward trend will continue until their Local Assembly goal is won.

Sicily

The Hand of the Cause Rahmatu’lláh Muhájír, standing center, visited the Bahá’ís of Catania, Sicily, in May 1977.

He spoke about projects for entry by troops in Sicily.

Dr. Muhájír, Counsellor meet Catania believers

The Sicilian town of Catania was “twice blessed,” said a report from the Local Spiritual Assembly, with the visits of the Hand of the Cause Rahmatu’lláh Muhájír in May, and Counsellor Adíb Taherzadeh in April.

During Dr. Muhájír’s visit, there was one declaration.

Of his visit, the Local Assembly says, “It was as though the Blessed Beauty took us by the hand and led us toward the Divine Fragrances.”

To the friends gathered from Catania and surrounding communities, Dr. Muhájír presented plans for entry by troops in Sicily.

Dr. Muhájír was accompanied by Hayede Vahdat, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Counsellor Taherzadeh’s personal recollections of Bahá’u’lláh, as told to him by his father, deeply moved those present at his talk in April.

The Counsellor also emphasized the significance and functions of the Administrative Order, stressing its importance in the development of the Faith.
Hawaii

Hand of Cause Faizí pays two-week visit

The Hand of the Cause of God A. Q. Faizi visited the Fiji Islands March 12-27 and consulted with the Auxiliary Board, the National Spiritual Assembly, the Local Spiritual Assembly of Suva, the Bahá’í Publishing Trust, and the Translation and Review Committee.

On three evenings he met at the National Center with the friends.

At the National Center, Mr. Faizi gave a public talk on child education. He visited the University of the South Pacific, and presented Bahá’í books to the deputy vice-chancellor and the head of the School of Education.

Mr. Faizi attended one of the regular “social evenings” in Suva, and talked with the 18 non-Bahá’ís who were also there.

He dined with the director of the Indian Cultural Center and his wife.

The Bahá’í community of Nasinu enjoyed two visits from him, and the youth benefited from the deepening session he conducted for them.

Mr. Faizi was the guest of honor at a Naw-Rúz party in Koronivia. More than 100 people, half of whom were not Bahá’ís, also were at the party. Twenty of the guests were non-Bahá’í children from Raiwaqa.

At the party, Mr. Faizi explained the significance of Naw-Rúz, spoke about the New Day of God, and emphasized the importance of educating children from their earliest years.

One of the guests at the Naw-Rúz party was the principal of the Fiji College of Agriculture. He invited Mr. Faizi to give a talk to his students one evening the following week.

Mr. Faizi spoke for an hour and a half to the students at the College of Agriculture, and answered questions for another hour.

He also spoke at the Nasinu Teacher Training College to an audience of more than 200 students and staff.

Mr. Faizi reached an even wider audience when he was interviewed on Radio Fiji, and when an article about his visit was printed in the Fiji Times. People throughout Fiji heard the broadcast and saw the newspaper article; many Bahá’ís received inquiries about the Faith as a result.

The evening before Mr. Faizi left Fiji, 250 people heard him speak at the Grand Pacific Hotel. The proclamation was directed toward the Indian community, in keeping with one of Fiji’s Five Year Plan goals, which is to teach the Indians.

Of Mr. Faizi’s visit, the Fijian Bahá’ís said: “He warmed our hearts with his love and kindness, and filled us with the determination to teach the Cause and win all our goals.”

New Zealand

National Assembly elected 20th year

The Bahá’ís of New Zealand met at Rídvan 1977 for the 20th time in as many years to elect their National Spiritual Assembly.

For four days, beginning April 22, the 36 delegates consulted on a full range of topics, forwarding their recommendations to the newly elected National Assembly.

The Continental Board of Counsellors, represented by Violette Hoenke, had the pleasure of announcing the appointment of two new Auxiliary Board members in New Zealand. A total of 18 were appointed throughout Australasia.

The believers were exhorted by several speakers including Continental Counsellor Owen Battrick to try to win the Five Year Plan goals as soon as possible.
"Bahá’í News is for all of us our comfort, our stimulus, our vision of the countless efforts being carried out (in every land) with Divine help from the Supreme Concourse...!" (Bolivia)

"...the delayed issues...arrived yesterday and will you believe it? I pored over the first issue then another...hours slipped by and I looked down at the table and found my lunch untouched and four hours cold!" (El Salvador)

"The Bahá’í News often is...the only tie to home and the so-called ‘outside world.’ Often, it is the only piece of literature we receive in our native tongue...The Bahá’í News...becomes...the letter from home. Besides, it encourages the pioneer to know what his Bahá’í brothers are doing in other parts of the world and it inspires him to double his efforts." (Ecuador)

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A 'homecoming' in Ethiopia
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Cover

Forty-four years ago Sabri Elias, a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, opened Ethiopia to the Faith. In May 1977, Mr. Elias returned to Ethiopia with his wife for the first time in more than 20 years for an emotional reunion with his spiritual brothers and sisters at the National Convention in Addis Ababa.
Reaping the Harvest

44 years after opening the country to the Faith, Sabri Elias returns ‘home’ to Ethiopia

After more than 20 years, the ‘‘spiritual conqueror of Ethiopia’’ was home.

In May 1977, Sabri Elias, a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh who opened Ethiopia to the Bahá’í Faith in 1933, returned to its capital, Addis Ababa, to be warmly received by the National Spiritual Assembly of Ethiopia at its annual Convention. Emotions were high as Mr. and Mrs. Elias recounted their early days in Ethiopia and wept with joy that the seeds they had sown for Bahá’u’lláh had blossomed forth into a fruitful tree (the National Assembly) with its lovely branches (committees) and leaves (Local Assemblies and individual believers).

Had it not been for a dream about the Guardian, Mr. Elias might never have been in Ethiopia at all.

In 1933, the Guardian wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly of North East Africa, in Cairo, Egypt, urgently requesting that a Bahá’í be sent to Ethiopia to verify the status of some individuals there who claimed to be Bahá’ís.

The secretary of the National Assembly, Eskinder Hanna, told Mr. Elias that the Guardian needed someone to go to Ethiopia to verify the status of some individuals there who claimed to be Bahá’ís.

The secretary of the National Assembly, Eskinder Hanna, told Mr. Elias that the Guardian needed someone to go to Ethiopia. Mr. Elias, who did not wish to go, mentioned several others as possibilities, but the secretary found none of them acceptable.

That night, Mr. Elias had a dream in which he and another Bahá’í were standing before the Guardian who asked them who was ready to go and light up a country for Bahá’u’lláh.

The other Bahá’í eagerly volunteered and was chosen to go, whereupon Mr. Elias began weeping bitterly.

A passerby asked why he wept, and Mr. Elias replied that the Guardian had chosen someone else and not him to unfurl the Standard of Bahá’u’lláh. The stranger then told him that it was because the other man had volunteered, while he had not.

The next morning Mr. Elias hurried back to the National Assembly secretary and told him he would go to Ethiopia if accepted. The secretary said Mr. Elias already had been chosen for the mission because the Assembly was certain he would accept.

Mr. Elias, who was then 27 years old, came to Addis Ababa from Cairo through the Sudan in 1933 after arduous travels by train and car.

Although it was hard for him, a simple tailor, to make contacts with many people in a foreign land whose customs were unfamiliar to him, he persevered, taught the Faith to some, and managed in 1934 to raise the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Addis Ababa.

During this same period Mr. Elias managed to translate Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era and Bahá’í Administration into Amharic.

Mr. Elias left Addis Ababa in 1935, shortly before the war with Italy began, and did not return until 1944.

Once back in Alexandria, Egypt, Mr. Elias married a Bahá’í. In 1944 they were invited by Shoghi Effendi to come to the Holy Land on pilgrimage.

When Mr. and Mrs. Elias met the Guardian, he told them they soon would return to Ethiopia to pioneer, that there would be many Assemblies raised, that they would be successful and would be helped, and that there would one day be a National Spiritual Assembly in the capital of Ethiopia.

“It was not possible even to dream
Mr. and Mrs. Sabri Elias, seated in center, receive a warm welcome in Amharic, Arabic and English as honored guests of the National Spiritual Assembly of Ethiopia at its National Convention.

about what was said then," Mr. Elias told the Ethiopian National Convention. "But now I see it is a reality. At that time the seat of the National Assembly of North East Africa was in Cairo; later, that same National Assembly was transferred to Addis Ababa, when the Egyptian Bahá'ís were unable to exercise their Bahá'í rights, and now the National Spiritual Assembly of Ethiopia has been raised in Addis Ababa."

When Mr. Elias and his wife came to Addis Ababa in May 1944, they could not find the Bahá'ís he had taught previously, so they were obliged to start teaching over again.

One of the first fruits of this effort was the enrollment of Gila Michael Bahta, who is now chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Ethiopia. A Local Assembly was formed in 1945, and in 1954-56 the Assembly was incorporated—the first African Assembly to achieve that status.

There was a strong Bahá'í community in Addis Ababa at that time, and when the Guardian’s call for pioneers to Djibouti was received in 1954, Mr. and Mrs. Elias left with their two daughters, leaving behind their two younger sons at an Addis Ababa boarding school.

While in Djibouti, in spite of the heat and considerable suffering, Mr. and Mrs. Elias joined forces with another Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, Fred Schechter, who had preceded them there by about a week, and succeeded in forming its first Local Spiritual Assembly. They remained until 1959, then returned to Alexandria after reopening Ethiopia and helping to open Djibouti to the Faith.

Now, at the age of 71, Mr. Elias and his wife, who is 57, are pioneering for a second time to Djibouti, this time with their 26-year-old daughter.

It is the latest in a long line of services to the Cause by Mr. Elias who accepted the Faith as a young man of 14 and used to teach it in mosques and synagogues in Egypt.

Following three days of meetings with the National Assembly and the friends in Addis Ababa, Mr. and Mrs. Elias left on May 17 for their pioneering post in Djibouti.

Mr. Elias had come to Ethiopia before and after the Italian occupation and established firmly the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in that country. He and Mrs. Elias were in Djibouti the first time during the French occupation, and were there again as the nation celebrated its independence on June 21, 1977.

Before their departure, the National Assembly of Ethiopia presented both Mr. and Mrs. Elias with new Amharic translations of Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era.

The inscription in Mr. Elias’ copy reads:

"On behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly of Ethiopia this book is presented to Mr. Sabri Elias to thank him for the translation of this book in 1933 and for forming the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Ethiopia."

And in Mrs. Elias’ copy:

"To Sister Fahima Yakut thanking her for the valuable service she gave to the Faith, and for helping to form the second Local Spiritual Assembly of Addis Ababa in 1944."

The latest visit to Addis Ababa of Mr. and Mrs. Elias was all too brief. Their names are planted deeply in the soil of Ethiopia and in the hearts of its people, whether believers or seekers. And the fruits of their valiant labors are now apparent for everyone to see.
Three Visitors

The Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, The 'Mother Temple of the West,' reaches out to embrace people from all over the world. Here are the stories of three of this year's visitors.
Chief Kintoki Joseph

Chief Kintoki Joseph didn't have to leave the South Pacific island of Truk, where he grew up, to see the world; the world came to him.

Even the chief's name reflects the several cultures that have held sway over the island at various times.

The Japanese controlled Truk in 1921, when he was born. So he was named "Kintoki," which is Japanese for "golden time."

Shortly after his birth, the future chief's parents took him to a Catholic priest—a carryover from the earlier days of Spanish rule—to be christened. The priest named him "Diego," which in English translates into "Joseph."

In his name, only the title of "chief" is indicative of the traditional culture of the island.

Chief Joseph speaks Japanese and Trukese. His children, ages 10 and 12, are studying English in schools established since 1947 when the United Nations designated Truk as part of a Trust Territory to be administered by the U.S.

With so many different peoples inhabiting Truk, it was only a matter of time before Bahá'ís would visit Chief Joseph's island. They arrived in 1971 in the form of a teaching team from the Hawaiian Islands.

When the friends told Chief Joseph of an international brotherhood of humanity who would live together as one family, he said he would like to become a Bahá'í.

Teams from Hawaii and Guam returned several times afterward to establish a strong Bahá'í Group on Truk. Now there are three Local Spiritual Assemblies on the island, with five more on the remaining 37 islands in the Truk District.

The same year that Chief Joseph became a Bahá'í—1971—he celebrated his 50th birthday and left Micronesia for the first time to attend a White House conference on aging in Washington, D.C.

He has since made two other overseas trips. In 1976 Chief Joseph traveled to Australia for a meeting of the Pacific and Asian Tribal Association.

This summer he was in the U.S. again, this time under the Visitor Program Service (VPS).

The VPS is a State Department-sponsored program under which citizens of other countries visit the U.S. The program was begun after World War II, and according to Chief Joseph's interpreter, some 25 Japanese-speaking persons are guests under the program each year.

The chief says he believes he was chosen by the island government for the VPS tour because he is a traditional chief, and because of the opportunity to learn things that might be of some use to the island on his return.

His visit began with a stop in Hawaii where he met with the Bahá'ís. From there he spent five days in Washington discussing government affairs.

The chief stayed one night in Lena, Illinois, with an American family. The mayor of Lena showed him the water works and sewerage plant.
Chief Joseph, who is interested in comparing rural American government with that of his own island, says the two are quite similar, largely because Truk's government is modeled after the U.S. system.

While in America the chief visited the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, and said later it was even more beautiful than he had expected it to be.

Afterward, he traveled to Puerto Rico to study the relationship of that territory to U.S. government and to survey the tuna fishing industry (he is president of a fishing cooperative on Truk); stopped in Phoenix, Arizona, to discuss Mexican-American relations and visit a nephew; visited Indian tribes in the states of California and Washington; saw his first American baseball game in San Francisco, and stopped in Hawaii again on his way home for another visit with Bahá'ís there.

Chief Joseph says that from what he has seen, the U.S. is "tops" in building things and providing living conveniences.

But American culture, he adds, has its drawbacks. For example, it has brought alcoholism and an inability to hold jobs to the youth of his island.

But the chief plans to send his son and daughter to the U.S. for a college education, then have them return to Truk to work.

Chief Joseph says outsiders should visit Truk, not so much because of anything that is especially interesting there, but because the lifestyle of the people is unlike that of persons from industrialized nations. He says anyone who is considering a visit to Truk should first become familiar with local customs.

One such custom, says the chief, who teaches Trukese traditions, is that women aren't allowed to walk in front of men who are talking. Another is that women may not interrupt men who are in session at the meeting house.

Among Bahá'ís, says the chief, women do not interrupt men who are talking, but this is not discrimination, simply good manners.

On the other hand, a woman is allowed to divorce her husband, but a husband may not divorce his wife.

One of the duties of a chief is the customary one of settling family disputes. The family either comes to him for help, or he approaches them. The chief strives for an agreement that is satisfactory to everyone.

Chief Joseph says the fact that he is a Bahá'í doesn't change the way in which he settles disputes or functions as chief.

Kintoki Joseph is chief of the municipality of Udot, not the entire island of Truk.

Although the position of chief is hereditary, it is not patrilineal; that is, Chief Joseph's son won't be the next chief. Instead, the son of his daughter, or the son of his sister, will be the chief. In this way, the chiefship does not stay in one family.

As chief, Kintoki Joseph is careful to refrain from involvement in politics. For most Bahá'ís on the island, he says, this is not difficult.

Involvement of another kind, that of local believers with members of Protestant or Catholic churches, he says, is one of peaceful cooperation.

Each Sunday, he says, Bahá'í women and children on Truk meet to discuss various precepts of the Faith.

Bahá'í literature is available on the island in languages understood by the people. Generally, the older people speak Japanese, the younger people English, and both groups speak Trukese.

The chief says that if someone wishes to pioneer to Truk, skill as a construction worker would be helpful, as would some knowledge of Japanese or Trukese in addition to English.
Bernice Edna Yorke

Each year the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over the world. They come from every level of society, from every religious background, from every continent, territory or island, and from every race and nationality. Many of them have interesting stories to tell.

Among the visitors to the Mother Temple of North America in the summer of 1977 was Mrs. Bernice Edna Yorke, an educator and vice-chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Belize (formerly British Honduras) in Central America.

Mrs. Yorke, who learned of the Bahá'í Faith through Cora Oliver and Shirley Ward, Knights of Bahá'u'lláh who pioneered to Belize during the Ten Year Crusade (1953-63), declared her belief in God's Messenger for this Day in 1961 and has been a staunch and active member of the Belize community ever since.

In addition to her National Assembly membership, Mrs. Yorke is chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Belize City.

Mrs. Yorke had been a schoolteacher for more than 15 years when she accepted the Faith. Eleven years ago, acting on the advice of friends and acquaintances who pointed out to her the great need for preschool education in Belize, she opened her own private school, the Cinderella Infant School.

"Infant School is really an English term for kindergarten," says Mrs. Yorke. "The original idea was to have a school for children from three to five years old."

"But parents would come to me saying, 'Please, won't you keep him (or her) just one more year?' So the age limit has gone up now to eight years. If I would allow it, the parents would have me keep their children all the way through school, but I had to put my foot down and set the limit at eight years.

"I am the principal of the school and also teach the six- to eight-year-olds. I have four helpers whom I am training to become teachers, and they teach the younger children."

What sets the Cinderella school apart from others is that Mrs. Yorke incorporates Bahá'í principles in the curriculum and training wherever possible.

"This is done indirectly," she says, "without mentioning the Faith. These children come to us from many religious backgrounds, and we surely don't wish to antagonize the parents.

"But the children say Bahá'í prayers each day, and learn them by heart, without being told the source. We also teach them the Bahá'í principles and way of life; that is, freedom from prejudice, tolerance toward others, reverence for God, and other concepts to make them better human beings."

"We have public shows at the school twice each year, and always we open them with the Bahá'í prayer, 'Blessed Is the Spot.'"

From the response she has received from parents, it is obvious that Mrs. Yorke must be doing something right. Not only does the Cinderella school operate at its capacity, 100 students, there also is a long waiting list of future students.

"In fact," she says, smiling, "some of the children on our waiting list haven't even been born yet! The prospective parents ask us to reserve a space for their unborn child so they'll be certain he'll be able to attend the Cinderella school when he is old enough."

One reason for the school's success, she believes, is that "we stress the fundamentals: reading, writing, arithmetic. As a re-
suit, our students do exceptionally well as a whole when they go on to the government (public) schools.

"I have great hopes for these children. While ours is not a 'Bahá'í' school in the true sense of the word, we are training the children to be accepting toward Bahá'í principles. And of course, they know I am a Bahá'í, so it is easy for them to figure out for themselves the source of what they are being taught."

Mrs. Yorke, who has a son in California, a daughter in New York City and two grandchildren, opened the Cinderella school in September 1966 with 28 students housed in the downstairs area of a private residence.

The school's capacity at the time was 70. Five years ago Mrs. Yorke finally was able to acquire her own building for the school, raising its capacity to the present 100.

Coincidentally, the new Cinderella school building is in an area of Belize City known as Cinderellatown.

Mrs. Yorke traveled to the U.S. in July to visit her daughter, who is a Bahá'í, and made it a point to return via Wilmette so she could visit the House of Worship.

"I had wanted to do so before, on several trips," she says, "but always I was dependent on someone else to go also, and it never seemed to work out."

"This year I decided I would go there by myself, so I rode the bus from New York to Chicago. It was more than worth it.

"The House of Worship is beautiful and inspiring, and I even had the great bounty of guiding visitors on two evenings. This has been a lovely visit, and I have many fond memories to share with the friends in Belize when I return."

'I think that no man in the world really is able to count the rewards of pioneering...But the reward is spiritual joy, and also material and physical.'

Dr. Ahmad Taeed

Dr. Ahmad Taeed, who is vice-chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of The Netherlands, left his native Iran in December 1961 to pioneer to the land of tulips, windmills and wooden shoes.

He had finished studying dentistry at the University of Tihran, and applied to a university in The Netherlands for postgraduate work.

After waiting a full year, he received a reply: his application was not accepted.

"But I did not give up," says Dr. Taeed. "I had a dream which pushed me to keep trying."

Dr. Taeed decided to fly to The Netherlands and present his case in person. He was told that if he could pass an examination, he would be allowed to enroll for post-graduate courses. Inside of an hour's time he had passed the exam.

Dr. Taeed had become interested in pioneering while he was a student at the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade in 1953.

He was so moved by the letters of the beloved Guardian, and by the encouragement to pioneer given to the Bahá'ís of Tihran by the Hand of the Cause of God 'Ali-Akbar Furutan, that he started pondering the possibility of pioneering at that time.

By the time he was graduated from college, several years later, says Dr. Taeed, "pioneering was the desire of my heart, and I had only to bring it to action.

"Many of my friends and colleagues," he says, "wanted to go to the United States. But at that time I had no desire to go there."

He says a letter from Shoghi Effendi to the American Bahá'í community dated July 1954 mentioned that the friends should disperse, especially from the City of the Covenant (New York) and the Mother City (Chicago).

No more than 15 Bahá'ís, the Guardian said, should remain in either city, which would be enough to maintain their Local Spiritual Assemblies.

"So I did not go to the U.S.," says Dr. Taeed, "I was interested in the European countries, either Denmark or The Netherlands."
While visiting the House of Worship, Dr. Ahmad Taeed (right) and his wife, Rafat, were greeted by U.S. National Spiritual Assembly Secretary Glenford E. Mitchell (second from left), and Assistant Secretary Mrs. Soo Fouts (left).

The early years in The Netherlands, he says, were not easy:

"Almost every pioneer, leaving his home, going to any country, will be confronted with so many difficulties. It is seldom that I have heard that a pioneer has gone to a new place and everything has been according to his wishes.

"So in the beginning, you see, all the doors are closed. But only through perseverance will all the doors open. That was the case for me too."

The first community Dr. Taeed lived in was Utrecht, where he later was joined by his wife, Rafat.

Utrecht, he says, is known to the believers for the golden tiles made there for the Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel. "So in the writings of the beloved Guardian, we find the name of Utrecht," he says.

After five years the Taeeds moved to Ede, where there are now nine Bahá'ís.

In spite of the difficulties often encountered in pioneering, says Dr. Taeed, it has many bounties.

"I think that no man in the world really is able to count the rewards of pioneering," he asserts. "It is initially so hard. But the reward is spiritual joy, and also material and physical. Our needs have always been met. Really, the doors have been opened, more than I ever thought they would be or could have wanted them to be."

The growth of the Faith in Holland, says Dr. Taeed, has been most gratifying.

"When I arrived there in 1961," he says, "there was a single National Spiritual Assembly for Belgium, Luxembourg and The Netherlands. The following Ridván, the Dutch had their first Bahá'í National Convention and elected the first National Assembly."

Dr. Taeed has been a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of The Netherlands since 1967, and currently is the only member of that body who is not Dutch.

There are 25 Local Spiritual Assemblies in The Netherlands, with six more scheduled to form at Ridván 1978. Only five more are needed to win the Five Year Plan goal.

To help win the other goals of the Plan, the National Assembly has planned four teaching conferences to be held before Naw-Rúz. Youth have been asked to take part, and invitations sent to National Assemblies around the world requesting teachers and speakers.

"We hope the friends will be fired spiritually," says Dr. Taeed.

He says most declarations in The Netherlands in the past 10 years have been among the youth. The National Youth Committee, formed several years ago, is organizing deepening classes for Bahá'ís youth, their friends, and other seekers.

Dr. Taeed suggests that Bahá'ís who are contemplating a trip to Europe consider teaching or pioneering in countries other than The Netherlands.

The Taeeds are themselves looking toward other countries where the need is even greater.

"For a year or so we have been pondering the possibility of moving to a developing country where the Faith is growing faster," says Dr. Taeed. "We visited Nairobi, Kenya, in October 1976 when the International Teaching Conference was held, and we found the Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís alike there to be spiritually ready for growing in the Faith."

The Taeeds speak Dutch, English and Farsi, the language of Iran. Perhaps they'll soon be learning another language.
Delegates express concerns at National Convention

Concerns expressed by the 15 delegates to the 3rd Bahá'í National Convention in Sierra Leone April 29-May 1 were that more materials be printed in local languages, that women's conferences and inter-community teaching continue, that local Bahá'í centers be acquired, and that teaching events be held near the borders.

A step was made toward achieving one goal of acquiring local Bahá'í centers when, on the last day of the Convention, land at Dwarzack Farm was donated for the purpose.

Messages from the Universal House of Justice and the Continental Board of Counsellors were read by Shidan Kouchezkadeh, an Auxiliary Board member, who represented the Continental Board of Counsellors at the Convention. The messages were translated into the Krio language.

Elected to the National Spiritual Assembly were Kent Alkire, Horace Brown, Judi Bryant, Sandra Bullock, Augustine Conte, A.M. Jalloh, Ansumana Mansaray, A.S. Momodu and Donald Williams.

After the election of the National Spiritual Assembly, the delegates presented recommendations to that institution.

The Convention also sent a cable to the Universal House of Justice stating that the Local Assembly goals for the Five Year Plan had been met. The Universal House of Justice cabled back that it was “delighted.”

The Convention closed with prayers and the friends lingered around the Bahá'í National Center, enjoying fellowship.

Women’s Institute a huge success

Of the Women’s Institute held at the Bahá'í National Center in Sierra Leone, it was reported: “To unite theory and practice, matter and spirit on the one hand, and to say what should be done and to do what has been said on the other, is a phenomenon so rare that when, once in a while, it happens through the united efforts of some well-wishers, it is regarded as a miracle. And that is exactly what happened at the Women’s Institute sponsored by the Auxiliary Board on February 13...”

The institute, which was attended by 17 people, followed a Deepening Institute held earlier in the year.

There were classes for both women and children. They studied methods of teaching the Faith, the obligatory prayers, the lives of distinguished Bahá'í women such as Táhirih, and Bahá'í law.

During workshops, the participants had an opportunity to learn the obligatory prayers in English, French, Krio and Temne. Two non-Bahá'í youth learned the prayers in English and Krio.

The concluding words of the conference centered around the idea that the role of Bahá'í is to bring about the unity of mankind.

Weekend seminars aim to strengthen Local Assemblies

Three weekend seminars presented by Auxiliary Board member Gösta Reuter in northern Germany in May were aimed at strengthening Local Spiritual Assemblies in the area.

After presenting “Glimpses of Perfection,” a slide show about 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Mr. Reuter and his three assistants talked about four interrelated aspects of the Local Assembly.

The first aspect discussed was the necessity of constantly turning to the Writings for Divine guidance; the second was the divine origin of the Local Assembly; the third was the attributes and virtues required by Local Assembly members; and the fourth aspect was the functions of the Assembly as described by Shoghi Effendi.

A separate program was held for children of participating parents. They studied arts and crafts, and baked waffles for everyone present.

Conference focuses on women’s teaching

How can Bahá'í women teach prominent women in Asia about the Faith? The question was discussed by representatives from many Asian National Spiritual Assemblies at the recent International Teaching Conference in Hong Kong.

One idea, which will come to fruition October 13-17, is an All Asia Bahá'í Women’s Conference to be held in New Delhi, India. This will be the first Bahá'í Women’s Conference ever held in Asia with the specific aim of involving Bahá'í women in teaching the Faith to other women.

Immediately following the conference, a two-month teaching project will be launched. Women who attend the conference, together with Bahá'í women in their home communities, will take the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to prominent women throughout Asia.

The Universal House of Justice, in a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of India, said: ‘’This seems to be a useful and interesting project which, if held, may have a great effect on the expansion of the Cause in Asia.’”

The Hand of the Cause Amatu’l-Bahá Ruhíyyih Khánum has accepted an invitation to attend.

New Publication

Guardian’s letters in new publication

Call to Nations, a compilation of excerpts from the World Order letters of Shoghi Effendi, will be available in August 1977, the Publishing Department of the Universal House of Justice has announced.

In the foreword, it is explained that these extracts are offered “at this critical juncture...as a light and a guidance to all mankind in this dark period of our history.”

The Publishing Department believes the volume is well suited for use in presentations to public figures, and of particular interest to serious students of the Faith.

Call to Nations will be available in both hardback and paper editions.

10 Bahá'í News/August 1977
Six communities gather to study Bahá’í Writings

During a Youth Activation Day on April 3, six Bahá’í communities on the North Island of New Zealand studied the Bahá’í role both in history and in years to come, along with aspects of Bahá’í life.

The 20-30 friends met in Levin for the study. Other communities represented were Ashhurst, Feilding, Kairangi County, Lower Hutt and Palmerston North.

Levin was given priority for consolidation during a regional planning session that day.

The first session, called “Our Place in History,” dealt with the Faith’s progress, both past and future. This led to a lively discussion about the immediate challenge of the future, and the need to be armed with knowledge of the Faith and a distinctive character.

The sessions gave the friends a deeper awareness of the seriousness of the Faith, the responsibilities to be shouldered, and the assurances from the Writings that we will be assisted and ultimately victorious.

The friends talked about spiritual life, physical laws, education, the Administrative Order, pioneering and teaching, and making personal plans to win the goals of the Five Year Plan.

Malaysia

Hand of Cause Muhájír speaks at conference

The Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláh Muhájír was the guest speaker at a conference in Port Dickson, Malaysia, on April 2-4.

The two topics covered at the conference were teaching the Faith and protection of the Faith.

Dr. Muhájír entreated the friends to remain firm in the Covenant. He said as the Faith expands in numbers, more people from within and without will strive to undermine its unity.

To protect the Faith, said Dr. Muhájír, the number of Auxiliary Board members for protection would be increased.

In its Ridván message a few weeks later, the Universal House of Justice did indeed call for 297 more Auxiliary Board members.

On teaching, Dr. Muhájír told the assembled believers about a project under way in India to bring in half a million new believers, which would double the Bahá’í population there. A call for Bahá’ís to assist in the project brought 12 volunteers.

Of the approximately 285 people at the conference, 150 were Aslis, a people indigenous to Malaysia. Hundreds of Aslis are becoming Bahá’ís; oftentimes entire villages declare, it has been reported.

Fiji Islands

Hand of the Cause A. Q. Faizí, third from left, visited the South Pacific island of Fiji on March 12-27. While there, he gave Bahá’í World, Volume XV and The Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh, to L.F. Brosnaham, deputy vice-chancellor of the University of the South Pacific, second from left. Also present were John Weeks, reader in education, left, and Ivan Williams, lecturer in education, right.
Cameroon Republic

A teaching trip was made to Bambui, in the Bomenda region of the United Republic of Cameroon, in March. Continental Counsellor Mihdi Samandari, fifth from left, was among the teachers.

Ecuador

Children's conference brings 17 declarations

Children in Tachina, Ecuador, had their own regional conference recently. By the end of the five-day event, 17 persons had become Bahá'ís. Most of them were the parents of children attending the classes.

The conference stemmed from regular children's classes held in the Tachina area, 12 being held in the countryside and three in the city itself. They began last December.

Bahá'í mothers, most of whom have had no previous teaching experience, conduct the classes. One teacher holds classes in different areas and travels on foot to do so.

The classes are family-oriented, and material produced by Bahá'ís in Colombia is used.

United Kingdom

Bahá'í plays role in world government

When the Crusade for World Government was launched 27 years ago, the Guardian wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom:

"...the Bahá'ís should by all means support (the Crusade), vote for the representatives to be sent to its constituent Assembly in 1950, and stand for election if they wish to..."

The offspring of the Crusade for World Government is an organization called the Association of World Federalists (AWF). It is gaining ground in Denmark and Japan where 80 per cent and 50 per cent respectively of these countries' parliaments are members of the world government movement.

But the trend in recent years in Britain has been a loss of members of AWF as the threat of world war seems to diminish.

Renewed attempts are being made by the World Federalists to form a Constitution for World Government, and conferences for this purpose have taken place in Mexico, Canada, Austria and France in recent months. The Bahá'ís were officially invited to these conferences.

It was during this time that Philip Hainsworth, then secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom, and now its public relations officer, was able to play an unexpected role.

He was elected to the Council of World Federalists at the annual General Meeting in Britain, and was asked to serve on the executive body as well.

Pressure of work at the National Center caused him to decline the latter invitation, but he accepted membership on the council in a consultative capacity.

Shortly afterward he was elected to the District Council of the United Nations Association (City of Westminster).

He also was invited to be a member of the Committee for the Constitution of a Provisional World Government.

The association of Mr. Hainsworth with both the AWF and the UNA has proven to be beneficial for the Faith.

For many years in the United Kingdom the AWF and the UNA have followed different paths and have not had much sympathy for each other's activities. But at the first UNA Branch meeting Mr. Hainsworth attended, he proposed that a World Federalist be invited to address a UNA meeting. The proposal carried, and a distinguished Federalist was invited to speak.

Later, while Mr. Hainsworth was at an AWF Council meeting, he suggested that more liaison between the two bodies would be advantageous. The council decided to encourage all AWF members to join the UNA.

A meeting called by the Local Spiritual Assembly of Three Rivers to address the need for world government provided an excellent opportunity to further the process of cooperation.

Both the chairman of the AWF and the chairman of the Westminster branch of the UNA spoke at the meeting. Not only did they discover they had much more in common than they had previously appreciated, but they were impressed by the Bahá'í welcome and the practicality as well as the vision of the Faith.
Eleven Saskatoon bookstores receive ‘Thief in the Night’

Coinciding with the Canadian National Convention, held in Saskatoon, 600 copies of *Thief in the Night,* a book by the Hand of the Cause William Sears that explains how Baha’u’llah fulfills Biblical prophecy, were dispersed over a period of two weeks to bookstores throughout the city.

The Spiritual Assembly of Saskatoon ordered enough promotion kits for the book to distribute to 11 bookstores across the city, including the major ones.

At the same time, the book was advertised on the radio three to four times a day over the two-week period.

The radio advertisements were aired again at the end of May and the beginning of June, on the advice of the booksellers. They suggested that advertising at this time would be beneficial, because it would coincide with the influx of returning students.

The promotion of *Thief in the Night* caused at least one instance of opposition. An advertisement appeared in a local newspaper inviting the public to a sermon at a large city church on the subject of *Thief in the Night.*

The minister giving the sermon felt he should try to discredit the book and disprove the claims it contains concerning the return of Christ.

The combined results of wide proclamation and the stimulation of this form of opposition have drawn considerable attention to the Faith in Saskatoon.

Children’s classes growing in Griffith

Baha’i children’s classes in the Australian town of Griffith are taught by nearly every adult and youth in the Baha’i community.

The approximately 19 children who usually attend are mainly from non-Baha’i families. The community has hired a hall to accommodate the growing number of children.

Dawn Dibdin, who provides transportation for a group of Aboriginal children, says the Baha’i songs they sing on the drive home get louder and louder each week as their numbers increase.

Elderly believer uses prayer to teach Faith

Rose Hawthorn is in her early nineties and has nearly lost the sight in both her eyes. She is confined to a nursing home in Burnside, South Australia, yet through constant prayer has been able to teach the Faith.

One of the nurses, who reads the Sacred Writings to Rose regularly, borrowed *Prescription for Living,* a book by the Hand of the Cause Amatu’l-Baha’i Ruhiiyyih Khânum, and took it home.

The nurse’s 12-year-old daughter saw the book and became interested in what it had to say. “This,” she thought, “is what present day people need to sort out their difficulties.”

After reading the book, and telling her schoolmates about it, she and her friends decided to have regular study sessions based on the book.

So enthusiastic has the group of youth become that the parents are also attending the study sessions each Monday night.

The latest book which Rose has lent the group is *Thief in the Night,* the Hand of the Cause William Sears’ book about how Baha’u’llah fulfills Biblical prophecy.

The group size has increased to 39, and the nurse’s husband has made space in his shed for everyone to meet.

Rose is excited about the classes and takes them as an answer to her prayers.

Ruhiiyyih Khânum plans 5-month tour

The Hand of the Cause Amatu’l-Baha’i Ruhiiyyih Khânum will embark in September on a journey of approximately five months’ duration that will take her to several Baha’i communities in the Far East including Hong Kong, India, Japan, Nepal, and Singapore.

During her trip she will attend the All Asia Baha’i Women’s Conference in New Delhi, India, October 13-17. It is expected that this international conference for Baha’i women will attract a large attendance from Asia and other parts of the world.

Convention spurs pledges of victory

The National Convention of the Baha’i is of Ethiopia brought renewed pledges from delegates and communities to assist in winning the remaining goals of the Five Year Plan, and especially the immediate goals arising from the Convention itself.

Sixteen believers offered their vacation times for the primary purpose of teaching, while 13 others pledged to have firesides in their homes at least once a week.

The message from the Universal House of Justice read at the Convention sparked these people to arise.
Around the World

Philippines

After 13 years, she wants to shout 'I am a Bahá’í!'

Flordeliza Cornejo is a Bahá’í who lives in Punta, in the Philippines. Her story, told in the Philippine Bahá’í News, is shared here.

"It was in the summer of 1964 when I first heard about the Bahá’í Faith. A small group of Bahá’ís held a public meeting. . . . a joyous occasion, though I cannot remember much about what was discussed . . . . I thought that one could be a Catholic and a Bahá’í at the same time, so I became a Bahá’í.

"Four years later another team again visited Punta . . . . and held another public meeting. I thought that would be the last time I would hear about the Faith. I continued to live the life of a devout Catholic, and for a while even thought of becoming a nun."

In 1975 a Local Spiritual Assembly was elected in Punta.

"I just wanted to please the traveling teachers, so I voted," said Ms. Cornejo, adding that although she subsequently became chairman of the Assembly, it meant nothing whatsoever to her, because "we didn’t know anything about Bahá’í activities."

Some months later, more Bahá’í teachers arrived, full of friendliness, although "I knew they felt our lack of interest. At about this time the National Teaching Committee kept sending guidelines for the Nineteen-Day Feast celebrations, which we did not use at all."

Finally, pioneers came from Alaska who asked if there were any Bahá’í activities going on.

"What could I answer? I was terribly embarrassed! I told them about the situation. . . . and they smiled with such warmth, patience and understanding. . . . They gave us some pamphlets, books and a prayer book, which I never bothered to read . . . ."

Ten years had passed since she "became a Bahá’í," and at the end of 1975, a regional conference was to be held close by.

She admits that "I had planned to go somewhere else, to have an alibi for not attending this conference," but "the powers of Bahá’u’lláh reached my heart, as if there was a great force which pulled me to attend the conference. I decided to go . . . ."

At this conference, surrounded by the enthusiasm, encouragement, love and unity of the friends, she found herself being introduced as "the chairman of the Punta Spiritual Assembly."

"Immediately I began to question myself seriously. Where do I stand?"

"I was awakened! I was moved and enlightened. . . . I decided to really become a Bahá’í."

Her discovery coincided with the awakening of her companion Bahá’ís, and her family too, for Punta became an active and progressive community.

"Before," she concludes, "I was very hesitant to say 'I am a Bahá’í.' Now I want to shout to the whole world 'I am a Bahá’í!'"

Alaskan believer recounts teaching trip

Marian Johnson, an Alaskan Bahá’í, spent two months in the Philippines recently, traveling to different parts of the country to teach the Faith.

She tells of one declaration that "pleased me very much." She and two other Bahá’ís were riding to the top of the rice paddies in the town of Lubuagen in an open jeep with about eight non-Bahá’ís.

"A man across the seat asked: 'What makes you ladies so happy? You have such nice smiles and dispositions.'"

After two hours of discussion, he declared his belief in Bahá’u’lláh.

One of the passengers asked if the three teachers knew who the new Bahá’í was. When they said they didn’t, he told them the man was the Vice Mayor of the town to which they were traveling.

The new Bahá’í introduced the teachers to many people in the town, including the Governor and his wife. The Vice Mayor himself brought in two new believers while the three teachers were there.

Uganda

Message interests Catholic priest

When a Bahá’í woman in Uganda visited a Roman Catholic priest, the topic turned to the times in which we are living.

What she said concerning the prophet Daniel’s words about the "time of the end," and the vision of St. John in the book of Revelation especially interested the priest.

She was delighted when the priest said in great seriousness, "God’s plan can be in operation and one may not be aware of it until some years later. Listening to you, I can see that many of the prophecies have been fulfilled. And we are still waiting!"

She then told him that many souls are waiting, and that God has given every soul the capacity to recognize His Messengers when They come.

Belize

Canadian lends hand in village teaching

Arthur Irwin, a Canadian Bahá’í, traveled in Belize after attending the Bahá’í International Teaching Conference in Mérida, Mexico, in February.

"With the guidance of the National Spiritual Assembly of Belize, I concentrated on teaching in the villages," he says.

"The emphasis was on visiting believers who had not been visited for nearly a year, and to find new Bahá’ís in the opened localities.

"Travel was by bicycle, as I could not find a car or motorcycle to rent."

"The village Bahá’ís were very hospitable and eager to hear the Teachings. Pamphlets . . . were left for them as most had no literature.

"During the teaching activities there were six enrollments, including a child of 14."
In a surprise visit on June 30, Mr. Hus­
mund Fatheazam, a member of the Univer­
sal House of Justice, met with the Conti­
nental Board of Counsellors in Western
Asia and their Auxiliary Board members in
Persia at their semi-annual meeting. Mr.
Fatheazam is seated in the center with
Counsellor Hadi Rahmani standing at the
far right and Counsellors Dr. Iraj Ayman
and Dr. Masin Farhangi standing at the
far left.

United Nations

Bahá’ís contribute to new exhibit at United Nations

An estimated two million visitors tour the United Nations Headquarters in New York annually.
These visitors will see a new exhibit this year, dedicated on March 10 by Kurt Wald­
heim, Secretary-General of the UN.
The exhibit features the work of non­
governmental organizations (NGOs) at the UN. The Bahá’í International Community is one of 530 NGOs.
A report from the Bahá’í International Community says the exhibit took several years to complete, and features photos of people around the world, and 15 illumi­
nated boxes indicating areas of NGO par­
ticipation, such as International Women’s Decade, Human Rights, the Right to Food, Environment, Racial Discrimina­
tion, Cultural Heritage, etc.
“For the box on cultural heritage, the Bahá’í International Community contribu­
ted an Inuit (Eskimo) soapstone carving donated by the National Spiritual Assem­
bly of the Bahá’ís of Canada.”
Gifts from more than 60 National Assem­
bles, which demonstrate the cultural diversity of the Bahá’í world, are included in the exhibit.

Alaska

Festival booth gets friendly response

Each year the Bahá’ís of Nome, Alaska, have a booth in the annual Midnight Sun Festival, held near the date of the summer solstice in late June.
“There was a pleasing response to the booth from the community,” reads one report. The Bahá’í booth displayed pic­
tures of the Bahá’í Houses of Worship throughout the world and a pamphlet which the Nome Bahá’ís had prepared themselves.
“Those who stopped at the booth were quite friendly and happy to talk about God and things of the spirit. It was also good to renew old acquaintances and friend­ships,” said one participating Bahá’í.

Tanzania

Villagers impress Canadian teacher

Canadian Bahá’í Chris Anderson, ac­
accompanied by a Tanzanian Bahá’í and two other Canadian Bahá’ís, traveled through­
out Tanzania recently to teach the Faith.
In a letter to the Canadian National Spiritual Assembly, he says: “We fell in love with the Tanzanians, the country and the climate.
“We were impressed with the unity and community life in the villages we visited. In one instance we were simply staggered by the Bahá’ís’ deep commitment to Bahá’u’lláh in a village so far from any­
where with one copy of one book, no prayers, no Bahá’í visitors since two years ago, where they were actively teaching, meeting once or twice a week plus organiz­ing study groups conducted by two or three literate school youth.
“What an example they have set for us who have so many Bahá’í Writings and total literacy.”

August 1977/Bahá’í News 15
Believers host conference, form youth committee

The Baha'is of the mountain kingdom of Sikkim, on the slopes of the Himalayas, hosted the Himalayan Conference May 7-9 in their capital city of Gangtok. The three-day conference renewed and strengthened the confidence of the Baha'is of Sikkim toward early completion of its Five Year Plan goals, reported the National Spiritual Assembly. From this conference came the formation of the National Youth Committee, efforts toward the completion of four Haziratu'l-Quds, and the promise of consolidation in some areas. Many believers offered to teach in communities near their own, and two of the friends arose to pioneer to Bhutan, Sikkim's international goal. Three members of the Continental Board of Counsellors and three members of the National Spiritual Assembly of India attended the conference. Baha'is from Belgium, Iran, Ireland and Malaysia also were there.

The Governor of Sikkim, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and other state ministers and heads of government departments attended a Unity Feast that preceded the conference. The Governor said he was confident that the unique principles of the Baha'i Faith would go a long way toward achieving peace and establishing the recognition of the oneness of mankind.

Conference inspires youth teaching effort

Sixty youth were inspired by the recent International Teaching Conference in New Zealand to make trips around the country to teach the Faith. The four teams were composed of youth from Australia, Fiji, Iran, Malaysia, New Caledonia, the New Hebrides, and New Zealand.

One team visited the Auckland area, another the East Coast, one the West Coast and one the South Island.

In every town they visited, on the buses, in the streets, in the parks and on the beaches and hills, they handed out pamphlets along with invitations to their Baha'i variety concerts.

In Hamilton, Masterton, Rotorua and Taupo, members of the youth teams were given radio interviews. In many more towns, articles and sometimes team photographs appeared in local newspapers.

In some places the youth sang in hospitals and homes for the elderly.

On the East Coast the youth were asked to attend a Maori wedding, were given a Maori welcome, and were asked to speak to a number of the guests.

Besides proclaiming and teaching the Faith—with many non-Baha'is attending their firesides—these teams helped to consolidate existing Baha'i communities.

Haiti

34 attend day-long Assembly Institute

The National Spiritual Assembly of Haiti recently conducted a one-day institute for the secretaries and treasurers of Local Spiritual Assemblies. "The entire institute was conducted in the Creole language by native believers," reported the National Assembly. "It was well-received, and the participation and questions were heartening."

The 34 believers present agreed to share what they had learned with their own Local Assemblies and members of neighboring Assemblies who were unable to attend.

More than half of Haiti's Local Assemblies were represented at the institute.

Taiwan

Hand of Cause guest at pioneer institute

The Master said, "China, China, Chinaward the Cause of Baha'u'llah must go."

The words were repeated by the Hand of the Cause H. Collis Featherstone in the city of Taipei, in northern Taiwan, last spring, at a one-day pioneer institute.

The purpose of the institute was to rekindle the spirits of the pioneers to Taiwan who, though few in number, have won many victories.

While in Taipei, Mr. Featherstone met with the National Spiritual Assembly and the Auxiliary Board members and their assistants.

During his week-long visit to Taiwan, Mr. Featherstone stopped in Taichung in central Taiwan. The visit resulted in one new Baha'i and a rededicated community.

In the southern part of Taiwan, in the city of Tainan, the Hand of the Cause spoke to a group of Baha'i's and non-Baha'is.

"This group," reported the National Assembly, "included one shy, elderly Chinese lady, who had passed the Center many times but had never before, though she wanted to, had the courage to enter and ask her questions about the Faith. This night she walked right in."

The National Assembly said that Mr. Featherstone "inspired the friends the whole length of the island."

The Gambia

Opening village leads to formation of 13 Local Assemblies

The opening of one village in the Lorebeh area of The Gambia has led to the formation of 13 Local Spiritual Assemblies.

The initial village opened was that of Sinchi Colley, near Kuntaur. The headman there became a Baha'i, and under his guidance, 12 neighboring villages were brought into the Faith, reports the National Spiritual Assembly.

It also reports that as Baha'i centers are built and dedicated in The Gambia, separate meetings are held stressing the important role of women in the Baha'i community. At the same time, the women are invited to participate in the establishment of regular children's classes, and the children are taught prayers and songs.
"Bahá'í News is for all of us our comfort, our stimulus, our vision of the countless efforts being carried out (in every land) with Divine help from the Supreme Concourse...!" (Bolivia)

"... the delayed issues... arrived yesterday and will you believe it? I pored over the first issue then another... hours slipped by and I looked down at the table and found my lunch untouched and four hours cold!" (El Salvador)

"The Bahá'í News often is... the only tie to home and the so-called 'outside world.' Often, it is the only piece of literature we receive in our native tongue... The Bahá'í News... becomes... the letter from home. Besides, it encourages the pioneer to know what his Bahá'í brothers are doing in other parts of the world and it inspires him to double his efforts." (Ecuador)

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Cover
Sixty-five years ago ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Mystery of God and Center of His Father’s Covenant, posed for this picture at Chicago’s Lincoln Park during one of His four visits to the city that were a part of His epochal coast-to-coast journey through the United States.
Abdu’l-Baha in Chicago

An account of the Master’s four visits to the Windy City 65 years ago

By EDWARD E. BARTLETT

In 1912, during His epic journey to the United States and Canada, Abdu’l-Baha visited Chicago on four occasions. Abdu’l-Baha, “the embodiment of every Bahá’í ideal, the incarnation of every Bahá’í virtue, the Most Mighty Branch sprung from the Ancient Root, the Limb of the Law of God,” about to enter His 69th year of life, arrived from Washington, D.C., for the first of these visits in the evening hours of April 29.

Abdu’l-Baha came to Chicago not only to promulgate the Bahá’í Teachings, but also to protect the emerging Chicago Bahá’í community, the oldest and one of the most pre-eminent in the nation, from a small group of Covenant-breakers. 2

During the 19 days He spent in Chicago, Abdu’l-Baha gave at least 26 talks, addressed congregations in three churches,
granted innumerable private interviews, visited the grave site of Davis True, dedicated the site of the future Mashriqu’l-Adhkar, visited the Lincoln Park Zoo, and met with local leaders of social welfare organizations, women’s rights movements, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Theosophists, and religious organizations. His visits resulted in 22 newspaper articles written about His travels and the Bahá’í Faith.3

First Visit

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s first visit to Chicago was the longest, lasting eight days, and was probably the most significant of His four visits.

Apparently ‘Abdu’l-Bahá arrived later than expected by the Chicago Bahá’ís, because the Chicago Daily News headlined, “Bahá’í Chief Missing/Abdul-Baha, Head of Cult, Disappears on His Way to Convention in Chicago/Puzzles His Followers.”4 The Daily News later recounted, “…Chicago followers had passed an anxious morning and afternoon meeting inbound trains and trying to account for his nonarrival.”5 When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá finally reached Chicago on the evening of April 29, Mirza Mahmud-i-Zarqani, the chronicler of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s journeys in Europe and North America, recorded:

“At night the train reached Chicago. The city was as lighted up with electric lights as if it were the feast of illumination. The moment the friends saw the Beloved they cried out ‘Allah’u’Abha’ and ‘Ya ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,’ and the whole station resounded with their cries.”6

‘Abdu’l-Bahá and His entourage then proceeded to the Plaza Hotel, on the southeast corner of Clark and North avenues, adjacent to Lincoln Park.

The following morning, April 30, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá consented to interviews with friends, inquirers, and reporters in His suite at the hotel. The Chicago Daily News printed an extensive article on these interviews, including a photograph of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and recorded part of that first encounter:

“Without the door of the Plaza hotel suite a dish of radishes and celery, sprinkled with water, was discovered. This was part of the Breakfast of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, who has in his company a Persian cook. On the door was a sign which read:

‘Don’t ring bell. Knock softly.’

‘One of the delegation knocked softly. Ameen Fareed opened the door and down a long corridor ushered the visitors to the room of ‘the master.’

‘Marhaba!’ came a voice from the sunshiny room, speaking the Persian word of welcome.”7

After this warm greeting, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke through Dr. Aminu’llah Farid, His interpreter, encouraging reporters to be purveyors of truth, touching on the history of the Bahá’í Faith, and summarizing six basic teachings of Bahá’u’lláh.

After an appropriate time spent with the reporters, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá signaled the conclusion of the interview with a wave of His powerful-looking hand, and presented a red apple from a fruit dish as a present to each of the journalists, saying:

“Today I shall pass looking about your city…It is such a great place. In this country the flag of universal peace must first fly. The American democracy is the one to cope with the problem.”

Before leaving, the reporters requested a photograph of the Master. He acceded to

Children were always greatly attracted to the Master because of His boundless love for them. Here He poses with three of the Bahá’í children at Lincoln Park.
their request, changing His dull black aba for a lighter, fur-lined garment. After a half-dozen snapshots, a cordial farewell was extended by 'Abdu'l-Bahá with a handshake to all present.

Before attending His afternoon engagements, 'Abdu'l-Bahá journeyed to the home of Corinne True, whose 25-year-old son, Davis True, was very ill. He visited Davis in his upstairs room for a time, then told Mrs. True that he was better than anticipated (referring to Davis' spiritual state rather than, as Mrs. True assumed, his physical condition), and that she should attend the public meetings planned for that afternoon.

That day 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave well-attended talks at two sessions of the annual convention of the fledgling National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP): one address in the cavernous Bowen Hall of the Jane Addams Hull House, the second address in the Handel Hall at 29 E. Randolph Street (on the site of the present Marshall Field store). Regarding the first speech, Mahmud penned:

"The address was so impressive and His similes were so terse and eloquent that a commotion was set up among the hearers. There is a marked hatred for the colored among the whites of America, who...think it beneath their dignity to mix with them in certain buildings and hotels."^8

'Abdu'l-Bahá then crossed the street to the Masonic Temple, on the northeast corner of State and Randolph streets, and ascended to the Drill Hall to attend the last session of the Bahá'í Temple Unity Convention, where 2,000 persons were in attendance. Mahmud recorded the event:

"Although all were not Bahá'ís, yet the whole audience involuntarily rose the moment 'Abdu'l-Bahá entered the hall. Friends raised the well-known cries of 'Allah'u'Abhá' and the whole hall resounded with their voices."

"After a song of praise and glorification by the friends, the Beloved gave a detailed and eloquent address, particularly on the purpose of the temples and the gathering together of people under the shadow of one word. He concluded it with a most impressive prayer in Persian."^9

The following morning, May Day, after receiving friends at the hotel, 'Abdu'l-Bahá journeyed 12 miles by motorcar to the site of the future House of Worship, then just a grassy knoll overlooking Lake Michigan.

According to the newspaper account, 'Abdu'l-Bahá became lost on His trip to suburban Wilmette, and arrived at 1 p.m., two hours after the scheduled time for the ceremony.10 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a brief address to the crowd of 300, saying:

"Thousands of Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs, dawning points of praise and mentionings of God for all religionists, will be built in the Orient and Occident, but this being the first one erected in the Occident has great importance."11

Afterward, the friends adjourned to the outside of the large marquee tent, where 'Abdu'l-Bahá and representatives of diverse nations and races placed the cornerstone, a discarded gray stone transported to the site by Nettie Tobin from a construction site in Chicago. Following the modest ceremony, the friends formed a double line through which 'Abdu'l-Bahá passed to ascend the "horseless carriage" to return to the Plaza Hotel.

On May 2, following His customary interviews at the hotel, He traveled to the LaSalle Hotel in downtown Chicago to give addresses to the Cook County Federation of Women's Clubs and to a reception of the Bahá'í women.

More than 1,000 men and women representing all sections of Chicago and many down-state cities listened to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's address in the Grand Ballroom on the LaSalle Hotel's 19th floor. Speaking at a time when the women's suffrage movement was embroiled in a national controversy, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's addresses received coverage in three of Chicago's four daily newspapers. The Chicago Inter-Ocean headlined, "Persian Purist Urges Ballot for Women/Abdul Baha Abbas Addresses Bahá'í Woman's Assembly of Illinois and Pleads for Golden Rule, Sanctity of Home and Equal Suffrage."12 The Chicago Examiner recorded the astonishment of the suffragettes who wondered how a person from a Muslim country could have such progressive views of the equality of the sexes.13

Following His address to the Federation of Women's Clubs, 'Abdu'l-Bahá adjourned to the Red Room (now known as the Century Room), across the central foyer from the Grand Ballroom, for a reception hosted by the Bahá'í women. Addressing this group, 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke on the human powers and the existence of God:

"When we consider the kingdoms of existence below man we find no distinction or estimate of superiority and inferiority of male and female. Among the myriad organisms of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, sex exists but there is no differentiation whatever as to relative importance and value in the equation of life."15

That same evening, after a day of meetings and addresses that would have exhausted those without indefatigable spiritual energies, 'Abdu'l-Bahá continued to meet with more inquirers and friends at

A very fortunate group of Bahá'í men, women and children gather at Lincoln Park for a group photograph with 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
the Plaza Hotel, and gave yet two more talks in the hotel's main salon when the swelling number of eager seekers could not fit in His suite at one time.

'Abdu'l-Baha continued His usual busy schedule the two following days, consenting to interviews with His well-wishers and supporters, giving addresses at the hotel, and speaking before the Theosophists at the Northwestern University Hall in Evanston.

One day a number of representatives of the Indian Club of Chicago presented 'Abdu'l-Baha with an address of welcome:

"Sir:

"We the members of the Indian Club welcome you to this country. The Cause which has brought your Excellency to these parts is certainly a source of honor and grace to us . . ."

"Further, we believe that our country, India, will be greatly benefited by a visit from your Excellency. The lack of unity between Hindus and Mohammedans has kept them in utmost contention and strife. But as your Excellency's teachings are very much like the teachings of our religious leaders, they will undoubtedly unite them and make these contending nations one . . ."

'Abdu'l-Baha received all friends and visitors with an attitude of utmost love, humility, and wisdom.

One of the more dramatic moments of 'Abdu'l-Baha's visit to Chicago occurred on the morning of May 5 at the newly-constructed Plymouth Congregational Church, 935 E. 50th Street. Mahmud wrote:

"As the Beauty of the Covenant came to the pulpit, the audience arose. Although they were in church, they received Him with prolonged cheers. The Beloved beckoned them to order and delivered a very impressive address . . . The whole atmosphere seemed replete with the Holy Ghost. It occasioned such a stir in the people that we could scarcely make our way to the door. Groups of people surrounded Him on each step, shook His hand and implored His blessing and assistance."

Of that meeting 'Abdu'l-Baha later remarked, "History will never forget that day."

That afternoon 'Abdu'l-Baha visited the grave site of Davis True, who had ascended on April 30. Accompanied by Corinne True and others, 'Abdu'l-Baha offered the Prayer for the Dead for him, as well as for all other persons buried in the Oak Woods Cemetery.

That evening 'Abdu'l-Baha addressed a gathering of Christian Scientists at the All Soul's Church in the Lincoln Center, 700 E. Oakwood Boulevard. Mahmud succinctly records, "A great commotion was created among the people of this church also." The knowledgeable and erudite minister of this congregation, Jenkin Lloyd Jones, later wrote in his yearly report:

"Notable Visitors. It has given me great pleasure during the year to introduce to my own and other audiences the illustrious 'Abdu'l-Baha, from the Orient . . ."

The following day 'Abdu'l-Baha left for Cleveland, Ohio, departing from the LaSalle Street Station on the New York Central train.

Second Visit

The second arrival of 'Abdu'l-Baha in Chicago, on September 12, 1912, was recorded by Mahmud in the following words:

"The Beauty of the Covenant alighted from the train. The spacious building of the train was packed with friends. As soon as the Beloved came close to them a commotion arose. One hastened to shake hands with Him; one ran to kiss His mantle; one held a bouquet of flowers in His hands to present to Him; and the other raised His voice in gratitude on attaining the bounty of meeting Him."

With the exception of an address to the Theosophical Society at the Northwestern University Hall on the afternoon of September 14, 'Abdu'l-Baha remained in the home of Corinne True at 5338 N. Kenmore Avenue, meeting individually and collectively with inquirers and friends. During those meetings at the True home He spoke of proofs of the existence of God, of the confirmations of the Kingdom of Abbah, of the need for divine civilization, of the necessity for racial unity, and of the dangers posed by the Covenant-breakers.

Later that day (September 14) 'Abdu'l-Baha went for a walk on the beach, just a few blocks east of the True home. During the course of the day a Mr. Jacobsen of Wisconsin beseeched Him to visit Kenosha for a day. Thus on September 15 'Abdu'l-Baha left for Kenosha. The party was scheduled to change trains en route to Kenosha. Unfortunately the connection was missed, but 'Abdu'l-Baha commented, "Oh, it matters not. There is wisdom in it." Shortly thereafter, while riding the next train to Kenosha, they passed the wreckage of the first train, which had collided with another train. 'Abdu'l-Baha had been providentially saved from harm!

Third Visit

'Abdu'l-Baha returned to Chicago on September 16, and remained in the city only one day. On arriving in Chicago, some of the friends offered money to Him. Despite their insistence, 'Abdu'l-Baha instructed that the offering be distributed among the poor.

As during His previous visit, the Master spent most of His time engaged in fellowship with the friends at the home of Mrs. True. Poems and prayers were played on the piano. 'Abdu'l-Baha walked among those present, exhorting them to spread the fragrances of God, to proclaim the Bahai teachings, and to show kindness to
'Chicago has great capacity. I hope that the banner of universal peace will be unfurled from this city...Then, and only then, the dormant pulse of this country will be stirred.'
responded with joy to the eloquence and majesty with which 'Abdu'l-Baha expressed Himself. Afterward, 'Abdu'l-Baha visited the home of the church's pastor, Reverend Melbourne. At the request of a newspaper reporter, 'Abdu'l-Baha revealed one of His most buoyant Tablets revealed in Chicago, which included the following words:

"Be happy! Be happy! The Sun of Truth has shone!

"Be happy! Be happy! The Light of the Spirit has surrounded the world!

"Be happy! Be happy! The doors of the Kingdom are opened!

"Be happy! Be happy! The song of the Supreme Concourse is raised!

"Be happy! Be happy! The breaths of the Holy Spirit are life-giving and the world of man is being quickened!"30

That evening 'Abdu'l-Baha met with the Chicago Bahá'ís at the Nineteen Day Feast in the home of Mrs. Ellen F. Davies, 5847 S. LaSalle Street. All present shared a sumptuous banquet, and later the Master answered questions regarding the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, its gardens, and surrounding dependencies.

The next day, the final departure of 'Abdu'l-Baha from Chicago on November 4 revealed a pathetic sight:

"At the Chicago railway station the friends of God, both men and women, wept when they saw the Beloved leaving them. The penetrative power of the Divine Cause and the greatness of the Covenant of God became a warning to the people of wisdom and sagacity. Respected persons of the West were attracted by the Beloved of the East. They hovered like moths around the Divine Lamp and wept at their Heavenly Friend's departure."31

The pain of separation was no doubt eased for those believers who realized that they must instead love the light, not the lamp. And from the light there never exists separation.

The Destiny of Chicago

'Abdu'l-Baha not only blessed Chicago with 19 days of His presence; He also enunciated its high station in several speeches and tablets. The first night He arrived in Chicago, He made these comments:

"'You have a good city. I hope that Chicago shall show a great capacity for the Cause of God. It shall be illuminated by the lights of the Kingdom as it is enlightened by the light of electricity.

"'In Washington we always had one thousand and two thousand hearers in large meetings. Day and night I had no rest. A close friendship has been created between the colored and white friends. They have become excellent believers. Even those who have not become believers, have come much nearer. Notwithstanding all this, I like Chicago more, because the first voice of Bahá'u'lláh was
raised from this city. I hope you shall be assisted to great things and shall live together in utmost love and harmony!' "32

During His final visit to the city, He stated:

"...Chicago has great capacity. I hope that the banner of universal peace will be unfurled from this city. The friends of this place shall be united, and as different flowers they will become a lovely divine garden to embellish the world of man. Then, and only then, the dormant pulse of this country will be stirred." 33

But 'Abdu'l-Baha reserved His strongest words of praise of Chicago for the Tablets of the Divine Plan. He devoted almost one-half of His Tablet of February 8, 1917, to the exalted station of Chicago, enumerating five reasons: first, the initial mention of the Baha'i Faith in the Western Hemisphere was made in Chicago (in the present Art Institute Building), second, a number of devoted teachers are furthering His cause in that "blessed spot"; third, Chicago was specially blessed during 'Abdu'l-Bahá's sojourn there; fourth, all efforts exerted in Chicago have "spread to all parts and to all directions"; and fifth, the first House of Worship in the West was constructed there, an "honor and distinction . . . infinite in value.

"Continually my ear and eye are turned toward the Central States; perchance a melody from some blessed souls may reach my ears—souls who are the dawning-places of the love of God, the stars of the horizon of sanctification and holiness—souls who will illumine this dark universe and quicken to life this dead world. The joy of 'Abdu'l-Baha depends upon this! I hope that you may become confirmed therein . . ."34

References

2. Chicago Examiner, May 7, 1912, p. 4.
7. Ibid.
8. Mahmud, April 30, 1912.
9. Ibid.
12. Chicago Inter-Ocean, May 3, 1912, p. 3.
13. Ibid.
15. Promulgation, pp. 74-75.
18. Mahmud, November 1, 1912.
22. Mahmud, September 15, 1912.
23. Ibid.
24. While the date of the stroll is not given by Mr. Jaxon, it is apparent from the scarce foliage that the event occurred during 'Abdu'l-Baha's November visit. Judging by the small numbers of men and children in the photographs of that walk, one can assume that the visit to the zoo took place on a weekday. While it is possible that the stroll was on Thursday morning, October 31, it is more plausible that it was on November 1, allowing 'Abdu'l-Baha a day of rest following His non-stop train journey from Denver to Chicago.
25. Chicago Inter-Ocean, May 3, 1912, p. 3.
27. Mystery, p. 98.
29. Mahmud, November 3, 1912.
30. Ibid.
31. Mahmud, November 4, 1912.
32. Mahmud, April 29, 1912.
33. Mahmud, November 1, 1912.
34. 'Abdu'l-Baha, Tablets of the Divine Plan, pp. 41-43.
The New Era Bahá'í School

Southeast of Bombay, India, a Bahá'í school is gaining renown for the diversity of its students, the excellence of its facilities, and the attractiveness of its curriculum.

The following article is based on an interview with Truitt White, the acting vice-president of the New Era School, and an article that appeared in the July 1977 issue of Bahá'í Journal, a publication of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom.

India, a land of more than half a billion people known for its diverse geography, its tradition of religious tolerance, and its social caste system, is the site of the New Era Bahá'í School, which has more than 400 students from 23 countries.

The school is located approximately 200 kilometers (125 miles) southeast of Bombay in the town of Panchgani. The school grounds, three-fourths of the way up one of the five mountainsides in the area, overlook the Krishna River that flows through Chikli Valley 457 meters (1500 feet) below. It is not surprising that in the Hindi language "Panchgani" means "five mountaintops." The mountain summits are flat and covered with lakes, owing to the presence of a glacier during one of the Ice Ages.

The New Era School had its beginnings on August 1, 1945, when Mrs. Rezwan Moberzadeh and Mrs. Salisa Kermani left Poona, the Indian town to which they had pioneered, and began a Bahá'í children's place of lodging. The hostel was established at the request of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India and Burma.

For the first six months, the school served only as a hostel, offering spiritual instruction to the children in the morning and evening. Gradually classes were added, and in 1948 the school was given the name "New Era."

In 1953, a large property, "Woodland," was purchased. For the first time academic and physical education were offered side-by-side.

Over the years, the Guardian wrote many statements and letters about the school, all of them pointing to its future. In an early letter to the Spiritual Assembly of Panchgani he said he would "especially
praying for the growth and progress of the Bahá'í children's hostel so that it may become perfect and distinguished in every respect.” He later expressed the hope that it would someday become a Bahá'í university.

Truitt White, acting vice-principal for the school, said in an interview in Wilmette, Illinois, in August, “One of the things the Guardian mentioned which the Universal House of Justice has re-emphasized in the Five Year Plan is the need to develop the ‘distinctive characteristics of Bahá’í life.’

“The more distinctive the school becomes, the more visible it will be. It will be a point of criticism but will become more renowned and appreciated at the same time.’”

The school already enjoys international renown to some extent. Its student population represents more than 20 nations, with only 40-50 per cent of the students from Bahá’í families. The remainder of students are from Buddhist, Christian, Hindu or Muslim backgrounds, among others.

Many of the parents, says Mr. White, “acknowledge the statement of Christ, ‘Ye shall know them by their fruits,’ though tradition, politics and religion may inhibit them from becoming Bahá’ís, or even from openly declaring the beauty and validity of the Faith and how it is able to deal with human behavior.”

He said that among the parents, those who recognize the Faith the fastest are the ones “who can see what it is doing for their children as opposed to what is happening to other children.”

The students are quite united, largely because of an Eastern culture that dictates submissiveness by students to their environment and to adults and teachers. There are, of course, many things tradition continues to carry forward that are not conducive to unity among the students.

One such tradition is the inequality of men and women. Mr. White said striving for equality “definitely produces conflict. But the Guardian says truth goes through three stages: conflict, questioning, and finally the self-manifestation of truth. Until government institutions start providing the environment where the initial psychological and spiritual conflicts can take place, we can never get to the second stage: questioning the validity of our own concepts of truth.”

The cultural ties among students, said Mr. White, serve as a unifying force. Over the years, the school curriculum has taken on many new aspects, and today there is offered a full range of academic subjects and extracurricular activities. Inter-school events, including a sports day, drama and school festival, are held each year.

Spiritual education is given great emphasis, and both moral and deepening classes are provided for the students.

New Era is an accredited member of the Maharashtra State Government educational system and has proven itself a source of pride and inspiration to both its local community and the world community of Bahá’ís. The school is coeducational, has both boarders and day students, and offers instruction from kindergarten through the higher secondary level.

The present day functioning of New Era is the result of continual guidance from the Universal House of Justice, the National Spiritual Assembly of India and its appointed school committees.

One reason the New Era School is growing is because it is one of the few English-language schools in the area. Also, approximately one-third of the students receive some form of scholarship for their tuition, room and board, which is unheard of in India. These students would otherwise be unable to afford any English medium school in India, because all other such schools charge tuition, even at the elementary level.

In the past 10 years, the government has started to subsidize village schools for up to seven years of education. But the students are taught in the local dialect, which can isolate them educationally for the rest of their lives. “People may live 10 kilometers apart and not be able to communicate, and the cultures of villages may be different enough to cause strife should intermarriage between the villagers occur,” said Mr. White.

The Indian government encourages every school to have a social service program, but few do as much as New Era.

The older students help to clean the school compound, assist at school functions, make greeting cards for hospitals, visit orphanages, assist local doctors, perform first aid, assist village people to plant trees and build roads, and take part in
An international team of Baha’is in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, public health, hygiene, economics and engineering works... with the students to bring an over-all rise in the standard of living in the villages.'
**Around the World**

**Barbados and Windward Islands**

**First Carib Indian adult believer enrolled in Dominica**

"We are most happy to give you the news of the first Carib Indian adult believer to be enrolled in Dominica," the National Spiritual Assembly of Barbados and the Windward Islands said in a letter to the International Center in Haifa dated June 17.

"He is already actively involved in the teaching work that is going on. The whole community is excited by the activity in Dominica and the teaching plans that will spread to the other islands," continued the letter.

**Australia**

**North Sydney forms its first Assembly**

Nine months of teaching activity by the communities of Kuring-gai and North Sydney, Australia, resulted in the election June 25 of the first Local Spiritual Assembly of North Sydney.

Sixty friends from surrounding communities attended the celebration at the Cammeray Community Center. Flowers, music and love marked the occasion.

Before the Assembly election, the friends were reminded of the four aspects of the institution: its spiritual reality, its duties and functions, the relationship between the Assembly and the community, and the election itself.

After the election, the friends present enjoyed a delicious cake decorated especially for the occasion.

**Bahá’í program aired on Sydney radio**

The opening of a new radio station in Sydney provided an opportunity for the Bahá’ís to have a 30-minute program on the air.

The program was aired during the second test broadcast of Radio Eastern Sydney Association on July 15-17.

The Bahá’ís had read about the new radio station in the local newspaper, and attended a few meetings of the Radio Eastern Sydney Association to become acquainted with the people involved.

When the Bahá’ís offered to produce a half-hour program, the Association readily accepted.

The program was produced at the home of a local Bahá’í, in the format of a fireside, with one person asking three questions about the Faith and a second person answering.

The radio station manager said he is eager for further Bahá’í programs in future broadcasts.

**Turkish believer assists teaching**

A member of the Bahá’í community of Turkey, Mr. Doktoroglu, spent time in Australia recently teaching the Turkish residents there about the Faith.

Following his visit, two declarations were received from Turks taught by Sydney Bahá’ís.

Tapes of talks in Turkish—including talks made for Melbourne ethnic radio—are being reproduced by the Bahá’í National Goals Committee for use by believers involved in Turkish teaching.

Libraries of Bahá’í books in Turkish have been established in Melbourne and Sydney.

Mr. Doktoroglu wrote to the friends in Australia that he would recommend to the National Spiritual Assembly of Turkey that it form a committee to assist the teaching of Turks in Australia.

**Tasmania plans teaching project**

A special month-long teaching project will be held in Tasmania, an island south of continental Australia, in January.

In conjunction with the teaching campaign, a National Youth Conference will be held in Tasmania in January, in the town of Hobart.

**Switzerland**

**Children, parents hold conference**

Children and parents from the German-speaking areas of Switzerland and Liechtenstein, including a family visiting from Germany, met for a Children’s and Parents’ Weekend in Lutzelfluh, Berne, at the end of May.

They met in a house belonging to a Quaker family. "One evening," the group reports, "the owner of the house told us about the Quakers and of the parallels between his religion and the Bahá’í Faith.

"He already had several Bahá’í books in his library. We were able to talk about the history of the Faith, and about the future as well. In thanksgiving for the loving care given us by our hosts, we presented them at the end of the weekend with a copy of God Passes By."

During the two-day meeting, the children studied in two age groups, where they learned about the station of the Manifestations of God, progressive revelation, and the childhood and Declaration of the Báb. Each day the meetings began with the children chanting prayers from memory.

Similar gatherings may be held in the future.

**Ghana**

**Teaching efforts lead to increase in enrollments**

Bahá’í teachers, traveling throughout Ghana, have held many spontaneous gatherings that have brought about an increase in the number of believers.

The entire community of Asebu was invited to a slide show about the Faith. Seats were reserved for the town’s dignitaries, who listened to the Message of Bahá’u’lláh with great respect.

During a follow-up fireside several villagers declared, including the first woman to embrace the Faith in Asebu.

In Ankroman, more than 200 people attended a proclamation. The traveling teachers were assisted by the Bahá’ís of Kwahu-Tafo for this event.

Four meetings were held during a twoday visit in Akoasi. So genuine was the interest that two of the meetings were held at 6:30 in the morning.

Eight youth in Prampram have become Bahá’ís. Four more youth have accepted the Faith in Tamale, and one youth has declared in Lgatanga.
Trinidad and Tobago

More than 800 declare belief

With two of five teaching projects completed, the Bahá'ís of Trinidad and Tobago report that more than 862 individuals have enlisted under the Banner of Bahá'u'lláh. One of the projects, held in the east, resulted in 262 declarations, the opening of 11 localities and the formation of eight Local Spiritual Assemblies. The project held in the south saw the enrollment of more than 600 Bahá'ís, the opening of 18 localities and the assurance of 14 Local Spiritual Assemblies.

Sierra Leone

New believers attend deepening institute

New believers in Kambia, Sierra Leone, attended a deepening institute sponsored by the Bahá'í Group there on July 15-16.

The institute was aimed at preparing the new believers to teach the Faith. Six Bahá'ís attended the Friday morning and afternoon sessions, and four attended the Saturday morning session.

The topics covered were Bahá'í history, which included brief lessons on the lives of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá; Bahá'í principles and laws; and teaching the Faith. The twin aspects of words and deeds were emphasized in the teaching session.

The friends were drawn closer together at a Friday evening gathering at which a filmstrip about the Holy Land was shown, followed by refreshments and music.

After the institute, many of the new believers gathered literature and declaration cards from the secretary of Kambia's Bahá'í Group and left on teaching trips.

Translation completes Five Year Plan goal

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sierra Leone has fulfilled one of its Five Year Plan goals with the first translation into the Mende language of Prayers and Brief Selections from the Bahá'í Writings.

In addition, the west African community has translated the same publication into Temne, another of its major languages. Both translations are ready for publication.

Conference inspires renewed efforts

'Abdu'l-Bahá says, "O ye believers of God! Do ye not look upon the smallness of your numbers and the multitudes of the nations... One fruitful tree will be conducive to the life of society, whereas a thousand forests of wild trees offer no fruits."

Perhaps at the beginning of the annual National Teaching Conference in Magburaka, Sierra Leone, the less than 30 believers in attendance felt the group was small. After all, there are nearly three million people in the country.

But by the end of the conference they must have felt the strength promised to the people of Bahá'í, for it was a conference to be remembered.

For the first time in the history of the Faith in Sierra Leone, the conference sessions were conducted entirely by local believers, with the exception of a talk by Auxiliary Board member Charles Bullock. The conference will be remembered by those present because one devoted believer stood up and donated a piece of land as an endowment.

The conference will be remembered because the majority of believers present made a successful teaching trip to Makump, a few kilometers from Magburaka. Their willingness to endure rain and a long walk back to the conference site in darkness helped bring about four declarations.

The conference will be remembered because of the ability and potential exhibited by each of the teachers.

The conference addressed the topics of Bahá'í laws and principles, teaching the Faith, and consolidation. The participants learned how to conduct children's classes in villages.

The Netherlands

The first Spiritual Assembly of Emmen, The Netherlands, is one of 24,045 new Local Assemblies formed in the world so far during the course of the Five Year Plan. The Universal House of Justice has said that B.E. 134, the fourth year of the Plan, is the crucial year, and has called upon believers everywhere to arise to the challenge of achieving the victory.

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American reports on teaching efforts in Cayo district

Belize, formerly British Honduras, is on the Caribbean side of Central America and is bordered by Mexico and Guatemala.

Its population is a sea of diversity. Two indigenous tribes, as well as Spanish, Chinese, Lebanese, West and East Indian, African, American and British cultures, and mixtures of these, are evident.

Raymond W. Hassen, an American Bahá'í who taught the Faith in Belize from August of 1976 until April of this year, says the diversity in culture is reflected in the variety of languages spoken in Belize.

He reports: "Although the national language is English, many other village languages and Spanish are spoken. Because of the developing educational system and the constant reversion to using native tongues instead of English, one finds that Belizeans do not speak, read or write the English language as well as might be expected."

One of Mr. Hassen's key jobs was to consolidate and deepen the friends in the village of Georgeville, in the Cayo district.

He planned meetings that were held every Sunday afternoon. He invited the friends to attend, and saw to it that prayer books and literature were available. He says, "Teachers should have a planned program, but be flexible and have alternatives. They should have a variety of teaching materials, and their spiritual attributes, ready for use."

In many of the outlying areas there are inactive Bahá'ís. They have not been deepened owing to a lack of literature, the all-too-rare visits from Bahá'í teachers, and a limited understanding of English.

Even in Georgeville, many Bahá'ís were not deepened. The Local Spiritual Assembly was inactive. "Not at any time in my eight-month stay was I able to get the Local Assembly to meet," says Mr. Hassen. "It seems the most difficult task facing Bahá'í teachers in Belize is building a desire among the Bahá'ís to meet together."

Past experiences with foreigners have not been conducive to unity.

"It took nearly six months for many Belizeans to feel comfortable around me, and I was working with the same families every Sunday," says Mr. Hassen.

"A traveling teacher needs patience. Often it seems that all the work done has given no fruit. One finds he must be very accepting of others' beliefs, feelings and actions, both Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í. The Bahá'í teacher must realize that the communities may be at a different stage of Bahá'í development than his community at home."

He gave deepenings centered on Christian prophecy, the Central Figures of the Faith, Local Spiritual Assembly development, and Bahá'í virtues and attributes.

"The children were always eager to learn. I found that whenever a planned deepening could not be held, a children's class could be held in its place. They enjoyed songs, prayers, short stories and games. Often a few of the 12- to 15-year-olds would say the opening and closing prayers at the adult deepening, and listen closely to the lesson. They are usually able to read as well as or better than their parents."

Two Bahá'í youth in Georgeville were instrumental in causing a delegate to be elected to the Bahá'í National Convention of Belize and for the election of the Spiritual Assembly of Georgeville at Ridván.

The youth, girls aged 14 and 15, went house-to-house in the village inviting more than 30 adult Bahá'ís to participate in the election. They did this twice: 10 days and three days before the election.

Just before Mr. Hassen's departure, one of the girls, "an excellent reader, expressed an interest in starting a local Bahá'í library which she no doubt could manage without difficulty," he says.

Of his stay in Belize, Mr. Hassen observes: "People with all kinds of practical skills, especially mechanical, are needed. Even so, jobs are hard to find because there is no ready market for skilled people to enter."

He adds: "People, especially children, smile a lot. Be ready to smile back."

Italy

Australian musicians present two concerts

The Italian city of Mantova was the site of two recent concerts by the Dawn Breakers, an Australian Bahá'í musical group.

The morning concert was given for more than 600 school children, and an evening concert was given for the general public.

Between performances, the Dawn Breakers met with students in a school room and explained aspects of the Faith.

A few days later, one of the students asked to become a Bahá'í.
Alaska

Auxiliary Board conferences held

Between June 11 and July 17, five Auxiliary Board Team Conferences were held in Alaska.

The conferences were hosted by the Spiritual Assemblies of the Baha'is of Bethel, Dillingham, Juneau, Kodiak and Rainbow.

Friends from those communities and from Auke Bay, Chugiak, Douglas, Eagle River, Matanuska Valley and Spruce Cape attended, together with a few visitors.

Each session began with a discussion of the Central Figures of the Faith, followed by talks on the development of the Baha'i Administrative Order and the state of the goals of the Five Year Plan.

Friends host to Dr. Allen

Dr. Dwight Allen, presently a professor at the University of Massachusetts in the United States, and for many years a member of that country's National Spiritual Assembly, made a sweeping tour of Alaska the first week in June.

His visit was in connection with investigating for the U.S. government the possibilities of launching and operating a satellite program for the purpose of educating people in several African countries through radio and television.

This would be a complex project involving the collaboration of many nations in the development of educational programming on many subjects and probably in at least 200 languages.

Juneau was Dr. Allen's first Baha'i stop in Alaska. More than 20 friends enjoyed an evening with him at the Bergamashi Baha'i School.

Other stops included Bethel, Aniak, Holy Cross, Chuathbuluk, Barrow, Fairbanks and Anchorage.

Dr. Allen returned to the U.S. this year after spending two years in Lesotho, Africa. His wife still serves on the National Spiritual Assembly of Lesotho.

Uganda

Hand of the Cause Olinga discusses goals with believers

Baha'is of Uganda, concerned about completing their Five Year Plan goals, met at the National Haziratu'I-Quds in Kampala on June 18-19. They were honored by the presence of the Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga, who is from Uganda.

The Universal House of Justice sent a message to the conference. Mr. Olinga said it is unusual for conferences of 52 believers, the size of the Five Year Plan goals conference, to receive a message from the Supreme Institution.

The group consulted on the teaching work and on the role of the Women's and Children's Education Committee.

Mr. Olinga emphasized the importance of the Nineteen Day Star newsletter. His wife, Elizabeth, said she had seen it on travels in Jamaica and Trinidad, in the West Indies.

Many of the believers present, including 13 youth, pledged even greater service to the Cause.

Mr. Olinga opened the final session of the conference by saying, "The whole Baha'i world has its eyes on Uganda; Shoghi Effendi called us 'the spiritual heart of Africa.' This means we are to be strong and lead the way so that in the end we may report to the Supreme Body, the Universal House of Justice, the bounties showers on us from the Concourse on High."

The conference cabled the Universal House of Justice: "... Confident wonderful spirit generated will lead accomplishment Five Year Plan through individual commitments and over-all nine-month plan."

Counsellors O. Epyeru and Kolonario Oule and eight members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Uganda were present at the conference.

Singapore

Women's conference sparks teaching

At a Malacca State Baha'i Women's Conference on May 15, 96 women volunteered to aid the Area Teaching Committee in doubling the number of Baha'i families in Malacca in the following three-month period.

Of the 175 attendees, 106 were women, representing 20 localities. Seven of those
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in attendance came to the conference as seekers and left as Baha'is.

Representatives of Baha'i Women's Committees who were at the conference are planning to organize similar events in their home states.

The Spiritual Assembly of Singapore reports in its newsletter that the increased women's activities in Malaysia are a fitting prelude to the All-Asia Baha'i Women's Conference to be held in New Delhi, India, in October.

The success of the Malacca conference is attributed to prayer circles, increased teaching at all levels, close cooperation among Local Assemblies in the state, and the work of the Regional Teaching and local youth committees with the assistance of Baha'is' teachers from outside Malacca.

United Kingdom

More than 1,100 attend Persian conference

More than 1,100 Iranian Baha'is from 15 countries gathered in London June 18-20 for a conference called by the Universal House of Justice.

The entire conference was conducted in the Farsi language, with special talks by Hands of the Cause Shu'a'u'llah 'Ala'i, 'Ali-Akbar Furutan and Rahmatu'llah Muhajir.

Mr. Furutan said non-Baha'is learn about the Faith by watching how Baha'is conduct themselves. He also addressed the subject of child education.

Dr. Muhajir spoke about teaching large numbers of people at one time, and teaching minority groups. He then spoke with deep feeling about pioneering.

Pioneering was also the topic of a talk by Continental Counsellor Adib Taherzadeh.

Some 85 people arose to fill the European goals of the Five Year Plan, and 20,000 pounds sterling was given to the Fund.

The believers saw the Farsi language version of The Green Light Expedition, a film about Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyih Khanum's teaching trip to South America.

On the final day, the children presented a program for the conference.

The Universal House of Justice cabled the conference urging the rapid implementation of the 85 offers for pioneering and travel teaching, and assured the Iranian believers of prayers for assistance in winning the goals of the Five Year Plan.

Pilgrimage made by Baha'i youth

For the first time, a pilgrimage has been made to Haifa comprised entirely of Baha'i youth from the United Kingdom.

The pilgrimage, taken in late December of last year, began at the Guardian's grave near London, where some of the youth said prayers.

They then proceeded to the World Center where the Universal House of Justice had arranged meetings with the pilgrims, and one of the youth writes, "Many of us could not communicate, but the watering eyes and the smiles were enough to express feelings—we were all joined in the love of Baha' u'llah."

The youth were taken for their introductory visit to the Shrine of the Bab by a Hand of the Cause.

On the second evening, they met with the Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyih Khanum at the Master's house.

Cathy Cardell, one of the youth on the trip, emphasized how privileged they felt "because of the trust from our own National Assembly and the House of Justice."

Germany

Persian friends confer at Mainz

Approximately 450 Persian believers including 70 children met in Mainz, Germany, in June for one of two Persian conferences held in Europe this year. The other was held in London, also in June.

The Hands of the Cause 'Ali-Akbar Furutan and Rahmatu'llah Muhajir and Continental Counsellors Anneliese Bopp and Adib Taherzadeh greatly inspired the friends.

Eighteen of those present said they would travel in Europe to teach the Faith, and 41 said they would travel outside of Europe, to Africa and other places.

Israel

This is a general view of the construction area of the Universal House of Justice building as it appeared on June 21. The upper basement is in the foreground and the lower basement is beyond, looking toward the east.
Virgin Islands

7 Bahá’í women attend regional UN conference

Seven Bahá’í women attended an International Women’s Year Territorial Conference in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, June 24-25.

One of the workshops at the conference—“Principles Which Enable People to Work Together”—began with four speeches. One of the speeches was given by the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Leeward and Virgin Islands.

At the same workshop session, the chairman of the workshop said the National Assembly is a national Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) affiliated with the Bahá’í International Community and the United Nations Economic and Social Council. She then explained the meaning of “NGO.”

Another workshop, on education, featured a talk by the secretary of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of St. Thomas. She also assisted with the organization of that workshop.

When conference participants were invited to speak from the floor, Joyce Owen, treasurer of the National Spiritual Assembly, talked about the need for harmony. She then introduced a series of recommendations with modifications from a Bahá’í viewpoint.

About the conference, the National Spiritual Assembly reported, “We have many new friends. The Bahá’ís teachings have attracted the attention of more women while confirming others in the study of the Faith. We are in regular contact with the Conference Coordinating Committee regarding follow-up activities.”

India

Cooperation leads to greater activity

Cooperation between institutions of the Faith—the Continental Board of Counsellors in South Central Asia and its Auxiliary Board members with the Local Spiritual Assembly of Poona, India—has led to a series of successful activities in Poona, one of the first Bahá’í communities in India.

Firesides, deepening classes and twice-weekly meetings for youth all have been well-attended by young Bahá’ís and their friends.

Poona also was the site of a teaching conference sponsored recently by the National Youth Committee of India. Eighty youth delegates from all parts of India met with representatives of the Counsellors and members of the Auxiliary Board.

Even All-India Radio has taken notice. A public presentation on the Faith on July 9 was reported in both Marathi and English in a morning news broadcast.

The Continental Board of Counsellors in South Central Asia said this is believed to be the first time the Faith was mentioned by the Poona station of All-India Radio.

Mysore Assembly organizes visits

The Local Spiritual Assembly in Mysore, India, has organized visits to neighboring villages every Sunday.

On three consecutive Sundays, eight villages were visited. In one of the villages, 28 people asked to become Bahá’ís. Twelve firesides and two children’s classes also were held.

Portugal

Teaching conference renews determination

Seventy friends attended the recent National Teaching Conference in Portugal. The believers cabled the Universal House of Justice that they are “determined (to) become (a) beacon (in) Europe with (the) aid (of) prayers (at the) Holy Shrines.”

Continental Counsellor Hooper Dunbar, a member of the International Teaching Center, was present, as were two Auxiliary Board members.

The report on the progress of the goals of the Five Year Plan in Portugal revealed that two Bahá’í communities were ready to form Local Spiritual Assemblies; two Local Spiritual Assemblies had been re-established; 36 persons had declared their belief in Bahá’u’l-Ábah, and 30 believers had volunteered to travel throughout Portugal to teach the Faith.

New Hebrides

Pioneer requested for Society Islands

For the first time the believers in the New Hebrides have been asked by the Universal House of Justice to send a pioneer overseas. Their goal locality is the Society Islands (Tahiti).

The National Spiritual Assembly of the New Hebrides has called upon all believers there to prayerfully consider pioneers there to prayerfully consider pioneering.

The assignment of the Society Islands to the New Hebrides came in the recent appeal by the Universal House of Justice for an additional 462 pioneers to settle in various countries in the remaining two years of the Five Year Plan.

Iran

Seminars planned

The Women’s Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran has planned seminars geared to the needs of women believers in Iran so they may fully develop their potential talents.

Members of the Women’s Committee have traveled to cities outside ÏhÎrân to assist with the seminars.

United Nations

‘Flowers of Garden’ is UNICEF theme

“Ye Are the Flowers of One Garden” is the theme chosen by the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) for International Children’s Day, to be held in October.

Kits containing French, English and Spanish versions of the song, “Ye Are the Flowers of One Garden,” and a poster designed by Eliane Hopson, an American Bahá’í from New York, are being sent around the world to groups such as Girl Guides that host Children’s Day events.

The Bahá’í Writings will be cited as the source of the quote.

The United States Committee for UNICEF has been consulting with the Bahá’í office at the United Nations regarding the selection of a “Oneness of Mankind” theme for International Children’s Year, coming up in 1979.

September 1977/Bahá’í News 17
Grieved passing Dorothy Senne, first African woman believer in South Africa. Kindly extend our warmest sympathy to her family and friends. Praying Holy Shrines progress her soul to Abhá Kingdom.

Universal House of Justice, June 1977
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Cover

More than a hundred years ago Bahá'u'lláh, a Prisoner and an Exile seemingly without power or influence on earth, boldly declared that He was the One sent by God to unite the warring peoples of the world. The potency of His message and the degree of faith required by those who accept it are the pivotal elements of an excerpt in this issue from the new book, The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, Volume II, by Adib Taherzadeh.
The following is an excerpt which deals with the important subject of acquiring faith in God from The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh. Volume II, by Adib Taherzadeh, to be published in November by George Ronald, London. Mr. Taherzadeh’s book covers the period of Bahá’u’lláh’s stay in Adrianople, 1863-1868.

In the Tablet of Sayyid Bahá’u’lláh unveils the glory of His Station, states that He is the Ancient Beauty through Whose command the whole of creation has come into being, and affirms that mankind turns to Him in adoration and clings to the Hem of His bounty even though it is unable to recognize Him in His wondrous Revelation.

He alludes to the followers of the Bayán who have denied and repudiated His Cause, refers to them as the people of sedition and the company of Satan, and reminds them that for many years He had associated with them, but had hidden His glory from their eyes so that none might recognize Him; but they had risen up against Him in great enmity.

It was then that He unveiled the beauty of His Countenance and shed the radiance of His Face upon all creation.

He declares that the days of tests have come, and that the balance has been established, a balance through which the deeds of all men will be weighed with justice. He proclaims to the peoples of the world that if they wish to hear the voice of God they should hearken to His wondrous melodies, and if they desire to behold the Face of God then they should gaze into His beauteous Countenance.

He warns them, however, that they shall not be able to do this unless they cleanse their hearts of all idle fancy and detach
themselves from this world and all that is therein.

It is in this Tablet that Bahá'u'lláh, by allusion, foretells His exile to the city of ‘Akká, designating it as the ‘vale of Nabil.’ He describes in allegorical terms His arrival in that city in these words:

Upon our arrival, We were welcomed with banners of light, whereupon the Voice of the Spirit cried out saying: ‘Soon will all that dwell on earth be enlisted under these banners.

There are passages in this Tablet which throw light on the severity of the tests which the believer encounters when he treads the path of faith. Alluding to the people of the Bayán, Bahá'u'lláh refers to some who were among the most holy of men, who worshipped God with great devotion, who were considered the most devout, who were endowed with the keenest insight; yet when the breezes of His Revelation were wafted over them, they were found to be shut out as by a veil from Him. This notwithstanding the fact that He associated with them for so long and manifested His glory to their eyes.

He attributes the reason for this failure to pride and attachment to self and ego. He grieves that their acts of devotion and service had become the cause of pride and had deprived them of God's bounty.

The subject of detachment occurs in numerous Tablets. Perhaps it may be said that there are few, if any, among Bahá'u'lláh's exhortations which have been stressed so much as detachment from this world and from every selfish desire.

One of the reasons for this is in the Tablet of Sayyid Bábí, which makes it absolutely clear that Bahá'u'lláh's companions, because of their closeness to Him, could not remain faithful to the Cause of God unless they were able to cast out entirely the evil of self. Any trace of self-glorification, however insignificant, was fatal to them, and in His holy presence nothing but utter self-effacement could survive.

There were many among His disciples who were enabled to subdue their egos. By their words and deeds they demonstrated their utter nothingness when they came face to face with their Lord. These became the spiritual giants of this Dispensation, and through their faith they shed an imperishable lustre upon the Cause of God. It is concerning such men, during the days of Baghdad, that Nabil writes:

Many a night, no less than ten persons subsisted on no more than a pennyworth of dates. No one knew to whom actually belonged the shoes, the cloaks, or the robes that were to be found in their houses. Whoever went to the bazaar could claim that the shoes upon his feet were his own, and each one who entered the presence of Bahá'u'lláh could affirm that the cloak and robe he then wore belonged to him. Their own names they had forgotten, their hearts were emptied of aught else except adoration for their Beloved. . . . O, for the joy of those days, and the gladness and wonder of those hours!

That a few souls have been able to achieve such distinction, to soar into the realms of detachment, and to humble themselves before their Lord, augurs well for the human race which, in the fullness of time, is destined to follow in their footsteps.

Today, the followers of Bahá'u'lláh cannot attain His presence in this life, and therefore the tests which were particularly associated with His Person do not seem to affect them. But the requirements of faith and the path to Bahá'u'lláh remain unchanged.

It is necessary for the believer today, as in the days of Bahá'u'lláh, to detach himself from all earthly things and to banish from his soul traces of passion and desire, of ego and self-glorification, in order that he may truly appreciate the awe-inspiring station of Bahá'u'lláh and become a worthy servant of His Cause. If he fails to do this, although he may not be faced with the same perils that surrounded Bahá'u'lláh's companions, he is bound to feel a measure of doubt in his innermost heart concerning the Faith and may experience great conflicts in his mind. Although intellectually he may accept Bahá'u'lláh as a Manifestation of God and may be well versed in His Writings, he will not be able to have that absolute certitude which endows a human being with divine attributes and confers upon him perpetual contentment, serenity and happiness.

The acquiring of true faith is man's greatest accomplishment. Faith endows a human being with powers that no earthly agency can equal. By the power of their faith, the believers have overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles and won memorable victories for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. In order to have faith, a man must banish from his heart every trace of vain imagination and idle fancy. Let us examine the road to the achievement of this exalted goal and explore the many pitfalls and obstacles which confront the soul in its quest.

There are two focal points of enormous power within a human being. One is the brain, the centre of intellect and thinking and the storehouse of his knowledge and learning. Through the agency of this faculty man can manifest the unique powers of the rational soul which distinguish him from the animal. The intellect is the greatest gift of God to man. But since man has free will, he may be led by his intellect either to faith and belief in God, or else to
disbelief.

The other focal point is the heart which is the centre of warmth and love. The heart of man falls in love with the world and its own self. But it is also the habitation wherein God’s attributes are revealed. Bahá'u'lláh states:

_O Son of Being!_

Thy heart is My home; sanctify it for My descent . . .

It is within the heart of man that the spark of faith appears. But this can only happen when the heart becomes freed from attachment to the things of the world. Bahá'u'lláh declares in *The Hidden Words*:

_O Son of Dust!_

All that is in heaven and earth I have ordained for thee, except the human heart, which I have made the habitation of My beauty and glory; yet thou didst give My home and dwelling to another than Me; and whenever the manifestation of My holiness sought His own abode, a stranger found He there, and, homeless, hastened unto the sanctuary of the Beloved. Notwithstanding I have concealed thy secret and desired not thy shame.

God has created man in such wise that the two focal points in his being, namely the mind and the heart, should complement each other. The mind without the heart illumined by faith does not acquire the capacity to investigate, or the language to understand, the truth of the Cause of God. Similar to the eye when deprived of light, it is unable to explore the world of the spirit.

Instead, it develops its powers in the field of materialism and naturally rejects the concept of God and religion. Thus it becomes the most effective barrier to the individual’s acquisition of faith. In such circumstances the heart becomes filled with love of the world and its own self, for it is a characteristic of the heart to love. If it is not allowed to love God, it will love itself and its worldly possessions. And this is one significance of the “stranger” that Bahá'u'lláh refers to in *The Hidden Words*:

_O My Friend in word!_

Ponder awhile. Hast thou ever heard that friend and foe should abide
in one heart? Cast out then the stranger, that the Friend may enter His home.

To acquire faith, a man must cast out the “stranger” from his heart. To the extent that he succeeds in doing this, he will acquire faith. Once the spark of faith is ignited within the heart it must be allowed to grow steadily into a flame, otherwise it could die because of attachment to this world.

For instance, when an individual reaches a point where he recognizes Bahá’u’lláh as a Manifestation of God, his heart becomes the recipient of the light of God’s Faith for this day. If the believer immerses himself from the start in the ocean of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation, reads His writings daily, not merely to add to his own knowledge but to receive the food of the spirit, seek the companionship of the righteous, and arise to serve Him with sincerity and detachment, then he may steadily grow in faith and become a radiant and enthusiastic soul. He may obtain a deeper understanding of the writings and reach a point where both his mind and his heart work together in harmony.

Such a believer will eventually find no conflict between the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh and his own thinking. He will discover many a wisdom hidden in the utterances of Bahá’u’lláh and will recognize the limitations and shortcomings of his own finite mind.

But if a believer, after having recognized Bahá’u’lláh, fails to follow this path, he may soon find himself in conflict with many aspects of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh. His intellect may not be able to understand the wisdom behind many of His Teachings, he may indeed reject some of His precepts and eventually lose faith altogether. Some people struggle for years to overcome this problem, for they long to be confirmed in their faith. Often such an individual may be helped to acquire a true understanding of the Faith by those who truly believe in Bahá’u’lláh and are detached from this world.

But if everything else fails, the only remedy for the individual who still has a glimmer of faith in his heart, but who has doubts about the Cause, is to admit that he may be wrong in his assessment of the
teachings of the Faith, to affirm that Bahá'u'lláh's knowledge is of God, and to surrender his feelings and thoughts completely to Him. Once he submits himself in this way and perseveres in doing so with sincerity and truthfulness, the channels of the grace of God open, and his heart becomes the recipient of the light of true knowledge. He will discover, some time in his life, either by intuition or through prayer and meditation, the answer to all his problems and objections. Every trace of conflict will disappear from his mind. He will readily understand the reasons behind those very teachings which previously baffled his intellect, and will find many mysteries enshrined in the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh, mysteries of which he was completely unaware in earlier days.

The following words of Bahá'u'lláh in The Hidden Words demonstrate that not until man submits himself to God can he attain to the knowledge of His Revelation:

O Son of the Dust!

Blind thine eyes, that thou mayest behold My beauty; stop thine ears, that thou mayest hearken unto the sweet melody of My voice; empty thyself of all learning, that thou mayest partake of My knowledge; and sanctify thyself from riches, that thou mayest obtain a lasting share from the ocean of My eternal wealth. Blind thine eyes, that is, to all save My beauty; stop thine ears to all save My word; empty thyself of all learning save the knowledge of Me; that with a clear vision, a pure heart and an attentive ear thou mayest enter the court of My holiness.

The following story in the life of Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl, the outstanding scholar of the Cause and its famous apologist, is one which demonstrates that reading the Word of God with the eye of intellect can lead a man astray. He himself has recounted the story that soon after he came in contact with the believers, they gave him the Kitáb-i-Íqán to read. He read it with an air of intellectual superiority and was not impressed by it. He even commented that if the Kitáb-i-Íqán was a proof of Bahá'u'lláh's claims, he himself could certainly write a better book.

At that time he was the head of a
theological college in Tihrin. The following day a prominent woman arrived at the college and approached some students asking them to write an important letter for her (few women in Persia were taught to read or write in those days). The students referred her to Mirza Abu'l-Faql saying that he was an outstanding writer, a master of eloquence and a man unsurpassed in the art of composition. Mirza Abu'l-Faql took up his pen to write, but found himself unable to compose the first sentence. He tried very hard but was unsuccessful. For several minutes he scribbled in the corner of the page, and even drew lines on his own fingernail, until the woman realized that the learned scribe was unable to write. Losing her patience, she arose to go and mockingly said to Mirza Abu'l-Faql, "If you have forgotten how to write a simple letter why don't you say so instead of keeping me here while you scrawl?"

Mirza Abu'l-Faql says that he was overcome with feelings of shame as a result of the incident, and then suddenly he remembered his own comments the night before about his being able to write a better book than the Kitab-i-Iqan. He had a pure heart and knew that this incident was nothing but a clear answer to his arrogant attitude toward that holy Book.

However, it took Mirza Abu'l-Faql several years to be convinced of the truth of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. He reached a stage where he accepted the Faith intellectually, but for years his heart was not convinced. The only thing which caused him to recognize the truth of the Cause of God after having struggled for so long was to submit himself and surrender his intellectual gifts to God.

One evening he went into his chamber, and prayed with yearning as tears flowed from his eyes, beseeching God to open the channels of his heart. At the hour of dawn he suddenly found himself possessed of such faith that he felt he could lay down his life in the path of Bahá'u'lláh. The same person who once said he could write a better book than the Kitab-i-Iqan read that book many times with the eye of faith and found it to be an ocean of knowledge, limitless in scope. Every time he read it he found new pearls of wisdom within it and discovered new mysteries which he had not come across before.

Faith comes to man through submission to God. The surrendering of the self with all its accomplishments renders the soul free of attachment to this mortal world. It drives the "stranger" away from the heart and enables him to receive the "Friend" within its sanctuary. Bahá'u'lláh states:

O Son of Man!
Humble thyself before Me, that I may graciously visit thee . . .

In another passage He reveals:
O Son of Man!
If thou lovest Me, turn away from thyself; and if thou seekest My pleasure, regard not thine own; that thou mayest die in Me and I may eternally live in thee.
Fifth All-Guajira Conference held at Los Mochos, Zulia

The fifth All-Guajira Conference was held July 16-17 at Los Mochos in the state of Zulia, Venezuela.

Baha'is from surrounding communities in the Guajira, from cities all over Venezuela, and from neighboring Colombia gathered for deepening, fellowship and preparation for a teaching campaign that began immediately after the conference.

Topics discussed included goals of the Five Year Plan, the functions of Local Spiritual Assemblies, the Fund, and the need for a spiritual foundation in teaching the Faith.

All talks were translated into Spanish and Guajira.

On Saturday evening the friends enjoyed Guajira music and dancing arranged for by the Spiritual Assembly of Los Mochos.

Near the close of the conference a talk was given on the establishment of new Local Assemblies in the Guajira region. Afterward, teaching teams were formed with many conference participants volunteering to help.

The following day, Monday, the teams set out to various parts of Zulia to begin a six-week teaching effort.

Baha'is came from various parts of the country to help. Some dedicated two weeks of their vacation to assist with the teaching work, form Assemblies and win other goals of the Five Year Plan.

At the end of the six-week period, 16 Local Assemblies had been formed, and six or seven more Baha'i Groups were close to Assembly status.

Botswana

Tlokweng believers building Bahá'í center

In Tlokweng, Botswana, the believers have begun to build a local Bahá'í Center, literally with their own hands.

They decided that one way to save money would be to make their own mud bricks, in the manner that is traditional to the region. The believers of Tlokweng say this type of brick is strong, and lasts for many years.

In a week's time, a thousand bricks had been made, enough to begin construction of the local Bahá'í Center.

One woman, who could not help make the bricks because of her job obligations, hired a worker to take her place.

Counsellor's visit spurs teaching effort

The recent visit to Irán of Continental Counsellor Aziz Yazdi of the International Teaching Center has created a wave of teaching activities.

Mr. Yazdi's consultative sessions with Iranian youth and with various teaching and pioneering committees has caused the youth to send 10 Bahá'í teachers to Sri Lanka and numerous other teachers throughout Irán. A teacher training class also was formed, and was attended by 60 believers.

The governor of Hawaii, George R. Ariyoshi, signs a document proclaiming Sunday, September 18, World Peace Day. Looking on are Tracy Hamilton (left), chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands, and Lani Tamanha (right), who recently returned from pioneering in the Philippines and now resides in Honolulu, Hawaii. Twenty-eight Local Spiritual Assemblies in Hawaii participated in the observance of World Peace Day, using the theme "World Peace Begins With You."
The Philippines

Large teaching team helps bring victories

A team of 55 Bahá'ís taught the Faith for 20 days this summer in the Philippines. They opened nine provinces, assisted with the formation of 25 Local Spiritual Assemblies, and helped bring in 1,000 new believers.

The teaching team works with new believers until a Local Assembly is formed in the community, then moves on. A team of two deepened Bahá'ís remains with the new Assembly to work with the new believers and deepen them.

Members of the teaching team are from several areas of the world, including Alaska, Australia, Malaysia and the continental United States.

Paraguay

Pioneers describe lifestyle, rewards of service abroad

Jim and Jeannine Sacco, pioneers to Paraguay, recently wrote to the International Goals Committee in the United States. They described the lifestyle in Paraguay, and the reward of pioneering there:

“Living in Paraguay today is like living in the semi-rural United States about a generation ago. Life moves along slowly and naturally, especially outside the capital city of Asunción.

“Ask a Paraguayan to describe his small-town life and he’s likely to say ‘tranquillo’—a very apt description.

“Cars are still so few that drivers of horse-drawn taxis can and do make a living.

“Fruit and meat are plentiful and sweet. More than likely your house will have at least one type of fruit tree. We have papaya, peach, lemon and orange trees growing in the back yard.

“The people are very friendly and greet foreigners with graciousness and interest. Although most Paraguayans are of Roman Catholic background and conservative in their beliefs, many do not practice their religion and are open to the Faith.

“The children are wonderfully receptive and love to hear about the Faith. Weekly children’s classes are a delight to teach. Sixty-five children and parents attended our first teaching event, an outdoor showing of the Green Light Expedition.

“Paraguay includes immigrants from Japan, Korea, the Ukraine, The Netherlands, Germany and other places; all seem to get along quite nicely together.

“Encarnación is a small town about five hours from Posadas, Argentina. Here we have spent the last five months amidst natural beauty and sometimes trying primitiveness. Despite the unpolluted environment, work is scarce and the daily life rugged for the average North American: unpaved roads, outdoor plumbing, no central heating (it can get cold!), and a sense of isolation from the hustle and bustle of the city make life a challenge.

“Small-scale businessmen, mechanics and agricultural specialists can make a better go of it than English teachers, the job we tried.

“Still, the rewards of living in the small Bahá’í Center built and furnished so lovingly by a pioneer, and the privilege of serving in a land with an incredible Bahá’í history of sacrifice and service, is in itself of inestimable value.

“We cannot help but feel that Paraguay is on the verge of something very exciting in Bahá’í terms. Happy the pioneer, or better yet, the pioneer family, who has the bounty to serve in this precious post."

On behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Philippines, Walter Maddela presents Bahá’í literature to Dionisio Sarandi, the governor of Quirino, Philippines. Witnessing the presentation, which took place on August 29, is the Provincial Board of Quirino. To the governor’s left is another member of the Bahá’í community.

Norway

Bahá’ís have audience with Norwegian king

King Olav of Norway was visited by Bahá’ís for the first time in nine years on January 13.

Odd Van Krogh, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly, and Gerd Strand, Auxiliary Board member, had a private audience with the king and presented him with volumes XIV and XV of The Bahá’í World. The King’s name and title are inscribed in gold on the cover of each book.

The Bahá’ís had received a cable from the Universal House of Justice that said, “Assure loving prayers Shrines success audience.” This cable was carried with them into the meeting.

The king was interested in the reaction of Queen Victoria to the Message of Bahá’u’lláh: “If this be of God, it will prevail.” He said, “It has prevailed, has it not?”

He also read the letter from Kurt Waldheim, Secretary General of the United Nations, to the Bahá’í International Teaching Conference in Paris, and was told that the Bahá’í International Community is a Non-Governmental Organization at the UN.

At the close of the audience, the Prayer for All Mankind was read. The 73-year-old monarch said, “Those are beautiful words.”

October 1977/Bahá’í News
Staff members sought by 200-bed hospital

Bahá’ís are sought to staff a 200-bed hospital in Zaire. Positions are open in every field necessary for hospital operation, from administrative or medical staff to maintenance.

Elementary school teachers are needed in Chile at a school whose administrative head is a Bahá’í.

Contact your National Spiritual Assembly if you are qualified for either of these opportunities.

Pioneers lead active life in Lubumbashi

John and Bahin Newport are pioneers in Lubumbashi, a city of 200,000 people in the Shaba region of Zaire.

John, originally from the United States, arrived in Zaire in 1970. He married his Persian wife, Bahin, in 1972, taking her from her pioneering post in Tanzania to join him in Zaire.

At that time, there were only five or six Bahá’ís in the entire region. A year later, there were 25 Local Spiritual Assemblies. As of July, there were 32 Local Assemblies.

John said, “We are constantly helping to form Assemblies. The number of Assemblies formed is directly related to the amount of time one has available to teach.”

When going to a village that has not previously been visited, the Newports speak with the Chief first. If he is receptive, he will send a messenger to call the people together, or will call them together himself. The villagers usually are fascinated to see Bahin teaching, since it is traditionally a male role.

The teachings of the Faith that are most appealing to the villagers at first are the oneness of mankind and progressive revelation.

“When we mention the idea of equal education for everyone,” said Bahin, “it does not touch the villagers; they cannot feel what equality of education means. But when we talk about the unity of mankind, and say, ‘Here is a Persian working with an American working with a Zairian,’ they understand.’”

The new believers are encouraged to build a local Bahá’í Center as soon as possible. They are encouraged to learn how to do things for themselves.

Such self-reliance is important, as John explained: “The most difficult part of pioneering here is deepening the new Local Spiritual Assemblies, because travel is so difficult in Zaire. The roads are bad, and are often impassable in the rainy season, which lasts for six months. Gasoline

Children meet for Bahá’í classes in the home of John and Bahin Newport in Lubumbashi, Zaire. Here the children share food from one pot.

Continental Counsellors Isabel Sabri (far right, second row) and Oloro Epyeru (left end of front row, next to woman and child) met with the friends in Lubumbashi, Zaire, in January. The photograph was taken in front of the hotel where the Guardian stayed on a visit in the 1940’s.

Bahá’is from Lubumbashi, Zaire, meet at the home of pioneers John and Bahin Newport to celebrate Ridván.
is rationed. I am able to buy it by the barrel, but many people have much difficulty in getting gasoline.

"We are the only Bahá'ís in the region who have a car, and there are no buses from city to city. You may ride in the back of a truck with goats and chickens and sacks of flour if you wish, however."

The Bahá'ís are kept in contact through a regional newsletter, printed in Swahili. International events reported in Bahá'í News are shared.

"The friends are very excited when they see themselves in Bahá'í News," said Bahin. "They are excited that it goes all over the world, and that Bahá'ís in the rest of the world are interested in reading about what they are doing. It makes them feel like a part of an international family."

When the Newports visit the villages, John teaches adult classes and Bahin teaches children's classes.

The children learn songs about the Faith, play games and memorize prayers. Bahin said, "After we leave, the children go throughout the village singing the songs they have learned, and explain the meaning of the words. This is a good proclamation for the Faith."

In two villages, the children have built their own Bahá'í Centers.

At the National University of Zaire, where John teaches English, there is a Bahá'í campus club. Approximately 14 students there are Bahá'ís, and they teach among the other students.

The Newports said more pioneers and itinerant teachers are needed to deepen the new believers in Zaire.

Luxembourg

Hand of Cause sparks new teaching campaign

A new teaching project, "Vers la Victoire" (Toward Victory), resulted from a recent meeting of the Hand of the Cause Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir with the National Spiritual Assembly of Luxembourg.

The campaign, to last through the months of August and September, called for teaching in seven goal towns.

Three believers offered to serve full-time on the project while many others offered part-time service.

While in Luxembourg Dr. Muhájir also attended the summer school, where 140 of the friends were gathered.
Around the World

French Antilles

**National Assembly plans major teaching project**

The newly-formed National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the French Antilles is planning a major teaching project for the remainder of the Five Year Plan.

The project calls for a minimum of four full-time teachers. At present, one person has volunteered to spend at least one year teaching.

The National Assembly is in dire need of French-speaking teachers who can spend one month or more.

Anyone able to assist with the project should contact his own National Spiritual Assembly.

United Kingdom

**Proclamation a success in Orkney Islands**

The Local Spiritual Assembly of the Orkney Islands, a part of the United Kingdom that lies north of Scotland, launched a proclamation project in September 1974 to bring the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to every resident of the 15 islands.

The project was completed in July of this year during the summer school held in Kirkwall when 2,000 pieces of literature and invitations to a Bahá'í meeting were mailed to residents of Kirkwall and St. Ola.

During the course of the project a total of 8,000 pamphlets and invitations was distributed.

"In this manner," reported the Orkney Spiritual Assembly, "we proclaimed the Faith in 15 islands, 14 districts and two towns in Orkney."

Nine persons responded to the invitations on each of the small islands of Wyre and Egilsay.

Also, the first of four goal islands was opened to the Faith in Orkney. In August, Margaret Rendall, a resident of Papa Westray, declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh after 20 years of sustained visits by the friends. She is the first Orcadian believer from one of the smaller islands, although there have been other Orcadian believers on the mainland of Orkney.

At the beginning of the Five Year Plan, the Local Assembly of Orkney was asked by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom to adopt four goal islands. It chose Papa Westray (population 110), Eday (population 170), Wyre (population 33) and Egilsay (population 34).

Australia

**Bahá’í children follow the Master’s footsteps**

On May 29, the anniversary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, a Bahá'í children's class from Cambridge, England, toured the places in London visited by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Three members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia met with 10 Auxiliary Board members in Australia during the summer. The three Counsellors are Howard Harwood, standing at extreme right; Thelma Perks, standing in front of Mr. Harwood; and Peter Khan, standing on the left in the dark suit.
First stop for the busload of 53 children and adults was the National Haziratu’l-Quds where they saw the chair in which the Master sat during a visit to a local church in 1911.

The second stop was the home of Lady Blomfield where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed for a total of 69 days during two visits. Ethel Rosenberg, the first woman in England to embrace the Faith, met with the group at 10 Cheniston Gardens. The building, formerly the Higher Thought Center, was visited twice by the Master.

After a picnic lunch at Hyde Park, the Bahá'ís walked to Serpentine Bridge where the Master also had walked. They then visited St. John Smith Square Hall, which was known as St. John the Divine Church at the time of the Master’s visit there.

The guide at the church told stories of the Master, and took the group to the Deanery where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had dined with His host, Archdeacon Wilberforce.

Three more places were visited: the Mansion House, where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was received by the Lord Mayor; City Temple, the church where the Master gave His first talk in the western world; and the Mary Ward Center, formerly Passmore Edward’s Settlement Center, where He gave two talks.

The group ended its tour at Northern Cemetery, where the Guardian is buried. There they commemorated the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh with readings and prayers.

Spain

**Proclamations lead to five declarations**

Proclamations held during the first National Teaching Conference in Madrid, Spain, attracted 500 inquirers, five of whom declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh.

The conference was attended by 150 believers, and was covered by the press. Counsellor Hooper Dunbar of the International Teaching Center was present at the conference.

**Top UNESCO official receives Bahá'í book**

The Secretary-General of UNESCO, Dr. Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, from Senegal, was presented with a book about the Faith on August 16 in Malaga, Spain.

Dr. M'Bow was visiting Malaga for the purpose of being presented with an honorary membership in the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in San Telmo.

The Local Spiritual Assembly of Malaga obtained special and cordial permission from the president of the Royal Academy to present Dr. M'Bow with *This Earth One Country*, by John Huddleston.

The presentation was made by three Bahá'ís—Ignacio Blanco del Piñal, Juan Leyva Palma and Virginia Orbison—in the presence of President don Baltasar Peña Hinajosa, the Bishop of Malaga, the civil and military governors of the province, and others.

Dr. M'Bow showed obvious delight upon receiving the book from the Bahá'ís.

The Bahá'ís were the only persons present not directly connected with the presentation of Dr. M'Bow’s honorary membership in the Royal Academy.

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12 declarations highlight annual summer school

Around the World

Italy

12 declarations highlight annual summer school

A dozen declarations were reported at the Italian Bahá'í Summer School held September 3-11 in Giulianova.

Speakers included two members of the Continental Board of Counsellors: Aziz Yazdi of the International Teaching Center, and Adib Taherzadeh.

Announced at the school was the upcoming International Year of the Child (1979).

The children sang the theme song for Universal Children’s Day 1977 for the entire school. The song, “Flowers of the Garden,” was written by a Bahá’í, Jerald Day, and has been released by UNICEF to many organizations around the world.

Canada

Thank you note reaps publicity dividends

A recent experience with a major Ontario newspaper brought startling confirmation to the Bahá'í, who wrote a letter to their National Spiritual Assembly, an extract of which follows:

“...As you may know, the (newspaper) has never put in any articles about Bahá’í although they always promise to. However, when World Religion Day was celebrated... we did submit a very good article (which they didn’t print), but under the Church Briefs they did mention in about a dozen words that the celebration was taking place but did not mention the time or place.

“Our group decided to send them a thank you note for mentioning it. The results were great. The morning after the receipt of our note, I received a phone call from the assistant religion editor telling me that he had never received a thank you note from anyone, and he apologized for not printing the entire article. He told me that there were to be changes made in his department and that if the Bahá’ís have also been offered the free use of the newspaper’s new auditorium for future meetings.

Upper Volta

Teachers help prepare for national election

Preparations for the election of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Upper Volta at Ridván 1977 were carried out with the help of a traveling team that visited five of the nine Local Spiritual Assemblies in the country.

The five Assemblies visited are in small villages and are composed of newly-enrolled believers who cannot read or write.

To assist these villages in playing their part in the Administrative Order, the team held meetings on the purpose of Bahá’í administration and related topics, all planned by the National Teaching Committee.

After a series of meetings, the same themes were developed and expanded at a weekend institute attended by Bahá’ís selected by their Local Assemblies.

At a workshop following the election, a mock National Convention was held. The friends were divided into groups, each representing a Bahá’í locality, and each “locality” elected two “delegates” to be sent to the simulated National Convention.

“The experience was rewarding,” the team reported, “as the first National Convention of Upper Volta began and ended in an atmosphere of brotherhood and spirituality, and was conducted in an orderly fashion. Five of the villagers who had attended the workshop were elected to the National Assembly.”

The knowledge gained from the meetings also proved helpful in the election of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Lai.

When coordinators who were to assist with the election were detained at another village, the Bahá’ís of Lai decided to pro-
ceed with the election on their own. When the coordinators arrived, they were delighted to find that the Assembly already had been formed, and that two women had been elected to serve on it.

Children receptive to Bahá’í classes

Mr. and Mrs. Mohsen Enayat, Bahá’ís from Canada who visited Upper Volta for five months recently, observed a great receptivity among children to Bahá’í classes.

They said, “Weekly classes for children are held in Nimbdi, a village near Ouagadougou, and other villages welcome classes whenever a Bahá’í visitor comes to meet with the community.”

Village children know a few prayers from memory, many Bahá’í songs, stories of the history of the Faith and some of the Bahá’í teachings.

The Enayats said many villagers “value the Bahá’í classes where their children are taught the knowledge of God and respect for the authority of parents, and where they are exhorted to uphold unity and cooperation, and are stimulated to take pride in their work.”

“After classes, among themselves, the children repeat their lessons and help each other to understand.”

“In Nab-Rabogo, while waiting for some friends to gather for the election of the Local Spiritual Assembly, the children offered to entertain those present. They recited prayers, told stories about the history of the Faith, then played instruments and sang songs with Bahá’í themes and danced for the adults. It was not long before the adults were fully involved in the program.”

“It is impressive to see the absence of age barriers between children and adults in these villages. What is given to children finds its way to adults and is passed on to them in a more suitable and acceptable form than a visitor could devise. Many adults love to join in the children’s classes and meet the challenge of memorizing prayers or discovering the significance of the history of the Faith.”

“Teaching children in the villages of Upper Volta could be the key to entry by troops there,” concluded the Enayats.

United States

‘Victory Sessions’ launch push toward winning Plan goals

Imbued with a new sense of purpose and inspired by the call to arms sounded by the National Spiritual Assembly, the “radiant spiritual Army” of Bahá’u’lláh in the United States gathered its far-flung legions the weekend of September 10-11 to launch a mighty push toward victory in the final months of the Five Year Plan.

The Victory Sessions of intensive study that weekend, proposed by the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears, endorsed by the National Spiritual Assembly, supported by the Continental Board of Counsellors and its Auxiliary Boards, and hosted by every Local Assembly in the U.S. were the prelude to a month-long series of firesides throughout the country from September 20-October 20 and a period of deepening and consolidation of victories that is to continue to November 12, the anniversary of the birth of Bahá’u’lláh.

The three-phase program marks the beginning of a Victory Campaign that is to last until Ridván 1979 when the Five Year Plan reaches its conclusion. The objective of the campaign is no less than the attainment of every single goal outlined in the Plan.

Mr. Sears, who suggested the Victory Campaign in a letter last May to the National Spiritual Assembly of the U.S., was himself an active participant in each of the Victory Sessions through a four-part cassette tape recording prepared especially for use at the historic gatherings.

These gatherings marked the first time such taped study classes ever were held simultaneously nationwide.

The Bahá’í National Center kept its switchboard open all weekend to receive reports of victories and pledges of service from Spiritual Assemblies, Groups and individuals throughout the country.

As of September 26, believers had pledged 20,642 firesides. A total of 5,239 postcards has been received with names of seekers and others for whom prayers were requested at the holiest House of Worship. One hundred-six believers volunteered to fill pioneering posts, and 121 of the friends volunteered to pioneer on the homefront.

Courage averts tragedy in Bosch school kidnap

The courage and composure displayed by 63 of the friends who were held captive by an armed man the evening of August 17 at the Bosch Bahá’í School in Northern California averted a potential tragedy while attracting favorable publicity to the Faith in news media throughout the country.

The gunman, 26-year-old Thomas B. Wilson, commandeered a city bus in nearby Santa Cruz and forced the driver to take him to the Bosch School where he ordered the friends to remain with him in a barricaded dining room.

More than five hours later, the ordeal ended when the last of the hostages—the gunman had by that time released all but five men—talked him into laying down his gun and surrendering to police.

While the man’s motive in holding the Bahá’í hostage was not clear, it was learned that he had been a member of the Faith for about a year in 1973 before his membership was rescinded.

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The incident was front-page news in many papers and was mentioned on network radio and television with many of the articles and newscasts commenting on the quiet courage shown by the Bahá'ís under extreme duress.

Panama

Public speaking course helpful to 26 Bahá'ís

Twenty-six Bahá'ís enrolled in a recent Bahá'í public speaking and human relations course that was sponsored by the Spiritual Assembly of Panama City, Panama, and held at the National Hazírat’ú-l-Quds. Nine communities were represented.

The 10 students who graduated from the 14-week course gave talks at its completion, telling what they had gained by taking it.

One student credited the course for a promotion he received at work. Others said they had learned to make friends more readily. Some said they were able to stop worrying as much and enjoy life more. For several students, the ability to remember names, addresses and telephone numbers vastly improved with the course.

Textbooks on public speaking and human relations were used in the course, and extensive references were made to the Writings.

Students gave two short talks at each meeting. The topics were selected from a list of 42 Bahá'í themes. This encouraged the students to learn to speak about the Faith.

Many spoke about the importance of teaching the Faith and will possibly repeat the talks in their home communities and in goal areas.

The students were trained to chair meetings and to use a microphone. They are prepared to read at the devotional services at the House of Worship in Panama and to read for radio programs. All are determined to use their new abilities to teach the Faith and give public talks.

Hemispheric radio-TV conference in December

A Hemispheric Radio and Television Conference will be sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Republic of Panama on December 22-27.

This conference is for Bahá'ís throughout the Western hemisphere who are working with radio and television projects.

Demonstration sessions and workshops will be held on the development of the use of mass communication, production, scripts, techniques, music, the development of television programs, programs for indigenous peoples, and more.

Speakers will include Raul Pavón, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in South America.

Portugal

‘Victory Plan 134’ off to flying start

Since the launching of “Victory Plan 134 B.E.” in Portugal, six of 11 goal towns have seen the formation of Local Spiritual Assemblies, and 150 people have entered the Faith.

The objective of the plan is to win the Five Year Plan goals by Ridván 1978.

To make this possible, three full-time teaching teams have been traveling throughout Portugal since July.

Their main concentration has been in the 11 goal towns destined to have Local Spiritual Assemblies by the end of the Five Year Plan. Special attention is given to consolidating new believers — consolidation going hand-in-hand with teaching.

One of the six goal towns where a new Assembly has been formed is Santarém. Twenty residents there have become Bahá'ís. They have held their first Nine­teen Day Feast, and attend regular deepening classes.

In coming months, the National Teaching Committee will hold deepening institutes for those who have been traveling in Portugal to teach the Faith. The teachers will exchange deepening and teaching ideas, and will be prepared to hold local institutes in the goal towns.

Mauritius

National Assembly member notes progress

Roddy Lutchmaya, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Mauritius, visited the Most Holy House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, on September 20.

He was in the United States from August 30 until the end of September to tour its prison system, of interest to him in his capacity as commissioner of the prison system in Mauritius.

While in Wilmette, he shared information about the progress of the Faith in his home community.

He said the friends in Mauritius are in the process of building two Hazírat’ú-l-Quds, one in the northern half of the island and one in the southern half. The two Hazírat’ú-l-Quds will serve as regional centers for the Faith. Thirteen local Hazírat’ú-l-Quds are also to be built before the end of the Five Year Plan.

Mr. Lutchmaya said, “Ten to 15 localities remain to be opened; it won’t be difficult to accomplish that goal.” Once these localities are opened, every locality in Mauritius will have at least one believer.

The Mauritian believers are accomplishing their teaching goals through firesides and weekend teaching trips to unopened areas.

Mauritius has 58 Local Spiritual Assemblies, with 37 remaining to be formed by the end of the Five Year Plan.

A plan for the consolidation of newly formed Local Assemblies is being made.

The first Nineteen Day Feast to be held in Santarém, Portugal, was that of Asmá‘, B.E. 134. Some of the friends who were present are shown here.
jointly by the National Spiritual Assembly and Continental Board of Counsellors.

The National Assembly has appointed a National Children's Committee, a National Women's Committee and a National Youth Committee, so that special attention can be paid to the needs of these friends.

Baha'i women's clubs have been established in Mauritius. The women meet to study the Writings and pray, as well as to cook and sew.

The Faith was established in Mauritius in 1953, the Centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's banishment from Persia to Baghdad, Iraq. The country was opened by an American Baha'i pioneer named Ottolie Rhein.

When the National Assembly of the Indian Ocean, which included Mauritius, was formed in 1967, Roddy Lutchmaya was elected to serve.

He served on that National Assembly until 1972, when the National Assembly of Mauritius was formed. He has served on the newer National Assembly since its inception.

Mauritius was the site of the first of eight Oceanic and Continental Conferences called for by the Universal House of Justice at Ridván 1969.

More than 1,000 friends gathered in Rose Hill, Mauritius, August 14-17, 1970, for that conference. The Hands of the Cause Jalál Kházez, Rahmatu'lláh Muhájír and William Sears attended as well.

During the conference, the Faith received wide media coverage, on a scale it has not received since in Mauritius.

Mr. Lutchmaya said that should any Baha'i wish to pioneer to Mauritius, it would probably be necessary to invest in a business even to be permitted entry by the government.

United Nations

'Bahá'í International Community reports in its August newsletter.

Johan Grun, director of the International Year of the Child Secretariat, says this is the year that "we can all open our hearts and minds to the child to develop his full potential."

The newsletter continues, "While Bahá'ís can support wholeheartedly the emphasis being laid during the year on the physical, emotional and mental needs of all children, the distinct contribution to be made by Bahá'í communities during the International Year of the Child will be in the area of moral and spiritual education, based on the Teachings of God's new Manifestation, Bahá'u'lláh, and centered in the principle of the oneness of mankind."

UNICEF calendar now available

The Bahá'í International Community, which has been affiliated with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) since March 1976, announces that the 1978 UNICEF wall calendar, which features drawings done by children around the world, is available.

As in past years, several Bahá'í Holy Days are listed. This year, for the first time, the Birthday of the Báb is featured in the supplementary section. "Holidays of Special Interest."

Check with your National Spiritual Assembly for information on how to order the calendar.

Mobile van helps educate villages

A van equipped with a library, audio-visual materials and community deepening materials has proved to be an effective way of educating new Bahá'ís in the villages of Cameroon.

The Mobile Institute, as it is called (see Bahá'í News. December 1976) aims "primarily to encourage the friends to properly re-elect their Local Spiritual Assemblies on April 21; in addition, the Five Year Plan goals of early morning prayers, children's classes, building Bahá'í Centers, and starting Bahá'í-owned farms are stressed," reports the National Spiritual Assembly.

During a three-month period in the spring of 1977, the Mobile Institute visited 37 localities in the Manyu Division of Cameroon, and helped to form eight Local Spiritual Assemblies. On return visits, officers of the Assemblies were elected.

Teachers with the Mobile Institute hold firesides, show filmstrips and, in some communities, present gifts of Bahá'í books.

Eighteen Bahá'ís is traveled with the Institute, some for as long as four weeks. At one time, believers from some new localities accompanied the Institute to other areas.

"This seems to be an effective method of deepening Bahá'ís in nearby communities and encouraging the new believers to start their own teaching projects," the National Assembly affirms.

Sweden

200 friends attend annual summer school

The Scandinavian Bahá'í Summer School which was held in July in Stockholm, Sweden, was attended by 200 friends from seven countries. Speakers included the Hands of the Cause Ugo Giachery and Rahmatu'lláh Muhájír, and Continental Counsellor Betty Reed.
Rural Development in India
HAVE MUCH JOY IN ANNOUNCING APPOINTMENT TWO DISTINGUISHED BAHÁ'Í ARCHITECTS FROM CRADLE FAITH: FARIBORZ SAHBÁ AS ARCHITECT MASHRIQU’L-ADHKÁR INDIA, AND RIDVÁNU’LLÁH ASHRÁF AS ARCHITECT FOR RESTORATION SACRED RESIDENCE BELOVED MASTER KNOWN AS HOUSE OF ABDU’LLÁH PÁSHA. SUPPLICATING DIVINE CONFIRMATIONS THESE TWO HISTORIC ENTERPRISES.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
October 14, 1977
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Cover
Since October 1975 a dedicated team of Bahá'ís with expertise in agriculture, education and medicine has been working to raise living standards in rural areas of India. The effort is known as the New Era Rural Development Project, and an up-to-date report of its progress begins on Page 2.

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Rural Development in India

In a remote village area, a team of Bahá’ís works to raise living standards, exemplifying Bahá’u’lláh’s command to serve one’s fellow men.

A team of a dozen Bahá’ís with expertise in agriculture, education and medicine is working to build better living standards in villages in the Panchgani, India, area.

The team forms the core of the New Era Rural Development Project, begun in October 1975, which is the first of its kind in the Bahá’í world.

Donations from the Mottahedeh Foundation (established by Rafi and Mildred Mottahedeh) and individual believers have allowed the team to “provide education and organizational guidance so that villagers may be led to develop their own capacities, resulting in self-development,” said H.C.L. Ross, a dairy and poultry farmer from New Zealand who is co-director of the project.

Mrs. Mildred Mottahedeh said, “We have had the idea for the project for several years. It is not only important to tell the Message of Bahá’u’lláh, but also to give a life illustration of Bahá’í principles.”

The New Era Rural Development Project site was selected in consultation with the Universal House of Justice. The project is serving as a pilot project for similar...
undertakings in underdeveloped villages on other continents. The Universal House of Justice, the National Spiritual Assembly of India and the project team consult on decisions to be made regarding the project.

Seven of the team members are from India, while others are from Australia, the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, New Zealand and the United States. Two of them are women.

Thanks to the project, six villagers have begun poultry farming; a new breed of dairy cow with high milk production has been introduced; and mango, papaya, seedless lime and silver-oak saplings have been planted. These are just a few of the many changes completed or under way.

Other agricultural projects have included planting demonstration fields in rice that yields more grain than what is usually planted; developing a hybrid crop plan, with villagers financing 80 per cent of the cost; teaching the villagers to save for specific purposes, such as buying farm machinery, and sending two villagers on an agricultural tour offered by a local university. The New Era Project also has its own bullock team and driver, which have proven useful.

Numerous improvements have been made in health care. The New Era Project is shifting its emphasis from curative medicine to preventive medicine, which is
The first tasks of the Rural Development Project team, when it arrived in October 1975, were to plant demonstration fields, purchase a van, and build a community center. The center, shown under construction, is the living quarters for the staff and the place where meetings and classes are held. Local villagers helped to build the Rural Development Center.

A sports program was sponsored for the villagers on the first anniversary of the Rural Development Project, October 1976. The project team believes that activities like the sports program bring the Project and people together.

Women of the village socialize while they work.

Cholera injections have been given to a large percentage of the villagers, along with inoculations against other diseases. To eliminate many health problems, the New Era Project has developed plans for a sanitary closed-water system. Until the system is completed, the team must settle for chlorinating the wells from which drinking water is taken. This is done with the villagers' permission.

Arrangements have been made with the nearby Wai Mission Hospital for a doctor to visit the village monthly, treating the ill and seeing that serious cases are admitted to the hospital.

The Wai Mission Hospital also has agreed to send a woman doctor to the villages to train selected women in the rudiments of health care, particularly in child delivery and child care.

Information about health care is circulated by the New Era team in a village bulletin and displayed on posters. It is taught at the community center, where a clinic has been established.

Moral education classes are taught at the village school.

Students from the nearby New Era Junior College, as part of their training, regularly provide social services for the villagers and assist with the New Era Rural Development Project. (The school and project are separate, although they bear the same name.)

Chalk-making molds and two tons of gypsum have been procured by the project so that two villagers may begin this industry. Other short- and medium-range plans are in progress in the fields of
agriculture, animal husbandry, cottage industries, education and medicine.

Headway in the various components of the project has not been as rapid as planned, largely because there has been less cooperation from villagers than expected. "This has caused team members to develop a standard of success for the project based on attitude change among villagers rather than economic transformation," said a 1977 report.

The team feels that changing the villagers' economic self-interest to concern for others is the "key to bringing about sustained and enlightened rural development."

The team strives to exemplify Bahá'í virtues in hopes of influencing the attitudes of the people. No proclamations or teaching activities are held, in keeping with instructions from the Universal House of Justice, but several villagers have inquired about the Faith as time has passed and trust has been established.

The bathing procedure (above) has changed since a well (right) was brought to the village by the Rural Development Project. The well serves not only as a place for bathing, drinking and laundering clothes, but also as a social center. An even more sanitary water supply system is planned, one that will improve the conditions and locate facilities in one communal and convenient center where social activities can be carried on as they are now.

Children make up a large percentage of the village population. Moral education and increased opportunity, provided by programs like the Rural Development Project, will largely determine the future of their village and of India.

The Rural Development Project team acquaint the villagers with a seed drill. 

cooperated with the University of Poona to

The bathing procedure (above) has changed since a well (right) was brought to the village by the Rural Development Project. The well serves not only as a place for bathing, drinking and laundering clothes, but also as a social center. An even more sanitary water supply system is planned, one that will improve the conditions and locate facilities in one communal and convenient center where social activities can be carried on as they are now.
Students from the New Era Junior College, a Bahá’í-run institution, spent a successful work week in the village. Work week projects are being added to the regular curriculum of the New Era School.

A van (left), bought in 1975, is now barely recognizable after two years of use. It is essential for the delivery of goods from the New Era School, where Rural Development Project supplies are stored, to the villages, more than an hour’s trip up and down a steep mountainside.

The New Era Rural Development Project team has coordinated its activities with government rural development programs whenever possible. The team recently expanded its contact with other agencies involved in similar projects by attending a meeting at which “eminent and experienced persons of India and other countries who are involved in rural development projects explained their successes and failures,” reported Mr. Ross.

Giving the villagers material goods is not the purpose of the New Era Rural Development Project; it is, rather, providing education and organizational guidance so permanent changes can be made.

Two varieties of rice were grown in the past season. The one on the right is a high yield variety (HYV) introduced by the government. The yield was greatly increased, but many of the villagers said they preferred the taste of the traditional kind of rice.
A project team member who has close contact with the villagers is George Menezes, in the striped shirt. He is a native of India and a school supervisor with public relations experience. He is highly respected among the villagers and well-known to them all. In the foreground is another team member, Anwar Akhtarjahan, a native of India who is knowledgeable about agriculture and mechanical engineering.

Students from the nearby New Era School, established and run by Bahá'ís, carry out social service projects and provide entertainment in the villages.

Cooperation with government officials is sought by the project team in all its undertakings. Numerous state and local officials have made visits to the project sites. The former Minister of Irrigation and Power, Dada Patil, who is now Chief Minister of Maharashtra Vasanthrao, the name of the state where Chikli is located, is seen here visiting one of the project villages. His hands are pressed together in the "Namaskar," the traditional sign of greeting and respect.
Seat of the Universal House of Justice

On Mt. Carmel in Haifa, Israel, work continues on the edifice that is destined to house the supreme Bahá’í administrative body.

The site of the permanent Seat of the Universal House of Justice is seen (top photo) as it appeared in September from the terrace on Mt. Carmel. Concrete is being pumped for the first suspended slab forming the ceiling of the lower basement. Haifa bay can be seen in the background. Formwork of the outer wall (bottom photo) is seen in the foreground of the site as viewed from the northeast corner of the building. The terraces cut into Mt. Carmel in the background will be landscaped in the future. Since Riḍván 1976, when the excavation work was completed, work has been started on the foundation and upper and lower basements.
Local Assembly goal surpassed, raised

The Bahá'ís of Guyana have exceeded the goal of achieving 36 Local Spiritual Assemblies by the end of the Five Year Plan. The National Spiritual Assembly has adopted an extension to this goal, raising it to 50 Local Assemblies.

Looking at the measure of success as of the middle of September, the National Assembly said the goal soon will be achieved “if the fire that is raging in our land continues.”

Youth Camp sparks phenomenal growth

More than 750 believers recently were enrolled and 10 Local Spiritual Assemblies formed in less than six weeks in Guyana.

The major growth came during teaching projects both before and after the 5th Annual Bahá'í Youth Camp, and principally in the Berbice and Corentyne areas of the country.

Prior to the Youth Camp, 100 believers were enrolled and three Local Assemblies formed in the Berbice area.

But the more phenomenal growth came after the Youth Camp, when many of its participants formed teams and taught on the Corentyne coast. This teaching activity brought 625 believers into the Faith and saw the formation of eight Local Assemblies.

Simultaneously, three teams taught in West Demerara. Two Local Assemblies were established in this area and 25 believers were enrolled.

At the time the National Spiritual Assembly of Guyana sent the report to Bahá'í News, it noted that the number of declarations had “soared to 925.”

Five of the traveling teachers who were from countries other than Guyana decided to remain there as pioneers.

Faith proclaimed in talk on surfing

A talk on surfing, given as part of a proclamation in Hawaii on July 9, lent itself to analogies about the ocean from the Writings of the Faith.

More than 80 people attended the event at the Laiwa Alii Beach Park Surf Center. The program included a movie about surfing, filmed and narrated by Greg Hall, director of the Surf Center and a guest of the Bahá'ís of Waialua, who sponsored the proclamation.

The film showed magnificent north shore surfing highlights and daring, big wave/water cinematography.

The featured speaker, who tied surfing in with the Faith, was Tom Morey, a Big Island believer.

The audience included Bahá'ís from every community on the island of Oahu, and many who were not Bahá'ís.

The proclamation was advertised with posters placed throughout the Haleiwa, Sunset Beach and Waialua areas.

The Bahá'ís continue to receive enthusiastic comments about the proclamation from people on the north shore of Oahu.

Switzerland

Bahá'í group visits Foreign Minister

A delegation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland visited the Swiss Foreign Minister and his secretary general, Ambassador Albert Weitnauer, in early October. Mr. Weitnauer accepted Bahá'í books for the library, and said he would read them during his coming vacation.

Aziz Yazdí, a member of the International Teaching Center, and Erik Blumenthal, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Europe, recently visited Switzerland. Both attended several regional meetings.

Three teams of Bahá'ís are teaching in Switzerland and the bordering regions of Austria and Italy, action called for by the Five Year Plan. Bahá'ís from other countries have taught with the teams.

"Ye Are the Flowers of One Garden," a song that contains words from the Writings and was adopted by UNICEF as the theme song for Universal Children's Day 1977, is being sung in Swiss schools.

The Philippines

Bahá'ís who attended the World Peace Through Law Conference in Manila, the Philippines, from August 21-26 were, left to right, Pourandokht Mottahedeh Rahimi; Honofre Restor; Hedayatollah Rahimi; Vicente Samaniego, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South-eastern Asia; Rose Mangapis; Neva Dulay; and Riaz Tebyani. Attorneys Restor and Dulay were the representatives from the Bahá'í International Community to the conference.
Assembly trainers attend institute near Anchorage

Instruction for trainers of Local Spiritual Assemblies was sponsored September 17-18 by the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska and held at the Mathew Kasab Baha'i Institute in Spenard, just outside Anchorage.

Attending were Auxiliary Board members Jetta Brewer and Lauretta King, and National Spiritual Assembly members John Slone, Janet Smith and John Kolstoe. Mr. Kolstoe, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska, conducted the sessions. Other Alaskans present were Hugh Gray, Donna Horn and Evelyn Huffman.

Representing the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada were Clara Schenkel and Mark Wedge, from the Yukon. Geoffrey Marks of the Baha'i National Center in Wilmette represented the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States.

The interest of the National Assemblies of Canada and the United States in Alaska's training program was sparked by consultation on the development of Local Spiritual Assemblies at the meeting of the three National Assemblies in Toronto, Canada, in June.

The training program focuses on consultation and is based on the conviction of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska that improving the quality of consultation is the most pressing need of its more than 50 Local Assemblies.

The program takes one weekend to complete and features an in-depth analysis of excerpts from the Writings on the spiritual prerequisites for consultation, an examination of the Writings that describe what consultation is, and a session during which the principles and methods of consultation are practiced by consulting on fictitious cases and subjects prepared by the National Spiritual Assembly.

The program also includes an evaluation component that requires each Assembly to assess how well it is functioning in basic areas. The sessions begin each day with private prayer.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska has been working on the program for several years and has taken a few Local Assemblies through it during the early stages of its development.

The program has been enthusiastically received by both the trainers and the Assemblies who have taken it.

In addition to helping Assembly members acquire the skills of consultation, it instills a greater understanding of the purpose and station of the Local Spiritual Assembly.

As a result, the unity of the Local Assemblies is expected to increase, as is their ability to carry out their manifold responsibilities.

The representatives of the Canadian and U.S. National Spiritual Assemblies expressed strong interest in the program and will report to their National Assemblies on how it may be adapted to the needs of the believers in their respective countries.

Barbados and Windward Islands

Effects of alcohol topic at institutes

"Alcohol and the Baha'i Faith" was the topic at institutes held September 25 on Barbados and each of the Windward Islands.

The National Teaching Committee and District Teaching Committees of Barbados and the Windward Islands sponsored the institutes, which dealt not only with the effect alcohol consumption has on health, but also with the effects and consequences of disobedience to Baha'u'llah's Commands.
16 Assemblies formed in three-year period on island of Penang

There are now 16 Local Spiritual Assemblies on the island of Penang, four kilometers (two and one-half miles) off the coast of Malaysia. None was there three years ago.

The growth of the Faith on Penang began in 1974, when a number of teaching teams opened the Chinese fishing village of Batu Maung; but the community dwindled when the fishermen left their homes in search of richer seas.

A second village, Sungai Pinang, was opened at Rıdvan 1975. To strengthen this nascent community, a small group of dedicated believers from Georgetown, on mainland Malaysia, made weekly visits to the community and developed bonds of friendship with the new believers.

The next stage of growth on Penang began after the Hand of the Cause Rahmatullâh Muhâjjir met with Malaysian believers and introduced the SEA Plan — SEA being an acronym for Spiritualization, Education and Administration. The plan was designed to follow in the wake of continual expansion.

The SEA Plan was adopted by the Penang believers for use in the island village of Kuala S. Pinang. Penang Bahá'ís traveled there to begin children's classes and teach families about the Faith.

They held the first children's classes in a shed where gunny sacks and other items were stored. Later, the villagers built benches for the children. When the friends would arrive on Sunday evenings to teach the classes, a crowd of eager children would greet them.

Eventually the Bahá'í teachers were invited to the children's homes, and gradually taught parents, grandparents and other relatives about the Faith.

Once a core of believers was established in this village, they took on expansion activities of their own. Their work led to the formation of Local Assemblies in the adjoining villages of Telok, Kumber and Pantai Acheh. They opened other villages for the Faith as well.

Further strides were made for the Faith on Penang in May when seven youth, including Penang University students, lived in the home of one of the local believers. While there, they helped lay the foundation for children's classes to be held in four villages.

Today there are 16 Local Assemblies on the island of Penang, five of them in fishing villages. Four Bahá'í marriages have been performed at the request of the new believers.

The Malaysia Bahá'í Bulletin reports that the Chinese villagers on Penang now recognize the Faith as "something good," and that the new believers are bringing in declarations every week.

Wide growth stressed in six-month plan

The Bahá'ís of Malaysia met in Kuching in May to launch a six-month plan that was to end on November 12, the anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh.

The plan calls for the enrollment of 2,000 people into the Bahá'í Faith; the formation of enough Local Spiritual Assemblies to bring the total to 250, or 50 over the number called for in the Five Year Plan; an increase in the number of localities open to the Faith from 973 to 1,030; an emphasis on teaching Chinese families; accelerated training of youth; development of women's activities, and strengthening of the Fund.

The plan lays great stress on individual participation, commitment and sacrifice.

Faith brings feuding villagers together

The following is reprinted from the May-June issue of Malaysia Bahá'í News. It is excerpted from an article by Soh Aik Leng about Bahá'u'lláh's power to reconcile traditional enemies.

The Nineteen Day Feast of Núr was a special Feast. The Universal House of Justice asked us to celebrate it with love and dedication in commemoration of the time, a hundred years ago, when Bahá'u'lláh left the prison city of 'Akká and moved to the mansion of Mazra'ih.

When Bahá'u'lláh first arrived, He was surrounded by enemies, but after years of loving kindness, His foes became His friends.

Although this happened a century ago, His power to change the hearts of men is still a mighty force. As I attended the Feast of Núr in the Malaysian fishing village of Kuala Jalan Bahru, my heart was filled with this thought. Here under one roof were Bahá'ís from two villages that were traditional enemies.

The feud between these villages had lasted for generations, and the people of each place dared not step into the other for fear of fighting.

When the villagers first became Bahá'ís, they were impressed by Bahá'u'lláh's teachings on the unity and oneness of mankind. When we told them there were Bahá'ís in the next village, they were surprised, because they considered that village "bad."

To heal the differences, we always tried to take a few Bahá'ís from one village with us when we visited the other village. In this way, the slow reconciliation began.

As I attended the Feast of Núr, and listened to one of the villagers saying a prayer in English with a strong Chinese accent, my thoughts flew back to the early days of the Faith here, and I was filled with awe at the power of Bahá'u'lláh to transform men.

Enthusiasm high at Summer School

The Bahá'í Summer School held in Port Dickson, Malaysia, in July was "characterized by a spirit of high enthusiasm and a determination on the part of the Malaysian friends to fulfill all goals of the Five Year Plan," reported the Continental Board of Counsellors in Southeastern Asia.

At a session devoted to pioneering, 22 of the 300 friends present offered to pioneer to Asia, Africa or the South Pacific. Fifteen Bahá'ís said they would travel to Sri Lanka and India to teach the Faith.

Discussion at another session centered on the adoption of realistic goals supplementary to the Five Year Plan, and the achievement of increasingly effective collaboration between Bahá'í administrative institutions and members of the Auxiliary Board and their assistants.

Represented at the meeting were the Continental Board of Counsellors in Southeastern Asia, the National Spiritual Assembly of Malaysia, the Auxiliary Board, and the National Teaching Committee.
Conference urges women to service

One hundred-seven Bahá’í women from 21 localities and 76 men attended the Perak State Women’s Conference in Malaysia on July 17. The conference was arranged in response to the Universal House of Justice’s call for Bahá’í women to arise to serve the Faith in all fields of its activity.

One of the highlights was a call by the Regional Teaching Committee of Perak for women to fulfill the goals of the Six Month Plan that was to end in November.

Seventy-eight women said they would travel from village to village to teach, and increase the number firesides and children’s classes being held.

One of the men at the conference declared his belief in Bahá’u’lláh.

The gathering was addressed by Yan Kee Leong, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors; Auxiliary Board members Imbum Chinniah, Lily Chin­niah, Rama Naidu, and Shanta Sundram; Shirin Fozdar of Singapore, and Mrs. Narasiah, whose talk in the Tamil language was well-received.

The friends were told that Bahá’í women’s conferences would be held in the other states of Malaysia in coming months.

19 believers given coordinator course

Nineteen believers were trained as three-day institute coordinators at a meeting held by Auxiliary Board member Mr. Kuppasamy in South Sarawak, Malaysia, in May. Seventeen of those attending the nine-day training course were natives of South Sarawak.

Mr. Kuppasamy followed the institute coordinator course with a five-day course on teaching and administration, which was attended by 45 believers.

Some of those at the teaching and administration course volunteered to devote long periods of time to making teaching trips, with some volunteering as much as two years.

Nigeria

Teachers trained at 5-day institute

To increase the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies in Nigeria, the National Spiritual Assembly sponsored a five-day teacher training institute in Port Harcourt from September 26-30.

Believers were selected by the National Assembly to participate in the institute, where they were trained to complete special full-time teaching assignments in various regions of the country in October.

The group studied Bahá’í history, Bahá’í laws, Christian subjects and the Hidden Words.

The trainees commented that the institute gave them the inspiration to go forward to proclaim and teach the Cause of God.

South Africa

Cape Town hosts first conference for women

The first Bahá’í Women’s Conference ever held at the Cape Town Hağiratu’l-Quds was attended by 15 women representing communities from Belhar, Elsies River and Lotus River.

They spent the day discussing the status and role of women.

Fadela Davids, the first speaker, said the United Nations has designated 1976-1985 as the Decade for Women, adding that Bahá’í communities are being urged to help bring into focus the principle of sexual equality.

The drive toward equality, she said, is being aided by the unseen forces of God, as is evidenced by the growing numbers of women in government, women doctors, women lawyers, and so on.

A discussion on child-rearing was led by Amina Dollie who stressed that the example set by the parents is the best teacher. Parents, she said, must be steadfast in the Bahá’í Covenant, be as active as possible in achieving Bahá’í goals, and always remember Bahá’u’lláh’s laws and teachings.

The friends were reminded that the most important aspect of any conference or meeting is carrying the knowledge gained back to one’s community to be put into practice, and were urged to remember that since the mother educates the child, it is imperative that women be educated.
Around the World
Faroe Islands

Haziratu’l-Quds meets Five Year Plan goal

The acquisition of a Haziratu’l-Quds in the capital city of Thorshavn in the Faroe Islands fulfills a goal of the Five Year Plan for the National Spiritual Assembly of Iceland.

The Faroes, 22 islands covering 800 square kilometers (540 square miles) in the Atlantic Ocean north of the British Isles, are a nation separate from Iceland, but under the jurisdiction of its National Assembly. The inhabitants have been self-governing since 1947, following nearly six centuries of Danish rule.

The Haziratu’l-Quds, a three-story structure, was purchased by the National Assembly of Iceland, with cooperation from the National Assemblies of Denmark and the United Kingdom.

The Spiritual Assembly in Thorshavn calls the purchase “a tremendous achievement, as property is expensive and quickly snatched up in this rapidly growing town.”

The Friends in Thorshavn said they were “greatly inspired” on May 5 by a visit from Anneliese Bopp, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Europe, who was en route from Iceland to Germany. They said her visit was appreciated “as the islands are out of the way of most Bahá’í travelers and our community sorely needs help and prayers.”

In particular need is the Spiritual Assembly of Thorshavn. “Although our Local Assembly has been in existence since the end of the Nine Year Plan, we have been hanging on by the skin of our teeth, and now have only six adults and two children, all pioneers. Every year since the Assembly’s formation we have had pioneers come to maintain its status, and every year after Ridván, three or four people leave.”

Most Faroe Islanders have heard about the Faith. By the end of the Five Year Plan, the Faroese National Teaching Committee hopes to reach every resident with information about the Faith.

In the past three summers, an estimated two-thirds of the homes have been covered with the help of Bahá’ís from Denmark, Great Britain, Iceland and Norway.

Last summer information leaflets and invitations to public meetings were distributed to 2,200 homes on the two most southerly islands and some nearby smaller islands.

Public meetings also were advertised on the national radio station, in the national newspaper and on posters in many of the villages.

The public meetings were attended mostly by small children, a few youth and a few adults.

The Bahá’ís in the islands say they “look forward to the future, when the seeds that have been sown over the past year will spring up and can be gathered in.”
Malawi

Two-month upswing accelerates growth

The progress of the Faith in Malawi took an upswing between April 1 and June 23. During that period, 228 new believers came into the Faith; 149 were from communities that have Local Spiritual Assemblies, and 79 were from localities with Groups or isolated believers.

The average number of enrollments per month prior to the April-June period was 15-30. During the April-June period, the average number of enrollments per month rose to 76.

Four Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed in April and May: Funsani, Mikundi, Nkungusa and Sitepe. The formation of these Assemblies brought the total in Malawi to 53, leaving only seven to be formed to meet the goal of the Five Year Plan.

Twenty new localities were opened during the three-month period, bringing the total number of localities to 419, or 69 above the goal for the Five Year Plan.

Brazil

Number of Assemblies shows net rise of 50

During the National Convention in Brazil, the National Teaching Committee reported the formation of 112 Local Spiritual Assemblies, a net increase of 50 Assemblies since Ridván 1976.

At the 1976 National Convention, the Hand of the Cause Rahmatu’lláh Muhajir and Continental Counsellor Raul Pavón, together with newly-arrived traveling teachers, had formulated a plan to raise the

Portugal

New believers deepened at weekend institutes

To consolidate new believers in goal towns in Portugal, weekend deepening institutes are being held.

The first such institute was held on October 15-16 in Figueira da Foz. The believers studied prayer, the three Central Figures of the Faith, laws and principles, administration, the Nineteen Day Feast and the Baha'i calendar.

Goal towns chosen for the institutes are those that will elect Local Spiritual Assemblies this year.

While weekend institutes are being held, teaching continues in three different localities each weekend, touching the northern, central and southern regions.

Baha'ís from surrounding communities assist the full-time teaching team, which has been active since June.

These full-time teachers recently acquired full-time transportation when a Land Rover was donated to the National Spiritual Assembly of Portugal.

The National Spiritual Assembly reports that the Baha'ís of Portugal are "going all out to win the Five Year Plan goals this year."

Deepening, teaching conferences are held

A Baha'í National Deepening Institute and Baha'í National Teaching Conference were held consecutively on the weekend of September 16-18 at the National Hazíratu'l-Quds in Lisbon.

The weekend was planned by the National Teaching Committee to deepen new Baha'ís, and review and consult with the believers on the progress of the nationwide Victory Plan, which began in August.

The deepening institute was attended by 40 new believers from six communities. They studied the book The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh and were trained to join the teams that are making teaching trips to goal towns. The use of visual teaching aids and living the Baha'í life also were discussed. For many of the participants the institute was the first Baha'í activity at the national level.

On Sunday, believers arrived for the second National Teaching Conference to be held in Portugal this year. Since the inception of the Victory Plan, 150 believers have been enrolled and seven goal towns opened. Twenty of the friends present said they would make teaching trips for the Faith.

At the close of the National Teaching Conference, teaching teams were formed. Many of the team members were new believers who had been trained at the deepening institute during the previous two days.

New believers study the book The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh at a National Deepening Institute held September 16-18 at the National Hazíratu'l-Quds in Lisbon, Portugal.

New believers in Portugal are being deepened through a series of weekend institutes. Pictured here are the believers who attended the first institute, held October 15-16 in Figueira da Foz.

Musicians sang songs about the Faith at the National Teaching Conference held in Lisbon, Portugal, on July 16-17. Among those present was Hooper Dunbar, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors from the International Teaching Center.
Around the World

number of believers in northeastern Brazil by thousands.

The effort received added impetus at the International Teaching Conference in Bahia, Brazil, in January, and from two letters from the Universal House of Justice.

The National Spiritual Assembly reports: “The attainment of new Local Spiritual Assemblies from Amapa and Belem at the mouth of the Amazon River to Marco, on the frontier with Colombia at the Upper Amazon, excites the imagination of the friends, all of whom are curious and enthusiastic about helping in this growing region.”

New Amazon Committee notes teaching success

The Bahá’í International Amazon Committee, formed by the sister countries of Brazil, Colombia and Peru to support the teaching goals in the Amazon region, reports that some “new and different” teaching methods, used in the Upper Amazon for the first time, have proven “very successful.”

“We were able to appreciate the success of village-to-village teaching suggested by the Hand of the Cause Rahmatu’lláh Muhájjir at the 1976 Brazilian National Convention. For example, a group of Bahá’ís from São Jorge, Brazil, opened the nearby village of Sapotal.

“In Colombia, in the village of Santa Sofia, a Ticúna Indian Bahá’í family went with us to introduce the Faith in the Peruvian village of Yahuma Cayaru.”

The Ticúna family took their small children with them. The children helped teach the Faith “with confidence and joy.” reports the committee.

“Another teaching method we used is that of remaining in a village for two days. This gives us time to have a proclamation, to speak to the civil authorities, and to have children’s classes.

“By staying two days we noticed greater trust, not only among the Bahá’ís who hadn’t previously met each other, but among the other villagers as well.”

In all the towns that have Local Spiritual Assemblies, the traveling Bahá’ís leave deepening materials and show films on the Bahá’í world and the Holy Land.

Singapore

Equality of sexes topic at institute

An institute on the equality of men and women was held June 19 at the National Center in Singapore.

The 50 participants heard an opening address by Yan Kee Leong, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South-east Asia. He stressed the fact that for the first time a prophet of God has stated that men and women are equal.

Other speakers talked about the institution of marriage, the need for equality in education and training, the obligations that come with equal rights, and the contributions of women to world peace.

The institute was brought to a close with a talk by Mr. Leong. He said the problems of mankind will not be solved until women participate fully in world affairs.

Conference stresses women’s participation

The believers attending the Melaka State Women’s Conference in May pledged to accomplish a six-month plan involving the active participation of women.

Kenya

Members of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Africa met together in late October 1976, following the Bahá’í International Teaching Conference in Nairobi. Seated, left to right, are Isobel Sabri, Aziz Yazdi of the International Teaching Center, and Thelma Khelghati. Standing, left to right, are Hushang ’Ahdíyyih, Oloro Epyru, Husayn Ardikani, Friday Ekpe, Peter Vuyiya, Zekrollah Kazemi, Kolonario Oule and Mihdi Samandari.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) affiliated with the United Nations.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Kenya has appointed a subcommittee of the National Bahá’í Women’s Committee to act as its representative to the Kenya NGO Committee for the project.

The Bahá’ís of Kenya already have started a tree-planting project as part of the “Water for Health” program.

The “Water for Health” idea originated in the UNICEF/NGO Subcommittee on Women and Development, which meets at UNICEF headquarters in New York. The Bahá’í International Community is one of the NGOs comprising the committee.
Of the 170 believers at the conference, 106 were women representing 20 localities.

The conference cabled the Universal House of Justice: “Beseech prayers Holy Shrines success six-month plan.”

Zambia

Auto trouble leads to Assembly formation

A Local Spiritual Assembly was formed in January in the village of Machipisa, Zambia, an area not previously visited by Bahá’ís.

The formation came about when four Bahá’ís from Lusaka had a car breakdown on the way to Mongu. Since the group already had covered a distance of 150 kilometers, and now had to return, they decided to teach at some of the villages along the road.

The second village in which they taught was Machipisa. The Bahá’ís were warmly received, and a two-hour talk about the Faith ensued. Before the end of the discussion, the headman and nine others had declared their belief in Bahá’u’lláh.

As all of the new believers were over 21 years old, arrangements were made to form the first Local Spiritual Assembly.

Two weeks later, when a deepening and teaching class was held, two more villagers accepted the Faith.

Faith is discussed at primary school

Bahá’ís were invited to speak to students in the fifth, sixth and seventh grades at Chipongwe Primary School in Chilangwe, Zambia, in February.

The Bahá’ís were given 40 minutes to speak, but the discussion lasted for an hour and a half. The Bahá’ís left books and promised to return in a week to answer questions.

When they returned, they found a tremendous interest in the Faith among both students and teachers. They spoke to the students for two hours, during which time the headmaster asked them to invite the students to become Bahá’ís.

Forty-eight of the students declared, including 10 who were over 15 years old.

Spain

Barcelona Bahá’í Week attracts wide notice

Bahá’í Week was observed in Barcelona, Spain, in May. An estimated 1,500 people attended the public meetings held during that week or visited the display on the Faith, despite rainy weather.

The believers in Spain, who are determined to form 28 Local Assemblies in the coming year, which would complete a goal of the Five Year Plan, met in Madrid in July for a National Teaching Conference.

The conference was preceded and followed by two weeks of concentrated teaching in the central region of the country.

Special guests at the conference were Hooper Dunbar, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors and International Teaching Center, and Virginia Orbison, a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh who opened Spain to the Faith in 1946.

A touching moment came when Spain’s newest believer and one of its first believers presented Miss Orbison with a gift on behalf of the Bahá’í community there. Both believers are her spiritual children.

Spain’s summer teaching project brought together Bahá’ís from all regions of the country and from other countries.

They held firesides and put up displays in the goal towns, resulting in dozens of new believers.

In the town of Fraga, a teaching team consisting of three adults and an eight-year-old boy brought seven believers into the Faith in a 10-day period.

The Bahá’í summer school of Spain, held in Valencia, was attended by 227 people from 36 localities and several countries.

Among those present were the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláh Muhájir and Betty Reed, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors.

Three of the 30 non-Bahá’ís present declared their belief in Bahá’u’lláh by the end of the school.

Residents of seven nearby villages were invited to a public meeting held during the school. Twenty-five attended. Among them was the counselor for a youth reformatory. He asked the Bahá’ís to give a concert there, which three of them did.

The summer school was preceded by a four-day children’s school, which was attended by 35 children from various parts of Spain.

The students immediately formed a Bahá’í Club.

Germany

Youth conference hosts Hand of Cause Muhájir

The Hand of the Cause Rahmatu’lláh Muhájir attended the National Youth Conference in Langenhain, Germany, in July.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Germany reports: “The participation and inspiring talks of Dr. Muhájir instilled in the 200 believers the spirit to devote their hearts and minds, their time and efforts to winning the goals of the Five Year Plan.”

Action-oriented workshops held at the Youth Conference produced 44 volunteers for summer teaching activities.

One of the teaching activities was a month-long project entitled “Youth Teaches Youth ’77,” which was held following the conference in 14 goal towns.
Hawaii

‘The Light of the Pacific,’ Part 1
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This month marks the 76th anniversary of the introduction of the Bahá'í Faith in the Hawaiian Islands. Bahá'í News observes the occasion with the first of a two-part series on the growth and development of the Faith in Hawaii. Part 1 covers the period from December 1901 when the Hand of the Cause of God Agnes B. Alexander brought the Faith to the Islands to the election in April 1964 of the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Hawaiian Islands.

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For more than 75 years, the ‘Light of the Pacific’ has shed its lustrous radiance throughout the Bahá’í world

By TONY A. PELLE

First of two parts

On December 26, 1976, the Bahá’ís of the Hawaiian Islands observed the 75th anniversary of the introduction of the Faith to the Islands. As the Hawaiian Bahá’í community heads toward its 100th anniversary, it is appropriate that we look back to the beginnings of the Faith there to see how far it has come and where it is today.

The Hawaiian Islands

The Hawaiian Islands are considered to be the most isolated archipelago in the world. Situated more than 2,000 miles from the nearest point on the American continent, they are also more than 2,000 miles from the nearest major island group to the South.

Yet this group of islands has become known as the Paradise of the Pacific and a flower garden of peoples. Over the years Hawaii has added to its shores peoples of sharply contrasting ethnic and racial origin — Polynesians, Chinese, Japanese, Okinawans, Filipinos, Portuguese, Koreans, Puerto Ricans, Micronesians, Melanesians, Spaniards, Germans, Russians and others.

Not only is Hawaii a melting pot of ethnic and racial groups, it is a blend of East and West, a blend that is reflected in its religions as well as its social and cultural life.

Hawaii became the 50th member of the United States in 1959, and is the only state that previously was ruled by a king.

Today Hawaii has a Bahá’í National Spiritual Assembly, a proud history of
many Bahá'í achievements, and is the crossroads for Bahá'í activity in the Pacific Ocean. Many islands in the Pacific bear the mark of Hawaii's interest and assistance. From this midpoint in the Pacific, television programs about the Bahá'í Faith are produced and used around the world.

The Beginnings

The Bahá'í Faith came to the Hawaiian Islands on December 26, 1901. It was brought by Agnes Baldwin Alexander, a descendant of one of the earliest Christian missionary families to leave New England and eventually make its permanent home in Hawaii.

Agnes' parents, the Rev. and Mrs. William Patterson Alexander, left Massachusetts in 1831 to sail for Honolulu, two years after her mother's parents arrived in the Islands.

"After a voyage of 186 days, Honolulu was reached in May 1832. When we contemplate the hardships of these pioneers of God's Faith, we may better appreciate the material blessings bestowed on us in the Bahá'í Dispensation," Miss Alexander later wrote.

Agnes Alexander first heard of the Bahá'í Faith in 1900 in Rome. Here is how she described the occasion:

"One day in the dining room of the pension (boarding house) where I was staying in Rome, some people sitting across the long table attracted me. So strong was the magnet which drew me to them, that I gazed at them until ashamed. They seemed to have a happiness which was different from others.

"Later I learned that they were Mrs. Charlotte Dixon and her two daughters, who were returning to the United States after a visit with the Master in 'Akká. The happiness which I had seen in their faces was a reflection from 'Akká.

"A few days later, while sitting in the parlor, I overheard them in conversation with a lady who had heard of the Cause in Persia. Little did I comprehend what they were talking about, but my heart was stirred, and the realization came to me that it was the truth.

"The next day I met Mrs. Dixon in the elevator. Taking her hand, I asked her if she would tell me what it was she had. That evening, as I sat listening to her, my heart was touched and tears came to my eyes..."

Before Mrs. Dixon left Rome she gave Agnes a letter to sign declaring her belief that the Promised One had come. From Rome, Agnes traveled to Paris where she spent three and one-half months and met other Bahá'ís — May Bolles, Laura Dreyfus-Barney, Lua and Dr. Getsinger, and others who had met with 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

As Agnes prepared to begin a journey homeward, she received a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

"To Miss Alexander, the servant of God, through Miss Bolles.

"O thou maid servant of God!

"The tongues have spoken of thy attraction to God and the pens have testified of thy burning by the Fire of the Love of God. Indeed the heart of 'Abdu'l-Bahá approves of this because it feels its heat from this distant and Blessed Spot.

"O maid servant of God! By God, the Truth, the Spirit of Christ from the Supreme Concourse doth in every time and aspect announce to thee this Great Good News.

"Be therefore a divine bird; proceed to thy native country; spread the wings of sanctity over those spots and sing and chant and celebrate the Name of the Lord, that thou mayest gladden the Supreme Concourse and make the seeking souls hasten unto thee as moths hasten to the lamp and thus illumine that distant country by the Light of God.

"Upon thee be salutations and praise."

Agnes traveled from Paris to London, then by steamer to Portland, Maine, and from there to the Green Acre School at Eliot, Maine, to New York City, Chicago, San Francisco, and finally by steamer to Honolulu.

The Faith Is Planted

She arrived in Honolulu on December 26, 1901, and later wrote of it: "Strange feelings came over me as the steamer on which I voyaged to Honolulu neared the shore, for alone I was to stand there, the first Bahá'í to touch that soil."

While in Paris, Agnes had met Clarence Hobrom Smith who was visiting the city. His father's parents also were missionaries to Hawaii. Agnes wanted to tell him about the Faith, but kept delaying. Finally, as she later wrote, "... I felt if I did not speak I would die, and said abruptly, 'Christ has come!'"

The following day Mr. Smith came to..."
see her and told her that he believed.

Two months after Agnes returned to Honolulu, Clarence Smith returned to the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Owen Smith. Also living there was a Miss Elizabeth Muther, of Austrian parentage. He approached Miss Muther about the Teachings, but she wasn’t interested, and was even somewhat annoyed.

Later, with the help of visiting Bahá’ís, according to Miss Alexander’s later written account of the early days of the Faith in Hawaii, “Miss Muther turned to God and prayed that He would reveal to her the Truth, that she was ready to accept whatever trials might come in her path. In less than half an hour she found herself saying aloud, ‘This is God’s Truth! This is God’s Truth!’”

Thus by 1902 there were three believers in Hawaii: Miss Alexander, Mr. Smith, and Miss Muther.

It was Miss Muther whom God was to use, in Miss Alexander’s words, “as His instrument to confirm the first Japanese Bahá’í of the world.”

Kanichi Yamamoto, who was then 23 years old, had come to Hawaii from Japan and was serving in the Smith home. He knew little English, and Miss Muther helped him learn the language.

Miss Muther also told him of the Bahá’í Faith. He accepted it, and later wrote to the Master to express his gratitude. He re-wrote the letter four times before he was satisfied, but felt he could not adequately express his feelings in English.

Miss Muther told him it would be all right to compose the letter in Japanese, and that she was sure the Master would understand the spirit of the letter. When the reply came, Mr. Yamamoto said that although his letter was written in Japanese, the Master had fully understood it and fully answered him.

**Early Meetings and Growth**

The three Honolulu Bahá’ís would meet on a hilltop in Pacific Heights and read prayers and Tablets. These were the first Bahá’í meetings in Hawaii.

In the summer of 1902, Miss Alexander and Miss Muther gave the Message on the island of Maui.

The Master sent many Tablets to the early believers in Honolulu to encourage them and to answer their questions. Between the year 1901 and His passing in 1921, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá revealed 41 Tablets to residents of Hawaii.

In 1905, Clarence Smith left Honolulu and eventually went to Italy where he married and lived for many years. After his marriage he lost interest in the Cause, but through him the seed was planted for Elizabeth Muther, and later for his sister, Mrs. S.A. (Katherine) Baldwin, to become firm Bahá’ís.

Slowly the Faith began to grow in Honolulu. In 1905 a Mrs. Otis, the soloist in the Central Union Church, became a Bahá’í, and opened her home on Bates Street for weekly meetings.

Later, Dr. and Mrs. George Jacob Augur became Bahá’ís, and from 1907 to 1927 their home on Beretania Street in the heart of Honolulu became “the radiant center of the Cause” where weekly meetings were held and the Bahá’í library was kept.

Dr. Augur was a homeopathic physician who had come to Hawaii from Oakland, California. Miss Alexander wrote of Dr. Augur, who was to become another of the disciples of Bahá’u’lláh, that he was “gifted with rare spiritual insight in his comprehension of the Station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and his love for Him. His words were few, but he could quote from the words of Bahá’u’lláh and

**Hawaii facts and figures**

The state of Hawaii consists of eight major islands in a chain of 124 minor islands with a total area of 6,450 square miles.

The eight major islands are Oahu (where Honolulu is located), Kauai, Maui, Molokai, Lanai, Hawaii, Ni’ihau (which is privately owned) and Kahoolawe (a military bombing range).

Honolulu, the capital city, is 2,397 miles from San Francisco. The highest peak in the state is Mauna Kea, 13,796 feet above sea level. The population of Hawaii in 1976 was 886,000, which included 123,000 members of the U.S. armed forces and military dependents.

The state averages nearly 80,000 visitors daily.
...in December 1911 the Bahá'ís received a message from the Master in which He said, ‘I love the friends of Honolulu very much because they are good and are lovers of each other and live in unity. I am always with them, and because of their love and unity they shall not be in want of anything.’

Honolulu was given by Mr. Remey on November 29 at the Alexander Young Hotel, and was attended by around 75 persons. Mr. Remey gave talks at other public places including the New Thought Center and the Oahu Prison, and as a result, several articles appeared in the press with headlines such as ‘Would Unite All Religions’ and ‘What the Bahá’í Movement Really Is.’

In April 1910, the believers started to hold business meetings twice a month on the work of the Faith in Hawaii. At these meetings letters were read from Bahá’ís in distant lands and other business conducted. When later the Spiritual Assembly of Honolulu was formed, the pattern of twice-monthly meetings was continued. In January 1911, the Honolulu believers started evening meetings for teaching the Cause.

Through a Bahá’í, Mme. Aurela Bethlen, who visited Honolulu en route to the Orient, then saw the Master in Egypt on December 26, 1911, the Bahá’ís received a message from the Master in which He said, ‘I love the friends of Honolulu very much because they are good and are lovers of each other and live in unity. I am always with them, and because of their love and unity they shall not be in want of anything. The more they unite and love each other, the greater will be the bounties of Bahá’u’lláh to them. I love them very much.’

From Local Assembly to National Assembly

From this small but significant beginning, the Bahá’í Faith grew in Hawaii to spread not only on the island of Oahu, where Honolulu is located, but to the islands of Kauai, Maui, Hawaii (known as the Big Island), Molokai and Lanai.

The first Bahá’í Messages to the island of Maui were given in 1902, and the first believers there included Mary Clark, Alice Cameron, Sila Pratt Smith, Anni M. Hansen and Mary Fantom, the first native-born Hawaiian to accept the Cause.

The island of Hawaii received the Message in 1925 from Agnes Alexander. From 1924 to 1926, the island of Kauai received several visits from Honolulu Bahá’ís, the first one a visit by Miss Alexander.

On April 21, 1935, a Local Spiritual Assembly was formed on Maui with Katherine Baldwin elected chairman and a new member, Mrs. E.F. (Daisy) Sabin, vice chairman.

The first letter to the Hawaiian Bahá’í community from the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, is dated January 16, 1924. The first Bahá’í children’s class was begun in September 1927.

On her last world tour, the beloved Martha Root, a Hand of the Cause of God, reached Honolulu on June 7, 1939, when returning to America from Australia. She left the steamer to go to the home of Mrs. Katherine Baldwin (in Honolulu) for the day. As Miss Root was very ill, she retired to her room to rest. From that hour she never left the house.

On the afternoon of September 28, 1939, Martha Root passed away, and her resting place in Honolulu at the Nuuanu Cemetery has become a landmark and point of interest and loving memory for local and visiting believers. Elizabeth Muther died in 1940 and is buried beside Martha Root.

A photo taken in Dr. George Augur’s backyard in Honolulu on December 10, 1909. Dr. Augur is No. 1 in the photo. Others include Mrs. Augur (No. 3), the Hand of the Cause of God Agnes B. Alexander (No. 6), Miss Elizabeth Muther (No. 11).
Mrs. Katherine Baldwin's cottage was used from 1927 as a meeting place for the Baha'is in Honolulu. In 1940, owing to the generosity of a handful of the friends, a lovely site for the first Baha'i Center in Honolulu was obtained in the Waikiki area on McCully Street. Ground was broken for the building on June 11, 1941, and the building was dedicated on October 20 of that year. The dedication keynote speaker was Anthony Seto.

The furnishings for the new building were donated by the friends. The McCully Street Center was the scene of many Baha'i activities until it became apparent that it was too small for the growing numbers of Baha'is.

In July 1960, after a long search, the present Haziratu'l-Quds on Allan Place was bought and the McCully Street Center sold. A few years ago, the new Center was nearly destroyed by a fire, but through the efforts of many Baha'is was rebuilt and remodeled.

In October 1963, a cable from the Universal House of Justice was received calling for the formation during Ridvan 1964 of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the Hawaiian Islands with its seat in Honolulu. Thus it was that the Hawaiian Local Spiritual Assemblies that had been a part of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States were to become part of a new pillar of the Faith.

As a prelude to the National Convention that was to elect the new National Spiritual Assembly, a gala public meeting was held at the Princess Kaiulani Hotel in Honolulu. Among those attending were John A. Burns, then governor of Hawaii, who delivered the opening address; Miss Agnes B. Alexander, the Hand of the Cause of
A special photo of the Hand of the Cause of God Agnes B. Alexander was presented to the Lahaina Historical Society by the Bahá'í community of Lahaina on the island of Maui.

Velma Sherrill, then a member of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly who was representing that body.

On Sunday morning, April 26, 1964, 19 delegates cast their ballots at the National Convention to elect the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Hawaiian Islands. Its members were Hugh Chapman, chairman; Michael D. Woodward, vice chairman; Mrs. R. Lei Chapman, secretary; Miss Elena M. Marsella, assistant secretary; Miss Evelyn Musacchia, recording secretary; Dr. Claude V. Caver, treasurer; Miss Gertrude V. Garrida; Jacques Smith, and James S. Wada.

At the time of its formation there were seven Local Spiritual Assemblies in Hawaii. On the island of Oahu the Assemblies were at Ewa, Honolulu, Koolaupoko, Wahiawa and Waianae; on Hawaii at South Hilo, and on Maui at Kawaihau. In addition, there were Bahá'í Groups at Wailuku on Maui and on the island of Molokai.

Next: The Bahá'í Faith Today in Hawaii.
It was 1953, the year of the International Conference at New Delhi, India, that was the last in a series of four such intercontinental teaching conferences called by the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, to highlight the worldwide observance of the Bahá'í Holy Year 109. The Conference brought to a close the year-long jubilee, begun in October 1952, which marked the termination of the construction of the Holy Sepulchre of the Báb on Mount Carmel.

The friends were flocking to New Delhi from all parts of the world to assemble at the most auspicious and august Bahá'í gathering in the history of the Indian metropolis.

On October 6, the day before the Conference was to open, around 100 of the friends in India gathered at the airport to welcome the Hand of the Cause of God Mrs. Dorothy Baker. It was the first time that I was privileged to meet her, though I had heard much about her activities and her great knowledge of the Cause, and had even translated some of her articles into Persian.

Mrs. Baker was renowned as an outstanding Bahá'í teacher and lecturer, and had taught in many different countries, and as I recall, she had spent some time before coming to the Conference in the Holy Land where the Guardian had instructed her as to the aims and purposes of the Conference and the duties of the Indian National Spiritual Assembly.

When she arrived I saw a smiling, radiant, charming woman, intoxicated with the love of God, chatting and laughing with the friends in a relaxed and friendly manner. This was an example of Bahá'í conduct that attracted the friends as well as non-Bahá'ís.

At that time, the building housing the Bahá'í Center (Hazíratu'l-Quds) had been expropriated by the Indian government and assigned to that of Russia as its embassy, so the Conference was held at a lot that was part of a development being contracted by the U.S. government for military purposes (Constitution House).

During the Conference, which ran from October 7 to 15, 1953, Mrs. Baker was the shining ornament as representative of the Guardian and as a lecturer of unparalleled magnetism and wisdom.
I remember that she spoke nearly every day, explaining in detail the goals of the Conference and the instructions of the Guardian. Her speeches were so compelling that no one wanted to miss them.

Moreover, Mrs. Baker had the responsibility of contacting the Indian government authorities to acquaint them with the principles of the Cause and aims of the Conference.

Jawaharlal Nehru was then prime minister of India, Rajendra Prasad was president of the Republic, and Abol Kalam Azad was minister of education. As I recall, Mrs. Baker met with Mr. Nehru and Mr. Azad, and each expressed pleasure at having met her.

Some public meetings were arranged at which Mrs. Baker lectured eloquently and convincingly. In fact, her public talks were so warmly received that they were reported in most of the newspapers in New Delhi.

Following the Conference, Mrs. Baker was directed by the Guardian to remain in India for a time to teach, and to acquaint Delhi. The Guardian's love and direction.

I was at that time working at the Iranian Embassy in New Delhi and was a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly there, I was aware of her many activities and her zeal in carrying out the Guardian's instructions.

Day and night Mrs. Baker was engaged in different services, constantly reminding and encouraging the friends to teach the Cause of God. I still remember the tears in her eyes as she emphasized the importance of the Teachings and the wishes of the beloved Guardian.

Mrs. Baker traveled to many cities during a three-month period, bringing them the Guardian's love and direction. On her return to New Delhi, I noticed that she had become physically frail and weak; but her zeal had only increased, and it seemed to me that she was somewhat disappointed at having been unable to generate more enthusiasm among the friends than she had observed.

In January 1954, Mrs. Baker traveled to Karachi, Pakistan. I later received a letter from a Mr. Bakhtieri in Karachi expressing his appreciation of her highly spiritual nature and her sacrificial endeavors for the Cause of God.

Later that month, Mrs. Baker left Pakistan for Rome, Italy. She never arrived there. The plane on which she was traveling crashed near the island of Elba in the Mediterranean Sea, and Dorothy Baker had sacrificed herself in the path of God.

Her untimely and tragic death came as a shock to every believer, and especially those in India with whom she had been so close in the final days of her life and who had been privileged to glimpse her marvelous Baha’i qualities and unswerving loyalty and devotion to the Guardian.

While the loss of Mrs. Baker was irreparable, the seeds she had sown while in India thrived and flourished in later years as a result of her sacrificial endeavors. She knew and followed well the words of the Master, ‘Abdu’l-Baha, that the believers should not expect to reap the benefits of their teaching at once, but like a good sower, must prepare the hearts and plant the blessed seeds so that they will be ready for the divine rain to raise the harvest in due course.

Upon the news of Mrs. Baker's death, the Guardian sent an impressive and sympathetic cablegram to National Spiritual Assemblies expressing great appreciation for her outstanding service and instructing the friends to hold suitable memorial services.

The cablegram from the Guardian reads as follows:

‘Hearts grieved lamentable, untimely passing Dorothy Baker, distinguished Hand Cause, eloquent exponent its teachings, indefatigable supporter its institutions, valiant defender its precepts. (Her) long record outstanding service enriched annals concluding years Heroic opening epoch Formative Age Baha’i Dispensation. Fervently praying progress soul Abhá Kingdom.

‘Assure relatives profound loving sympathy. (Her) noble spirit reaping bountiful reward.

‘Advise hold memorial gathering Temple befitting her rank imperishable services. . . .’

—Shoghi Haifa, Israel January 13, 1954
Plan goals are studied at Teaching Conference

Four hundred believers spent August 13-14 near the city of Cochabamba, Bolivia, at the fourth Bahá’í National Teaching Conference, where they studied the Five Year Plan goals for that country.

The conference had the bounty of the presence of four members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South America: Athos Costas, Mas’u’d Khamsi, Peter McLaren and Donald Witzel.

All nine provinces of Bolivia and 96 local communities were represented. Pioneers and friends from six countries attended.

It was noted with joy that 105 women were present, demonstrating their increased participation in Bahá’í activities.

The children took part in organized children’s classes.

During the two days of the conference nearly all the goals of the Five Year Plan for Bolivia were studied under the guidance of the Counsellors. The state of the goals was the subject of reports by the various Regional Teaching Committees.

In this simple and direct way, the immense potential of the nine provinces was demonstrated, as were the advantages and difficulties awaiting those who are willing to arise with devotion to the challenges yet in store.

The friends were inspired by talks given by the Counsellors. Mr. Costas spoke about the importance of teaching. Mr. Khamsi addressed the urgent task of forming Local Spiritual Assemblies. Mr. McLaren spoke about the influence Bolivian Bahá’ís have in the world. Mr. Witzel underlined the necessity for each believer to constantly better himself and contribute to the progress of the Cause.

The enthusiasm and spirit of the conference were channeled into offers by many participants to win and surpass the goals set for the Five Year Plan. Youth and adults, men and women all arose not only to win the goals in Bolivia, but to assist the friends in Brazil, Paraguay and Peru.

The conference was one of the largest in recent years, and nearly upset the balance of carefully planned meals and lodging for the meeting; this reaffirmed the need for Bahá’í-owned conference facilities. The friends at the conference prayed that Bolivia, with its thousands of believers, might soon have a Bahá’í Center that would be adequate for national events.

They were inspired to learn that the friends in Ecuador, with their own funds, had built a meeting place for the recent International Quechua Conference.

During the conference, the principal local newspaper printed an article about the objectives of the Faith, and the chief authority of the province of Cochabamba was personally informed about the National Teaching Conference.

The day before the conference, the Counsellors met with 25 pioneers and two visitors, and deepening classes were held.

Rhodesia

Salisbury plays host to first Summer School

For the first time the friends in Rhodesia have held a Bahá’í Summer School. The historic dates were August 28-September 1, 1977, and the historic site was the Salisbury Motel Bahá’í School in Salisbury.

The Rhodesian communities of Bunsida, Greater Salisbury, Gwelo, Highfield, Mabvuku, Mont Marie, Mzilikazi, Nyamayaro, Salisbury West and Tafara were represented. Three Bahá’ís from Swaziland also attended.

Among them was Benjamin Dlamini, a prominent educator in Swaziland. He was interviewed on national radio while the school was in session, and was able to mention the school, reinforcing earlier radio announcements about it.

Attendance fluctuated from 50 to 100 people during the five-day period. The friends learned primarily about living the Bahá’í life, with its high moral standards; knowing the Writings and using them in teaching; and accomplishing the goals of the Five Year Plan as assigned by the Universal House of Justice.

The school provided an opportunity for families to deepen together, and for believers from rural areas and towns to meet.

Auxiliary Board members Mr. Mumvuma, Mr. Sohaili and Mrs. Wilks were among the teachers at the school. Children received special instruction.

An inspirational moment came when on the first evening Lawrence A. Hautz shared his memories of the Beloved Guardian with the friends.

The National Spiritual Assembly firmly hopes the school will develop into a regular occurrence that will light the way of Bahá’u’lláh throughout the years to come.
Bahá'í prayer read before legislature

Joyce Owen, treasurer of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Leeward and Virgin Islands, was invited to read a Bahá'í prayer at the opening of the legislature of the Virgin Islands.

It was later pointed out that this was the first time that any woman has appeared in that capacity before the legislature. These actions put the Faith before the government and prominent people, and there has been a "very heartwarming response," reports The Island Bahá'í.

Teaching teams roam over mammoth area

Alaskan Bahá'ís are responsible for spreading the Faith in a state that is close to a million square kilometers (571,065 square miles) in size.

This mammoth area was covered, length and breadth, last summer by teaching teams who traveled from a home base in Anchorage to the northernmost point in Alaska, Barrow, and many points in between, north and south.

The first trip was made to Homer, in the Southen area. The team showed the films "A New Wind" and "It's Just the Beginning" at a fireside at which two individuals declared.

On its return to Anchorage the team assisted the nearby Spencer community with its goal in Girdwood.

On June 24 the team went to Anchor Point. The town was originally settled by Russians, who dress in the traditional manner and attend services in an Orthodox church. The Bahá'ís were given a tour of the Russian area by a local school teacher.

On another trip to Homer, July 17-19, invitations to firesides and deepenings were distributed door-to-door.

On June 30, a teaching team visited Valdez. The Local Spiritual Assembly hosted a barbecue, attended by Bahá'ís and their friends. A children's class was held the next day followed by a showing of The Green Light Expedition.

On July 5 the team drove to Chitina. There the members spoke about the Faith with several interested residents.

The team that visited Galena, Kaltag, Koyukuk and Nulato gave the National Teaching Committee of Alaska valuable information about these towns: accommodations, persons to contact for arranging meetings, and names of individuals interested in the Faith.

One of the seekers in Koyukuk declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh. In Kaltag, more than 50 people attended a public meeting, and the Bahá'ís were told they were welcome to return.

From here the team went to Ruby, Circle City, Venetie, Chalkyistic, Dot Lake, Tanacross, Hughes and Nikolai.

In Nikolai, a resident asked to become a Bahá'í. He became the ninth adult member of the community, and a Local Spiritual Assembly was formed.

Jamaica

Summer School points toward winning goals

The focal point of the fifth annual Bahá'í Summer School in Jamaica was the need for individual support of teaching plans and the sacrificial efforts necessary to win the remaining goals of the Five Year Plan before Rívdván 1979.

Ninety-one individuals from Kingston, Lluidas Vale, and 10 rural communities were present for the school, held August 26-28 at the Social Action Center.

The general sessions were supplemented with sessions for youth on drugs, marriage and careers, and regular classes were held for the children.

Topics of discussion included the Covenant, obedience to Bahá'í laws, the role of women, the Bahá'í Fund, the relationship between the Faith and Christianity, the goals of the Five Year Plan, the education of children and the institutions of the Hands of the Cause, the Continental Board of Counsellors and the Auxiliary Board.

The friends enjoyed a talent show Friday evening, and the showing of films that featured the Oceanic Conference held in Jamaica in 1971.

A report in the Jamaica Bahá'í News said, "The School elevated the spirits of the participants tremendously and taught the believers the pattern of living, working and learning together."

Italy

Blessed Beauty's Life - focus of Summer School

The 14th Bahá'í Summer School was held at Giulianova Lido from September 3-12. The participants studied Bahá'u'lláh's life, His Station, His Revelation and His Proclamation to the kings and ecclesiastical leaders.

The school began with an encouraging and enthusiastic message from the National Spiritual Assembly.

The principal teachers were Dr. Aziz Yazdi from the International Teaching Center; European Counsellor Adib Taherzadeh, and Dr. Leo Niederreiter from Asmara, Italy.

A special non-Bahá'í guest at the school, Dr. Pagnanelli, director of the information center of the United Nations Organization in Rome, gave a public talk on "The First 30 Years of the United Nations Organization." Both this and another public meeting held during the school were well-attended.

At a Unity Feast, slides of the Holy Shriines and early believers dating back to 1907 were shown, as well as a film on the House of the Báb in Shiráz.

The school was characterized by a profoundly spiritual atmosphere that culminated in the declarations of 12 friends who had attended the sessions.

Pioneering and teaching pledges were made. Two telegrams were sent to the Universal House of Justice, and an answering cable was received during the school.

Townspersons respond to traveling teachers

The Bahá'í pioneers in the goal town of Cosenza, Italy, had worked hard to make friends with the residents there.

While the pioneers were working in their neighbors' homes, the residents were reluctant to enter the homes of the Bahá'ís.

This situation began to change during an intensive two-week teaching campaign.

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held in Cosenza in August.

When traveling teachers arrived by bus, they only had to ask, “Where does Carlo the Bahá’i live?” and someone would offer to accompany them to his house.

During the two weeks, it was decided to show some filmstrips at Carlo’s house, but the living room would not hold the more than 12 people who attended. The Bahá’ís found an extension cord and showed the film outside, against the wall of the house.

The neighbors were glad to cooperate. The woman downstairs handed chairs from her apartment out the window. Groups of neighbors arrived, some bringing chairs and some sitting on the wall.

More than 40 people saw the filmstrip The Bahá’ís and the Holy Land and the fourth part of the Green Light Expedition, about Ruhiyyih Khánum’s travels in Bolivia and Peru. Many stayed to talk after the film was over.

The Bahá’ís were invited to a birthday party that was held the following evening. The host asked the Bahá’ís to close the evening with a prayer.

The two-week project ended the next morning. Many new-found friends were crying. “Come back soon,” one woman said. “We have just met you and grown to love you, and now you are going away.”

A month later the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Cosenza, Italy, was formed.

New Hebrides

Illness forces pioneer Bertha Dobbins to depart

Bertha Dobbins, spiritual mother of the Bahá’í community in the New Hebrides, has left her adopted home, owing to ill health, after 24 years there as a pioneer.

She was bade farewell on October 27 by more than 70 Bahá’ís and former students from Núr School, which she founded, who gathered at the National Haźratu’l-Quds.

Mrs. Dobbins was one of the first Bahá’ís to leave Australia at the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade (1953) in response to the Guardian’s appeal for pioneers.

She earned the title “Knight of Bahá’u’lláh” when she opened the New Hebrides to the Faith.

Soon after her arrival in Vila, New Hebrides, she moved into a cottage at Nambatu, and it was here that the Faith was first taught.

Later, she founded Núr School at Anaibrou and educated several hundred New Hebridean children at the primary level.

Some of the pupils and their parents accepted the Faith, and the foundation was laid for the progress of the Cause in the New Hebrides.

Mrs. Dobbins retired from teaching at Núr School in 1971, and devoted her time to traveling and telling people about Bahá’u’lláh.

All the tributes paid to Mrs. Dobbins at the farewell gathering spoke of her selfless service to the Cause, her great courage and perseverance, and her love for the people of the New Hebrides.

Auxiliary Board member Alick Soalo said of her: “We have learned many things from Mrs. Dobbins, but our main souvenir is the Bahá’í Faith, which will last for many generations.”

Mrs. Dobbins left Vila on October 29, promising that the New Hebrides would be foremost in her thoughts and in her prayers.

Women assuming more active role

Women believers in the New Hebrides, following the appeal by the Universal House of Justice in its Ridván message that women arise, have led teaching activities, held a women’s conference, and become more active in administrative aspects of the Faith.

The first Bahá’í Women’s Conference in the New Hebrides was held in Vila on October 23. Eighteen women from Vila, Fila Island and Erakor heard stirring talks on Ta’ihríh, the Greatest Holy Leaf, the role of Bahá’í mothers in the education of children, women’s activities around the world, and the meaning of “responsible action.” The workshops at the conference focused on what Bahá’í women can do to spread the Faith in the New Hebrides.

While the women held the conference, Bahá’í men organized children’s classes and games, served refreshments and cooked dinner.

Bahá’í women led teaching activities recently in Big Bay, Aneityum and Tonga. They will be responsible for the next trip to the island of Pentecost.

Four of the 11 Local Spiritual Assemblies in the New Hebrides currently have more women members than men. These Assemblies are in Erakor, Lenakel, Port Resolution and Port Vila.

25 believers attend institute on prayer

Believers from Vila, Fila Island and Erakor attended an institute on prayer at the Bahá’í Center in Vila, New Hebrides, on August 6.

Twenty-five were in attendance.

Teaching plan spurs burst of activity

The first phase of the nine-month plan that is being conducted in the New Hebrides was officially completed on September 21.

As it came to a close, there was a burst of teaching activity. Bahá’í teams visited the Big Bay area of Santo, as well as Ambrym, North Efate, North Tanna and Aneityum. Individual teachers traveled to Emae and Middle Bush.

During the first phase of the plan, traveling trips were made to 10 localities. One of the localities, the island of Aore, was reopened to the Faith.

South Epi also was opened. A Bahá’í Group was formed in Middle Bush. Meetings and dawn prayers are being held in Lenakel and Erakor as a result of the first phase of the plan. Women’s classes also are being conducted in Lenakel.

Malaysia

Blind Bahá’í youth a remarkable fellow

In the Malaysian state of Sarawak, in a long-house, five hours’ journey by foot from the main road, lives a blind Bahá’í youth named Liaz.

He shares the long-house with a dozen families who have been Bahá’ís for three years.

Almost no Bahá’í literature exists in Bidayu, the language of the Land Dayaks, the minority group to which Liaz belongs. But they do have a small prayer book, and the literate members of the families read to the others. They rely on rare visits from traveling teachers to learn more about the
Members of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Western Asia met with Auxiliary Board members in Iran on September 23. It was the first general meeting with the newly appointed Auxiliary Board members, and took place at the site of the future Mashriqu’l-Adhkar.

Faith.

Even so, the community is firm and strong. It has a Bahá'í Center, and regular children's classes.

Liaz loves to teach the children. He principally uses music. He translates songs about the Faith from Iban to Bidayu, and composes melodies and lyrics of his own.

Some time ago he decided that the songs would sound better with guitar accompaniment. Since the community could not afford a guitar, Liaz made one himself with the help of the children. This was all the more amazing because no one in the community had ever made a guitar.

When Liaz is not leading the children in songs, he tells them the stories of Bahá'u'lláh that he has heard from traveling teachers.

It is a special occasion when traveling teachers arrive in the community. People drop their work and rush forward calling, "Alláh-u-Abhá!" They give the teacher a comfortable place to sit, and serve a refreshing coconut drink.

Then Liaz walks in, carrying his guitar very carefully, the children following behind. As the visiting Bahá'í teacher listens, Liaz and the children break into a round of songs praising Bahá'u'lláh.

The Gambia

Teaching trip helps open nine villages

Nine villages were opened to the Faith in the Republic of the Gambia recently, due largely to a one-month teaching trip made by three women: Mahin Azami and Ghodzieh Badcoubéi from Holland, and Marlena Imami from Germany.

United Kingdom

Doncaster interfaith meeting attracts 40

In her Christmas message last year, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain expressed a desire for reconciliation among peoples of all races and religions. This would, she said, be the gift she would most value in her Silver Jubilee Year.

The Bahá'ís of Doncaster decided, therefore, to hold a "Sharing of Faiths" meeting to promote this theme. Local dignitaries and all the religious groups of the Doncaster district were invited to attend. A hundred posters advertising the meeting were put up in Doncaster and surrounding towns.

Forty people attended the meeting, which consisted of readings from the Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Bahá'í scriptures.

Many of those present said that their understanding of other religions had been broadened by the readings.

Sierra Leone

Translation completes goal of Five Year Plan

The first translation into the Mende language of Prayers and Brief Selections from the Bahá'í Writings marks the accomplishment of one of the goals of the Five Year Plan for Sierra Leone.

The same book has been translated into Temne, another major language of the country.

Both translations are ready for publication.
Baha'i float captures 'Aloha Week' award

The Baha’i float in the Aloha Week Parade in Honolulu, Hawaii, in October won first prize in the non-commercial division.

This was the fourth time first place was taken by the Baha’is in the 11 years they have entered floats in the parade. They have won second place on three occasions, and one year they won third prize.

Aloha Week is held each year in remembrance of the days when Hawaii was ruled by royalty. The theme of this year’s parade was “Hawaii My Home.”

The Baha’i float design was that of a Hawaiian woman, a “lei” maker, dressed in a holoku gown and broad brim hat. (A lei is a necklace of flowers.) The lei maker was some five meters (16 feet) in height, and in front of her was a basket laden with completed leis.

The parade, held on October 15, was seen by some 80,000 people along the parade route in Honolulu and Waikiki. Thousands more viewed it over television throughout Hawaii. Videotapes of the parade were telecast again in the United States on Thanksgiving Day, November 24.

The videotape is scheduled to be shown in Japan and its Trust Territories soon.

United Nations

Faith is represented at conference on law

The Baha’i International Community was represented at the World Peace Through Law Conference in Manila, the Philippines, on August 21-26.

Many legal minds were made aware of the Baha’i teachings as global solutions to the problems of human rights, terrorism, armaments, hunger and the lack of justice were discussed.

Representing the Baha’i International Community were attorneys Honofre Res­­tor and Mari Luisa Dulay. They described the opportunities to meet with judges, jurors and lawyers as “excellent.”

They also wrote that “as soon as we introduced ourselves as representatives of the Baha’i International Community, the participants were usually interested and became curious as to the meaning of the word ‘Baha’i,’ thus opening the door to an instant ‘fireside’ on the principles of the Baha’i Faith . . . in relation to the attainment of world peace, the principal aim of the conference.”

Several Chief Justices, each from a different part of the world, showed interest in the Faith, as did a number of lawyers who have Baha’i friends or had visited a Baha’i House of Worship.

The Baha’i delegation was surprised to meet five other Baha’is at the conference who were attending for professional reasons.

The Baha’i pamphlets One World . . . One People: A Baha’i View, and Divine Law: Source of Human Rights were widely distributed at the conference and well-received. Participation in the Manila Conference marked the third time that the Baha’i International Community has taken part in conferences organized by the World Peace Through Law Center, a prestigious non-governmental organization in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

At the conference in 1973, the Bahá’í delegates were Dr. ‘Azíz Navádí and Albert Lincoln. Dr. Navádí addressed 4,000 participants in his opening speech.

In 1975, Dean Dorothy W. Nelson and Judge James Nelson represented the Baha’i International Community at the Washington, D.C., World Peace Through Law Conference, where Dean Nelson was awarded the World Peace Through Law medal.
Bahá’í community active in UNICEF

The Bahá’í International Community has played an active role in UNICEF (United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund) since gaining consultative status with the organization in March 1976.

Three Bahá’ís represent the community on the UNICEF Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Committee.

Dr. Victor de Araujo is a member of the UNICEF/NGO Steering Committee; William C. van den Hoonoord serves on the subcommittee on Public Information, and Mary Sawicki is both a member of the Subcommittee on Women and Development and associate editor of the UNICEF/NGO newsletter. In the latter capacity, Mrs. Sawicki was asked to write an article on Laura Dreyfus-Barney, a Bahá’í who contributed greatly to many committees of the League of Nations and United Nations and was in the forefront of their efforts to achieve a universal and lasting peace, for the May 1976 UNICEF/NGO newsletter.

The Bahá’í International Community also takes part in the annual sessions of the UNICEF executive board.

This year, the Bahá’í world was represented at the board session in Manila on May 17-June 1 by David Mockon, Hazel Mori and Fé Samaniego, all members of the Bahá’í community of the Philippines.

Australia

Thousands hear of Faith at Monash University

The Bahá’í Society at Monash University in Melbourne took full advantage of the University Open Day to proclaim the Faith to thousands of students and visitors on campus.

A conference room in the Student Union Building was the center of the proclamation. Two films were shown: “It’s Just the Beginning” and “Give Me That New-Time Religion.” Bahá’í posters decorated the walls, and books and pamphlets were available to anyone interested.

On a table outside the conference room were free pamphlets and a display panel about the Faith. Another table with pamphlets was in the foyer of the building.

“We feel that our Open Day program was very successful this year,” said a member of the Bahá’í Society. “We estimate that at least 300 people must have seen at least a part of the films shown during the day, and thousands must have seen the name ‘Bahá’í’ in the official University Open Day program and in the 500 programs we passed out.”

He went on to say that some of the other societies were particularly impressed by the organization and effort of the Bahá’ís.

More than 600 attend institutes on Covenant

More than 600 adults and youth attended six institutes on the Covenant held in each state of Australia during August and September.

Convened through joint collaboration of the Continental Board of Counsellors and the National Spiritual Assembly, each institute was conducted by three speakers: a Counsellor, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, and an Auxiliary Board member.

The institutes were honored with a cable from the International Teaching Center: Supreme Body joins us in loving greetings all participants Australia’s widespread Covenant institutes designed strengthen and deepen allegiance and service to Faith. Spirit and knowledge received these institutes will surely inspire swift complete attainment all goals. Assure prayers Holy Shrines Australian believers become stalwart champions defenders Covenant. Deepest love.

This beautiful message provided a fitting start to the institutes, each of which was pervaded by a wonderful spirit of unity and dedication. Ample time was allowed for consultation and discussion, as well as for informal fellowship.

A great contribution was made by Bahá’ís who traveled many hundreds of miles from remote country areas to be present.

Each institute included sessions on the fundamental principles of the Covenant, the authority and functions of the Universal House of Justice, the institutions for protection and propagation of the Faith, Spiritual Assemblies, and the spiritual principles underlying the teaching plans.

The sequence of topics formed an integrated theme that illustrated how the Administrative Order is the visible form and indispensable channel for a spiritual process leading to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

At most of the institutes, the Local Spiritual Assembly or group handling the physical arrangements organized a creative and educational program for children, centered around themes from the Covenant.

Bahá’í teachers visit patients in hospitals

Patients in two hospitals at Lake Macquarie, near Sydney, were visited on a
Around the World

recent Sunday by Bahá’ís who sang for them and gave them paper flowers with quotes from the Writings on them.

The visits were part of a weekend teaching project hosted by Lake Macquarie Bahá’ís and accomplished with the assistance of believers from Newcastle and 24 of the friends from Sydney. Nineteen Sydney Bahá’í youth were among those who helped.

The evening before the hospital visits a public meeting was held and the Green Light Expedition film shown. A half dozen Lake Macquarie youth responded to the invitations to attend.

A spokesman for the youth group said, "I feel that this trip did much to bolster the confidence of the youth concerning their role in teaching projects."

Marshall Islands

Traveling teacher brings Faith to islanders

Inhabitants of the Marshall Islands in the western Pacific Ocean heard the name of Bahá’u’lláh, many for the first time, when Nancy Emerson of the Hawaiian Islands traveled there to teach the Faith recently.

Although she has returned to Hawaii, she says, "My heart and soul are still with my Bahá’í families in Majur and Arno atolls."

"Those lovely people," she continues, "were just waiting to hear Bahá’u’lláh’s name. Their shining eyes were so shocked and at the same time so happy to hear that Christ has returned and His new name is Bahá’u’lláh."

She said the Marshall Islanders are generally well-versed in the Bible, "and it was exciting for them to look back in the Bible and find the truths that have been there all these years."

During the trip, two Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed, bringing the total in the Marshall Islands to nine. The new Assemblies are in Ajeltake and Arno Arno Lukej.

Teaching Conference stresses action

Forty-two Bahá’ís who attended the first National Teaching Conference of the Marshall Islands on October 28-31 spent the first two days in conference and the last two days in action.

Six teaching teams went forth from the conference which was taking place at the Bahá’í National Center in Rita Majuro. Their efforts brought 11 new believers into the Faith.

Ten Bahá’í women volunteered to teach on the Wotja and Ebon atolls, one person volunteered to deputize anyone who would travel to the outer islands to teach the Faith, and one Bahá’í volunteered to be a translator for traveling teachers.

A public meeting held in conjunction with the conference was attended by many non-Bahá’ís. They saw the Green Light Expedition and were entertained by Bahá’ís who demonstrated native dancing.

Friends from Ebeeye, Long Island, Ponape, Santo and Truk attended the teaching conference.

New Zealand

UN information officer confers with believers

Representatives of the Bahá’í National Publicity and Information Committee of New Zealand met with Gilberto Rizzo, director of the United Nations Information Center, Sydney, during his recent visit to Wellington.

The friends met him at his hotel where they had coffee and conferred for almost an hour.

Mr. Rizzo described Bahá’ís as "highly motivated" and "a powerful intellectual force."

He was impressed that when he traveled in Bangladesh, Fiji and Australia, among other places, Bahá’ís were on hand to make themselves known to him and to offer their support.

"It was an extremely cordial and sympathetic interview and highly successful," said one of the Bahá’ís.

Germany

Summer School activity leads to declaration

Daily proclamations of the Faith in Achberg, Germany, by participants in the Bahá’í Summer School held there in August brought a new believer into the Faith.

The 150 people in attendance at the summer school "enjoyed good spirit," according to a cable sent to the Universal House of Justice on August 9.

Special guests at the summer school were the Hand of the Cause Adelbert Mühlschlegel and Anneliese Bopp, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe.

United States

Indian Assemblies give U.S. homefront victory

The formation on November 10 of Local Spiritual Assemblies on Indian Reservations in Cherokee, North Carolina, and Fort Peck, Montana, enabled the U.S. Bahá’í community to win its first homefront victory of the Five Year Plan.

The Assembly at Cherokee was the 25th to be formed in the U.S., and the first east of the Mississippi River. The Five Year Plan goal called for the formation of 25 Local Assemblies on Indian Reservations by mid-1979, the end of the Plan.

The American Indian Teaching Committee had promised at the Bahá’í National Convention last May to win the goal by November 12, the 160th anniversary of the birth of Bahá’u’lláh.

The Assemblies at Cherokee and at Fort Peck brought the total to 26, two days before the anniversary of the Blessed Beauty’s birth. They were the third and fourth Indian Assemblies formed in less than two weeks.

Rose Lebre (left) is the first person to become a Bahá’í in the town of Ajeltake, in the Majuro Atoll of the Marshall Islands. Standing with her is Nancy Emerson, a traveling teacher from the Hawaiian Islands.
Bahá'í News and what they say about it...

"Bahá'í News is for all of us our comfort, our stimulus, our vision of the countless efforts being carried out (in every land) with Divine help from the Supreme Concourse...!" (Bolivia)

"...the delayed issues...arrived yesterday and will you believe it? I pored over the first issue then another...hours slipped by and I looked down at the table and found my lunch untouched and four hours cold!" (El Salvador)

"The Bahá'í News often is...the only tie to home and the so-called 'outside world.' Often, it is the only piece of literature we receive in our native tongue...The Bahá'í News...becomes...the letter from home. Besides, it encourages the pioneer to know what his Bahá'í brothers are doing in other parts of the world and it inspires him to double his efforts." (Ecuador)

...what do you say?

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‘As the Bahá’ís in those islands are one and united, there is no doubt that the luminosity of the Kingdom will illumine those islands like unto a spiritual rose garden, will decorate it with flowers and myrtle, the Word of God will penetrate, and the Holy Spirit will bestow life.’

— ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
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Cover

As the quote on the cover by the Master, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, indicates, the Hawaiian Islands were destined from an early time to play a significant role in the advancement of the Faith in their part of the world. The second of our two-part series on the Faith in the Islands deals with developments there since the formation in 1964 of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the Hawaiian Islands.

CORRECTION: On Page 7 of the December 1977 issue of Bahá’í News, Mrs. Velma Sherrill is identified as an Auxiliary Board member. She is a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors. Also on Page 7, the first line of type was inadvertently omitted. It should read “God, and first Hawaiian Bahá’í; and Mrs.”
The Bahá’í Faith in Hawaii

Progress in the Islands has been marked by steady growth, constant teaching, and innovative use of radio, television, and other media to spread the Faith.

By TONY A. PELLE

Second of two parts

When the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the Hawaiian Islands was first formed in April 1964, it was immediately assigned the following goals by the Universal House of Justice: to raise the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies in the islands to nine, to incorporate the National Spiritual Assembly, to acquire a national Hazírat’ú’l-Quds in Honolulu, to establish a national endowment, to acquire the site for a future House of Worship, and to obtain official recognition of Bahá’í Holy Days, in addition to foreign teaching goals in the Pacific and Philippine Islands.

Today the Hawaiian Bahá’í community includes 28 Local Spiritual Assemblies: seven on the island of Oahu, five on the island of Kauai, five on Maui, nine on Hawaii (the Big Island), one on Molokai, and one on Lanai.

Within recent years the Faith has continued to grow and develop in Hawaii. Here are some of the highlights of that growth:

- In 1968, Dr. Claude V. Caver of Honolulu was appointed a member of the Auxiliary Board for the Hawaiian Islands. In
1973, Miss Elena Maria Marsella, a Hawaiian believer, was appointed by the Universal House of Justice as a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for North East Asia. Recently, other members of the Auxiliary Board for Hawaii were added: Healanl Alama Hamilton, Gertrude V. Garrida and Ben Ayala.

- By Ridván 1972, the Bahá'ís of the Hawaiian Islands had acquired a site for a House of Worship, a national endowment, and had witnessed the signing of a bill by the Hawaiian legislature recognizing Naw-Rúz as a Bahá'í Holy Day. On April 25, 1974, the governor of Hawaii signed legislation giving the authority to perform marriage ceremonies to the institution of the Local Spiritual Assembly rather than to individual Bahá'ís, as was done previously.

- In November 1970, the first large scale teaching campaign was launched in Hawaii and was continued through 1971. Using cultural programs with songs and dances of the various ethnic groups in Hawaii, the teaching teams hopped from island to island, and at Ridván 1972 were instrumental in the formation of a Local Spiritual Assembly in the leper settlement on Molokai.

The teaching effort brought in hundreds of new believers. In May 1972, the Hawaiian teaching vanguard for a period of 120 days again gave a new spirit to expansion and consolidation throughout the islands. In 1973, after the close of the Nine Year Plan, the National Spiritual Assembly issued Hawaii's One Year Teaching Plan.

- In June 1974, the Hawaiian Bahá'í community received specific goals from the Universal House of Justice, one of which is to acquire local Hazíratu'l-Quds on the islands of Oahu, Kauai, Maui, Hawaii and Molokai. As of this date, centers have been acquired on Hawaii and Maui, and an active effort is being made to secure the remainder. High land and building costs and the scarcity of suitable land that could be used as Bahá'í centers have hampered the effort. A site for a Bahá'í summer school has been acquired on the exhibit developed by the Honolulu Bahá'í community and displayed at the world's largest shopping center, the Ala Moana mall in Honolulu.
On the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Hand of the Cause of God Agnes B. Alexander, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'í of the Hawaiian Islands arranged for a new headstone to be placed on her grave in Honolulu. The new headstone indicates that Miss Alexander was a Hand of the Cause of God and includes a quotation by Bahá'u'lláh: 'Light and Glory, Greeting and Praise be upon the Hands of His Cause.'

On January 1, 1971, the Hand of the Cause of God Agnes Baldwin Alexander passed on to the Abhá Kingdom. Her grave is only three miles from that of Martha Root in a family plot at the old Kawaiahao Church in downtown Honolulu.

In 1975, the National Spiritual Assembly established NAHBOHR—the National Assembly of Hawaii's Bahá'í Office of Human Rights—and in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the birth of Miss Alexander created the Agnes Baldwin Alexander Award for Service to Humanity. The award has been presented twice to date at NAHBOHR-sponsored banquets, to Betty M. Vitousek, a distinguished judge who was at the time the only woman judge in Hawaii, and to Hawaii's best-loved entertainer, Hilo Hattie, for her many community services.

As many had predicted, Hawaii has been and continues to be in the forefront of assisting the growth of the Faith in the Pacific area. It was from Hawaii that the Hand of the Cause Agnes Alexander brought the Faith to Japan and many other areas of the Pacific. Hawaii fulfilled its pioneering goals during the Nine Year Plan, which included pioneers to American Samoa, the Philippines, Japan, the Marianas, the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, New Zealand, and the Caroline Islands.

In addition to offering financial support to many Bahá'í communities, Hawaii in the Nine Year Plan assisted with pioneers to Tahiti, Portugal and other areas, and sent traveling teachers to the Philippines and to Micronesia.

As the Five Year Plan draws to a close, Hawaii already has sent pioneers to the Philippines, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Western Samoa and the Caroline Islands, and is in the process of fulfilling new international pioneer and traveling teaching goals given to it. In addition, Hawaii has helped many Pacific areas publish Bahá'í literature in their special languages and dialects.

Although Hawaii does not have a formal Publishing Trust, its Bahá'í publications are being used in many areas of the world. Among its publications are those performed much of the work, the National Center was rededicated after having been rebuilt and refurbished.
In May 1975 the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'í of the Hawaiian Islands presented 132 trees of 23 varieties to Honolulu Community College as a part of the National Assembly's observance of the U.S. Bicentennial and the 132nd anniversary of the Bahá'í Faith. Here Bahá'ís and students at the college plant a Jacaranda tree.

Prepared for use by children, such as "A Bahá'í Picture-Coloring Book," and "A Bahá'í Puzzle Book." Others include "Bahá'í Quotations on Education," "God's New Age" in Japanese, Palauan and Ilocano, and "Memoirs of Agnes B. Alexander." A large picture teaching book developed originally for the direct teaching campaign in 1972 is used in many areas of the Pacific.

One of Hawaii's more significant contributions to the Faith has been in the area of proclamation. This has included the use of floats, radio and television programs, banquets, tree-plantings, and exhibits.

For the past 12 years the Bahá'ís of the Hawaiian Islands have entered a float in the annual Aloha Week parade in October. Nine times they have won either a first, second or third place award in the non-commercial category. They have won five first place awards including 1977. For days, Bahá'ís from all over the islands gather on Oahu to work on building the float which has a Bahá'í theme and always includes the words "Bahá'í Faith" in large letters on the front and back.

The parade is not only seen by many thousands in person, but also is televised in Hawaii, then shown again on Thanksgiving Day in the continental United States and televised in Japan as well.

In December 1973, the National Spiritual Assembly started production on a television series entitled "The New World." The series consists of 13 half-hour color videotapes, and presents the Bahá'í story through songs and interviews.

The Hand of the Cause of God William Sears prepared the scripts, and either narrates or is a guest on each segment in the series. The programs also feature Seals and Crofts, England Dan and John Ford Coley, Dizzy Gillespie, Dorothy and James Nelson, Russ and Gina Garcia and others. Assisting in the series' production was Robert Quigley, a Bahá'í who is the producer of several popular television quiz shows.

The Bahá'ís were able to put the series together because of their "let's get the job done" attitude. When it became apparent that production costs would be too high for filming or hiring someone to videotape, the friends put together the production themselves by working during the late night and early morning hours. To do this, they literally rented a television station during those hours, along with its camera crew.
Noted composer-arranger Russ Garcia conducts the Hawaii New World Chorus at the Bahá’í International Youth Conference-Hawaii 74 held August 4-8, 1974, at the Hilo Civic Auditorium. Mr. Garcia also conducted the chorus during videotaping of a Bahá’í television series, ‘The New World.’

Today their efforts are paying dividends, as the series not only was shown several times without cost over Hawaiian television, but has been used with great results in Alaska and Western Samoa and is now being used by many other Bahá’í communities around the world. Now the Hawaiian Bahá’ís are preparing to produce with the help of Mr. Sears another series of 13 half-hour segments—and this time they are receiving financial support from many areas of the Bahá’í world.

The banquets sponsored by NAHBOHR to present the Agnes Baldwin Alexander award have become outstanding events. Through these banquets the Bahá’ís have been able to reach government and community leaders with the Bahá’í Message. A recent award banquet was attended by the governor of Hawaii, two U.S. senators, a U.S. congressman, a state legislator, and the executive director of the Council of Churches of Christ, among others.

In 1975, when a community college was expanding and needed trees, the Hawaiian Bahá’ís provided 132 trees to the school, the Honolulu Community College, the number corresponding to the number of years from 1844. The result was excellent television and newspaper coverage.

Each year on March 21, or the closest date to it that the state legislature is in session, a Bahá’í is invited to open the state Senate session with a prayer. Each year the governor is photographed signing a proclamation on behalf of World Peace Day, a Bahá’í-sponsored event. The Bahá’ís have received a great deal of
publicity for their leadership in a continuing effort to persuade the board of education in Hawaii to grant public school students excused—rather than unexcused—absences for religious holidays. To existing Bahá'í special event days, Hawaii has added Mankind Day, observed on the second Sunday in June, and Youth Recognition Day, observed on the first Sunday in February.

In 1974, a Bahá'í International Youth Conference was held in Hawaii, the first Bahá'í international conference ever held in the Islands. It generated the most favorable publicity the Faith had ever received in Hawaii. More than 16,000 persons attended proclamation events held in connection with the conference. Thousands more heard the Bahá'í Message on radio or television. The conference, held August 4-8 on the Big Island of Hawaii, was attended by 1,000 Bahá'ís from 35 countries. Three Hands of the Cause of God—A. Q. Faizi, H. Collis Featherstone and William Sears—were present along with three Continental Counsellors and several Auxiliary Board members.

Seals and Crofts and England Dan and John Ford Coley entertained at proclamation events in Hilo and Honolulu. Hugh Clark, Hilo reporter for the Honolulu Advertiser, wrote in his column: ‘'Bahá'ís turned the week into a smooth sales pitch for their faith to Hiloans. All without knocking on a single door or bothering a single person. As a practicing agnostic of many years, we had to be impressed.’'

In a Tablet dated December 9, 1920, to Dr. and Mrs. George Jacob Augur of Honolulu, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote in part:

‘'It is my hope that the islands will be quickened with great spirituality; that the people of different nationalities may gather under one banner; that such enthusiasm and ardour may be generated as to stream out into the other islands.’'

Today the Bahá'í community of Hawaii, like the first believers in the Islands, is faced with the challenge of increasing its membership. As Hawaii is a crossroads of the Pacific, many come into the Faith there and then move on. The moment teaching activity slows down there is no increase in the Bahá'í population; in fact, the numbers may begin to drop.

To overcome this, the National Spiritual Assembly is engaged in a series of short-term teaching efforts to increase the number of believers, to meet new pioneering and traveling teaching goals, and to increase the support of the various Bahá'í Funds. It can look back at its early believers and draw from them the strength, the
resolve, and the perseverance to achieve victory.

The title of the monthly Bahá’í journal for Hawaii is *The Light of the Pacific*. That light reflects the true goal of the Faith in the Islands, as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stated in the Tablet revealed in 1921:

'As the Bahá’ís in those islands are one and united, there is no doubt that the luminosity of the Kingdom will illumine those islands like unto a spiritual rose garden, will decorate it with flowers and myrtle, the Word of God will penetrate, and the Holy Spirit will bestow life.'

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Delegates to the 1976 Bahá’í National Convention in Hawaii reflect the racial diversity of the Hawaiian Bahá’í community.

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Members of the Hawaii New World Chorus appearing on the television series, 'The New World.'

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Jack Lord, star of the television series 'Hawaii 5-0,' pauses in front of the Hawaii Bahá’í float during the 1976 Aloha Week parade in Honolulu. The Bahá’í float was included in the television promo made to advertise the parade’s nationwide showing on Thanksgiving Day and won first prize in the parade.
Cleaning up at the House of Worship in Sydney

One of the problems invariably associated with a domed structure as large as the Bahá’í House of Worship at Mona Vale, near Sydney, Australia, is that of maintenance.

To solve the problem, the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia employed John Quittner of Quicksteel Engineering to design a new maintenance system.

Mr. Quittner devised a system of winches and hoists to carry maintenance personnel to the top of the building from the inside; outside, he designed a unique ring beam to fit around the lantern that sits atop the dome. The ring beam, which weighs 180 kilograms (396 pounds) and was lowered into place by a helicopter from a Sydney television station, supports an external access buggy that enables maintenance personnel to reach any part of the outside of the dome.

The system cost $10,000 to install. The addition of the ring beam attracted considerable attention; it was covered on the evening news on Sydney television, and the Sydney Morning Herald carried a report with photographs. Representatives of the New South Wales Department of Labor and Industry were present at the installation of the ring beam and photographed the event for their records.

Once installation of the system was completed, an inspection of the dome was carried out and the necessary repairs made.

A helicopter from a Sydney television station lowers a ring beam into place atop the Bahá’í House of Worship at nearby Mona Vale. The beam, which weighs 180 kilograms (396 pounds), supports an external access buggy that allows maintenance staff to reach any part of the outside of the dome.

John Quittner (left), who designed the maintenance access system for the Australian House of Worship, rides to the top of the structure with another engineer in a special ‘dome buggy’ that will be housed in the aluminum fleche, or lantern, at the top of the building.
Around the World

Israel

Construction of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice is proceeding on schedule. Workmen are pouring the perimeter concrete slab at ground-floor level that will support the colonnade of the building. Columns will rest in each of the sunken squares. At the center of the photograph, taken October 12, can be seen the structural pillars that will support the dome of the completed edifice.

India

Rúhíyyih Khánum places cornerstone in India

The Hand of the Cause Amatü’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum laid the cornerstone of the Mother Temple of the Indian Subcontinent in a ceremony on October 17.

A cablegram from her to the World Center said in part:

"... Temple site ceremony worthy great spiritual occasion laying cornerstone seventh precious House of Worship. Continental Board Counsellors, National Bahá’í Assembly India deserve highest praise ardent thanks great achievement."

The ceremony took place in a tent erected on the site that provided seating for 10,000 persons. Prayers were offered in 10 languages.

Architect Fariborz Şahbá designed the new House of Worship. It will be in the shape of a nine-petaled lotus, paying homage to the glory of both the Buddhist and Hindu religious Dispensations, which arose in India.

It is interesting to note that Bahapur, the district in which the House of Worship site is located, means literally "town of Bahá."

Opposite the site is an area named Kalka. "Kalka Avatar" — literally "Manifestation of Kalka" — is one of the titles of the Promised One of the Hindu religion, which says that the advent of Kalka in the world will herald the age of peace, prosperity, and universal brotherhood.

After the Mashriqu’l-Adhkar site was purchased, the area was re-zoned as a "green belt," where no construction would be allowed.

But after long negotiations between the National Spiritual Assembly of India and the Urban Development Committee it was finally agreed— a scant two weeks before the cornerstone ceremony — that the House of Worship could be built there.

Europe

European Counsellors host Boards, Assemblies

Every year the Continental Board of Counsellors in Europe invites the Auxiliary Board members, their assistants and members of the National Spiritual Assemblies to a Conference of the European Institutions.

This year the gathering took place on October 29-30. The following cable was sent to the Universal House of Justice:

"Hearts greatly uplifted presence Hand of Cause Dr. Giachery and Madame Giachery, Counsellor Florence Mayberry representative of the International Teaching Centre, presence six Counsellors, 34 Auxiliary Board members, 32 assistants, 4 National Spiritual Assembly members, 3 members Continental Pioneer Committee. Feel inspired confidence ability achieve all goals, transform Europe, renewed spirit dedication. Beseech prayers assist us this great task. Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá."”

The Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery spoke with the friends about the spiritual prerequisites and the practical ways of winning the Five Year Plan goals.

Counsellor Florence Mayberry spoke about the spirit of the Faith being the
power that helps carry mankind to its highest station.

She said early victory in the Five Year Plan goals will be achieved to the extent that each Bahá'í uses every opportunity to mention the Faith.

The Counsellors said the institutions of the Faith must work in absolute unity, and the Auxiliary Board members and their assistants should actively support the plans of the National Spiritual Assemblies.

Brazil

Teaching surge brings goal victories near

"Teaching activities are continuing on all fronts," reports the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil.

"The North, Northeast, Central, South and Southwest are all actively engaged in spreading the Word of Bahá'u'lláh.

"Only one Local Spiritual Assembly is lacking to complete our Local Assembly goals, and the hope is to add many others to that list.

"Only 30 localities are lacking, and we feel it will be far surpassed before long.

"News from the far north in the region of Belem and the Ilha of Marajó indicates the gains are constant, exciting, and seem to be of a permanent nature. The 'direct teaching methods' are bringing such results.

"Our velocity of growth has been about 100 per cent within the past year.

Youth pledge to help in forming Assemblies

At a recent Bahá'í Congress in Curitiba, Brazil — a city of more than 600,000 people — the youth present made definite plans to help form 19 Local Spiritual Assemblies, all part of their Plan for this year.

Nineteen groups of youth volunteered to either directly help to form the new Local Spiritual Assemblies themselves or to be responsible for creating teaching teams to assist them.

Another group of Bahá'í youth, not in attendance at the Congress in Curitiba and unaware of the plans that had been made there, set almost the same goals for themselves. They took responsibility for the formation of 19 Local Assemblies!

These youth, mostly new Bahá'ís, also pledged to give almost one-third of the over-all goal for contributions by youth to the National Fund by Ridván 1978.

Nicaragua

More than 40 present at first National Children's Institute

At the first National Children's Institute to be held in Nicaragua, more than 40 children attended classes on the lives of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb, Bahá'í qualities, the importance of children, the need for education, the Nineteen Day Feast, prayer, and the Bahá'í Fund.

The institute, for children ages 10-14, took place September 17-18 in the newly-opened locality of Diria. The children were from 10 communities.

Prayers, songs and games were interwoven in the two-day institute to bring about an increased awareness on the part of the children that they belong to a large and united Bahá'í community.

The children enjoyed an evening of music and a slide presentation about the Holy Land.

Teachers for the institute were knowledgeable and experienced Bahá'í adults, including Auxiliary Board member Edith McLaren who gave a class on the Bahá'í family.

El Salvador

Hillside gatherings note Feast, Holy Day

The imposing Chinchontepeque volcano and the Pacific Ocean, visible from the five-acre spot on a hillside that is the property of the Bahá'ís of El Salvador, lent majesty to two events held there last summer.

The first was the Feast of Núr, on June 4. At this Feast the Centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's release from the prison-city of 'Akká to Mazra'í was observed. As part of the observance a tree was planted, along with a sequoia seed brought from California.

The anniversary of the martyrdom of the Báb, July 9, was observed in a cleared circular area in a wooded grove near a meadow.

At the same time, the friends dedicated the "Permanent Institute," a blue-trimmed white cottage recently completed. It has two rooms, and is the first of many buildings planned for the site.

The carpenter-builder of the Permanent Institute became a Bahá'í during the building's construction. He and his family were present at the dedication ceremony.
Malawi

**Rhodesia pioneers have productive week-long visit**

While the Bahá'ís of Rhodesia are obligated by the Five Year Plan to make teaching trips to Malawi, it has become increasingly difficult for Rhodesians to obtain permission to travel there.

It was most helpful last summer when Mr. and Mrs. Philip Harvey, pioneers to Rhodesia, were able to spend a week teaching in Malawi on a trip planned by the Rhodesian National Assembly.

The Harveys also were able — unexpectedly — to assist Malawi with one of its Five Year Plan goals, that of having contact with the higher echelons of the police and government.

It happened while lunching at the home of one of their hosts that a police inspector arrived with instructions to convey "the strangers" to the office of the Commissioner of Police.

The Commissioner was shocked when he saw Mrs. Harvey, since he did not know a European woman intended to travel in the sometimes troubled countryside.

However, the Commissioner knew of the Faith, applauded its aims, and said he would not hamper the Harveys' movements.

When, upon his advice, they agreed to cancel an overnight stay in a more unstable part of the country, he was relieved.

Meanwhile, Mr. Harvey, preparing to leave the Commissioner's office, picked up a small bundle of pamphlets about the Faith and turned to go. But the Commissioner extended his hands and said, "My hands are begging for your gift." He took the pamphlets and said, "Not only will I read these, but my deputy and my assistant shall read them thoroughly also."

The police inspector returned the Harveys to the home of their hosts, and asked the family, "How are you going to feed these Europeans?"

When told that the Harveys would share Malawian food with the family, the inspector was astonished. Even the most dedicated missionaries never did this; it was unheard of!

On subsequent days in Malawi, the Harveys traveled by car and on foot to many villages, among them Chilemele, Umi, Jali, Paluse, St. Mary's, Zomba, Zamsiya, Limbe and Livalo.

The Area Teaching Committee for the region, which held its first meeting after the Harveys arrived, accompanied them on many of their trips.

Some of the meetings were held in the new regional Hazíratu'l-Quds at Umi, some in the homes of Bahá'ís in the villages, and some along the roadside.

"We went to Malawi to help and to encourage the Bahá'ís," the Harveys said. "We wanted to give, but we also received. We received a great uplift in our hearts at perceiving the love for and devotion to Bahá'u'lláh of the entire Bahá'í community, and we look forward eagerly to repeating the experience and renewing the association with this particular part of our Bahá'í family."

Iran

**Children's classes make friends of non-Bahá'ís**

The Continental Board of Counsellors for Western Asia says that for more than 50 years, children of diverse religious backgrounds have been attending Bahá'í classes in Iran.

Many of the children from non-Bahá'í families who attended these classes in their early years are now "responsible officers" of government in Iran, "and wherever they are, they are very sympathetic and helpful to the Faith."

Currently, the Counsellors report, "we have quite a number of non-Bahá'í children attending classes in various towns with the consent and persuasion of their parents. "What is more important and interesting is the growing interest of parents ... in the necessity of Bahá'í 'character-building' classes for their children."

Members of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Africa met with Auxiliary Board members for Central and East Africa in late October 1976. Standing, left to right, are Counsellors Hushang 'Ahdiyyih and Oloro Epyru; Auxiliary Board members Festus Shayo, Enayat'u'lláh Fananapazir, Festus Sunguti, Sadegh Eghtessadi, Louis Kalombo, Hebat'u'lláh Khodadad, Counsellor Kolonario Oule, Auxiliary Board member Chowghi Rouhani, Counsellor Isobel Sabri. Seated, left to right, are Auxiliary Board members Anselme Tykouka, Selemani bin Kimbulu, Paul Hanbury, Ola Pawlowska and Javon Gutosi.
All-Quechua Conference
an overwhelming success

Constructing a wood and straw building 14 meters (15 yards) in diameter was a joyous task for Quechua believers in the Otavalo, Ecuador, area. They were preparing for the Third Quechua Tantanakuy (All-Quechua Conference) in July.

Quechua, once the language of the Inca civilization, is spoken today by some four million people in the Andes mountains.

The three National Spiritual Assemblies involved — Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia — also prepared for the conference. In Ecuador, pamphlets, a small prayer book, song books and recordings were made in the Quechua language.

In Bolivia and Peru, chapters from *Baha'u'llah and the New Era* were translated into Quechua.

Communities with Quechua believers prepared for the Tantanakuy (conference) by holding deepening classes.

Construction of the conference building, says the Continental Board of Counsellors for South America, "motivated an entire Quechua area and generated a renewed spirit of work and service. Finally the nine-sided hut became a reality . . . and eventually sheltered more than 450 Baha'is."

During the month of construction, more than 400 helpers carted straw, erected the

These Bahai's were among the 450 present at the Third All-Quechua Conference in Ecuador in July. Standing on the left are Andres Jachakollo and Sabino Ortego, Auxiliary Board members for Bolivia. Rufino Gualavisí, an Auxiliary Board member from Ecuador, is second from right. In the back center is Mario Leon, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Peru.

More than 400 Bahai's worked to build this nine-sided hut in Otavalo, Ecuador, where 450 believers met in July for the Third All-Quechua Conference.
Around the World

wooden frame, and thatched the building.

When the three-day Tantanakuy opened
on July 29, a strong spirit of unity was
evident.

The believers sought ways to study the
Revealed Word in their own language.
They also studied the history of the Faith,
the importance of universal participation,
and the goals of the Five Year Plan.

The Quechua believers had an op-
portunity at the Tantanakuy to express in
their own language their love for
Baha’u’llah and their understanding of His
Teachings.

Radio Bahá’í Test
broadcast successful

A cable to the World Center from the
National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador
contained the joyful news that the first test
broadcast for Radio Bahá’í was successful.

The broadcast took place at 11:10 a.m.
on October 12. The National Assembly
says this will “open a new path” in teach-
ing the Faith.

Canada

Regional conferences
map victory strategy

To ensure a victorious conclusion to
the Five Year Plan, the National Spiritual
Assembly of Canada called eight regional
conferences, held in September and
October. The featured speaker at each con-
ference was the Hand of the Cause John
Robarts.

The conferences were designed to
launch systematic deepening, teaching
and proclamation efforts that will enable

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Nigeria

Chance meeting turns to memorable experience

One of the more memorable moments during a teaching trip in Nigeria last summer by Amy Black, a Bahá'í from the United States, occurred in Ugep: "A beautiful young girl walked up to me and embraced me like a long-lost sister. She did not know anyone in our group and I had never seen her before. She just gazed at me with such love and trust that afterward everyone said she was one of those rare, pure souls who are led by God to be attracted to Bahá'ís. She was very shy. She said her name is Gladness and that she was 14 years old. She radiated gladness in her smile.”

Dr. Charles Lerche, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, told Miss Black a touching story that he felt demonstrated how dedicated Nigerian Bahá'ís can be.

Mr. Lerche said there was a believer in the Port Harcourt area who was ill, probably with tuberculosis. This did not deter the believer from agreeing to deliver building materials to a remote area where Bahá'í Centers were being built.

A few days before the delivery was to take place, the man's brother was killed by armed robbers. The Bahá'í was not only grief-stricken, but had to make all funeral arrangements himself.

This responsibility completed, he carried the construction materials to the difficult-to-reach area, traveling in pouring rain.

He then returned home and died, the materials safely delivered.

Conference at Enugu focuses on teaching

Teaching was on the hearts and minds of the more than 240 Bahá'ís from 17 countries who met in Enugu, Nigeria, August 13-14.

The friends were addressed by members of the Continental Board of Counsellors: Friday Ekpe, Thelma Khelghati and Mihdí Samandari.

A message from the Universal House of Justice to the International Teaching Conference in Enugu was read by Mr. Ekpe.

This was followed by a talk by Dr. Samandari about the Cause of God in Africa. He said African Bahá'ís must be deepened in preparation for the day they will leave Africa to teach the Faith in the West. He particularly directed this statement to the youth of Africa.

Mr. Ekpe, speaking about the history of the Faith in Africa, marveled at the relatively short span of time it has taken the Faith to become known the length and breadth of the continent.

Mrs. Khelghati reminded adults that children observe and imitate their elders. "We must be careful of what we say or do," she said.

At the close of the conference, a public meeting was held. Requests for literature about the Faith exceeded the supply on hand.

Bangladesh

Cooperation hallmark of regional meetings

Four regional teaching conferences and a teacher training institute in Bangladesh were the fruits of cooperative planning between the Continental Board of Counsellors and the National Spiritual Assembly of Bangladesh.

The teacher training institute lasted two days, the first day being spent in instruction and the second in actual teaching. The teaching, done in a new area of Dacca, brought 100 individuals into the Faith and caused three localities to be opened.

The institute, held in Dacca, was attended by five traveling teachers in that area and by an observer from the Faridpur area. Discussion, led by Auxiliary Board members, centered on the Five Year Plan.

Germany

The Bahá'í House of Worship near Frankfurt, Germany, is visible behind the friends assembled for the 47th National Convention held April 30 - May 1.
The first of the four regional teaching conferences was held at Jessore, and was attended by 80 people, 60 of them Bahá'ís.

It was conducted by two National Assembly members and a Bahá'í from Dacca. Firesides were given both evenings of the conference.

The National Assembly said a report about the conference appeared in a local newspaper, with the article stressing "the non-political character of the Faith and obedience to government."

The regional teaching conference in Mymensingh "created a new spirit in the women there," reported the National Spiritual Assembly. A number of families present became Bahá'ís.

The conference in Rajshahi brought about some "valuable contacts" for the Faith, according to the National Assembly. An Auxiliary Board member at the conference met with local dignitaries and visited Chapai Nawabganj, a subdivisional headquarters city. Firesides were conducted during the conference.

Twenty-five of the friends met at the regional conference in Dacca. They planned for the re-election of Local Assemblies in their four home communities and discussed the Five Year Plan.

Bermuda

Two declarations follow observance

One of those who attended the observance of the birth of the Báb, held at the Hazíratu'll-Quds in Hamilton, Bermuda, was a non-Bahá'í from Bogota, Colombia, in Bermuda with the ship "Doric."

After listening to prayers and readings from the Writings, and songs led by two traveling teachers, he declared his belief in Bahá'u'lláh.

He had with him a friend who one week later also became a Bahá'í.

TV interview program twice features Bahá'ís

One of the more popular television interview programs in Bermuda — Good Morning Bermuda — had a Bahá'í as its guest in both May and June.

The program's hostess, Marlene Butterfield, said to Georgia Sanchez, a pioneer from the U.S., "I am amazed at Bahá'ís. You are so involved in life."

Since the two interviews, close ties have been formed between the Bahá'ís and Good Morning Bermuda management.

One evidence of the goodwill of the management is that selections from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and Bahá'í prayers have been included on a rotating basis with readings from other religions as a beginning for Good Morning Bermuda.

Most Bahá'í proclamations and public events are now announced weekly in the TV Calendar portion of the program.

Hawaii

Dr. Jordan speaker at Hazíratu'll-Quds

Dr. Daniel Jordan, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, was the guest speaker at the National Hazíratu'll-Quds in Hawaii on August 29.

Dr. Jordan told the audience of 150 that Bahá'ís are bringing forth a new race that will solve many of the oppressive problems of mankind.

Dr. Jordan is in the process of making an index of these problems, and already has included crime, poverty, injustice, super-

New Hebrides

Two island areas visited first time by teaching team

The first teaching trip to Big Bay and Santo on the island of Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides has been made.

The team that spent eight days on the islands consisted of three women and three youth, one of whom is not a Bahá'í.

They traveled from Santo to Port-Olroy after arriving on Espiritu Santo. While waiting three days for transportation to the town of Matantas, they gave two evening firesides.

After reaching Matantas, they walked 20 kilometers (12 miles) around Big Bay and across six rivers to reach the village of Jereviu.

Three days were spent in Jereviu, where proclamations and firesides were held. The people there asked the Bahá'ís to return soon.

Children at a Bahá'í class in Port Vila, New Hebrides, color drawings about the Nineteen Day Feast, reinforcing what they have learned during a discussion period.
stition and war. He said all such problems are soluble if man’s attention and energies can be re-channeled.

He said civil agencies are impotent to change humanity, and that it is the responsibility of the Bahá’ís to do it.

Dr. Jordan is a professor of education at the University of Massachusetts in the United States.

Youngsters live, learn at Child Institute

Youngsters ages 4 to 17 made musical instruments and studied bird life at Kilauea Lighthouse in the Hawaiian Islands during the annual Child Institute.

The Kauai Island Teaching Committee sponsored the event August 6-7, using the theme “Unity Through Diversity.”

The children were enthusiastic and particularly enjoyed memorizing prayers.

Auxiliary Board assistants briefed

At a training session for his assistants July 23-24 at the Hawaiian national Hazíratu’l-Quds, Auxiliary Board member Ben Ayala told them about their duties and responsibilities, the relationship between the institutions, how to work with both Local Spiritual Assemblies and individuals, and methods of teaching and consolidation.

The assistants assessed the teaching activities in their home communities. Based on these assessments, which were reported to the group, the assistants made personal goals and goals as a team.

Alaska

20th Summer School a ‘dynamic’ event

A ferry boat strike prevented some Bahá’ís from attending the 20th annual Summer School in Alaska, but the smaller-than-usual group from Alaska, Canada and the United States had a “dynamic” school anyway, reported some of the participants.

They met in Juneau August 4-7, with children outnumbering adults 60-45.

Teaching in native Alaskan villages and appreciating cultural differences among Alaskans were major topics at the school.

Auxiliary Board member Lauretta King spoke to the group about the Native Council. The Council was established by the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska to broaden understanding between native and Western cultures, and to help native believers form Bahá’í identities.

The friends also studied the Covenant, education, teaching, child-rearing, and making the most of one’s potential.

Hand of Cause Furútan present at conference

The Hand of the Cause ‘Ali-Akbar Furútan was present at a teaching conference in Petersburg, Alaska, in September.

Sixty-six adults and children from eight communities in Alaska and one in Canada met with Mr. Furútan for a Unity Feast and three discussion sessions.

Ghana

Properties pursued

The Local Spiritual Assemblies of Asebu and Asamang, in Ghana, are actively pursuing the goal of acquiring suitable properties for their Bahá’í Centers.

The Local Assembly in Asebu has been offered a site that soon will be purchased.
Cleaning up at the House of Worship in Sydney see page 9
REJOICE ANNOUNCE INITIATION FULL TIME BROADCASTING FIRST RADIO STATION BAHÁ'Í WORLD DECEMBER 12 IN OTAVALO, ECUADOR. HAIL VISION LABORS ASSEMBLY COMMUNITY ECUADOR IN ACHIEVING THIS MILESTONE BAHÁ'Í PROCLAMATION TEACHING DEEPENING. OFFERING PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD BAHÁ'Í RADIO ECUADOR WILL FULFILL ITS PROMISE AS LANDMARK CAUSE AND SERVICE PROGRESS PEOPLES LATIN AMERICA.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
December 15, 1977

EXTEND WARM GREETINGS ATTENDANTS HEMISPHERIC RADIO TELEVISION CONFERENCE. GREAT OPPORTUNITIES AFFORDED THOSE BAHÁ'IS TRAINED USE POWERS RADIO TELEVISION REACH HEARTS, MINDS NUMBERLESS PERSONS AWAITING COMING KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH. MAY VOICE CAUSE BE RAISED BEFORE MILLIONS PROCLAIMING MESSAGE BAHÁ'U'LLAH THROUGHOUT HEMISPHERE. SHARING OF TALENTS, RESOURCES, ZEAL WILL ASSUREDLY BRING GREAT CONFIRMATIONS. ASSURE LOVING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES SUCCESS YOUR IMPORTANT DELIBERATIONS.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
December 15, 1977

JOYOUSLY ANNOUNCE 125 PARTICIPANTS 24 NSA'S 6 INDIGENOUS TRIBES REPRESENTED. COUNSELLORS PAVON AND OSBORNE 5 AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBERS SPIRIT FELLOWSHIP, LOVE. TWENTY-TWO PEOPLE OFFER HELP BAHÁ'Í RADIO ECUADOR. $626.04 DONATED SUPPORT CIRBAL. MASS TEACHING MANY NEW BAHÁ'IS. RECEIVED WIDESPREAD PUBLICITY. CONFERENCE INSPIRED INDIGENOUS PROGRAMS DEVELOPMENT MUSIC USE OF TV. SUPPLICATE FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY PLACES SUCCESS RADIO TV PLANS.

BAHÁ'Í HEMISPHERIC RADIO-TV CONFERENCE
December 26, 1977
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Cover

The last few years have witnessed a remarkable expansion of the Faith throughout Latin America, and one of the principal reasons for this is the widespread and effective use of radio and television as teaching and proclamation vehicles. The sharing of new ideas in media usage and the coordination of future efforts were the principal topics of an historic Western Hemispheric Bahá’í Radio and Television Conference near Panama City, Panama, in December. The conference followed closely the announcement that the first Bahá’í-owned and operated radio station in the world, Bahá’í Radio in Otavalo, Ecuador, had begun regular broadcasting.
Hemispheric Bahá'í Radio-TV Conference

Delegates from 24 countries assemble in Panama to discuss new techniques for using media to spread Bahá'í Message

One hundred twenty-five delegates representing 24 National Spiritual Assemblies met in Panama City, Panama, December 27 for a Hemispheric Bahá'í Radio and Television Conference, only the second of its kind ever held.

The delegates, who ranged in professional experience from a former U.S. network news producer to a schoolteacher, exchanged ideas about program design, production techniques, scriptwriting, and a host of other aspects in their work in Latin America.

A highlight of the conference was the dedication of a new Bahá'í radio station in the world, Bahá'í Radio Ecuador.

The use of mass media by Bahá'ís in Latin America, bears on the task of the Auxiliary Board of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly and on the Advisory Board of the Bahá'í World Center.

The Bahá'ís of Paraguay estimate that less than one percent of the population knew about the Faith prior to radio programs that are now broadcast in six cities.

In Columbia, pioneer Anne Miller coached indigenous citizens to announce radio spots in their own languages.
During consultation it was learned that while Latin Americans feel free to broadcast that Bahá’u’lláh is the Manifestation of God for this Day, Canadians have found that the indirect approach works best in their country.

In five cities, including Toronto, the Canadians broadcast Bahá’í world and national news for 10 minutes five nights a week. Another five minutes each night is spent telling viewers how to produce their own programs.

With a wide base of activity to work from, the delegates were able to formulate new media plans.

Perhaps the most far-reaching involves CIRBAL (Center for Bahá’í Radio Interchange of Latin America), a media collection center for the Americas in El Salvador. CIRBAL was created nearly three years ago at a Bahá’í Caribbean area media conference in Puerto Rico. It is a unit of the audio-visual department at the World Center.

CIRBAL collects mostly Spanish-language radio and television programs — but also some in French and English — as they are produced by individual National Spiritual Assemblies and makes them available to other countries.

The delegates at the conference felt the time has come for three-year-old CIRBAL to take on the production of programs as well. They plan to ask the Universal House of Justice to consider expanding the support and staff of CIRBAL. The delegates themselves contributed $600 toward its continued operation.

CIRBAL also is involved in a second media plan that sprang from the conference. Barbara Joyce, a pioneer to St. Martin in the Leeward Islands, volunteered to make a series of Spanish-language television programs, the topics and coordination of which will be handled by CIRBAL.

The delegates decided to send to CIRBAL information about television production in their home countries.

The Hemisphere Bahá’í Radio and Television Conference committee presented a gift to each delegation. Here, the delegates from Trinidad receive a photograph of the Bahá’í House of Worship in Panama from conference committee member Carrietta Kelly as conference committee members Sheri Robinson and Barbara Wisman look on.
One of the highlights of the Hemispheric Conference was a discussion of Bahá’í Radio in Ecuador by (left to right) Anne Miller, a pioneer from the U.S. who now lives in Colombia; Raul Pavón, Continental Counsellor from Ecuador; Alfonso Tocancano, who announces programs in the Quechua language on Bahá’í Radio, and Rodrigo Quintero, another of Bahá’í Radio’s announcers.

A Bahá’í who has access to a studio pledged to produce television programs in Venezuela.

A system will be devised to allow media professionals and educators to assist Bahá’í Radio in Ecuador to develop its listening center-tutorial school programming.

The Continental Board of Counsellors is to arrange a series of regional conferences, to be held during the coming year, on the use of music in the media.

The delegates, meanwhile, plan to produce and share with one another pre-packaged opening and closing themes and other musical elements of programs. They plan to produce more music about the Faith.

The conference that gave birth to these plans was itself planned and hosted by the National Spiritual Assembly of Panama through its Hemispheric Bahá’í Radio and Television Conference Committee.

The guest of honor at the conference was Continental Counsellor Raul Pavón from Ecuador, who has labored valiantly to make Bahá’í Radio a reality.

Continental Counsellor Alfred Osborne of Panama and five Auxiliary Board members also were present.

Conference sessions were held at a camp operated by the Lions Club at Las Cumbres, about a mile from the Bahá’í House of Worship.

Following a unity feast Thursday and dawn prayers at the House of Worship on Friday, Mr. Pavón opened the conference by discussing the relationship of the media to teaching the masses. He reminded the audience of the Master’s statement that all forces are created for the diffusion of the Covenant.

Michael Stokes, a representative from the U.S., talked about setting objectives for programming based on desired results.

Fernando Schianterelli, an Auxiliary Board member and producer with the government radio and television services in Peru, discussed production techniques and how to direct programs.

Stan Phillips, representative from Canada, emphasized the necessity of working with the institutions of the Faith to ascertain that materials are properly reviewed and edited.

Mr. Rutstein’s topic was “Sensitivity in Mass Communica-

A local Bahá’í youth is greeted by Continental Counsellor Alfred Osborne from Panama at a unity feast for the media conference participants and the Panamanian friends.
Fernando Schianterelli, a producer with the Peruvian radio and television services, reviews the elements of directing a program.

Alfonso Tulcanazo, an Otavaleño Indian, accepts on behalf of the Ecuadorian delegation the conference committee's gift of a photograph of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Panama.

Auxiliary Board member Nathan Rutstein, from the U.S., discusses radio and television programming with a Venezuelan participant at the Hemispheric Conference.

He said television exaggerates the character and emotions of its subjects, and can be a powerful medium for a sincere Bahá'í teacher.

Mr. Rutstein cautioned against "dragging the attitude of the old world order into our Bahá'í programs. The dignity of the Faith must be upheld, and love and unity communicated."

Other speakers at the conference included Robert Porter (Guatemala), Lillian Fraser (Trinidad), Susan Leich (El Salvador), Marvin Dreyer (El Salvador), Alex Frame (Canada), Fred Berest (Panama), James Theroux (U.S.), Kamram Mansuri (Ecuador), Dean Stephens (Puerto Rico) and Nahmy Zohoori (Jamaica).

Two awards were presented on Sunday evening. The John Stearns Award, named for a pioneer who broadcast Bahá'í programs in the 1940's on Radio Via in Ecuador, was given to the Bahá'ís of Ecuador for establishing Bahá'í Radio. The award was fashioned from a piece of the aluminum antenna from the new station in Otavalo, with "John Stearns Award" inscribed on it. The other half of the aluminum piece is in the international archives in Haifa.

Barbara Joyce received the second award for developing 15-minute Bahá'í television shows that are seen from St. Martin to Samoa.

The days immediately preceding and following the conference were devoted to teaching in Panama City. Eighteen believers taught the Faith in a new housing project. Others taught in a barrio where a dozen people accepted the Faith.

Articles about the conference were carried in two daily and one weekly newspaper, and were broadcast on two radio stations and one television station. Eight stations carried spots and news flashes about the conference for nearly two weeks before it began.

One person declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh at a public meeting held on the final evening of the conference.

It was announced that the next Hemispheric Bahá'í Radio and Television Conference would be longer to devote more time to television production, but not less to radio programs. The time and place of the conference will be announced later.
More than 1,000 Bahá’í women from all over Asia, with observers and speakers from Europe and America, gathered at Vigyan Bhavan Auditorium in New Delhi, India, October 13-16 for the Asian Bahá’í Women’s Conference.

The presence of the Hand of the Cause Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum as the most distinguished guest and principal speaker for the event was a source of great joy and happiness for the believers. Rúhíyyih Khánum shared with the gathering a cablegram, sent in December 1930 by Shoghi Effendi to the first Asian Women’s Conference:

"Convey to Indian Asian Women’s Conference behalf Greatest Holy Leaf and myself expression our genuine profound interest in their deliberations. May Almighty guide bless their high endeavor."

The significance of the 1977 conference was expressed in a message sent by the Universal House of Justice:

"With utmost joy hail Bahá’í Women’s Conference graced presence Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum as another major step in Asia leading to full recognition noble station fulfillment their great potentialities their significant role promotion Cause immense responsibilities they are called upon to discharge in cooperation with their brethren in building new civilization sheltering all mankind. Ardently praying Sacred Threshold this gathering may become landmark progress Faith Asia strengthen wing humanity so tenderly encouraged Blessed Beauty enable communities soar heights glorious victories."

The conference was inaugurated in a brief address by D.R.
Anumul-Bahá Ruhiyyih Khanum, assisted by architect Fariburz Sahá, lays the cornerstone of the Mother Temple of the Indian subcontinent. The ceremony on October 17 took place immediately following the close of the Asian Baha’i Women’s Conference. Inauguration of construction of the House of Worship is one of the goals of the Five Year Plan in India.

at New Delhi

Kohli, the lieutenant governor of Delhi, who pointed out that the gathering had “added prestige” to the city.

Then the principal non-Bahá’í guest speaker, Shanti Bhushan, India’s minister of Law, Justice, and Company Affairs, addressed the gathering. He spoke of his great happiness in appearing at “probably the first women’s conference of its kind taking place in India.” He recalled a visit he made to the Bahá’í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, in 1972.

“I can still vividly recall the overpowering feeling of peace and equanimity which overwhelmed me in the sublime precincts of the Temple. For a moment, I felt that all the problems and worries of the day-to-day material world which descend upon man had suddenly dissolved. It was a deeply moving experience. This unique and unforgettable experience has left a niche in my heart for the Bahá’í Faith and that is why I welcome this opportunity to reassociate myself with this movement.”

Television, radio, and the press covered the inauguration of the conference, and generated such widespread publicity that inquiries were received from many quarters, including prominent women of India and writers.

Amatu’l-Bahá Ruhiyyih Khanum, in her first appearance before the gathering, set the stage for the entire conference: “The purpose of this conference is to release an impetus throughout Asia amongst Bahá’í women. . . . The human race is composed of two component parts, but they are exactly the same. There are different characteristics and functions, but men and women are the same.”

She then pointed out that the Bahá’ís should realize that the
world is in “a state of emergency.” There is a great crisis in human history, she explained, and a special reaction is necessary on the part of the Bahá’ís. As much as it is necessary to understand the Teachings better, to understand and take part in the Administration of the Faith, it is even more important for the Bahá’ís to arise and distinguish themselves in teaching. And for this, men should assist their women. If they do not, it is going to be doubly difficult for women — particularly in India, where harmony within the home is a great, sacred, and precious tradition.

Men should actively encourage and assist their women to arise and serve the Faith, Rúhíyyih Khánum pointed out. “One of the failings of men in Asia and Africa is that they do not teach the Faith to their wives, mothers, and sisters,” she said.

Then, in further sessions of the conference, Rúhíyyih Khánum and the other speakers further developed the same theme. Some of the points she made included:

—The primary purpose of education is to draw the soul of man nearer to his Creator. Obviously the world needs doctors, engineers, farmers, etc. But if education is going to take one away from service to mankind and to Bahá’u’lláh, it is not what Bahá’u’lláh meant by education. These values are directly related to women, who are the first educators of mankind.

—From the beginning children are able to receive impressions, and the younger the child, the more impressionable. Therefore, children must be taught and lovingly encouraged to pray. They need discipline, as well. Parents must avoid building into the child weaknesses that will become weaknesses when they are adults. Bahá’í parents should pay more attention to the precious trusts given them by God; there is no reason why any child should not grow up to be a good Bahá’í.

—Deepening is a simple process: it takes place all the time. One way to deepen is to teach, and that is why Bahá’u’lláh admonishes us to teach His Faith. “If you want to deepen yourself, teach. You will be astonished at the knowledge and understanding you receive. Go out and teach—and you will learn.”

The other speakers at the conference, all of whom addressed themselves to the role of women in every aspect of Bahá’í life, included Mrs. Shirin Boman and Mrs. Zena Sorabjee, both members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South Central Asia; Dr. Edrice Rice-Wray of Mexico; Dr. Rezwan Mohregi and Dr. Mehri Afnan of Iran; Dr. Tahira Vajdi of India; Dr. Penny Walker of Nepal; Mrs. Meherangiz Munsiff of the United Kingdom; and Mrs. Shirin Fozdar of Singapore. A well-attended public meeting during the conference was addressed by Miss Jyoti Munsiff of the United Kingdom.

The closing session of the conference was a question-and-answer session by Rúhíyyih Khánum, followed by a slide presentation by Faríburz Şáhbá, the architect for the Mother Temple of the Indian Subcontinent, the cornerstone of which was laid fol-
lowing the conference.

Before the conference opened, and while it was in progress, Ruhiyyih Khânûm met with five ministers of the government of India. “All meetings were most effective in strengthening cordial and personal relationships with these high dignitaries,” the National Assembly reported. Each was presented a copy of *The Baha’i World and All Things Made New*. The ministers were Dr. P.C. Chunder, minister of education; Jagjivan Ram, minister of defense; Madhu Dandawate, minister of railways; Charan Singh, minister of home affairs; and H.M. Patel, minister of finance.

The conference received wide coverage in the news media in India. Interviews appeared in many publications, and press clippings received at the National Center came from as far away as Gauhati (Assam) and Kerala, where at least 12 newspapers carried accounts. All-India Radio of Delhi broadcast the news in Malayalam, the language of Kerala, on October 16. A leading daily newspaper carried an account of Mr. Bhushan’s speech on the front page.

The inauguration also was covered by United Press International for foreign distribution, and All-India Radio covered both the opening and conclusion of the conference in both domestic and foreign broadcasts.

Before the conference opened, teams of Bahá’í women spent two weeks calling on prominent women of Delhi, informing them of the mission of the Faith and of the purpose of the conference.

Many were invited to attend some of the sessions, and several responded to the invitations.

Many of the participants at the conference traveled to other parts of the country in a post-conference teaching plan, which included a teaching conference at Gwalior and proclamation events in Lucknow and Chandigarh.

In Lucknow, particularly, there was an intense interest on the part of local civic bodies in the women’s delegation that traveled there, and a heavy schedule of speeches and receptions took place, most of them reported over the Lucknow station of All-India Radio.

Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Burma also benefited from the teaching visits of persons who had attended the conference.

Among the guests at the inauguration of the Asian Bahá’í Women’s Conference was Shanti Bhushan, Indian minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs.
Echo Hotel Charlie — that was the name of our small Cessna airplane. Despite many problems, we were finally airborne and on our way to Mornington Island.

Four years had passed since I first met Larry and Fanny Lanley and their children at a supermarket in Melbourne. I couldn't keep my eyes off this beautiful full-blooded Aboriginal family. Straightaway I had approached them, told them I was a Bahá'í and invited them to a social gathering we were having that night. I hadn't told them much because I had wanted them to see for themselves what Bahá'í is all about when they met the other friends.

It took them only one day and they all declared. While they were in Melbourne they were looked after quite well and felt the love of the Bahá'ís very much.

After one year, the Lanley family left Melbourne for Mornington Island, which is about 3,000 miles from Melbourne, right at the top of Australia in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Since then I had been invited several times to go and meet the people on that island. The first year that I wanted to go, I had an auto accident and was hospitalized. The second year my son broke his hand, and the third year I had no money. The fourth year Francis (Fanny) and Larry, along with 90 other Aborigines, were taken to Fraser Island to make some films.

The only time I could go to Mornington, therefore, was during the school holidays. For two weeks it seemed that again I wasn't going to make it.

I could not understand the wisdom behind the unsuccessful attempts to go to Mornington Island, but now I can see clearly that the wisdom was that recently Larry had become the Chairman and Counselor of the island, and it is now easy to acquire permission to visit this Reserve. As you know, some areas of Australia are Aboriginal Reserves, which means that outsiders must ask permission from the Chairman before entering.

The other wisdom I see is that people respect their Chairman very much, and of course, his being a Bahá’í will help us to teach.

Originally, Sue Hiscock and I were planning to take a commercial flight to Mornington Island, but with the help of Aaron and Noela Blomely we chartered a small aircraft.

As usual, we faced a lot of problems and tests. First, we hadn't enough people who wanted to come with us; later, we had too many.

And speaking of tests and difficulties, I was terribly frightened of the little plane. I remembered that my husband had asked me some time ago whether I would fly in a small plane with him to look at some agricultural fields, and my answer was: “In no way will you get me, even for five minutes, in a small plane!”

Now I was embarking on a 36-hour journey in one. I asked Bahá'u'lláh to give me some courage, and as He promises that when we teach we get courage, I felt the fear leave me. And then I thought even if something did happen, what better thing to be doing than the most meritorious of all deeds, teaching the Faith.

Ted Von Nida, our pilot, who is not a Bahá’í, suggested that we go to Sydney to meet with a Bahá’í teaching group that previously had gone to Mornington Island so as to get some advice and ideas from them.

We are the third group that has traveled to the island this year. The first group was the Blomely family, the second...
the group of Eric Kingston, John Dunn and Allan Waters.

We met with members of the second group, and they told us that the people on the island are very spiritual; many had asked as the group was leaving the island if they could join the Faith. They were told to consider themselves Bahá'ís until the next group came.

Allan was most impressed by the Lanleys' 7-year-old daughter, Rubina. Speaking of Rubina, I remember that when the Lanleys were in Melbourne we would pick them up every Sunday for the children's classes. One day as I arrived, Rubina ran into my arms, calling out, "Auntie Mahvash, the Presbyterian minister is here, and wants to take us to the Christian Sunday classes. I told him I was a Bahá'í and that I don't want to go!"

I calmed her down and explained that there was no harm in going to the Christian children's classes, but promised her that from the next Sunday onward I would be picking her up much earlier than the minister so that he wouldn't be hurt when he came to pick them up. I was pleased to hear from Allan that Rubina had been teaching the children on Mornington Island Bahá'í songs even though she hadn't seen us for four years.

I recalled another incident involving the Lanleys' eldest son, Philip, while he was in Melbourne.

Philip was away from his family and wasn't happy where he was living. After consultation, I found a job for him and took him to Port Melbourne to stay with the Robinson family. Bahá'ís who were living there.

To my surprise, that very day Ken Robinson phoned and told me that three people, Philip's previous landlady, his boss, and the minister of the Presbyterian church had gone to the Robinson's house and taken Philip back to his former home. They said he was a Presbyterian and should not stay in a Bahá'í home.

The next day I went to the landlady and asked her to ask Philip to tell them what he was. With great courage Philip told them he no longer was a Presbyterian, he was a Bahá'í, and this helped him to get out of his old environment.

At the moment there are three Bahá'ís on Mornington Island, Mr. and Mrs. Lanley and Anna Chong, whose husband is of Christian background.

Wednesdays, August 24.

An all-day flight to Mornington Island.

Thursday, August 25.

Today at about 5 p.m. we arrived at Mornington, one day later than anticipated. I had wanted to send a cable saying we would be late, but the pilot said the people on Mornington Island are used to delays.

Fanny and Larry heard the plane coming, but were apprehensive as to whether we would be on it or not. You should have seen their faces, how happy they became as they recognized us.

Fanny told me that an hour before she had sent a cable to Melbourne saying, "What happened to you?" She said that as they had been expecting us on Wednesday, they had all had nice clothes on and bunches of flowers waiting for us. It really broke my heart that I hadn't cabled as I had wanted to.

Nevertheless, she and the others were very pleased to see us. Fanny said that we must all hold hands and walk through the town together so that people would see us. Fanny was introducing me as the friend she had been receiving letters from and had been talking to them about. Here I realized how important it is to write letters to the islanders even if we can't get there, as this is a good way of deepening believers. In each letter I had written a quotation from the Writings so they would not forget the Faith.

Friday, August 26

The first step we took today — of course, after prayers — was to meet with the Manager of the island, a white man named Roger Pettit. He is sent to the island by the government, but is nominated by the Presbyterian Church. After talking with him for half an hour we felt that he became interested, and he asked for books.

Later, Fanny took us to different tents to meet her friends. Speaking of tents, I should mention that since last year, and the very heavy cyclone they had on Mornington Island in which most of the people lost their homes and nearly everything else they owned, the people have been living in tents furnished by the government. The government has promised to build them new homes soon.

It was quite exciting to see what a great teacher Fanny is, as she told her people about the Faith. We would first start with some prayers, and we could feel that they enjoyed them very much. Then we would tell them that we did not bring any material possessions for them, we had instead brought them the happy news that Bahá'u'llah is the Return of Christ and it is only through His Teachings that world unity can be achieved.

In the afternoon we met with the minister. He asked us who the Bahá'ís are on the island were. He is from New Guinea, and although he himself is dark, he is not communicating much with the Aborigines but is always with the white people. He told us he had been angry when learning the other Bahá'í groups had been on the island during his absence. I remembered how Allan Waters had told us he was asked to conduct the service for National Aborigines Day, as the Aboriginal minister was away.

The minister said to us, "You Bahá'ís should have asked me before coming to the island because you are bringing a (religious) message."

I told him I had promised not to build another church on the island with a Bahá'í priest in it to compete with him, as we do not have any missionaries. He said that in meeting with the elders of the town he felt they were very unhappy that Bahá'ís are on that island. We read a prayer to him and gave him a book (All Things Made New).
Not long afterward we went to see some friends of Fanny’s. The whole lot of them accepted Bahá’u’lláh, most of them being youth between 18 and 25 years old. We asked them to take us to the elders to find out how much they knew about the Faith and whether they were concerned about our being on the island. The first elder, named Prince, was a nice and friendly man who had met with the previous group. When I asked him to read a Bahá’í prayer, he happily accepted. I chanted a prayer in Persian, and Sam, a member of our group who is Tongan, said a prayer in Tongan. Incidentally, the other members of the group were Sue Hiscock, from New Zealand, and Faruk Sasegar, from Persia.

We asked Prince whether they had discussed, at their last meeting, any unhappiness with the Bahá’ís. We said we did not wish to cause any trouble. He said he could not remember such a discussion.

We gave him a prayer book. He was quite pleased and asked for more literature. Then we went to see the next elder, named Margaret. She was pleased to see all the young people walking with us. She said, “It is wonderful to see all you young people taking up a religion.”

Margaret also did not remember any discussion of unhappy feelings toward us at the meetings. We told her that our purpose is to promote unity amongst the people on the island, and in no way would we like to be the cause of disunity.

There are six elders on the island who meet once a week with the minister of the Church to organize religious meetings. Another elder, Mr. Chong, had been in Melbourne four years ago and remembered having had dinner with us. After some discussion he expressed his wish to become a Bahá’í, but Fanny said no, he should think about it first. We left it at that.

That evening a film of Aboriginal dances was shown by the Mornington Islanders. To our surprise, there were only around 80 people in the audience.

As I was watching the film, suddenly someone grabbed me from behind and held me very tight. Turning around, I could scarcely believe my eyes. It was Anna Chong.

I told her I was sure she had forgotten us. She replied, “Darling, I have not forgotten the Faith or anyone else — the reason I did not answer your letters is because I teach seven hours a day and have seven children. I just did not have the time!”

I was so pleasantly surprised to see how faithful these beautiful Aboriginal people are.

Saturday, August 27

We started the day with prayers. Speaking of prayers, I must mention that we said 500 Remover of Difficulties in the plane for success in teaching, and the pilot had asked us to say some additional prayers for a safe takeoff from Mount Isa, as we were 400 pounds overweight because of the books, films and food we had on board.

Each morning we write out our plans and act accordingly. Today we divided ourselves into two groups. One group went to carry on the teaching work, the other went to deepen the new believers.

We heard that Larry had closed the island’s canteen. He told us he wished that the people would not drink alcohol while his friends were there. Alcohol is a big problem on the island; many of the people are alcoholics and need medical attention badly. To my knowledge the only people on the island who do not drink are Fanny and Larry, and that is one reason the other people are very impressed by their actions.

Today was a good day to teach because everyone was sober and knew what he was doing. We went back to the Manager, Roger, and spoke with him. I asked how we could show our Bahá’í films to the people.
To get permission we had to contact several people, and confirm with the minister whether he had any program planned for that Sunday night before the place could be made available to us. When we arrived at the minister's home we found he was not there. In front of the house, talking with Roger, was a counselor. He declared his faith in Baha'u'llah.

Later we found an elderly man who told us he was the father of a young man who had died some weeks ago from heart disease, and that the previous Baha'i group had said some prayers at his funeral. After we explained to him what the Faith was about and read some prayers, he accepted Baha'u'llah as the Return of Christ. As we were leaving, the man's wife and seven of their children, six of whom are over 15, arrived. He asked us to tell them about the Faith, then asked if they would like to declare, and they all did. Not far from there his daughter-in-law approached us, and she also declared.

Later we met some young people, called them together and asked if they would like to hear about Baha'u'llah. In a short time they all wanted to declare, and we ran out of cards. An elderly man who was standing nearby had a sad expression. I asked what was wrong, and one of the youth said the man also wished to join, but there were no cards left. So as not to break his heart...we took a blank card, wrote the necessary information on it, and gave it to the man to sign. His face became so happy and relieved.

In a nearby shop was a white girl who was surprised to hear the claim of Baha'u'llah. "What about the false prophets Christ speaks about?" she asked us.

We told her that Christ says many false prophets shall come in His name; this means they will still carry the name of Christianity, but He said He would come with a new name in the Glory of God, and Baha'u'llah means 'Glory of God.' Christ also said that by their fruits we would know them. She asked us to send her a book.

It was wonderful that we had 100 per cent unity in our group. We bought lots of fruit drinks and biscuits for the next day, as we had decided to hold a small deepening conference for the youth. In the afternoon we showed some slides. As we had not invited anyone, around 40 children came without invitation, including the children of the minister, and we taught them Baha'i songs.

**Sunday, August 27**

After prayers, Sue wrote out the plan, and we decided to go to the church service so our friends would realize we are not anti-Christian.

Margaret, the elder we had met, conducted some of the readings and hymns at the service. Interestingly, only four full-blooded Aborigines attended.

The minister said, "There are some wolves in this town, at this very moment, in this very place, in sheep skins and with sweet voices stealing our sheep." We knew he meant us. We were praying he would see and hear the good things that were happening in the church. I knew that the minister was only trying his best to protect the people, as he did not understand what the Faith is about.

During the announcements the minister mentioned that the group from the mainland that was supposed to perform some activities Sunday night would, owing to unforeseen circumstances, be unable to come. So we knew it would be all right for us to show our films, and that it was God's will and the power of prayer that had caused this.

When we came out of the church we were very happy. We shook hands with the minister and thanked him for the sermon. He was most surprised by our reaction.

Our aim in the town had been to make everyone aware of the name of Baha'u'llah. All the children already had learned His Name. After the church service, we found out that everyone leaves the town on Sundays. They go hunting or fishing with their families.

Nine of the youth remained in town to attend our deepening conference. It was an exciting day. In almost no time one of the youth, Jonathan, learned to play Bahá'í songs on his guitar. Everyone learned about Bahá'u'llah, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, and the Universal House of Justice.

We went with them through the pamphlet, "God's New Age." We gave the youth Bahá'í rings, and asked them to teach the Faith and not deprive any soul of hearing about Bahá'u'llah. We also explained to them the problems alcohol creates. It was really a wonderful conference.

Toward evening we got a car from Roger. We rode through the town, stopping at every house or tent, and Faruk would run out and announce to everyone that two Bahá'í films would be shown that night, and that everyone was welcome.

It was surprising to see that the young Bahá'ís were not shy around us. We sat on the steps together singing Bahá'í songs before we showed the films. More than 200 people gathered together, just like a drive-in movie. The films "It's Just the Beginning" and "That New Time Religion" were shown, and everyone was excited about them.

**Monday, August 28**

Anyone we met we asked how they liked the films, and everyone said they loved them. One of the youth had brought his sister, and she also wanted to join. A woman librarian declared, then a sergeant, a shop assistant and quite a few others, but we ran out of cards again and couldn't accept any more.

That very day we received a cable from Peter Hiscock asking for permission to come to Mornington Island the following week, and the permission was granted straightaway. On the way home we met with the Birchalls in Cairns and delivered all the cards to the Regional Goals Committee secretary.

We also had the pleasure of meeting the Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone, his wife, daughter and son-in-law in Rockhampton.

Dear reader, when you have finished reading this report, please kindly say a prayer especially for Mornington Island and our dear Aboriginal friends. The more we love each other, the closer we will feel to God.

(Postscript: Two weeks later another Bahá'í group visited Mornington Island, and another 28 souls accepted Bahá'u'llah, bringing the number of Bahá'ís on the island to 65.)

Allan Waters with Larry and Francis Lanley's seven-year-old daughter, Rubina.
From the village of Saramsa. She announced that she was ready to pioneer to Bhutan alone, or with another Bahá’í, to fulfill that goal of the Five Year Plan. Immediately, Dhambar Singh, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, said he too would pioneer to Bhutan.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Sikkim, encouraged by the response of the friends to the invitation to help win the Five Year Plan goals, announced a Six Month Teaching Plan during the last session of the conference.

The Sikkim Herald, the official publication of the Information Service of the Sikkim government, devoted nearly half of its front page to the governor’s inauguration of the Himalayan Bahá’í Conference.

The article stated in part: “Well patronized by both members and non-members of the Faith, the meetings were based on stimulating and informal discussions of the Bahá’í Faith and the role of the Faith towards uplifting moral values in the lives of men, with a special emphasis on youth. The forum included delegates from Bahá’í Centers as far away as Ireland, Iran, Belgium, Bhutan, and followers from States all over India.

To trace its historical evolution, the Bahá’í Faith originated in what is now modern Iran. A unique feature of the Faith is its administrative machinery which Dr. Norolla, a bearded medico from Bombay, describes as the ‘nucleus and pattern for a future world commonwealth.’ An avowedly non-political organization, Bahá’ism, true to its modern conceptions, has accentuated a socio-economic program which, among other things, seeks to secure equal rights for men and women, and raise the educational standards in the country...”

**Taiwan**

**Children take spotlight**

*These six Bahá’í children make up a chorus that entertained those who attended a special Music Festival organized by the Bahá’ís of Taiwan. It took place in October in the city of Tainan.*

Auxiliary Board member Roxanne Terril uses home-made papier mâché hand puppets—of several different races—as “teachers” during children’s classes at the annual Bahá’í Summer School in Taiwan. The puppets “spoke” in English and Chinese, sang songs, and added a merry and lively note to the Summer School.
More than 240 Bahá'ís from 17 African countries attended this International Bahá'í Conference in Enugu, Nigeria.

Alaska

Teaching surge under way

Those present at the National Teaching Conference of the Bahá'ís of Alaska in Anchorage held September 10-11 bore in mind the thought that they are "approaching the single most important effort undertaken in the country."

The quotation is from a recent letter from the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears to the Baha'is of North America, sent to them as they inaugurated an extensive teaching effort as part of the Five Year Plan.

A special guest at the teaching conference was the Hand of the Cause 'Ali-Akbar Furutan. He spoke about the spiritual education of children. The examples of love and unity set by parents, he said, are most helpful to a child's growth. He considers it essential that love for Baha'u'llah be encouraged in our children.

In a second address, Mr. Furutan said all religions were meant to be universal. The shortcomings of the followers of each Messenger of God caused each religion not to be universal during its time.

Mr. Furutan said we should never think we are doing enough for the Faith. If so, we will be held responsible before God for what otherwise could have been prevented in terms of man's waywardness, human suffering and woes.

Addressing the youth, Mr. Furutan advised them to study the Writings of Baha'u'llah and the stories about the Faith, so they would find a new pearl of knowledge to assist themselves each day.

Mr. Furutan met with the children on Sunday and asked them to sing a song or say a prayer or verse they had memorized from the Writings. The children were delighted to be with him and to share what they had learned.

Other talks and discussions at the conference centered around teaching and the immediate challenge in spreading the Message of Baha'u'llah.

Two hundred seventy-six Bahá'ís were present during the conference: 179 adults, 36 youth and 61 children.

Bahá'í booth at State Fair

For the 30th year, the Bahá'ís had a booth at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer. This year's Fair attracted an estimated 131,000 people.

One of those who visited the booth, David Hanawalt of Chugiak, later declared his faith in Baha'u'llah. When Mr. Hanawalt found the booth, he told its attendant, Geo Huyck, "That's why I came to the Fair!"

Mr. Hanawalt said he had heard of the Faith but everyone he had asked about it, including clergymen, knew nothing about it but warned him to stay away from it. This, he said, only made him more curious. After many questions, he attended a fireside in Chugiak with Geo and Pam Huyck, then declared his belief.

The booth this year was simple and homelike, exemplifying the openness of Mauritius

The Prime Minister of Mauritius, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam (seated in center), was the recent recipient of the latest volume of The Bahá'í World, presented by (left to right) Continental Counsellors Shudin Fathé-Aazam, S. Appa and Bahiyyih Winckler, and to the left of the Prime Minister. National Spiritual Assembly member S. Mooten, traveling teacher Sh. Ghadimi, National Spiritual Assembly member P. Fabien and traveling teacher Mrs. Ghadimi.
the Faith. The simplicity of the rugs, drapes and booth arrangement paralleled the feeling of warmth and hospitality felt in Bahá’í homes. This, combined with the continuous videotape of the Hawaiian Bahá’í television series with the Hand of the Cause William Sears, attracted many people and questions.

The rotating pamphlet and brochure rack was in keeping with the style of the booth — with no pressure or feeling that “you have to take one to be polite.” Seekers quietly selected their own, and 367 pieces of literature were taken from the rack.

United States
Los Angeles Bahá’í Week

Mayor Tom Bradley of Los Angeles, California, was guest of honor at a dinner-dance at the Biltmore Bowl that opened the observance of Bahá’í Week in that city November 13-20.

Performing after the dinner were entertainers Seals and Crofts, Walter Heath and Danny Deardoff, Alex Rocco and Mrs. Gloria Ferguson read selections from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh.

The week was ended with a public meeting and panel discussion at the Aquarius Theater. Panelists were Dr. Daniel C. Jordan, chairman of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly; National Assembly member Dr. Dorothy Nelson; singers England Dan and John Ford Coley, and comedian Stu Gilliam.

New Hebrides
Hand of Cause visits

The Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone was among several Bahá’ís who visited the New Hebrides, islands in the southwest Pacific that are under joint British and French administration, during the last two weeks in November.

Arriving in the seaport city of Vila on November 18, Mr. Featherstone called on the British Resident Commissioner, J. Champion, and gave him an information folder developed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the New Hebrides for presentation to prominent citizens.

Mr. Featherstone spent time with the National Spiritual Assembly, Auxiliary Board members and their assistants, and Bahá’ís on the islands of Efate, Santo and Tanna, reminding the friends to refrain from participation in politics, and speaking about developments at the World Center and the worldwide growth of the Faith.

It was also arranged for him to meet with the British District Agent on the island of Santo and with both the British and French agents on Tanna.

Other visitors to the New Hebrides in November included Meherangiz Munsiff and Gol Aidun. Bahá’ís are from the United Kingdom and Canada, respectively.

Mrs. Munsiff spoke at firesides at Fila Island, Port Vila and Santo. There was one declaration at each of the firesides, with two of the new believers being Fijians of Hindu background.

Mrs. Munsiff also spoke to Girl Guides in Vila and Santo, to a women’s club in Mele Matt, and gave Bahá’í proclamation folders to the British and assistant French District Agents in Santo.

Two interviews with Mrs. Munsiff, one...
Portugal

Assembly to form in Faro

The Baha'i community of Faro, in southern Portugal, will form its first Local Spiritual Assembly at Riqvan, winning another goal of the Five Year Plan in Portugal.

There were only five believers in Faro until October, when the Regional Teaching Committee of the Algarve (southern Portugal) worked with the Baha'is of Faro to arrange for the visit of two traveling teachers, Shamsi Navidi from England and Leon Caraco.

As a result of public meetings at the city hall and at the Hotel Globo four people in attendance declared their belief in Baha'u'llah. The community thus has the necessary nine adults for Assembly formation.

in French and one in English, were broad cast November 23 and 24 on Radio Vila.

Mrs. Aidun, who accompanied Mrs. Mun staff, held a deepening class for Baha'i women on Fila Island, and, accompanied by Baha'is from Lenakel and Whitesands, was able to speak to the entire village of Sulphur Bay, on Tanna.

Dr. William Maxwell, a pioneer from the U.S. who is head of the Department of Education at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji was the guest speaker November 23 at Malapoa College in Vila, had an opportunity during his speech to some 600 persons to mention both Baha'u'llah and the Baha'i Faith.

Three Baha'i youth from New Zealand also arrived in November for two and one-half months of teaching. They held deepenings at Erakur and on Fila Island, and helped repair the Vila Baha'i Center.

Bangladesh

Most of the 150 participants at this Summer School, organized by the National Baha'i Youth Committee of Bangladesh, offered time for traveling teaching at the end of the session. In fact, three groups left directly from the school for various districts in the country. Burhanud-Din Afsin, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South Central Asia, is shown in the center of the photo. He, three Auxiliary Board members, and a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Bangladesh spoke on a variety of Baha'i subjects during the school, which attracted students from all parts of the country.
World's first Baha'i-owned radio station begins broadcasting in Ecuador
The Seat of the Universal House of Justice, in a photograph taken November 26, 1977. Shown are the two basement levels of the building, and the first forms erected on the ground-floor level. (The photograph is a composite of two separate exposures.)
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Cover

An historic event took place last October 12 high in the Andes mountains in Ecuador: the world's first Bahá'í-owned and operated radio station beamed its first test broadcast. The 1,000-watt station began regular broadcasting on December 12; the story behind the station, its impact on the area and the entire Bahá'í world community begins on Page 2.
Bahá’í Radio in Ecuador

In the Andes mountains, the world's first Bahá’í-owned and operated radio station beams a message of peace and love.

O my God! O my God! Unite the hearts of Thy servants, and reveal to them Thy great Purpose.

With this prayer, revealed by Bahá’u’lláh and recited in Spanish by the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador, Señorita Teresa Jara N., Bahá’í Radio of Ecuador, the world's first Bahá’í-owned and operated radio station, broadcast its inaugural message at 11:13 a.m. Wednesday, October 12, 1977.

Following another prayer, read in the Quechua language by Alfonso Tulcanazo, and a brief melody, those who were present on that historic occasion at Cajas, an Andean mountain village near Otavalo and about 45 miles north-northeast of the Ecuadorian capital of Quito, heard this announcement:

"Bahá’í Radio of Ecuador, Ecuadorian station — an antenna for the service of the cultural progress and spiritual development of the family. This is a test broadcast of our equipment at 1420 kilocycles, medium wave."

The test broadcast was beamed with only 50 watts of power, rather than the 1,000 watts to be used when regular transmission was begun on December 12, a date specially chosen for its spiritual and historical significance.

It was on December 12, 1863, that Bahá’u’lláh arrived in the city of Adrianople, from which He was to proclaim His Mission to the world's secular and ecclesiastical leaders. Thirty-eight years later, also on December 12, Guglielmo Marconi sent the first trans-Atlantic radio signal.

And it was in a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador dated December 12, 1974, that the Universal House of Justice set in motion the work of establishing the world's first Bahá’í radio station, predicting that the effort "... may well, in time, be hailed as an historic forward step in proclamation."
expansion, and deepening through the medium of radio, a
medium which the beloved Guardian hoped would be exploited
on behalf of the Cause of God. . . ."

Baha’i Radio went on the air as scheduled on December 12, an
event hailed by the Universal House of Justice in this cablegram
to all National Spiritual Assemblies:

"Rejoice announce initiation full-time broadcasting first radio
station Bahá’í world December 12 in Otavalo, Ecuador. Hail
vision labors Assembly community Ecuador in achieving this
milestone Bahá’í proclamation teaching deepening. Offering
prayers Sacred Threshold Bahá’í Radio Ecuador will fulfill its
promise as landmark Cause and service progress peoples Latin
America."

At the present time, everything that is being broadcast on
Bahá’í Radio is produced and recorded at the Amatu’l-Bahá
Rúḥiyih Khánum Teaching Institute in Otavalo, which is equip­
ped with two separate studios. But when completed, the building
at Cajas will house full control, studio, production and transmis­
sion facilities and equipment.

The origins of Bahá’í Radio date to early 1973 when the
National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador leased the facilities of
Radio Turismo, a small, low power, short wave radio station near
Otavalo for about five hours of Bahá’í programming each day.

"Only three Bahá’ís work regularly with the station," said a
report in Bahá’í News of September 1973, "but already, with
what might be considered customary Bahá’í optimism, the be­
lievers of Ecuador are projecting their preliminary enterprise into
the future, and to the world at large, where they envisage
someday operating a powerful international production
and broadcasting complex.

"This fledgling communications venture
was predicated by the growing need to deepen a
community of Bahá’ís that has multiplied itself
enormously in a mere handful of years. It would
probably not be an exaggeration to say that the achievements of
this pioneering effort will be watched closely by many National
Spiritual Assemblies to determine whether it is time for others
also to turn another corner in the use of media for Bahá’í procla­
mation and deepening."

The rapid growth of the Faith in Ecuador, coupled with a
relatively high number of radios per capita there, made the coun­
ty an ideal choice as the site for the first Bahá’í radio station.
According to the United Nations Statistical Yearbook for 1971,
there were at that time almost two million radios in Ecuador, or
about one for every two people. On the other hand, there were
only about 150,000 television sets, and those were confined
almost exclusively to large urban areas. Although Ecuador had 25
daily newspapers in 1971, their combined circulation was only
250,000 copies. So if one wishes to reach Ecuadorians on a large
scale, radio is the obvious medium of communication.

Ecuador is the second smallest republic in South America. Its
104,510 square miles of territory (about the size of Colorado) is
larger only than Guyana (34,740 square miles). The broad,
immense spine of the Andes mountains cuts across the country on its
journey to the continent’s southernmost extremity. The famed
Mount Chimborazo, whose snow-capped peak towers some
20,574 feet above sea level, is Ecuador’s tallest. Thirty still­
active volcanoes are strewn along the nation’s mountain corridor.

Most of Ecuador’s Indian Bahá’ís live in the Andean high­
lands, and are descended from Indian empires thousands of years
old. East of the Andes region
is the forested Oriente,
which
contains more than half of Ecuador's land mass. This vast, mineral-rich expanse of rain and tropical forest conceals the headwaters of the Amazon River. To the west of the Andes corridor are the coastal lowlands, where many of the Bahá'ís of African descent reside. The people of the coastal region are employed in making Ecuador the world's principal producer and exporter of bananas.

More than 60 per cent of the country's four and one-half million people are Indians. About 30 per cent are of mixed Indian and Spanish ancestry, a handful are black, and not more than 15 per cent are white. The nation's official language is Spanish; however, most of the Indian peoples use Quechua as well, and it is estimated that at least 20 per cent of the population speaks Quechua exclusively. In the forest regions east of the Andes, the Jibaro language is spoken by the predominantly Indian population of the tropical forest.

"The impressive advances in the teaching work (in Ecuador) soon required that more effective deepening instruments be developed to keep pace with the quickening tempo of enrollments," *Bahá'í News* reported in September 1973. "There were simply an insufficient number of deepened believers to travel from village to village and region to region training and inspiring the growing multitude of new adherents. Confronted with this pressing need to deepen new Bahá'ís, the National Spiritual Assembly chose to pursue its historic action of leasing the first radio station for Bahá'í teaching and consolidation."

The first Bahá'í program was aired starting at 5:30 a.m. on March 1, 1973. It name was *En Horas de Amanecer*, or *The Dawning*. The program announced the new Day of God and spoke of the need to live a life of justice and service to others. It assured the audience that God, the Creator, had not forsaken humanity.

"The teaching done on the radio is both direct and indirect," Continental Counsellor Raul Pavón of Ecuador said at that time. "The programs of direct teaching include adaptations of *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, *The Divine Art of Living*, and *The New Garden*, as well as adaptations of introductory pamphlets about the Bahá'í Faith and compilations and notes from *The Dawn-breakers*."

"For the most part," he said, "the programs are bi-lingual; they are broadcast in Quechua and Spanish. In the near future programs of indirect teaching, including children's classes and cultural presentations, will be aired. Cultural programming being prepared (in 1973) will give the friends a view of their country and the world, describing the make-up of the family of man, complemented by historical notes from a Bahá'í perspective."

Even after the Bahá'ís had decided to operate their own radio station in Ecuador, getting it on the air was no easy matter. The request for a broadcast frequency twice was denied by the government, but the persistence of the National Spiritual Assembly's representative for the purpose, Sra. Isabel de Calderón, finally resulted in a letter issued July 5, 1977, by the office of the President of the Republic, National Secretary of Public Information, stating that "the frequency requested by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís may be granted for a radio station to be installed and operated in Cajas."

On July 19, the Institute of Telecommunications notified the National Assembly that the frequency was reserved for its use, and stipulated conditions to be met prior to the legalization of the frequency.

Counsellor Pavón volunteered to assume responsibility for construction, but the antenna presented a rather severe problem. Finally, after overcoming several local technical problems, the antenna was raised, one day before the station beamed its test broadcast.

Counsellor Pavón had ended his 1973 report by saying: "The friends are convinced of the effectiveness of this method of teaching the Faith and believe that the ideal thing would be to have a Bahá'í radio station, located possibly in Otavalo, 20 miles from the equator, which would broadcast the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the four corners of Ecuador, America, and the world." With Bahá'í Radio now on the air, the friends in Ecuador have taken a giant step toward reaching that ultimate goal.
Tears, cheers accompany first historic message

(The following is an eyewitness account of events surrounding the first test broadcast on October 12, 1977, of Baha’i Radio of Ecuador at Cajas, near the city of Otavalo in the Andes mountains. — Ed.)

The mountain pass is 3,102 meters high. The place is Cajas, Ecuador. The earth is very damp, black and cold. There are few dwelling places in the area, but it has a natural beauty; one can look down to the green valleys and see the picturesque farms, or look up toward heaven and see many majestic mountain peaks that surround the area. Beautiful white clouds whirl around the peaks, often giving the illusion of dancing snowflakes in the sun.

Counsellor Raul Pavón and a number of workers who live in the area have arrived early in the morning and already are busily at work when consultant/engineer Dean Stephens, station manager Kamram Mansuri and Auxiliary Board member Charles Hornby, outwardly calm but undoubtedly nervous and excited, arrive. Immediately, all are busy checking out every detail — the antenna, recording devices, etc. The morning is beautiful; a lovely sun is peeping through floating white clouds.

It is now between 10 and 10:30 a.m., and one sees coming over the hillcrest a number of the happy indigenous friends and their children — campesinos, pioneers, and city-dwellers, all in a spiritual and festive mood. As they approach there are shouts of "Allah-u'Abhá" and "Finally, the day has arrived!" A car and jeep filled with Baha'is arrive with a lovely birthday cake for the event. A miniature antenna is placed on the cake, resembling the real "Maypole-looking" antenna that is attracting a great deal of attention.

The minutes tick by: 10:15...10:30...10:45 a.m. Personal radios and recorders are placed in position, and cameras are checked and re-checked for readiness. It seems that the minutes are becoming like hours. Finally, someone calls loudly from the building: "We go on at 11:10!" A loud tone comes from the radio — no voice. What does it mean? Again there is a call, saying: "In three minutes!" Counsellor Pavón responds: "We've waited three years; I guess we can wait three more minutes."

It is exactly 11:13. A voice is heard: "O my God! O my God! Unite the hearts of Thy servants, and reveal to them Thy great Purpose." A prayer, revealed by Baha'ullah and recited by the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador, Señorita Teresa Jara N., in Spanish. Everyone stands with head bowed in reverence. Another prayer is read, in the Quechua language, by Alfonso Tulcanazo. Heads are still bowed, tears are rolling down cheeks. More prayers, followed by a brief melody. Then, for the first time in Baha'i history, one hears the announcement over the air:

"Baha'i Radio of Ecuador, Ecuadorian Station — an antenna for the service of the cultural progress and spiritual development of the family. This is a test broadcast of our equipment at 1420 kilocycles, medium wave."

The announcement is in Spanish. Similar announcements will be given alternately in Spanish and Quechua. The Greatest Name of God is now being sung in the Quechua language; the melody lingers. The program continues to tumultuous applause as the lively Quechua music, beautifully played, begins. Everyone is dancing with joy — adults, children, even the workers. One can see cars driving past on the Pan American Highway and people passing the site on foot pausing to see what all the happiness is about.

Dean Stephens...is jumping around like a proud new father — and at the same time reminds one of a happy mother who has just given birth! Everyone is embracing happily. Expressions of gratitude and congratulations are being showered over...the entire radio staff for making the radio station a reality.
A Very Special Gift

The Hand of the Cause Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum tells how an inexpensive ring was transformed into a $100,000 donation to India’s House of Worship

(Reprinted from the Nineteen Day Feast newsletter of the Baha’is of Singapore.—Ed.)

When I was invited by the Universal House of Justice to go and see this design (of the House of Worship in India), before I left Haifa, frankly I said, “Oh Lord, have mercy on me! What is it going to be like?” Because being an architect’s daughter I knew what a terrifically difficult problem it is to design a circular nine-sided building. And then when I saw this beautiful model I was deeply impressed, and I think that it will be a wonderful thing and very, very much loved in India.

There is one thing that Mr. Sábá (the architect) did not mention; perhaps it did not occur to him. The lotus has not only an association with Buddhism and Hinduism, but the lotus, par excellence, is the symbol of the Manifestation of God. The lotus is probably the most perfect flower in the world. It is symmetrical, it is exquisitely beautiful. And how does it grow? It grows in a swamp. It comes out of mud and raises its head from the slime absolutely clean and perfect.

Now this is what the Manifestation of God is in the world. He comes out of the slime of this planet. He appears amongst the worst people on the planet, so that no one can say that we made Him. They say that only God can bring forth such a Being from such an environment. This is perhaps the greatest symbolism of the lotus, and I think that it is so beautiful that we who are followers of Bahá’u’lláh should have this design in this part of the world where it is so deeply associated with two of the world’s great religions — Buddhism and Hinduism.

I would like to tell you very briefly a touching story. In Panama, where the most recent Bahá’í Temple, the one for Latin America, was built and dedicated — and, as you know, I was present — I had received, forwarded to me in Africa, a small ivory ring that had been made by a Bahá’í who was in prison in Mozambique. He sent one of these rings to each member of the House of Justice and one of them to me in Africa. And when I had an opportunity, during that conference at the time of the dedication, to speak to the friends, suddenly and impetuously I said, “You know, friends, I think it would be lovely if we were to send a little nest egg from the dedication of this Temple for the future Bahá’í Temple, the next one that will be built.” And I offered the ring for sale.

There was a young man there who was a jeweler and lived in Hawaii. He was not a wealthy man, but happened to have secured in the course of his profession a very large emerald. Suddenly it came over him — “I will offer the emerald for the ring!” Now the moment that he made the suggestion, he was horrified. I have heard this from the people who were seated next to him, and from his wife, who came to Haifa recently as pilgrims.

He said, “I am not a wealthy man, and this stone is worth at least $25,000 or $30,000. How can I offer this? Well,” he decided, “now it is finished. I was moved to do it; I can’t go back on my word.” So after a tremendous amount of involved story, the secretary of the National Assembly of Panama went to Hawaii. She took charge of the emerald, which was so valuable that no one could insure it, and she had to carry it on her person, and its owner had in the meantime had it set in a huge gold setting.

She thought, “This thing must go eventually to Haifa at the time of the election of the Universal House of Justice,” and she came to Haifa and sat down in the tea room and said to me, “Rúhíyyih Khánum, you don’t know what I have been through with this stone. For heaven’s sake, let me put it in your hands now.”
So she gave me this beautiful emerald which I had never seen in the gold setting, and I called the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran who were there to help elect the House of Justice, to vote for its members, and I said, "Look, I am going to entrust this to you, to your Assembly. Take it back to Persia. Whoever bids highest, they can have it, and then the money is to be given to the Universal House of Justice, and this is to be the first contribution for the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkâr to be erected during the next Plan," and it is this Mashriqu'l-Adhkâr of India that will have that money. The money has been resting for about seven years with the House of Justice.

Now the ring, which was worth perhaps two rupees (about 25 cents) at most — let us be generous and say five rupees — that ring a Baha'í paid $100,000 for, and that was the nest egg from the Panama Temple to the Indian Temple, and that is now in the hands of the Universal House of Justice.

Now friends, there are people here in this room of all kinds of means. Some of the friends are very poor, and there is nothing the matter with being poor. At one time Baha'u'llah was so poor He had only one shirt, and He had to stay in His room while they washed that shirt, and when it was dry He could put it on and come out of His room. So there is nothing wrong with being poor.

Some of the friends have a little more money, some of them are pioneers, but there are friends here who have difficulty in teaching the Faith. They come from Persia, they come from Arabia. It is very hard for them to open their mouths to proclaim the Message of Baha'u'llah. We know that 'Abdu'l-Baha said that the Temple is a silent teacher. Every time we have erected a House of Worship to Baha'u'llah, it has taught the Faith more than any of us could ever do.

This beautiful Temple that we have just seen will proclaim His

Following the All-Asia Baha'i Women's Conference at New Delhi and the laying of the cornerstone for the Mother Temple of the Indian Subcontinent, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Baha Ruhíyyih Khánum spoke to more than 300 Bahá'ís December 18 in Sydney, Australia. She said we are in a time of "acute necessity for Baha'i is to arise and serve," adding that a spirit of love and unity is essential in the Bahá'í community to attract others to the Cause of God. Ruhíyyih Khánum said the most important issue in the Bahá'í world is the question of how we treat each other in our Bahá'í communities.

Faith in Asia as none of the Bahá'ís, National Assemblies, Counsellors, Board members, anybody can do, because it will speak with the Voice of God silently to the people. So I invite you all — and I am going to ask my dear Bahá'í brother who has such a good voice and is so clearly understood in both Persian and English, to please take charge of this part of the meeting — I invite you, friends, to make contributions to this new enterprise that we are blessed by seeing at the beginning ourselves, and tomorrow we will be present at the laying of the cornerstone, but tomorrow's events soon will be over and we will not be together again. So I don't know what method He has in mind, but there is a method by which you will be able to contribute.

March 1978/Bahá'í News 7
Our incredible journey to Guyana had an exciting and blessed start!

Plans had been made for eight youth to make a teaching trip to South America and the West Indies from the United Kingdom. The group was to be split in two; one group of three boys was to leave first, with our group of five girls to follow shortly afterward. A cable was sent to the Universal House of Justice, and a reply received assuring us of “... fervent prayers outstanding success their devoted efforts. Will lovingly remember each one of them Holy Shrine. The Universal House of Justice.”

The boys' team left for Guyana on July 11. Two weeks later, about three days before our team was to leave, we received an urgent cable from Guyana to change our plan of going to the West Indies first, and instead proceed directly to Guyana where in about 10 days of teaching there had been some 100 declarations and two Local Spiritual Assemblies had been formed. Guyana was on fire!

Our team arrived in Guyana on July 28. On the plane we met a group of believers from Trinidad who were going to Guyana for an international Bahá’í Youth Camp, the fifth of its kind in that country.

At the airport we were greeted and welcomed by the wonderful smiling faces of the Guyanese youth and by Auxiliary Board member Edward Widmer. The youth camp turned out to be a tremendous success and a truly wonderful experience. There were Bahá’ís from more than 10 countries, and the joy and happiness emanating from the gathering of these friends filled every soul.

At the camp many youth offered to accompany the traveling teachers, so a few days after it ended three teams were formed. They were made up of the teachers from the United Kingdom, some of the youth from Guyana, some pioneers in Guyana and a traveling teacher from the U.S., Tom Seale.

Guyana already had achieved its Assembly goals for the Five Year Plan and had set for itself the goal of forming 19 additional Local Assemblies. In three weeks the three groups were to help form six of these new Assemblies, and in so doing to open a new area of the country to the Faith. This plan of opening the Berbis area of Guyana to the Faith was formulated from suggestions made by the Hand of the Cause Rahmatu'llah Muhajir on a previous visit to Guyana.

The three teams were sent along different points on the Berbis coast all the way to the border with Surinam. The next three weeks were filled with excitement, joy, disappointments, happiness, difficulties and, ultimately, glorious success.

The thrill of seeing the marvelous people of Guyana hungrily accept the precious Message of Bahá'u'lláh outweighed any setbacks we encountered. We can never really thank enough the Guyanese youth who were with us for their never-ending patience and the magnificent help they gave us so that we could cope with a climate with which we were unfamiliar, and with the never-
ending hordes of bloodthirsty mosquitoes!

Each group had been assigned two villages to teach in. The first week or so was to be spent teaching and helping to form the Assemblies, and the other days before we moved to the next village were to be devoted to deepening the new believers. So the days were spent getting to know the villagers, teaching them, holding children’s classes, and making preparations for a film that we showed almost every evening. These meetings also included informal talks, slide shows, and music, and were nearly always attended by 100 or more people. After the program we would explain how the villagers could join the Faith, and encourage questions. It was, to those of us who came from the United Kingdom, a moving and almost unbelievable sight to see people literally rushing to us after the programs, eagerly wanting to become Bahá’ís!

The children’s classes also were a great success. Every day at the appointed hour the children of the village would gather at the home where we were staying, and were taught songs, verses from the Writings, and prayers. Nothing can describe the happiness we felt as we heard those children sing the songs or say the prayers that they had learned, or when they woke us up at 5 in the morning with a chorus of “Bahá’u’lláh is getting us ready for that great day”...

Best of all, many were the times when the children’s parents would come to us, wanting to learn more about this Faith that their children were so excited about. Quite often the parents would accept the Faith immediately, and the children would ask us if they too could declare, and then proudly announce to the rest of the villagers that they were a Bahá’í family.

How the light of Bahá’u’lláh shone! The never-ending number of people who came up to us in the streets, who came knocking at our door, wanting to hear more, asking for literature, wanting to declare was a source of constant joy to us, and a sign of the power of Bahá’u’lláh. To see the new believers excitedly and immediately teaching the Faith, to see how eagerly they wanted to deepen themselves, to see their devotion and willingness to serve, to see the members of the newly-formed Local Assemblies taking on their responsibilities with enthusiasm and holding their first Nineteen Day Feast—these were like a never-ending stream of bountiful visions.

Needless to say, by the end of the three weeks our goals were achieved, plus one extra Local Spiritual Assembly. There had been some 750 declarations, and more than 14,000 pamphlets and hundreds of books had been given out. It was a truly marvelous end to our teaching experience.

After our return to one of the towns (Amandale) that has a high concentration of wonderful Bahá’í youth, two of the boys—Nabil Hussein and Brian O’Toole—and three of the girls—Vida Yazdi, Fahimeh Yazdi and Ruhy Mustafanejad—left for England. Ruhy hopes later to return to Guyana as a pioneer.

It was arranged that the three of us who remained in Guyana—Mitra Sabeti, Shohreh Youseffian and Moin Tayebi—would travel with some of the youth from that country on another 10-day teaching trip. We went to the west bank of the Demarara River and had the bounty of helping to form two more Local Spiritual Assemblies. By the time the planned teaching trip was over, there were 10 new Assemblies and around 800 declarations, nearly a 40 per cent increase in the Bahá’í population in Guyana!

We cannot end this account of teaching in Guyana without mentioning something about the Bahá’ís in that country. All the teachers agreed that they had never been on a project that was so well organized, and here our thanks go especially to the National Spiritual Assembly of Guyana and its National Teaching Committee, and to the Auxiliary Board.

We cannot thank the people of Guyana enough for the love and the hospitality that was showered upon us. The devotion and sincerity of the youth who accompanied us was truly exemplary and heart-warming. We look forward to returning, and Moin and I also are trying to find jobs in Guyana so that we might pioneer there too.

Guyana is an exciting country in which to teach for it is becoming ablaze with the fire of the Message of Bahá’u’lláh. The community there has an exciting and challenging time ahead, for not only do the new believers have to be deepened, but the spark that has been kindled in Guyana must blaze forth with such intensity that it will envelop the whole country.

Assistant to the Auxiliary Board members are introduced during the international Bahá’í Youth Camp in Guyana.
In a Sicilian prison, a Sinto gypsy finds new meaning in the Faith

The following report from Mrs. Agnese Borito, a Bahá’í prisoner on Elba, an Italian island in the Mediterranean Sea, concerning her meetings with a Sinto gypsy, Vittorio Mayer Pasquale, known as "Spatzo" (Sparrow), at the island prison was forwarded to Bahá’í News by its correspondent in Italy, Elsa E. Holmblad.

After many months of writing to a Sinto gypsy, a prisoner in Fort St. Giacomo, I was at last given permission to visit him.

"During our talks and by letter we always spoke about the Faith. This was in accordance with the Five Year Plan of the Universal House of Justice which, along with other goals for the Italian Bahá’í community, assigned that of extending activities among the gypsies.

"Spatzo wrote: ‘Dearest Agnese, the new year opens like a blessing from God, a stupendous omen of joy and peace for all our days."

"I see the birds, I listen to the brook."

"I gather the light, the light of the sun."

"And I hold it warm within my hands."

"In a later letter, after having read Parts Talks by Muhir-Bahá’, he wrote:

"AWAKENESS"

"Not one instant of my life."

"Shall I rest, wasted again."

"I want to spend it all in loving."

"I want to extend my love, formed in silence."

"Even to the most neglected things of the earth."

"I want to love man without limitation."

"Yes, mankind, because I know what it means."

"Not to be loved."

"In yet another letter Spatzo wrote: ‘Reality is always simple but men have complicated it. I believe that my distant Indian origins help me to absorb immediately the spiritual reality."

"Gypsies are different from other peoples because of their language, dress and physical characteristics. They originated in India, from whence they emigrated at different times and for various reasons.

"The gypsies have been a persecuted people. More than a centurial of them died in Nazi concentration camps, and no one has dared to say that justice has been done for them.

"The Children of the Wind know how to forgive. They have accepted with serenity every hurricane that has crashed upon their path in the name of God."

"We wish to remain what we are — free men, responsible for our actions. And that is why we accept the truth of Bahá’í Bahá’í because we are people of all ages, social conditions, races and nationalities, and we strive toward a world free from violence and war, from political, racial and religious economic troubles, from hunger and poverty, corruption and strife."

"Do you know that we Sinti have much in common with Bahá’ís! And to think that no one ever taught us anything. I find that very strange... It seems to me that this is the truth, which I have always known. I don’t know how to express it; I believe that my Sinto brethren are walking on the road with the Bahá’ís."

"In a still later letter, Spatzo added: ‘May God be with you always. May He keep you healthy and strong! For Glory, Spatzo.'"

"Spatzo has not yet declared himself a Bahá’í, but he says that the Faith to another prisoner, Giovanni Zuni, the Gypsy, who accepted the Faith and thus became the first person to do so, while in an Italian prison. Other declarations in Italian prisons have followed, and in several other Italian communities Bahá’ís have begun contacting the gypsies and teaching activities have been started.

"Spatzo, unless something unforeseen happens, is a Sinto gypsy in prison for some years yet. He is in Elba, and his address is:"

"Vittorio Mayer Pasquale, Forte St. Giacomo, Isola d’Elba, Italy."

"Mrs. Holmblad has appended the following note from Zuni, one of the prisoners at Fort St. Giacomo, Bernardino Castelli, who has accepted the Faith:

"I spend my time, sad and deeply thought. My parents are dead. I have no one, but I try to keep my spirit up. I have accepted the Faith since May 1976, and I am so happy and contented. Because I have understood so many beautiful things. I am sad, yes, but I have so much faith in the Bahá’í Faith. I sometimes receive letters from Bahá’ís, and I think them all."

"Sr. Custodino’s sister’s address is the same as that for St. Pasquale.
We set out on a sunny September day from Moorabbin in our six-seater Cessna. Mahvash Master had briefed us, and came with Aub and Greta Lake to see us off. Aub and Greta were on their way south to Tasmania, and we were heading north — to Mornington Island!

With happy hearts we took off, and soon the 500 Remover of Difficulties started. This was to continue each day after we’d taken off until our arrival on the island.

We picked up Barry Bennett from Shepparton — he was to visit the Baha’is of Cairns — and Nellie Birchall joined us there, making a team of five to Mornington Island. The others were Iradj Master, Sue and Peter Hiscock, and myself (Helen Perkins).

When we arrived at Mornington Island some members of the team went to visit Fanny and Larry Lanley (Baha’is who live on Mornington) and family, and returned later to tell us that a corroboree (celebration) had been arranged in our honor. We then split into teams and went on a “getting to know you” walk. Soon some beautiful souls had embraced the Faith.

That evening, while meeting the people and visiting Baha’is (the ones who had declared during the previous team’s visit) many more declared. Some asked, “May I join too?” Some of the friends thought I was Mahvash and immediately embraced me. Mahvash certainly is loved very much by the people of Mornington Island!

We later went to the corroboree, holding hands with lots of children and singing Baha’i songs; soon people were coming out of the shadows, joining us and singing with us. As we sang “We are the people of Baha,” looking behind us we found that there was quite a multitude, all laughing and singing with us. We felt like the Pied Piper of Hamelin!

At the corroboree there were about 150 people as the night wore on. We were officially welcomed by Larry Lanley, the island’s chairman, and afterward dear Fanny gave a moving talk about how she’d met the Baha’is in Melbourne and how she’d become a Baha’i.

At the end of the corroboree we were asked to join the circle of elders. The preacher, who had been chatting with Iradj all evening, asked Iradj to say a prayer. He chanted “Is there any Remover of Difficulties,” and then led the 150 souls line by line in saying it in English. A prayer for unity also was said, and we all sang together, “Blessed Is The Spot.” The preacher then said a lovely prayer especially for us and the success of our visit.

The next day we visited quite a few people and many more asked to join the Faith. All understood the Name of Baha’u’llah, and all understood what the Faith stands for. All learned to say “Allah-u-Abha.” Our new Baha’i brothers and sisters from the previous day would see us and shout, “Allah-u-Abha—We are one, eh?”

We invited many people to the film we had arranged for that evening — The Green Light Expedition. While the projectionist was getting organized a beautiful thing happened. Iradj was sitting on some steps leading to the verandah of the old schoolhouse and about 60 or so children started climbing all over him, just like bees around a honey pot. It was quite fantastic! Then Iradj started saying “Baha’u’llah,” and at the top of their voices 60 children screamed “Baha’u’llah,” then shouted “Allah-u-Abha,” then “the Glory of God has come,” and so on. Iradj asked them to call to me, which they did, and I went over and “conducted” them in singing Baha’i songs. There like “a thorn amongst the roses” sat Iradj, with children still clinging to him. It seemed that the whole island was singing the praises of Baha’u’llah!

Unfortunately, the bulb in the projector broke and so we saw only one reel of the film, but the friends were intensely interested in their South American brothers and sisters and were fascinated by Amatu’l-Baha Ruhiyih Khánum in the small portion of the film we were able to see.

Many beautiful things happened on our last day there. I would like to relate a few important events that seemed to put the icing on the cake.

Nellie had gone walking along the beach and met Fanny’s daughter, Catherine. Catherine had been enrolled in the Faith and expressed a desire that her husband should become a Baha’i. Nellie gave her a card for Horace, her husband, to fill in later. Imagine their happiness when they later met Iradj and Horace further along the beach. Horace had just declared his faith in Baha’u’llah!

After a delicious dinner of fish caught by our pilot, Ted Von Nida, we went to say goodbye to our brothers and sisters on Mornington Island. Iradj and I went to the Lanleys where another wonderful event occurred. Iradj and Mahvash were given Aboriginal names. Iradj is “Woonan,” meaning “the tallest oak tree” (the name of Larry Lanley’s father, who was a very important man), and Mahvash is “Wandin,” the tallest water lily, the one from which all the others grow.

After saying our goodbyes to the Lanleys, we met on the road Margaret, who had declared as a Baha’i during the previous team’s visit. We told her we had come to say goodbye. She placed her hands in ours and with tears in her eyes — trying to say “Allah-u-Abha” but forgetting it — she very movingly said, “Baha’u’llah.”

We too were crying as we walked back to the mission house to prepare for our homeward journey. After prayerful consultation, dear Sue and Peter Hiscock decided that they would stay at Mornington for a time for much-needed deepening and consolidation.

The contact will need to be kept up. These souls need our love so much — I really feel that whoever goes there will never be quite the same again. I don’t think I will be. — Helen Perkins
Cameroon Republic

Localities goal near

Bahá'ís reside in 832 localities in the Cameroon Republic, only 18 short of the 850 called for in the Five Year Plan, according to a report delivered at a National Teaching Conference held September 16-18 in Yaounde.

The conference, at a university campus, was attended by 95 persons including Continental Counsellor Mihdi Samandari and three Auxiliary Board members.

As to its other goals, the Cameroon Republic has 166 of the 300 Local Spiritual Assemblies called for in the Five Year Plan. 27 of the 50 local endowments assigned, and has built nine local Hazíratu’l-Quds, including two large ones, and has 11 under construction out of a total of 45 called for in the Plan.

Australia

Teaching conference held

More than 200 of the friends in Australia gathered in the garden city of Adelaide in December for a National Teaching Conference that the Australian National Goals Committee says will lead to “the successful completion of the remaining goals of the Five Year Plan.”

The conference received the exciting news from the Universal House of Justice via the National Spiritual Assembly that the number of delegates to its National Convention has been raised from 76 to 95, and that delegates will henceforth be elected on a regional rather than a local basis.

During the conference a Persian carpet, made and donated for auction by a Bahá’í, raised $500. The money was contributed to the Fund and the carpet given to the National Spiritual Assembly.

Continental Counsellor Dr. Peter Khan and other speakers reviewed the present state of the goals in Australia, discussed teaching methods, firesides and pioneering, and reviewed the Tasmanian teaching campaign.

Soviet Union

Bahá’i books exhibited

Bahá’í books published in Germany and the United Kingdom were exhibited at the first Moscow Book Fair last fall.

Bahá’í Verlag, the Publishing Trust of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany, participated in the fair through a joint effort with the German Publishers’ Association. Bahá’í Verlag received a medal commemorating its exhibition of nine Bahá’í books.

George Ronald Publishers of Great Britain presented four Bahá’í titles at the fair: Muhammad and the Course of Islam; The Glad Tidings of Bahá’u’lláh; The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh and Christ and Bahá’u’lláh.

Its participation was arranged and managed by Colet’s of London, a sales agent for a group of British publishers.

Thailand

Officials hear of Faith

Five Thai believers accompanied by Continental Counsellor Khudáraḥm Paymán had the unexpected opportunity to discuss the Faith with top provincial government officials while on a teaching trip to Samut Prakan, a resort area 30 kilometers (19 miles) from Bangkok.

The believers were teaching the Faith on a beach when they noticed a meeting in progress attended by 75 people in a building across the street. They asked officials for permission to sing and speak about the Faith.

This was denied, but the friends were permitted to approach the officials during a half-hour lunch break. During this time Mr. Paymán and two of the believers gave pamphlets to more than 50 of those in attendance, seven of whom signed cards asking for more information.

Samoa

Leone, American Samoa, was the scene of this weekend institute, conducted by the Bahá’í Regional Teaching Committee of American Samoa at the home of U.S. pioneers Mr. and Mrs. Frank Trump. Súháyí ‘Alá’í, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia, is kneeling, second from the right.
Portugal

Covilhã Assembly formed

Portugal has won another victory in its Five Year Plan goals. On December 11 the first Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Covilhã was elected.

The election was held high up on the "Serra de Estrela" (Mountain of the Star) in a former sanatorium that now houses refugees from Angola and Mozambique. Since June 1977 more than 50 of these refugees have embraced the Faith.

Assisting in the election were representatives of the three Bahá'í institutions: Counsellor Analiese Bopp on behalf of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Europe; Hilda Rodrigues for the National Spiritual Assembly of Portugal; and Auxiliary Board member Ana Costa.

Before the election, Counsellor Bopp told the children stories of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and shared refreshments with them.—Leon Caraco

Seychelles

Silver Jubilee set

The Bahá'ís of the Seychelles, faced with building local Hazíratu'll-Quds in three locations, have decided to provide the labor themselves to lower the construction cost.

Land has been donated in Port Glaud and Anse Boileau, Mahe; and in Praslin for the buildings.

The Seychelles are to build nine local Hazíratu'll-Quds during the Five Year Plan.

South Africa

Teaching ban rescinded

An order prohibiting teaching the Faith in the Enkeldoorn area of South Africa was rescinded after a representative from the Local Spiritual Assembly in Unyeto and an Auxiliary Board member approached the area Headman to ask his jury to have a hearing on the ban.

The Headman called for representatives from the churches in the area to come and discuss the matter with the Bahá'ís.

He first allowed the Bahá'ís to present their views, then asked for the views of the church representatives. None of them had anything against the Faith being taught in the Enkeldoorn area.

The Headman said he is not against any religion as long as its members follow the proper official channels when handling its affairs.

He then announced to the representatives that the Bahá'ís would be allowed to teach in the area. The Headman also promised an early answer to the Bahá'ís' request for land on which to build a local Hazíratu'll-Quds.

Puerto Rico

Radio campaign success

Every person in Puerto Rico had an opportunity to hear about the Faith the week of September 12-18 when 1,000 spot announcements were broadcast on most of the island's 50 AM radio stations.

The National Spiritual Assembly sponsored the campaign, hoping to place the name of Bahá'u'lláh and the purpose of the Faith in the homes of the island's three million residents.

Funds were budgeted to purchase air time on every AM station in Puerto Rico, although many of the stations either gave free time for the spots or offered substantial discounts.

The Radio and Television Committee of Puerto Rico was responsible for preparing a series of 30-second proclamation spots that featured a well-known Puerto Rican singer and a professional announcer, both Bahá'ís.

Fifty press kits also were prepared. They contained a record entitled "La Nueva Era de Dios" (The New Era of God) and a fact sheet with international and domestic data on the Faith.

The spot announcements were personally placed by Bahá'ís at virtually all 50 AM radio stations.

Follow-up programs are being distributed to interested Bahá'í communities and Regional Teaching Committees.

Italy

Florence hosts conference

Despite a heavy snowfall that closed roads to the north, preventing some of the friends from attending, 100 Bahá'ís met for the Italian National Teaching Conference in Florence, site of the first Convention in 1953 of the Italian-Swiss National Spiritual Assembly.

Those at the conference were delighted to listen that Italy is close to winning its Five Year Plan goals, and probably with one of the first communities in Europe to do so.

Bahá'ís who participated in a recent teaching campaign in Sicily expressed the conference that up to 1,000 people in Sicily seem ready soon to embrace the Cause.
Togo

Teaching trip productive

More than 450 new believers have been added to the Faith, 35 localities have been opened, and eight Local Spiritual Assemblies formed thanks largely to five Bahá'ís who spent their vacation time teaching, often on foot, in the Dapaon, Bassar, Tabligbo, Niamtougou and Amlame regions of Togo.

The friends spent 10 days prior to the teaching trip at an institute in Amlame that was organized by Thelma Khelghati, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Western Africa.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Togo has warmly congratulated the five believers: Daliwa Djara, from Koka; Togbe Kossi, from Gboto-Assigame; Kedang Kadjina, from Lama-Kara; Akakpo Kassegne, from Sika-Kondji, and Yao Tengue, from Lomé.

Rhodesia

Conference fulfills goal

The Bahá'í of Rhodesia fulfilled a goal of the Five Year Plan by holding the country's fourth National Teaching Conference October 22-23 at Bulawayo. The 82 believers present represented 18 communities.

The National Teaching Committee reported on the progress of the National Spiritual Assembly's Six-Month Program that began at Ridván 1977.

It was reported that since the program began five Local Spiritual Assemblies had been formed and 30 localities opened to the Faith. Twenty-two believers had been deepened at an institute. Two Local Assemblies had undertaken extension teaching, and one community reported holding regular early morning prayers.

Shidan Fat'hé-Aazam asked four believers to sit on a table, then asked two of the friends to lift it. When they could not, he asked everyone to help. The table was easily lifted.

"That is what must be done with our..."
**Argentina**

**Books in Braille donated**

Braille transcriptions of two Bahá’í booklets — “The Message of Bahá’u’lláh,” by J. E. Esslemont, and a selection of Bahá’í prayers — have been donated by the Bahá’í Publishing Trust of Argentina to the Argentine Library for the Blind.

The two titles are the first Spanish-language literature in Braille. They were originally transcribed by the Bahá’í Service for the Blind, a committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States.

The Publishing Trust of Argentina is investigating methods of producing additional materials for the blind in that country.

“So far, the response to our inquiries has been enthusiastic,” they report. “Schools for the blind have requested Bahá’í literature.”

The director of the Argentine Library for the Blind said the institution would gratefully accept further donations of Bahá’í books in Braille, and also asked about the possibility of acquiring tape-recorded books about the Faith.

**United Kingdom**

**Church attacks Faith**

The Free Church of Scotland, in its monthly magazine, has attacked the Bahá’í Faith, and particularly the community of Western Isles.

The attack came after the Local Spiritual Assembly in the Western Isles gave clerics and others in the Outer Hebrides a magazine called *Communication* that contained an article on the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh and the local spread of the Faith.

The response to the *Communication* article, carried in the Free Church’s magazine, said Christ is the only Messenger of God, and denounced the idea that eternal truths underly the religions of the world.

“These religions have been man’s greatest crimes and they represent not truth but that process of the apostate human mind which changed the Glory of God into a lie,” said the writer.

News of the attack was printed in several independent newspapers, including the *Stornoway Gazette* of the Western Isles, and the Aberdeen *Press and Journal*, one of the most widely-read newspapers in Scotland.

A week later, the *Gazette* published a longer item setting forth the Bahá’í standpoint clearly and without animosity.

The *Press and Journal* published a letter from the Western Isles Assembly stating the Bahá’í view on the matters raised and correcting the impression that the Faith is merely an isolated group in the Hebrides.

Meanwhile, in Petersborough, a clergyman who is a friend of some of the local believers and who has received Bahá’í support in some of his own projects, invited the friends to participate in an International Festival of Peace in the Peterborough Cathedral, which happened to coincide with the anniversary of the Birth of the Báb.

For the first time, scriptures of other religions were read in the Cathedral. Marina Bridle, one of the Petersborough Bahá’ís, read from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s discourses in Paris:

“I charge you all that each one of you concentrate all the thoughts of your heart on love and unity. When a thought of war comes, oppose it by a stronger thought of peace. A thought of hatred must be destroyed by a more powerful thought of love... If you desire with all your heart friendship with every race on earth, your thought, spiritual and positive, will
spread... Do not despair! Work steadily. Sincerity and love will conquer hate. How many seemingly impossible events are coming to pass in these days!..."

Fiji

Hand of Cause speaker

The Hand of the Cause H. Collis Featherstone was the featured speaker at a buffet luncheon attended by more than 40 distinguished guests on November 9 in Suva, Fiji.

The guests included ministers of state, senior civil servants, diplomats, high judicial officers, and representatives of the media, social services and education in Fiji.

Following lunch, Mr. Featherstone spoke about the independent and global nature of the Faith, the limitless capacity and diversity of its Teachings, and its central theme—unity.

The Hand of the Cause explained that the purpose of the luncheon meeting was not to proclamitize but to inform. He quoted from Gleanings: "Ye be aware of a certain truth... of which others are deprived, share it with them in a language of utmost kindness and good will."

Each guest was given a copy of the National Spiritual Assembly's newly-produced Proclamation Portfolio, available at the luncheon in both English and Fijian. Several guests sought out the portfolio for themselves, receiving it warmly and with thanks.

The National Assembly said that because the proclamation was attended by guests who represented a complete cross-section of Fijian society at its highest levels of influence, administration and decision-making, the event was the most significant of its kind ever to take place in Fiji."

Spain

Historic island opened

Gomera, the island in the Canaries off the coast of Spain from which Christopher Columbus began his historic voyage to the New World in 1492, was opened to the Faith in December.

Peruvian Bahá'í youth with Adelberto Morales (center, with book), a radio station manager in Caacupé, Paraguay, who gave them a weekly time slot for Bahá'í programming.

Paraguay

Bahá'í programs aired

For the past year, in Caacupé, Paraguay, a 20-minute Bahá'í program about the Faith has been broadcast each Saturday night on Radio ZP 28.

Although the manager of the station, Adelberto Morales, is not a Bahá'í, he appreciates and is friendly toward the Faith. His wife and two children are Bahá'ís.

Three years ago, Mr. Morales and his family attended a Bahá'í public meeting and were given a copy of Some Answered Questions. In January 1977 Mr. Morales encountered the Faith for a second time when 20 Peruvian Bahá'í youth stopped in Caacupé to teach while en route to Bahia, Brazil, for the International Teaching Conference.

Unaware that Mr. Morales was familiar with the Faith, they approached him for a radio interview. Not only were they given 10 minutes on the air, they were warmly received by the Morales family and were shown the well-thumbed copy of Some Answered Questions.

After the Bahá'í conference, Bahá'ís again stopped in Caacupé. When they visited Mr. Morales, he offered them the permanent weekly program time. Thanks to his generosity, the Message of Bahá'u'lláh has been spread throughout central Paraguay, several Bahá'ís have learned announcing techniques and technical aspects of radio, and many people have become Bahá'ís after listening to the weekly radio program.

Nigeria

Teaching momentum rises

Teaching momentum in the Etchekwre district of Rivers State, Nigeria, continues to build, with 14 villages opened to the Faith between January and September 1977.

Eleven of these villages now have Local Spiritual Assemblies. Bahá'í Centers are being built in six of them.

Teaching in the district began two years ago when Jehu Somari, a Bahá'í from Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State, was transferred by his employer to the village of Abara-Etche and was able to establish a Bahá'í Group there.

Eighteen months later a Bahá'í pioneer arrived at Port Harcourt, enabling Bahá'í teachers to make regular visits to the area.
India

These children are students at a nursery school operated by Baha'i pioneer R.C. Gupta in one of the four buildings that comprise the Haziratu'l-Quds at Jaitagon, Bhutan, in India. The New Baha'i Center is only a short distance from Phuntsholing, one of the principal towns in the state of Bhutan.

Last June the first Baha'i regional institute was held in the district, in the town of Ozuzu, with 18 believers from eight villages attending. The institute was followed by monthly deepenings.

Children's classes soon will begin in villages with Local Spiritual Assemblies.

Barbados/Windward

Counsellor, committee meet

Rowland Estall, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors, met recently with the National Teaching Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of Barbados and the Windward Islands, sharing concern over its unfilled national goals of the Five Year Plan.

After receiving an overview of teaching plans developed for each island, Mr. Estall visited local communities, encouraging the friends to teach, and offered a list of suggestions that would allow every Baha'i to participate in some way in winning the goals.

The list began by stressing something every Baha'i can do — pray. It also included suggestions about firesides, public meetings, proclamations, traveling teaching, and teaching with music.

Twenty-one Local Spiritual Assemblies remain to be formed in Barbados and the Windward Islands by the end of the Five Year Plan.

Gilbert Is./Tuvalu

Baha'is help in epidemic

The Bahá'ís of the Gilbert Islands and Tuvalu were able to offer services during a short-lived cholera epidemic that began in September.

The Bahá'ís relayed messages throughout the area by utilizing the radio equipment on the Bahá'í-owned catamaran Erena-Roe. The Erena-Roe also stood ready to transport patients from outlying islands to the central hospital.

A Baha'i served as secretary for the Cholera Committee during its existence.

El Salvador

Native believers active

Native believers in El Salvador are teaching more actively, holding Feasts more often, and are more aware of the Bahá'í electoral process, its institutions and spiritual concepts thanks to a series of monthly deepening conferences planned by the National Spiritual Assembly.

The National Assembly divided the country into four areas and asked the Teaching Committee in each of them to choose about eight believers to attend the three and one-half day monthly deepenings at the New Garden.

The believers are met the first evening of the deepening by a National Assembly member who orients them to the weekend's activities. Teachers include a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors, Auxiliary Board members, National Spiritual Assembly members, and Teaching Committee members.

Bangladesh

Teaching conference held

More than 200 believers attended the fourth National Teaching Conference in Bangladesh on October 28-30 at the district Haziratu'l-Quds in Jessore.

Sessions were held on Bahá'í Life, the Bahá'í Fund and Bahá'í History.

During the conference, delegations called on two government officials in the area and presented Bahá'í literature, which was well-received.

Hawaii

Seals & Crofts featured

Following a concert given by Bahá'í recording artists Seals & Crofts in Honolulu, Hawaii, on September 17, a fireside was held at the National Haziratu'l-Quds.

Of the 40 non-Bahá'ís who attended, two declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh.
The Festival of Rídván: April 21-May 2
REJOICE CONVOCATION SOUTH AMERICAN BAHÁ'Í WOMENS CONFERENCE AS IMPORTANT EVENT PROCESS FULL RECOGNITION POSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES WOMEN THIS NEW AGE. MAY PRESENT GATHERING INSPIRE PARTICIPANTS WITH VISION THEIR HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT ROLE PROMOTION FAITH AND TRAINING NEW GENERATION FOR COMING SOCIETY PEACE RIGHTEOUSNESS. UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE JOINS US SENDING WARM LOVING GREETINGS ASSURANCE PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES SUCCESS DELIBERATIONS.

INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE
December 29, 1977

INSPIRED MESSAGE WORLD CENTER FIRST INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í WOMENS CONFERENCE SOUTH AMERICA SPONSORED COUNSELLORS RECEIVED OFFICIAL MESSAGE FIRST LADY PERU. OBTAINED UNPRECEDENTED COVERAGE RADIO TV NEWSPAPERS PROCLAMATION. DELEGATIONS BOLIVIA CHILE ECUADOR PERU REPRESENTATIVES ARGENTINA BRAZIL COLOMBIA PARAGUAY VENEZUELA AUSTRALIA FRANCE NEW ZEALAND USA TOTAL TWO HUNDRED TEN WOMEN PARTICIPATING ACTIVELY DETERMINED WINNING GOALS REMAINING FIVE YEAR PLAN DESIGNATED SUPREME HOUSE. GRATEFUL PRAYERS.

CONFERENCE
December 29, 1977

DELIGHTED GREAT SUCCESS WIDESPREAD ATTENDANCE EXCELLENT PUBLICITY PROCLAMATION FIRST INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í WOMENS CONFERENCE SOUTH AMERICA. WILL OFFER PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD DETERMINATION WIN GOALS PLAN WILL BE CONFIRMED.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
January 3, 1978
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Cover

The month of April brings with it each year the celebration of the Most Great Festival—Ridván—commemorating Bahá'u'lláh's public declaration in 1863 of His Divine Mission to unite all the peoples of the world in one universal Faith. The declaration was made in the Garden of Ridván, near Baghdad, Iraq, as the Holy Family was preparing to depart on yet another journey of exile, to Constantinople. (Photo by Paul Slaughter)
Peru hosts Bahá'í women; Youth confer in Costa Rica

Three international Bahá'í conferences were held in Latin America between December 21, 1977, and January 8, 1978, covering three vital aspects of Bahá'í activity: radio and television (Panama, December 21-27; see Bahá'í News, February 1978), women's concerns (Peru, December 29-January 1), and the progress of youth (Costa Rica, January 3-8).

The Conference in Peru

In keeping with the goal set by the Universal House of Justice in the Five Year Plan calling for the promotion of the progress of women, the first International Conference of Bahá'í Women in South America followed closely the historic Asian Bahá'í Women's Conference in India that was graced by the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khánum.

More than 200 Bahá'í women attended the conference at Lima, Peru, near the heart of the ancient Inca civilization. They came from the 10 South American republics as well as from the U.S., Australia, France, New Zealand, Panama and Trinidad.

The conference was sponsored by the Continental Board of Counsellors for South America and was attended by five of its members: Mrs. Leonora Armstrong, the first pioneer to South America; Mas'ud Khamsi, Peter McLaren, Raúl Pavón and Donald Witzel.

Also present were the first pioneer to Peru, Miss Eve Nicklin, a former Auxiliary Board member in Paraguay, and Auxiliary Board member Miss Mercedes Sánchez, the first Peruvian Bahá'í woman.

The opening session of the conference, held at a municipal library near the National Hazíratu'l-Quds, was graced by an official greeting from Peru's First Lady, Mrs. Rosa Pedraglio de Morales Bermúdez, who said that "only the constant and responsible advancement of women will open the way for a better future for our people."

Talks at the conference were given in Spanish and translated into Quechua for the Indian Bahá'ís.

Topics included the Role of Women in the Progress of Humanity, the Education of Women and Children, Women in Professions, the Station of Women in the Bahá'í Revelation, Participation of Women in Teaching and Administration, Family Life in the Bahá'í Faith, the Contribution of Women Toward the Goals of the Five Year Plan, and others.

A reception was held one evening for distinguished non-Bahá'ís, and another evening was set aside for "folklore night" in which believers from several countries presented something typical of their culture such as dancing, music or a skit.

The Conference in Costa Rica

The youth conference at San José reflected the notable progress being made in depth of spirit and awareness by Bahá'í youth in Latin America of the great responsibility inherent in their vital role in the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

The conference was attended by about 200 believers from Belize, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico,
Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico, Venezuela and the U.S.

Three members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Central America were present: Artemus Lamb, Paul Lucas and Dr. Hedi Ahmadiyyeh.

A special guest of honor at the opening session was Fernando Soley Soler, Costa Rica’s vice minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, who said in a brief address: “As long as hunger and poverty exist in many corners of the world, there can be no peace; as long as there are differences of a religious or racial nature, there can be no peace. As long as frontiers exist between men and they do not establish a dialogue, there can be no peace.”

The conference was geared toward achieving a goal set for youth in the Five Year Plan by the Universal House of Justice: “The vast reservoir of spiritual energy, zeal and idealism resident in Baha’i youth... must be directed and lavishly spent for the proclamation, teaching, and consolidation of the Cause.”

Topics considered at the conference included Character Development, Laws and Morality, Proclamation and Teaching by Youth, the New World Order, Baha’i Administration, Prayer, the Three Objectives of the Five Year Plan, the History of the Faith in Latin America, the Spiritual Assembly, Life After Death, the Covenant, Marriage, the Role of Youth in the Faith, and others.

In this conference, as at the women’s conference in Peru, the importance of purity and chastity in leading a successful and productive life were emphasized.

On one of the days of the conference, trained teaching teams of youth visited goal areas in Costa Rica.

An evening was devoted to a colorful and artistic program of Costa Rican dances and music.—Gayle Woolson

Right: Sra. Isabel de Calderón addressing a public meeting held in conjunction with the first International Conference of Baha’i Women in South America at Lima, Peru. She is flanked by Indian women from Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador.

Below: Some of the nearly 200 Baha’i youth and guests from Central America, Venezuela, Puerto Rico and the U.S. who gathered at San José, Costa Rica, in January for the International Youth Conference.
Teaching in Tasmania

Unprecedented month-long campaign highlighted by flood of activity, first Bahá'í conference ever held on Australia's lovely 'Apple Island'

Tasmania, known as the Apple Island, and one of Australia's six states, is special to Bahá'ís because of its specific mention by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Tablets of the Divine Plan.

The unique distinction conferred by the Master on this island was in the minds of the believers early this year when a flood of Bahá'í activity, unprecedented in the 54 years of the Faith's existence in Tasmania, overtook the small Bahá'í community.

The first nationally-organized, month-long Tasmanian teaching campaign was carried out in January in four localities in the north and south of the island; also, the first national Bahá'í conference ever held in Tasmania—the ninth Australian Bahá'í Youth Conference— took place in Hobart at the mid-point of the teaching campaign.

The importance and purpose of the Tasmanian teaching campaign was expressed in a letter from the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia to the 26 full-time teachers at a briefing/deepening institute December 31-January 2 at the Exeter Bay Boy Scout Camp:

"The project on which you are about to embark is the most ambitious national teaching campaign yet launched in Australia... The importance of this campaign to the future of the Faith in Tasmania is immense... Its goal is to revitalize and revolutionize the fortunes of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh in that state... Your task is to search out, teach and confirm a multitude of seeking and waiting souls we know must be there..."

The team members were inspired further by a message from the Universal House of Justice:

"MONTH-LONG TEACHING CAMPAIGN TASMANIA HIGHLY PRAISEWORTHY. PRAYING SHRINES BAHÁ'U'LLÁH WILL SHOWER RICHEST BLESSING CONFIRMATIONS."

One team followed the other so that each of the four towns—Devonport, Launceston, Glenorchy and Clarence—was visited twice.

Each team spent about one week in each area, and met, taught and confirmed individuals through the use of prayers, pamphlets, books, poster displays, rented rooms in shopping areas used as information centers, films, public meetings and social gatherings. The Bahá'í music group, "1844," comprised part of one team, and their free concerts attracted many people.

The teaching teams converged in Hobart to join 150 other believers at the Bahá'í National Youth Conference held January 13-18 at the Southern Teachers Center.

The Lord Mayor of Hobart, Alderman Plaister, attended the first session to officially welcome the Bahá'ís to the city and open the conference.

Two addresses were given by the Hand of the Cause H. Collis Featherstone. He shared reports of his recent travels to Bahá'í communities in the Pacific, and urged the Bahá'ís to simultaneously root themselves in the firm earth of the Faith and teach the Cause with conviction, wisdom and love.

Talks and workshops were given by Counsellor Peter Khan and National Spiritual Assembly members Janet Khan and Beverly Stafford.

No less than 15 youth speakers gave book reviews, talks on various aspects of teaching the Faith, the Covenant, the Universal House of Justice, the Nineteen Day Feast, "Love of God," and "The Life Blood."

John Davidson, an Auxiliary Board member, and Tom Price produced and directed a highly successful science-fiction musical, "Return to Plutonia 2," about an inter-galactic teaching trip in the year 1345 B.E. to consolidate new believers on a distant planet.

The three-hour lunch/teaching period each day was effectively used to seek waiting souls and to invite people to hear Dr. Peter Khan's public talk, "Building a New Tomorrow."

Highlights and results of the conference were cabled to the Universal House of Justice:

"GREETINGS LOVE SUPREME BODY. CONFERENCE BLESSED PRESENCE HAND CAUSE FEATHERSTONE COUNSELLORS PERKS KHAN FOUR AUXILIARY BOARD TWO NSA MEMBERS. 187 PARTICIPANTS WITNESSED LORD MAYOR HOBART OPENING CONFERENCE MID-POINT TASMANIAN CAMPAIGN. MATURE UNDERSTANDING FAITH EXPRESSED. DEDICATED SPIRIT GENERATED. FIVE YOUTH INCLUDING TWO CHINESE DECLARED ALLEGIANCE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. TWENTY-SEVEN TEACHERS ARISEN CONFERENCE AUGMENTING ORIGINAL TWENTY-SIX TASMANIAN CAMPAIGN. TRANSFORMING SPIRIT EMERGING TASMANIA."

Stimulated by the conference, by the new believers, by generous press and radio coverage, and by the enthusiastic support of the Tasmanian Bahá'ís, the traveling teachers, now more than 50 strong, carried the teaching campaign to a successful conclusion.

In all, 12 declarations were received, more than 40 serious seekers found, two "new believer" institutes scheduled, follow-up teaching activities planned, and at least three Bahá'ís pioneered to Tasmania from the Australian mainland.

—Scott Stafford
The ninth Australian Bahá'í Youth Conference (right) was attended by 187 believers January 13-18 at Hobart, Tasmania. It was the first Bahá'í conference held in that Australian state. The Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone is seated in the middle of the photo.

Among the original 26 teachers in the Tasmanian teaching project in January was the Bahá'í music group "1844" (below) whose free concerts attracted many non-Bahá'ís to hear about the Faith. The group's album, "Dreams of Tomorrow," is available through the Bahá'í Publishing Trust in Australia.
The Baha’is of India, who have won almost all of their Five Year Plan goals, set in motion an ambitious plan to “arouse the multitudes” at an historic South India Teaching Conference held January 20-22 at Bangalore.

Members of the Continental Board of Counsellors, the National Spiritual Assembly of India, Auxiliary Board members, pioneers and visitors from abroad joined the believers of South India at the memorable conference that the National Assembly says “will surely result in a great upsurge of activities throughout South India.”

About 500 Baha’is and guests attended a Unity Feast that preceded the opening of the conference. They were treated to a presentation of the Faith by Auxiliary Board member S. Vasudevan, followed by a cultural program of classical Indian dance.

A highlight of the gathering was the large number of native believers attending from the south, including many from the Sulur Project area.

The conference was opened with devotions, followed by a cable from the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Baha Ruhíyyih Khánum:

“LOVING THOUGHTS PRAYERS WITH BELOVED FRIENDS. HOPEFUL UNPRECEDENTED SUCCESS FERTILE TEACHING FIELD SOUTH INDIA DURING REMAINING MONTHS PLAN. PROFOUNDLY DISAPPOINTED PROLONGED PNEUMONIA CONDITION PREVENTED MY ATTENDANCE CONFERENCE BUT MY HEART WITH YOU ALL NOBLE ENDEAVORS. RÚHÍYYIH.”

K. H. Vajdi, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly, welcomed everyone present, and particularly singled out the friends who had come all the way from Arabia.

Special healing prayers were chanted for Ruhíyyih Khánum to the friends who had longed to see her at the conference, as though she were in the auditorium.

Counsellor Shirin Boman set the theme: “Arouse the Multitudes.” It was especially fitting that the battle cry should be sounded here, for in a message to a previous teaching conference in Bangalore in 1975, the Universal House of Justice had cabled: “PRAISEWORTHY MANIFOLD ACHIEVEMENTS INDIAN BELIEVERS PAST DECADE SPARKED RAYS HOPE EARLY FULFILLMENT PROMISES MASTER GUARDIAN BRIGHT FUTURE THAT VAST COUNTRY. EARNESTLY APPEAL INDIVIDUAL BAHÁ’IS WHETHER VETERAN OR NEW OLD OR YOUNG MEN OR WOMEN RAISE CALL KINGDOM SUCH INTENSITY AROUSE MULTITUDES FROM SLUMBER BEFORE TOO LATE.”

Mrs. Boman urged the believers to arise and answer the call of the Universal House of Justice to “INAUGURATE UNPRECEDENTED TEACHING CAMPAIGN ALL PARTS INDIA SURPASS OVERSHADOW ACHIEVEMENTS MADHYA PRADESH THUS STRENGTHENING ORGANIC HEALTHY GROWTH FAITH LENGTH BREADTH COUNTRY.”

She then outlined some steps toward achieving the goals, drawing on the experiences of some successful past campaigns.

After an inspiring presentation by Counsellor Bahá’u’lláh d-Dín Afnán who
cheered and delighted the believers, some of whom were attending a Bahá'í conference for the first time, the afternoon session was devoted to questions, answers and the presentation of plans.

Charles Macdonald, secretary of the National Teaching Committee, reviewed the concept of the 'basic teaching unit' and urged the friends to marshal their forces and deploy them for a systematic campaign.

He provided the friends with an assessment sheet to record achievements against goals set for them by the National Spiritual Assembly, thus showing gaps to be filled while highlighting goals won or surpassed.

Toward the end of the question-and-answer session, a boy of about nine years of age came to the stage. He had traveled 170 miles by himself, as his father was unable to attend. In ringing tones the boy recited from memory a prayer in the Kannada language, then gave a fluent 15-minute talk on the Faith. No better conclusion could have been arranged on the opening day than this demonstration of faith and sincerity by a child. It had an electrifying effect on the friends.

The second day’s sessions began with a presentation by R. N. Shah, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, of the status of India’s Five Year Plan goals. While almost all the goals have been won, a few remain unfilled, particularly the strengthening of at least 500 Assemblies with extension goals and the opening of 1,000 new localities.

India, which was given almost one-third of the entire teaching goals of the Five Year Plan, already has reached its target of 7,000 Local Assemblies. Of special significance was the laying last November of the cornerstone for the first Bahá’í House of Worship in India.

The friends, elated by the manifold achievements, greeted the report with a thunderous ovation.

Counsellor Afshin then gave a brilliant and lucid explanation of the workings and relationships of the elected and appointed institutions of the Faith.

At the afternoon session, teaching reports were presented by the State Teaching Committees of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

On the morning of the third day, Counsellor Dipchand Khianra captivated the audience with a narrative presentation of 'The Faith in India' in which he traced the enduring ties binding the Cause of God to India.

Afterward, Dr. Sree Ganesar arose to present a thrilling report of the South India Project, sponsored jointly by the National Spiritual Assemblies of India and Malaysia.

Dr. Ganesar reported that more than 2,000 believers had been enrolled and 45 Local Spiritual Assemblies formed, with regular visits and firm guidance from team members continuing. The team is made up of Bahá’ís from Malaysia, India, Hong Kong and England. Satellite projects are to be launched soon in Palghat (Kerala) and Karaikal (Pondicherry).

The friends were deeply moved by the evidence of devotion shown by the team and by the faith it had inspired in the new believers, and when Dr. Ganesar asked for volunteers to help, 105 of those present, young and old alike, including members of the Auxiliary Board, arose and pledged a period of teaching and sacrificial effort. A wonderful new impetus for the advance of the Faith in South India had been given.

At the afternoon session, Auxiliary Board member Vasudevan spoke of the resolve initiated at the conference to double the number of Bahá’ís in South India in the remaining months of the Plan as a gift from India to the Universal House of Justice.

Counsellor Afshin recapitulated the purpose of the conference and called forward the volunteers, introducing each one, telling how much time he or she had volunteered, and indicating the places to which they would proceed.

Following the conference, Counsellor Zena Sorabjee spoke at a well-attended public meeting with Bahá’í youth presenting a musical program.

Mr. Vajdi thanked the friends on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly and expressed the hope that South India would seize the 'palm of victory' from Madhya Pradesh and usher in a great period of growth for the Cause in India.
(The following letter was written by Nathan Rutstein, U.S. Auxiliary Board member for propagation, following the Western Hemispheric Bahá'í Radio and Television Conference at Panama City, Panama, in December.—Ed.)

Dear Bahá'í Friends:

I witnessed a miracle in Panama. Nothing like a sea becoming a land mass in an instant. Nothing that biblical. It was the birth of Bahá'í Radio, New World Order radio, born despite initial governmental rejection, little money, and few trained broadcasters.

The 125 delegates at the Bahá'í Hemispheric Radio and Television Conference, representing 27 countries, caught a glimpse of the new broadcasting. The miracle unfolded as we heard the story of how the first Bahá'í radio station evolved in Ecuador, of how Bahá'í production centers have begun appearing throughout the Caribbean and Latin America the past two years in spite of little available money. Knowing that these centers are potential stations fired the imagination. Next year the second Bahá'í radio station, in Bolivia, is scheduled to begin broadcasting. Others will follow.

Listening to each country's story carried us from one height of exaltation to another. The cheers, the cries of "Bravo!" the tears of joy were expressions of gratitude to Bahá'u'lláh.

As story after story of the successful use of radio by faithful, hard-working Latin American believers, some of them illiterate, were told, I thought of Bahá'u'lláh, weighted down by prison chains in the Siyáh Chál. My heart throbbed with His cry of "O God, increase My astonishment!"

Seeing a film of the first Bahá'í radio station's antenna being raised was not only an opportunity to witness history in the making; it also demonstrated the conquering power of faith.

The antenna was not shipped in from some highly industrialized nation. It was put together in Ecuador and raised by Bahá'ís with makeshift rigs. Professional installation would have cost around $10,000. The Ecuadorian Bahá'ís is spent $900.

When the conference delegates saw the antenna finally standing straight, stretching into the Ecuadorian sky, they broke into spontaneous applause. Eyes moistened when they heard the first words flow from the station in Spanish:

"O my God! O my God! Unite the hearts of Thy servants, and reveal to them Thy great Purpose..."

All of the countries represented gave reports. In Peru, we learned, 70 per cent of the country is exposed to 45 minutes of Bahá'í programming each day. In Jamaica, a regular program has attracted listeners to Bahá'u'lláh. Trinidad, Paraguay, Antigua, El Salvador, Panama, and most of the other countries producing programs have experienced the same results.

Through these reports, the North Americans discovered what is essential in developing New World Order radio. It is not through the latest equipment, the most polished performers, the most skilled technicians, though all of that is important. The Latin American and Caribbean believers, with little radio knowledge, demonstrated what is most important. It has to do with attitude, with perspective. And no amount of money can produce that.

Radio is the servant of Bahá'u'lláh. As a consequence, the community is the beneficiary of that service. In essence, the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh sets the tone and focus and clarifies the purpose. All involved are guided by the principle of service to the human race. By operating via spiritual principles, love permeates every program, compassion fills the airwaves, and the cry for unity of the human family threads everything that is done.

The heavily credentialed North American professionals marveled at the spirit communicated in the programs they heard and saw, some of them aired by people who couldn't read or write. It dawned on us that had we been asked to launch Bahá'í Radio, much old world order professional conditioning would have unwittingly been injected into the programming.

I had gone to Panama thinking I had much to teach the Latin American friends. Instead, I—and this was true of the other North American delegates as well—gained much more than I gave.

If the Bahá'ís are going to develop new ways to broadcasting, then it must be free of the trappings of modern societies. Our eyes, our minds, our hearts must come to Panama. Maybe this is why the North American delegates to the Third Bahá'í Hemispheric Conference went to Panama.
On Mindoro, pure souls respond to the Message

(The following first person account of a nine-day training institute held in January 1977 at Mindoro, an island in the central Philippines southwest of Luzon, was written by Auxiliary Board member Baby Mockon of the Philippines. -Ed.)

A most memorable nine-day training institute was held last January in a fishing village called Caminawit on the island of Mindoro.

The training was for my assistants and other Bahá'ís, and the village was chosen to consolidate the Local Spiritual Assembly and Bahá'í community there at the same time.

Each night, after deepening in the Writings during the day, a public meeting was arranged to bring in new believers and reinforce this two-year-old Bahá'í community, as well as to give the Bahá'ís who were being trained an opportunity to teach.

The first night 20 children from the village were the first to crowd into our meeting. As there were as yet no adults there, the children were taught songs and prayers for children. An hour later the children—ranging in age from 3 to 11—had more or less memorized the prayers.

When the adults arrived the meeting started, with the chairman of the Local Assembly conducting. The opening prayers were said by the children.

Every adult at the meeting asked to become a Bahá'í. The children whose parents weren't yet Bahá'ís pleaded to be enrolled in the Faith too. Cards were given to them, and on each was written the designation, "Bahá'í child." The children were very happy and were the first to learn to say "Alláh-u-Abhá."

The short obligatory noon-day prayer was taught immediately to the new believers, especially to the children who were promised that after they had memorized the obligatory prayer they could open the following public meetings with prayers. The children remained while various questions were asked by the adults regarding such things as alcohol, disunity, etc. Before the meeting ended the children were instructed by the Bahá'ís to invite their parents, relatives and friends to the next public meeting.

The second night the number of children was doubled, and more adults came with the children. One mother even brought her two-week-old infant to the meeting because she had heard that it was for mothers and children too.

All the adults and children there that night declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh. The children who had become Bahá'ís the night before were the first to greet the new believers with "Alláh-u-Abhá," and the adults could not help but respond and return the greeting.

There were 50 children the third night. One 7-year-old boy brought his father, a man who had a long-standing drinking problem. The man said he came because his son had become a Bahá'í and had told him the Faith is very good. If, he said, he too found it good, he also would become a Bahá'í. Later that evening he declared his belief.

Afterward, the man's son showed him the short obligatory prayer and told him he must pray every day. He added that from then on he (the father) must stop drinking because it is bad for him.

More children came the fourth night, and more adults who had heard of the meetings came with them. One man asked to become a Bahá'í so his drinking problem might be cured. And automatically, the younger children continued to greet everyone with a cheery "Alláh-u-Abhá."

The following nights and meetings brought more adults and children. One of the men said he was going to become a Bahá'í because he wanted to be a better person and would start speaking again to certain of his relatives toward whom he had for a long time harbored ill feelings.

Each evening, from 20 to 40 children would walk along the shoreline to accompany the Bahá'í teachers to the meeting place.

By the ninth night 90 children had asked to become Bahá'ís. The Spiritual Assembly of Caminawit had become conscious of its responsibilities, such as continuing to educate the children in the Teachings of the Faith and to teach everyone in the village until all had become Bahá'ís.

To date a regular Bahá'í children's class is being held there every Saturday and a Bahá'í women's class once each week.

It also is worth mentioning what happened at another fishing village elsewhere on Mindoro, a village called Bulalacao. A regional Bahá'í conference was held there last year, and there were many (72) who became Bahá'ís. There also were about 30 children who pleaded to become Bahá'ís and whose names were taken and listed as believers.

Since that time those children have kept the fire of the Faith alive in that village with their singing of Bahá'í songs. Once I visited there and was told by the adults that every night the children would sing "Alláh-u-Abhá" and other Bahá'í songs until they fell asleep. Some of the children were telling other people that they were Bahá'ís.

Whenever a Bahá'í teacher visited that village, he or she would be surrounded by children eagerly waiting to be taught to sing, and to be taught about Bahá'u'lláh. While still on the bus, these Bahá'í teachers would be greeted with "Alláh-u-Abhá" by children clinging to its sides.

This is all I can report for now, although I wish to assure you that many more interesting and inspiring happenings will come our way as we continue to strive to win the goals of the Five Year Plan.

April 1978/Bahá'í News 9
Gathering of more than 1,000 Bahá’ís at Singapore is two conferences in one as children play major role in its theme of ‘Education for Peace’

A cablegram received December 29 at the World Center from the Singapore Conference read:


The following day, a second cablegram was received from the conference. It read:

“Happy, productive spirit prevails Singapore Conference. 1,022 in attendance, including 100 children. South Indian requirements met, 101 arose travel teach, seven pioneers. . . Educational Children’s Conference very successful. Generous outpouring funds . . . Deeply grateful your prayers, wise assistance.”

More than 1,000 Bahá’ís from 19 countries gathered December 28-31 at the Conference Hall in downtown Singapore for the Southeast Asia Bahá’í Regional Conference, thus helping to fulfill one of Singapore’s goals of the Five Year Plan.

Counsellor Florence Mayberry, a member of the International Teaching Centre, brought the fragrances of the Holy Land to the assembled friends, and also heightened, through her call to action, their resolve to take whatever steps are necessary to win a resounding victory in the Plan.

All five of the Counsellors for Southeast Asia also were present and made their invaluable contributions.

The conference theme was “Education for Peace: Man is the Supreme Talisman,” and one of its distinguishing features was a children’s conference in which more than 100 children ages 3 through 14 participated.

Thirty-five Bahá’ís attended a four-day pre-conference teacher training program to prepare them for the task of activating a measure of the divinely entrusted potential latent within the souls of the children who attended their classes.

The older children served as reporters at the adult conference, interviewing participants, taking notes, and publishing a newspaper, proceeds from the sale of which were given to the Fund.

More than 30 Aslis and Ibans, the aboriginal peoples of Malaysia, traveled at relatively great expense and at some risk to glimpse the worldwide family they had joined and to make their contribution to a Cause they so stoutly espouse.

Hundreds of Indian workers from the rubber plantations also made sacrifices to attend. The conference proceedings were translated into Mandarin, Tamil, Malay and Persian through a simultaneous translation system.

Taking its cue from a cable from the Universal House of Justice expressing the wish that “outstanding results” would be forthcoming from the conference, and from Counsellor Mayberry’s remarks, the conference was oriented toward action.

At the request of the House of Justice, representatives from each national community in the region met to standardize Bahá’í terms in Chinese, and were successful in doing so.

Workshops were organized by the Counsellors for Southeast Asia on the role of women, literature needs for the area, the role of youth, child education, pioneering, and traveling teaching, and each group reported its findings to the conference at large.
Some 1,032 Bahá'ís from 19 countries including these children attended the Southeast Asia Bahá'í Regional Teaching Conference held December 28-31 at Singapore. Counsellor Florence Mayberry of the International Teaching Centre is standing near the center of the photo, wearing a white dress.

Twelve per cent of the friends volunteered as pioneers or traveling teachers. Twenty-three volunteered to go traveling teaching for extended periods in South India, meeting the needs of an exciting project now entering its second phase.

A comparable number offered their services as itinerant teachers in Thailand where the methods of expansion and consolidation that have been so successful in the Philippines are being applied.

A conference highlight was a filmed report of the New Era Bahá'í School in Panchgani, India, by its principal, Dr. Ray Johnson. In the film the friends were given a glimpse of an "education for peace," grounded in faith and Divine purpose, that no doubt will help usher in the Most Great Peace.

The conference was closed with the celebration of the Feast of Sharaf (Honor), with the largest attendance of any Feast ever held in Singapore. The children sang, danced and acted, the Malaysian aborigines were presented as special guests, and everyone was moved by Counsellor Mayberry's final remarks.

She described the conference as being characterized by a spirit of determination to fulfill the expectations of the Universal House of Justice, and as a special and loving gift, she presented to Freddy Tan, the chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Singapore, a packet of rose petals that she had recently gathered at the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. — Bret Breneman

Children played an important role at the Southeast Asia Conference with the more than 100 youngsters attending having regular classes of their own and even producing a newspaper reporting Conference highlights, proceeds from the sale of which were donated to the Fund.
India

5,600 new believers!

During December, the National Assembly of India enrolled 5,600 believers, while 254 localities were opened and 52 Local Spiritual Assemblies established.

Some of the victories are due to the South India Teaching Project, a joint effort of the Baha'is of India and Malaysia.

At last report, the project team had accepted declarations from some 1,500 believers in 45 localities, all of which have elected Local Spiritual Assemblies.

The South India Teaching Project includes 10 Malaysian believers, six from India, and one each from the United States and Hong Kong.

Kenya

Africa’s lions roaring

It was announced at the annual National Teaching Conference for Kenya on November 26-27 that 77 Local Spiritual Assemblies have been formed since Ridván, bringing the total to 530; that 134 Local Assemblies have been strengthened enough to achieve re-election this Ridván; and that 84 Local Assemblies are carrying out extension teaching plans of their own.

Many local Baha’i Centers are under construction, many others are planned, and a large number of plots of land for local endowments has been acquired.

The Hand of the Cause Raḥmatu’llāh Muhájjir attended the conference at the Nakuru Baha’i Center, and twice addressed the gathering of 160 believers.

He recalled that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said Africa would roar like a lion. “When a lion roars, all other living creatures look his way. Now, all the people of the world are looking toward Africa. We are the lions of Baha’u’lláh,” he said.

Dr. Muhájjir reminded the audience of Shoghi Effendi’s special love for Africa, and asked them to imagine how happy he must be at the achievements of the African Baha’is.

He urged that teaching efforts be made to reach people in the remote areas of Africa, and that every Local Assembly and individual make and carry out teaching plans.

“The secret of progress in Africa is teaching the people to become teachers, but teaching is not enough,” he said. “We need organization and administration, and always more teaching. Neither teaching without administration nor administration without teaching will work.”

Continental Counsellor Isobel Sabri told the group the annual Teaching Conference is second only to the National Convention in importance. She said the Teaching Conference was made a goal of the Five Year Plan so that it would become a part of community life in every country.

Counsellor Sabri expressed pleasure at meeting Baha’is in their own homes and communities during a recent tour of Kenya.

“It is significant that Kenya is now a community of Baha’i families,” she said. She was encouraged and inspired to hear children reciting prayers by heart, to see women’s activities and to witness the building of Baha’i Centers.

“I have heard the voice of confidence proclaiming that Kenya’s goals shall be won,” she said.

Sri Lanka

Jamsheed Fozdar (left) of Encinitas, California, presents to His Excellency President Jayewardene of Sri Lanka and Madame Jayewardene copies of his books, The God of Buddha and Buddha Maitrya-Amitabha Has Appeared. During his four-day visit to Sri Lanka in November, Mr. Fozdar also presented to Their Excellencies copies of All Things Made New, Some Answered Questions, and The New Garden. Before arriving in Sri Lanka, Mr. Fozdar visited Bangkok, Thailand, where he was invited by the prestigious Siam Society to address it on “The Role of the Sangha in the Modern World.”

Kenya

UN Day invitation

For the first time since the government of Swaziland recognized United Nations Day (October 24) as a national holiday, the Baha’i community was asked to participate in its observance.

A Baha’i was appointed to the Program and Arrangements Committee for the annual International Friendship Ball. Radio publicity for the Ball mentioned the Faith.

The many people who asked why the Baha’i community was among the sponsors for the UN Day observance were given a pamphlet explaining the affiliation of the Baha’i International Community with the UN.

Prior to UN Day, the local UN representative spoke at a United Nations celebration at the Baha’i National Center in Moabane. The program ended with a filmed interview of Dr. Victor de Araujo, the representative of the Baha’i International Community to the UN.
Switzerland

200 at Winter School

The Alpine village of Enney in Switzerland's Gruyere region, known for its cheeses and peaceful surroundings, was the site in late December of a Bahá'í Winter School attended by 200 people from 10 countries. Among those present were many children and some seekers.

Erik Blumenthal, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Europe, shared the glad news that when Cyprus forms its National Spiritual Assembly at Ridván it will become the 19th pillar of the Universal House of Justice in Europe.

Topics of study at the school included child education, Bahá'í history (1911-1921), detachment, and the growth and development of Bahá'í institutions.

An evening program by the children included the singing of the Bahá'í song adopted by UNICEF as its theme for Universal Children's Day 1977, "Ye Are the Flowers of One Garden."

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New Zealand

Teaching Conference

The National Teaching Conference held in Palmerston North, New Zealand, in September was attended by "hundreds of enthusiastic believers," says the November issue of the New Zealand Bahá'í Newsletter.

The friends shared news of victories in their home areas, including a story of 15 members of one family who declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh!

The believers also shared prayer experiences—from guidance in personal matters to assistance in Bahá'í activities. One session was devoted to ways of teaching the Faith to the Maori, a Polynesian people of New Zealand. An important point made was that Bahá'í teachers should offer the Faith to the Maori as a gift rather than lecture them, which is true of all our teaching efforts.

In an entertaining session on the Fund, a "commercial" for the New World Order when they went to nearby towns and invited residents to public meetings and firesides.

Cameroon Republic

The National Teaching Conference held September 16-17 in Yaounde, Cameroon, was attended by 91 believers from 31 communities. Skits demonstrating teaching methods were presented, and those who were present later put the methods into practice when they went to nearby towns and invited residents to public meetings and firesides.
Bank was given by National Treasurer Tony Smit. He said that unlike its predecessors, the New World Order Bank will not go bankrupt, and the money on deposit will go to benefit mankind. When a material deposit is made, a spiritual one is made as well; thus the friends are saving in this world to benefit themselves in the next.

After several believers spoke about their international teaching experiences, 31 others arose and offered to travel and teach, and two arose to pioneer.

The New Zealand Bahá’í Newsletter concludes, "The Teaching Conference was especially strengthened by the number of different believers who took part in the sessions—some of them fairly new Bahá’ís. . . ."

**El Salvador**

**Goal localities opened**

The National Spiritual Assembly of El Salvador met with its committees December 18-19 at the Ḥáz̲r̲uṭu’l-Quds to discuss the progress and difficulties of winning the goals and to exchange ideas and suggestions to fulfill their role in the successful completion of the Five Year Plan.

All goal localities have been opened, and approximately 80 per cent of the requisite number of Local Spiritual Assemblies formed. While four properties were acquired last year, the properties goal remains to be met.

**United States**

**Bahá’ís at conference**

The U.S. Bahá’í community was represented at the National Women’s Conference sponsored by the U.S. State Department in Houston, Texas, November 18-20.

Dr. Wilma Brady, a representative of the U.S. Bahá’í community at the United Nations, said the conference was "the most remarkable example of unity I have seen outside the Bahá’í Faith."

Other Bahá’ís attending included Dr. Joy Benson, the official government representative from Guam, and Mary Figir, official international guest of the U.S. State Department from the Yap Islands in the Carolines.

The major teaching effort at the conference was the distribution of 1,000 invitations to two Bahá’í receptions hosted by the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Houston.

One of those who received an invitation was an oral historian for the conference, who taped a half-hour interview with Dr. Brady that will be stored at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

The conference agenda included interfaith services on Sunday morning. The Bahá’ís worked with members of other religions to plan the program.

"Over-all, the conference was an historic step toward peace," said Dr. Brady.

**Trinidad/Tobago**

**Assembly goal won**

In Trinidad and Tobago, the Five Year Plan goal of 120 Local Spiritual Assemblies has been surpassed with the present number at 128 and several other localities at Assembly status. The localities goal of 300 is well within reach and should be surpassed sometime this year.
Papua New Guinea

50 attend conference

Some 50 Bahá'ís from 12 provinces attended the National Teaching Conference held November 26-27 in Lae, Papua New Guinea.

For many of those attending, it was the first opportunity to see the new National Hazíratu'l-Quds in Lae. The building is large enough to house the National Spiritual Assembly, which met almost continuously during the conference.

During the conference, discussions were held on the Five Year Plan goals, the Bahá'í Fund, community development and the Covenant.

It was decided that ideas developed during workshops on teaching methods would be published and shared with believers who could not be present.

Burma

New teaching campaign

The Burmese Bahá'í community launched a teaching campaign in January to open 82 localities. Six full-time Bahá'í teachers have been deputized by the National Spiritual Assembly for the duration of the campaign.

The campaign was formulated after the National Teaching Committee, the National Women's Committee, the National Youth Committee and three Auxiliary Board members met November 11 at the National Hazíratu'l-Quds in Rangoon.

Besides opening 82 localities, the plan calls for the construction of local Hazíratu'l-Quds at Ngayyema, Htaukkyai, Letdithi and Minglawyathit; construction of a guest house in Daidanaw, and improvements to the local Hazíratu'l-Quds in Twante as well as to the National Hazíratu'l-Quds.

Many Bahá'í communities in upper Burma agreed to take on specific teaching and consolidation tasks after a two-day meeting of the National Assembly in Mandalay that included a regional conference.

Centenary observance

The Bahá'ís of Burma will celebrate in May the Centenary of the arrival of the Bahá'í Faith in their country, following the Fourth International Convention in Haifa.

The Burmese friends were unable to leave the country to attend the recent international and regional conferences, and are "thirsty to see our loving Bahá'í brothers and sisters from all over the world," the National Assembly says, adding that it hopes Bahá'ís from other countries will visit Burma during its Centenary celebration to "carry the water of life to the Bahá'í friends there."

Paraguay

Radio use increases

Plans for a radio campaign that would bring Bahá'í programming into every home in Paraguay were given a boost on November 1 when visiting Continental Counsellor Mas'úd Khamsi was given a 20-minute interview on the most popular radio station in the capital city of Asunción.

At the same time, thrice-weekly five-minute Bahá'í radio programs were begun in six cities.

On November 2, the interview with Mr. Khamsi was broadcast in six major cities, while that same day he had a seven-minute interview on the only television station in Asunción.

Five days later a second radio station in Asunción interviewed Bahá'ís for one-half hour.

Soon afterward, a Bahá'í couple was interviewed on a popular women's television program. The five-minute interview, aired on the anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, dealt with Bahá'í views on marriage and the status of women.

Canada

Ad campaign sparks tremendous response

The first responses were received on Monday, October 31, less than two days after the first advertisement in the Bahá'í national advertising campaign appeared in Canadian Magazine.

Others came, and are coming, from across the country, from cities and rural areas, from young and old, men and women, French and English, Italian and Spanish, Indian and Irish — the diversity of responses is described as remarkable.

As the December issue of Bahá'í Canada went to press, 223 inquiries had been recorded. Most had returned the label from the ad, often adding short notes or sincere and open letters. "Please send information soon" often was written below the name and address of the inquirer.

Each request is immediately answered. The Bahá'í Information Committee for Canada has prepared a letter thanking the individual for his interest, explaining the principle of the independent investigation of truth, encouraging him in that investigation, and providing the name, address and phone number of the nearest Local Spiritual Assembly, Group or Regional Goals Committee.

Included with the letter are several books and an introductory pamphlet. The Bahá'í Information Committee also writes to that Assembly, Group or Goals Committee, giving the name and address of the inquirer and suggesting that he or she be invited by letter to a fireside or other public event.

Response to the campaign has been steady and continuing, in spite of the fact that the second ad was inadvertently published in only one-third of the areas originally intended.

Perhaps the most touching inquiry came from an elderly couple who phoned the Bahá'í National Center and spoke with Esther Hayes of the Records Department.

After discussing some of the ideas presented in the ad, the gentleman said, haltingly, "We are pensioners. Are we too old to investigate the Bahá'í Faith?"

THERE IS ONLY ONE RELIGION

It has many names; but only one source

With our own eyes we see, we believe religions to have been divinely inspired. In the sight of God, they are one. This is the message given in the Bahá'í Faith to all the peoples of the earth. Founded by Ba'h?u'll Bahá'í Faith is a form of the world. It is the source.

As they were to their forefathers, Bahá'ís are bound to their descendents. Each rhymed phrase has its origin in the same Divine Source. Each religion is a revelation of the immutable Law of God.

The Bahá'í Faith

A. Trashman Kay

The right and duty of the inquirer to correspond with the Bahá'í National Center is recognized. Please write:

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY
AREA CODE

April 1978/Bahá'í News 15
Gilbert Is./Tuvalu

Bahá'ís in ceremonies

The Bahá'ís of the Gilbert Islands and Tuvalu were represented in three different ceremonies honoring Japanese soldiers who died in the battle of Tarawa during World War II.

According to Buddhist custom, the final and most important ceremonies for the dead are held 33 years later.

The first ceremony was for 15 Japanese, including the son of the officer who had commanded the Japanese troops in the area. Representatives of government, the churches, and the National Spiritual Assembly were present.

A similar ceremony was held by another group of Japanese families several months later. This group included a Japanese friend of one of the National Assembly members.

On the third occasion, the Bahá'ís of Betio were asked to arrange the program for the dedication of a small memorial to the Japanese war dead. The governor spoke on behalf of the Japanese, who were not able to be present. Jack Pedro, the first Ellice (Tuvaluan) Bahá'í, read the Prayer for Mankind.

United Kingdom

Plan goals studied

A National Teaching Conference held in the United Kingdom December 17-18 in Hatfield was preceded by two Area Teaching Conferences held in October in Swansea, Wales, and in November in Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland. All three conferences were aimed at marshaling the efforts of the Bahá'ís to win the Five Year Plan goals.

The conference in Swansea was attended by the entire National Spiritual Assembly and was addressed by Continental Counsellor Adib Taberzadeh.

Fully half the Bahá'ís of Northern Ireland, as well as a contingent of 10 believers from the Irish Republic, met in Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland. Counsellor Dorothy Ferraby was present, as were representatives from the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Irish Republic and the United Kingdom.

The first day of the National Teaching Conference in Hatfield was spent studying the compilation, “The Gift of Teaching,” recently prepared by the Universal House of Justice. Counsellor Taberzadeh concluded the first day's program with a talk on the philosophy of teaching.

The second day, committees explained their teaching plans and solicited commitments for teaching trips and pioneering.

Irán

Seen here are some of the Bahá'ís who attended a week-long deepening course in September at Buyr Ahmad, Luristan, in west-central Iran.

Seen here are some of the believers who attended a Regional Teaching Conference in Gilán, in north-central Iran, in September.
Portugal

Of the 80 Baha’is attending this National Teaching Conference in Lisbon, Portugal—the second such gathering in 1977—about half were new believers.

Benin

Board hosts institute

Benin’s first Auxiliary Board Institute was held January 20-23 at the National Hazirat’ul-Quds in Cotonou.

The newly-appointed assistants to Benin’s Auxiliary Board member for protection, Frederic Hodonou, were deepened in their challenging responsibilities by Mr. Hodonou and Thelma Khelghati, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for West Africa.

The assistants reviewed the divinely-created Administrative Order, and discussed ways to strengthen the country’s 65 Local Spiritual Assemblies.

Counsellor Khelghati thrilled the gathering when she announced the appointment of National Spiritual Assembly member Samuel Zodeougan as Benin’s first Auxiliary Board member for the propagation of the Faith.

In turn, invited the Baha’is to participate in a non-Baha’i women’s conference in October.

Sierra Leone

Exhibition a success

The friends in Kambia, Sierra Leone, cooperated to make the Baha’i Exhibition the weekend of October 1-2 a success.

It was displayed in the District Council Hall and seen by more than 60 people. It depicted several aspects of the Faith: the Central Figures; Bahá’u’lláh’s proclamation to rulers; the oneness of mankind; the diversity of the Faith; and the Administrative Order.

During the weekend, 300 pamphlet-style invitations to a fireside were given out.

This was the second time a Bahá’í Exhibition was held, the first time being in January 1975.

Finland

New Assembly formed

The 70 or so believers who attended the National Teaching Conference in Tampere, Finland, October 15-16 heard the joyous news that a new Local Spiritual Assembly would be formed October 25 at Naantali.

Adib Taherzadeh, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe, was a guest speaker at the conference.

Windward Islands

3 Assemblies added

There are now four Local Spiritual Assemblies in Dominica. The Assemblies at St. Luke, St. Paul and St. Joseph were formed following a teaching trip to Dominica December 6-13 by Counsellor Hedi Ahmadiyeh.

Fiji

Baha’is show film

The Baha’is of Suva, Fiji, showed The Green Light Expedition at the Alankar, a new local theater, to an audience of 600 on October 19.

The Baha’is report that “the management was most cooperative and asked for more films.”

The Gambia

Fifty adults and 20 children attended the Bulenghat Teaching Conference held November 27 in the Republic of The Gambia. Auxiliary Board member Muhammad Al-Salih is standing second from right in the back row. Auxiliary Board member Nassirou Toidi from Senegal is standing second from right in the middle row.
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Cover

This month marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the public dedication of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, the Mother Temple of the West. The cornerstone was laid by the Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, on May 1, 1912, and the magnificent structure was completed forty-one years later and dedicated by the Bahá'ís as a gift to all the peoples of the world.
The South India Project

The South India Project, a joint effort of the National Assemblies of India and Malaysia, began October 20, 1977, following the All Asia Bahá’í Women’s Conference in New Delhi.

A team of Bahá’ís, initially consisting of 10 Malaysians, six Indians and one member each from the United States and Hong Kong, began its efforts in Sulur Panchayath Union. The goal: 100,000 new believers and 100 new Local Spiritual Assemblies by Ridván 1978.

The following material is quoted or extracted from the team members’ reports to their respective National Spiritual Assemblies:

The first phase of the project, lasting 39 days, or until November 28, saw the establishment of a base of operations at Sulur. The team, consisting of between 12 and 19 members, achieved its initial goal of establishing Local Assemblies in the 23 localities of Sulur Panchayath Union District. Total enrollments reached 1,066. Activities included a “successful and well-attended” conference on November 13.

The friends took one day off before the second phase began. “During the day off we had a short briefing session. Dr. Sree Ganesh announced the over-all plan: a total of 100 Local Assemblies and 100,000 new believers to be brought into the Faith by Ridván 1978. The target seemed impossible, and the number of believers to be enrolled staggering, but we knew that with prayers, sincerity of motive, a little effort, and—most of all—with Bahá’u’lláh’s assistance and the prayers of the Universal House of Justice, nothing would be impossible.”

The second phase of the project opened November 29 with two aims: consolidation of the 23 new Local Spiritual Assemblies and the opening of a base for teaching at Palladam, with the aim of establishing Assemblies in that district’s 22 localities.

“The... friends were subdivided into three main teams. One teaching team of five (later six) members migrated to the new base and was assigned to open 13 villages and establish Local Assemblies. A second team stayed in Sulur, but began to open nine localities in Palladam that were easier to reach from Sulur. The third team’s task was to deepen the believers in Sulur and consolidate the victories won there.

“All of us seemed pretty lonely for the first couple of days, and grieved at the separation from one another. But soon we began to be absorbed in teaching and in the challenge that lay ahead.

“We would get up every morning at 7 o’clock, have group and individual prayers, and leave for our respective areas. Sometimes the friends showed signs of fatigue and failing health; at times it would be difficult to find people to teach; but never would we return home disappointed at the end of the day.

“Doors would open and our prayers would always be answered... people from all walks embraced the Faith—teachers, farmers, workers, women...

“The Sulur group successfully established nine Local Assemblies by December 9 and came to Palladam the next day. Five more Local Assemblies had to be elected with exactly one day left.

“The friends divided into five groups, deciding that they would only come back home after election of one Assembly each. In the evening the groups started returning, one by one, exhausted but happy. The target had been reached—22 Local Spiritual Assemblies were successfully elected.

“To mark the last day of the second phase, a conference was held. Each of the friends said the Tablet of Ahmad nine times for the occasion. An overwhelming number of 125 believers participated in the conference. The program consisted of the history of the Faith, the station of Bahá’u’lláh, Bahá’í Administration, the obligations of a Bahá’í, teaching, contributing to the Fund, and a question-and-answer session.

“The new believers pledged to bring in about 1,000 additional believers by the end of the month.”
Sierra Leone’s first Summer School

Thirty-four Bahá’ís from 12 communities were present at Magburaka, Sierra Leone, December 27-30 for the first Bahá’í Summer School ever held in that country.

Normally, the Bahá’ís of Sierra Leone each December attend the Summer School at Bomi Hills, Liberia, but that school was canceled in 1977. Following consultation, the National Spiritual Assembly of Sierra Leone decided to conduct its own Summer School.

Although there was little more than a month in which to plan for it, the Summer School surpassed all expectations. Among those attending was Counsellor Friday Ekpe from Nigeria. Moreover, two pioneers from Liberia—Jim Traub and Jerry Evans—added to the diversity of the Summer School.

The school was opened Tuesday evening, December 27, when more than 30 friends gathered for a Unity Feast hosted by the Local Spiritual Assembly of Magburaka. Eric Dumbuya spoke at the Feast on “The Role of Youth in the Faith.”

Wednesday’s sessions included presentations on “Bahá’í History” by A.S. Momodu and Rod Rash; the first of a two-part lesson on “Bahá’í Laws and Principles” by Donald Williams; “Why the Bahá’í Faith?” by Horace Brown; “The Importance of Teaching” by Augustine Conteh, and “Practical Teaching Techniques” by N.S. Kargbo.

In the afternoon, the friends were divided into three groups for teaching trips to Mayawlaw, Makump and Masoko, villages near Magburaka. That evening the friends enjoyed two filmstrips, “Arise!” and “The Bahá’ís and the Holy Land.”

Thursday’s sessions offered a continuation of Wednesday’s topics plus “The Importance of the Nineteen Day Feast” by Sultan Harrie, and “The Holy Days” by Lamarana Bah.

That afternoon the friends distributed more than 300 invitations in Magburaka and nearby villages to a public meeting Thursday night. More than 75 non-Bahá’ís heard an inspiring introductory talk on the Faith by Francis Bangura. Afterward, a panel of five Bahá’ís including Counsellor Ekpe and Auxiliary Board member Charles Bullock answered questions from the audience.

Friday’s topics included “Bahá’í Administration” by Counsellor Ekpe; “The Role of Women in the Bahá’í Community” by Miss Elsie Nicol; “The Bahá’í Fund” by A.M. Jalloh and Koleh Kamara; “The Five Year Plan Goals” by Joseph Swarray, and “The Local Spiritual Assembly” by Musa Lahai and Lansana Kamara.

The children also were well provided for; Miss Nicol planned a special program for them each day, and several of the friends volunteered to teach children’s classes.

The following cable was sent to the Universal House of Justice: ‘‘MAGBURAKA HOST FIRST SUMMER SCHOOL SIERRA LEONE. SPIRITUALLY RICH UPLIFTING INFORMATION. INSPIRED PRESENCE COUNSELLOR EKPE REPRESENTATIVES 12 COMMUNITIES 3 COUNTRIES. CHILDREN CLASSES HELD. PUBLIC MEETING OVER 100 PRESENT NEW DECLARANTS. BESEECH PRAYERS GREATLY SURPASS GOALS PLAN.”

The following reply was received: ‘‘DELIGHTED SUCCESS FIRST SUMMER SCHOOL PRESENCE COUNSELLOR EKPE. WARMLY WELCOME NEW BELIEVERS. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES BLESSINGS CONTINUE SURROUND ALL EFFORTS PROCLAIM TEACH DEEPEN.’’

As the Summer School came to an end, one could feel that all had gone well. The friends had studied, taught and proclaimed the Faith; everyone had contributed in some way to its success.

A tangible result was seven declarations! All that could be done had been done. Now, the Bahá’ís of Sierra Leone must arise and demonstrate to the Bahá’í world that they are determined to go from strength to strength.

—Horace Brown
Teaching in Korea

(The following account of a recent teaching trip to Korea by Terri and Paul Stern is reprinted from the Alaska Bahá'í News of February 1978. – Ed.)

Would you like to do some exciting teaching? Would you like to meet people who are thirsty for the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh? Would you like to be smiled at a lot and smile back in return?

Then the place for you to go is South Korea! We have just been there, and can't wait to go again. We'd love to have you join us.

The trip to Korea is one of the most pleasurable we've ever made. The people there are so friendly and open that it makes one's heart expand with the love of God.

We arrived in Seoul on Saturday, December 24, were met at the airport by Mr. Park (secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Korea) and his son, and went immediately to the Bahá'í Center to meet new Bahá'í friends there.

One of these new friends was an old friend, Bob Thiesse, a young man from Hawaii pioneering in Korea whom we'd originally met on our pilgrimage. Needless to say, it was wonderful to see him again.

We learned that some of the friends already were out visiting villages, teaching and organizing activities for us.

The next afternoon, escorted by Mrs. Park, we left for an island off the southern tip of Korea named Haedudo (pronounced "highbread"), and our transportation, believe it or not, was by Greyhound bus.

We were caught in a snowstorm over a mountain pass, however, missed our connecting bus, and spent the night in a little inn that had the barest of bare necessities.

We arose early the next morning, caught our bus, but learned later that we had missed our ferry to Haedudo by an hour. So we sat in a tea shop for five hours, but the time went by fast as we were in the company of three lovely Persian girls who were also going to Haedudo and were part of our teaching team.

And what a team it was! It was composed of National Spiritual Assembly members, an Auxiliary Board member, an assistant to an Auxiliary Board member in Korea, the Haedudo Area Teaching Committee, plus the three Persian girls (one of whom is a pioneer there) and ourselves.

These people went with us everywhere and had everything so well organized that we knew exactly what the plan was for each day and how many villages we were to visit. In many cases,
contact had been made with the villages the week before we arrived, so we were expected.

As soon as we arrived at Haeuido (after a rather risky disembarkation from the ferry), we plopped our suitcases at the only inn on the island and were whisked off to the home of a National Spiritual Assembly member for dinner, then to another Bahá'í home for a meeting.

Haeuido hasn't yet been touched by materialism, and the people aren't rich, so when we went to homes our lighting was mostly candle-light and kerosene lanterns. It was a precious experience to walk into a dimly-lit home and hear many sweet “Allah'u-Abhá’s” floating to us from across the room.

When we located the faces that went with the voices, they were the sweetest, brightest faces we had seen in a long time. They were men, women and children smiling at us and greeting us as though we were a family returning home. They showered us with love that can only be felt among Bahá'ís.

We would spend the evening relating stories about Bahá'u'lláh and the early believers, and they would keep saying, "Tell us another story, tell us another story!"

We had an excellent translator/teacher, Miss Hae Jon Chung (assistant to Auxiliary Board member Mr. Mithaquiyan). Miss Chung was at Haeuido a week before we came, and worked closely with the Area Teaching Committee as well as teaching adults and organizing children's classes.

We noticed that the communities that were the most active were those where women were participating. There are 33 villages in Haeuido, and Paul was able to visit 11 of the 33.

There were no buses on the island, only one car (which was almost always broken down and had people bending over it), no motorcycles, and only a few bicycles. Our transportation was our own feet, and they really got a workout. So did our lungs, because we sang as we went from village to village.

People would hear us singing and come out of their homes or look over their fences and shout, "Allah'u-Abhá!" They were fellow Bahá'ís, and it was such a joy to see their smiling faces and to meet them.

The thing we found most heartening and that added to our spiritual uplift was not only the friendliness of the people, but the fact that so many times we heard, "Tell us! Tell us so we can tell others!" These wonderful, pure village people want to know so they too can teach. We also heard, "What are the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh? They want to know, and are asking.

Later, we learned that there is one village (not on Haeuido) of about 1,000 people who are all asking to be Bahá'ís, and the Bahá'ís must tell them, "Wait ... let us teach you first!" This truly showed us the power of Bahá'u'lláh, for He already has prepared the hearts of those people they need only to be confirmed in His Cause. Their plea is being heard in Korea, but Korea is short of manpower. Can we help them?

And the children! Tiny, tiny ones saying their Bahá'í prayers from memory while the other children hummed a Bahá'í song in the background. Some of us had tears in our eyes listening to the little voices. But when they sang "God Is One, Man Is One" (in Korean, of course), how their little voices rang!

The first two days we visited five villages. Unfortunately, Terri contracted a fever and was unable to accompany the team to the other six villages.

They went by small boat to another part of Haeuido. The only way back, however, was to walk, and it had rained all day. The road was so muddy it was impossible to stand, so they climbed on a dike and walked on it for about three kilometers.

Imagine ... the ocean on one side, a slippery road on the other ... it is dark, and there is no flashlight. We are sure Bahá'u'lláh was guiding their footsteps and taking care of them on this treacherous walkway.

Our last night on this lovely island was Feast night, and we celebrated it with the Bahá'ís of the main village where our inn was located. We can say we felt a part of our hearts on that island. God willing, in the future we can go back.

We returned to Seoul by train on December 31. On Tuesday, January 2, Paul, together with Mr. Park's son and another young man, went to the area of Shin Chon, about three hours from Seoul.

Paul felt a noticeable difference in the attitude of the people there, as they were much closer to a large city and the materialism was more prevalent. The people seemed more indifferent and weren't as eager to talk.

Paul and his friends visited five villages from January 3-5, and were gratified to be part of opening the village of Jang Jae Li with a declaration there.

They also were able to deepen a few people in other villages, and three men they talked to in Ho Tan Li seemed eager to learn more. They were able to give some firesides, and had an unplanned opportunity to plant more seeds when they talked to more than 30 people who were relaxing in the sun.

It has been said that the traveling teacher receives much more than he gives. This is certainly true in our case. We both feel that our trip provided us with some much-needed spiritual renewal and also served as a first-hand reminder that there really are many souls who are not only longing to be given the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, but also are longing to be deepened in the Faith so that they, in turn, can teach and deepen others. Ya Bahá'u'll-Abhá!

Two nineteenth century ink on silk drawings depicting a Korean landscape and Korean rural life.
An American in Honduras

Shortly after American pioneer Ron Renna arrived in Honduras last summer, the friends there received a cable from the Universal House of Justice asking them to work harder to win their Five Year Plan goals, and to send progress reports to the World Centre every two weeks.

"We started teaching right away," says 28-year-old Ron, who is from Tampa, Florida. "About two months later, the Universal House of Justice sent a cable commending us for winning almost all of our national goals!"

Ron arrived in Tegucigalpa, the capital city, in July. Friends who met him at the airport assured him he'd have no trouble finding employment.

"I was worried about a job the first 10 days, while waiting to sign a teaching contract. Now I realize why my friends told me not to worry. If you have a teaching certificate in Honduras, you'll be hired right away," says Ron.

He was "lonely and depressed" at first, he recalls, because he wanted to teach the Faith and couldn't speak fluent Spanish.

"But accidentally, I stumbled on a teaching plan when I met Angel Coca, an Auxiliary Board member," he says, smiling.

Angel knew that Hondurans would like to practice English with Ron. "He started introducing me to people, and I was an attraction," says Ron. "I would practice Spanish, and they would practice English. Eventually they'd ask why I was in Honduras. I'd tell them about the Faith in broken Spanish until they were interested, then Angel would take over for the next hour-and-a-half.

"After the first time this happened, Angel and I just looked at each other and agreed we'd found a way to teach," says Ron.

Interestingly, Angel does not speak English and Ron speaks only "halting" Spanish. Sometimes they sit together with a dictionary and manage to communicate.

In compliance with the cable from the Universal House of Justice to try harder to win their goals, the friends in Honduras taught in villages surrounding their own communities.

"We would knock at someone's door and be welcomed inside even though we were strangers," says Ron.

The typical Honduran village usually has a square in the center, where the church is located, and in the case of one village, a shade tree.

"Irma Vasquez, whose parents and three sisters are Bahá'ís, sat under the tree and began to tell one or two people about the Faith. Within half an hour, 60 people were attentively listening to her."
"I was amazed at the knowledge that flowed from her," says Ron. "She's only 19 years old."

Ron says the villagers often accept the Faith because the diverse cultures and races of the Bahá'í teachers exemplify the unity of mankind.

"The Hondurans are down-to-earth, open and loving people. They can feel the spirit of the Bahá’ís," he says.

Ron remembers well one of his first teaching trips in Honduras:
"I felt moved to say something. I spoke in broken Spanish and later asked one of the other Bahá’ís if I'd made sense. He told me I'd spoken in perfect Spanish! I must have had the help of Bahá'u'lláh, because even now I couldn't repeat in perfect Spanish what I said that day."

Ron explains that Honduras, the second largest country in Central America, has three centers of population: Tegucigalpa, the capital; La Ceiba, a banana export center; and San Pedro Sula, an industrial city. Most of the remainder of the country is jungle.

Pioneers generally teach in villages surrounding their home communities. Most of the pioneers are school teachers, so they are able to devote weekends and holidays to teaching trips.

"The largest obstacle for teaching trips is lack of transportation," says Ron. "One of the pioneers recently bought a van. Fifteen people pile into it and he drops a few of us off at each village along the way, then picks everyone up at the end of the day."

The teachers often have to travel by public transportation, sometimes by busito (van), and find the Hondurans they meet this way very friendly.

"It's nothing for someone to get on the busito and greet everyone," says Ron. "If someone sits next to you, he'll start talking."

The private bi-lingual school where Ron teaches has 1,200 students, from kindergarten through grade 11. Most of the students are Honduran; a few are sons or daughters of foreign embassy personnel.

All classes are taught in English except for a weekly Catholic religion class, Spanish, and Latin American social studies.

The majority of students' parents, in the upper middle class, recognize the ability to speak English as a ticket to better career opportunities for their children. Virtually all students will continue their education in U.S. universities.

Ron began the school year teaching sixth graders. He had them enact a class assembly, modeled after a Local Spiritual Assembly, rather than class officers. There was no campaigning; the children were told what qualities their assembly members should have.

Ron didn't tell them the assembly was a structure of the Bahá'í Administrative Order. He's not allowed to proselytize. However, the children know he is a Bahá'í, and if they ask him questions, he answers them.

The owners of the school "hire Bahá'ís because they respect our social laws and know we will do a good job. They trust us," says Ron.

Ron, a Bahá'í for eight years, has wanted to pioneer since 1971-72. He wrote the International Goals Committee in the U.S. four years ago, wondering if he should accept a job offer in Central America. They advised him to finish school and learn Spanish first.

He spent the next three years earning his B.A. in English.

He knew the time had come to pioneer when he was at the International Teaching Conference in Merida, Mexico, in February 1977. He thought, "I've wanted to pioneer for a long time. Now is the time to go."
**Niger**

**Chiefs commend Faith**

The National Spiritual Assembly of Niger reported in December that it had received letters commending the Faith from chiefs of two villages where Bahá'ís are residents.

The translation of the letter from the village chief of Aderawa reads: "I am truly thrilled with joy at this unbelievable thing. And I thank all of the Bahá’í religion and everything concerning Bahá’í. We hope that God will protect us in every undertaking. Last, I offer you many warm greetings."

The translated letter from the village chief of Riadi reads: "The Local Spiritual Assembly will be formed with my authorization. I am very happy that you came to visit my village, Riadi, and that you want to have a class for our children to teach about the Bahá’í Faith. Thank you, people of the Bahá’í Faith."

**Pakistan**

**Winter School held**

Pakistan’s National Bahá’í Winter School, held December 22-26 at Hyderabad, was attended by more than 250 Bahá’ís from all parts of the country including new believers from Thar Parkar, and from Sibi in Baluchistan.

A National Women’s Conference and National Five Year Plan Conference also were held during the school. The women reviewed the activities of their sister believers throughout Pakistan and made suggestions about children’s educational activities.

An exciting moment during this period occurred when one of the women attending the conference, a traveling teacher from Kuwait, organized a teaching trip to the village of Sindies, about 64 kilometers (40 miles) from Hyderabad, where 40 people declared their belief in Bahá’u’lláh.

**Papua New Guinea**

**Youth convene, arise**

A featured speaker at the National Youth Conference held December 9-11 at Auki, Malaita Island of the Solomon Islands, was Meherangiz Munsiff of the United Kingdom, who has been on an extensive teaching trip in the Pacific area. She related stories of the services of Bahá’í youth around the world and of the early martyrs and pioneers for the Faith.

Twelve of the 50 Bahá’í youth who attended volunteered to undertake three-month teaching trips for the National Spiritual Assembly.

Three days before the conference, 70 guests attended a luncheon in Honiara at which Mrs. Munsiff spoke. It received local news media coverage.

Government officials, including the
chief minister of the government, the deputy governor, chief judge, chief of police, and several members of the legislature were presented with information about the Faith.

**New books**

Mr. Faizi authors two

*The Prince of Martyrs: A Brief Account of the Imam Husayn*, by the Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qásim Faizi; 80 pages; soft cover.

In this essay Mr. Faizi recounts the life of the Third Imam, grandson of Muhammad, and underlines its significance as testified by Bahá'u'lláh.

It may be ordered from George Ronald, Publisher, 46 High Street, Kidlington, Oxford OX5 2DN, England.

*Milly (A Tribute to the Hand of the Cause Amelia E. Collins)*, by the Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qásim Faizi; 56 pages; soft cover.

This essay offers an affectionate, intimate portrait that brings to life the achievements, devotion and shining personality of this distinguished believer.

It is published by George Ronald (see address above.)

*Flowers of One Garden*, by Gloria Faizi; approximately 40 pages; soft cover.

This book serves as an introduction to progressive revelation and the principles of the Bahá'í Faith. It is suitable for children. The booklet also contains prayers and brief quotations from the Bahá'í Writings.

It may be ordered from the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of India, 6 Canning Road, Post Box 19, New Delhi 110001, India.

*The Training and Education of Children*; 78 pages; soft cover. A compilation from the Writings on the subject of the education of Bahá'í children and youth.

It is available from the Bahá'í Distribution Service, 7200 Leslie Street, Thornhill, Ontario L3T 2A1, Canada.

*Divine Springtime*, by Daniel Nelson Wegener; 135 pages; photographs; soft cover.

The book recounts the stories of the early days of the Faith in Central America and Panama, as told by Louise Caswell, a pioneer to the area since 1939.

It may be ordered through the National Spiritual Assembly of Honduras, Apartado Postal No. 273, Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

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**North West Pacific**

Sisan and Susanna Suda of Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, and their 10 children get together with Sisan's cousin, Sichuo Sipa, Sichuo's wife, Resen, and their nine children before the Sipias embarked on a teaching trip to Truk in the East Carolines. Eight of the Sipias' nine children stayed with the Sudas while their parents went on the teaching trip, bringing the total number of children in the Suda household to 18.

**In Saipan, traveling teaching becomes family affair**

With nine young children of their own, plus an adopted child, Sisan and Susanna Suda of Garapan Village, Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, had their hands full.

Still, they longed to go pioneering or traveling teaching in their former home district of Truk in the Eastern Caroline Islands. But the large family responsibility and Sisan's job at the Trust Territory headquarters in Saipan made such plans impossible.

Finally, the Sudas found a solution to the problem that enabled them to go teaching after all—by proxy.

Sisan's cousin, Sichuo Sipa, and his wife, Resen, of Tanapag Village, Saipan, also have nine small children, and, like the Sudas, they wanted to teach, especially in Truk where there are island goals yet to be won. Although living in Saipan, they, like Sisan, are originally from Truk and speak fluent Trukese.

The answer came for all four with an offer by Sisan and Susanna to take care of the Sipias' children, enabling the latter to go teaching in Truk.

The Sipias left Saipan December 24, 1977, with the specific assignment to teach in the islands of Tsis, Param, Fefan and Fanapengas in the Truk Lagoon. When the time came to leave, they decided to take their youngest child with them. This meant there would be a total of 18 children in the Suda household.

Bahá'í children's classes became easy to assemble, and were held regularly at the Suda home with the help of Bahá'í friends from Saipan's two communities with Local Assemblies, Garapan and Tanapag.

When at home in Saipan, the Suda and Sipia families are active in teaching and Bahá'í community life. Sisan Suda also is treasurer of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the North West Pacific Ocean.

(A new pillar of the Universal House of Justice is to be established in May when Saipan and the other islands of the Northern Marianas will be united with Guam in the Southern Marianas to form the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Marianas Islands.)

— Cynthia R. Olson
The Netherlands

Music program a success

The Voorschoten Bahá'í community in The Netherlands, in cooperation with UNICEF, co-sponsored an evening of musical entertainment on October 29 at the local cultural center. An estimated 175 people attended, and seven newspapers printed accounts of the event.

As a part of the program, the Bahá'í chairman told about some of the goals and aims of the Faith and its reasons for cooperating with the United Nations.

The musical program included artists—most of them Bahá'ís—as diverse as an American jazz pianist, a Persian santour player, a Dutch folk singer, a group that performed music and dance from Surinam, and a musician who played European classical music.

The guests, who stayed until midnight, were hoping that a similar event would be held next year.

South Africa

35 declare during school

During the week of December 26-January 1, while the second South African Bahá'í Summer School was in session in Cape Town, 35 people declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh. Twenty-three of the declarations came when some of the 150 participants at the summer school spent a day teaching.

On hearing of the success of the school, the Universal House of Justice cabled: "DELIIGHTED SUCCESS SUMMER SCHOOL. CONVEY WARM WELCOME NEW BELIEVERS ASSURE PRAYERS."

Among those present were Continental Counsellor William Masimela and believers from Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana.

Sierra Leone

Assembly goal surpassed

The National Spiritual Assembly of Sierra Leone joyously reports that its assigned Five Year Plan goal of establishing 15 new Local Spiritual Assemblies has been exceeded by two.

The National Assembly now plans to request additional goals for the remainder of the Plan, increasing the number of Local Assemblies to 25.

20 declare after talk

More than 20 students and one teacher at the Women's Teacher's College in Port Loko, Sierra Leone, asked to become Bahá'ís after hearing a talk by Auxiliary Board member Charles Bullock at a proclamation meeting there.

Still more declarations

There weren't enough declaration cards available to accommodate the students who wished to become Bahá'ís following a talk on the Faith at the Government Secondary School for Girls in Mathora.

The Bahá'í speaker was Isatu Hyde-Forster, from West Germany, who spoke to 150 students and three teachers on the need for spiritual development and the equality of men and women.

Later that day, Ms. Hyde-Forster gave a similar talk at the Government Secondary School for Boys at Magburaka. Discussions with the students lasted far into the night.

As a result of her visit, enough interest in the Faith was generated to begin holding regular Bahá'í classes at the school.

Iceland

Counsellor presides

Counsellor Adib Taberzadeh, a member of the Continental Board for Europe, conducted a three-day institute December 9-11 at a resort in Iceland. Mr. Taberzadeh spoke five times during a two-day period, and conducted another informal session in which he shared stories of the development of the Faith.

The Counsellor talked mainly about teaching, pointing out that the first obligation of a Bahá'í is to teach the Faith. He said teaching helps remove the barriers between a person's soul and God, and that God's assistance is cut off when we do not teach.

During the institute, three Bahá'ís volunteered to pioneer to the town of Kopavogur, a jeopardized Local Assembly that the National Spiritual Assembly had designated a national goal to be won by January 25. The three pioneers, with a youth who will become 21 before Ridván,
assure the continuation of the Kopavogur Assembly.

Earlier, the National Spiritual Assembly had adopted a new policy of focusing on each goal individually—a policy change that followed a special meeting of the National Assembly called to discuss the progress of the Five Year Plan in Iceland.

Its first announced goal was Neskaups­tadur, and all Local Assemblies and Groups in Iceland were asked to “search their hearts” and find what they could contribute to the goal of establishing an Assembly in Neskaups­tadur.

The response was gratifying. One As­sembly began a 24-hour prayer watch, inviting others to join in, and offered the services of a traveling teacher. Another Assembly joined the prayer watch and also had noon and midnight prayers for nine days, finally offering two pioneers and a slide program. A third Local Assembly joined the two 24-hour prayer sessions, and sent a traveling teacher to Neskaups­tadur.

An Auxiliary Board member’s com­munity prayed for six hours before the Board member left for Neskaups­tadur to teach, and prayed while she was there. One person joined the Faith while the Board member was in the goal city, and a pioneer volunteered to move there shortly thereafter. The formation of a Local Spiritual Assembly seems assured.

The National Assembly reports that all communities in Iceland held special meet­ings to deal with the national goal, and also notes that a significant side effect has been a great increase in donations to the National Fund.

Benin

First Northern Institute

On February 4-5, twenty-five believers from four of the six provinces in Benin, West Africa, journeyed to Parakou to attend the country’s first Northern Bahá’í Institute, sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of Benin and con­ducted by its National Teaching Commit­tee.

Prior to 1975, when Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Van Deusen, American pioneers to Benin, settled in Parakou, the principal city in the area, there were no Bahá’ís in the country’s two northernmost provinces, Atacora and Borgou. The first Local Spiritual Assembly was formed in 1975. Within three years, seven Local Assem­blies were formed and many more localities in these provinces were opened.

The growth of the Faith in this area has been assisted further by Vincent Aguémon, who, as Benin’s first home-front pioneer, has been in Parakou since 1976.

In addition to presentations at the Institute on the life of Bahá’u’lláh, the Ad­ministrative Order, the importance of children’s classes, equality of men and women, the Fund, and teaching, a film­strip was shown, and Bahá’í songs ani­mated each of the sessions.

—Kiser D. Barnes

Six-week plan launched

The National Spiritual Assembly of Benin, West Africa, has launched an intensive six-week teaching campaign in three of the country’s six provinces, de­signed to establish 13 new Local Spiritual Assemblies, open 30 localities to the Faith, and find at least 600 new believers.

A special institute, held December 23-31 in Porto-Novo and conducted by Basile Khelgati, began the project.

Six teachers who will give their full time to the program were joined by 23 other Bahá’ís to study such subjects as the lives and missions of the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh, Abdu’l-Bahá, and the Guardian; teaching; Bahá’í Administration; Bahá’í Laws; living the life; the Fund; and the importance of prayer.

Five members of the National Spiritual Assembly and Auxiliary Board member Frederic Hodonou attended much of the institute and assisted in presentations.

Alaska

Winter Weekend held

Shoghi Effendi said: “Just one mature soul with spiritual understanding and a profound knowledge of the Faith can set a whole country ablaze—so great is the power of the Cause to work through a pure and selfless channel.”

This opening devotion set the pace for the annual Winter Weekend in Wasilla, Alaska, December 31-January 1 attended by 156 Bahá’ís.

The theme centered on finding 1,000 new believers to complete Alaska’s goals of the Five Year Plan.

Speakers at the conference included Auxiliary Board members Ray Hudson and Lauretta King.

A youth panel presented ideas on how adults and youth can help one another teach the Faith.

During the conference more than $1,400 was raised for the Fund.

Barbados/Windward

Pioneer reports good news

“We can report joyous news from here,” says Edith Seger Johnson, a U.S. pioneer to the Windward Islands in the West Indies.

She wrote on January 8 that she had just returned from a weekly visit to St. Joseph Village, where a Local Spiritual Assembly was formed in December, “and another enrollment took place today.

“There are now five Local Spiritual Assemblies on the island; some of the friends on Dominica are rising forth and teaching:

Germany

Drs. Guenther and Anneliese Mayer-Harnisch, a German-American Bahá’í couple from San Luis Obispo, California, pause in front of the Bahá’í House of Worship in Langen­hain during a five-week teaching trip to eight cities in their native land that began in December. Since the Mayer-Harnisches had prepared a German program that included an introductory talk on religious cycles and progressive revelation followed by a filmstrip, they also were able to present it to their relatives and friends.
one Carib Indian believer, quiet and dignified, is serving the Faith well; the weekly display we have at the open air market each Saturday morning has attracted many souls for the past eight months; the Bahá’í correspondence course being offered by our National Spiritual Assembly is being undertaken by both Bahá’ís and inquirers.

“Our goal of 10 Local Spiritual Assemblies needs to be achieved by Ridván this year. Daily prayers from the friends are surely needed.

“We have the bounty of many wonderful visitors who have greatly assisted us in accomplishing so much — Counsellor Hidáyu’tulláh ‘Ámadiyyih, Counsellor Rowland Estall, three friends from Barbados, National Spiritual Assembly members Emily Kramer and Leroy Wharton, National Teaching Committee member Saritta Chadderton, plus a rather unexpected visit from Lorana Kerfoot, a former secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Leeward, Windward and Virgin Islands, who brought such love and inspiration from the World Center where she has been serving for two years. We feel so blessed that this tiny remote island has had all this outside help.”

India

Winter School held

Counsellors Dipchand Khianra and Borhanuddin Afshin and Auxiliary Board member Mrs. Tahirih Vajdi were the distinguished speakers at the annual Bahá’í Winter School December 23-25 sponsored by the New Era High School in Panchgani.

The Bahá’í schools, which were encouraged for every Bahá’í by the beloved Guardian as “a precious opportunity so to enrich through lectures, study and discussion his knowledge of the fundamentals of his Faith,” this time enabled more than 200 friends, both pioneers and local believers, young and old alike to participate in four days of Bahá’í fellowship and study.

Morning classes, afternoon workshops, and a unity feast each evening helped the participants to deepen their knowledge and to stimulate their interest in the three major topics of study: (1) Bahá’í Administration, (2) the history of the Faith in India, and (3) teaching the Faith, especially in the villages.

Each morning the friends would gather for dawn prayers. In the late afternoon, teaching trips were taken into the surrounding villages with much success.

A Bahá’í children’s conference for ages 2 through 9 also was held at Panchgani. More than 60 children attended the three-day conference where they learned prayers and songs, heard stories and participated in games and other activities.

A junior youth conference for those from ages 10 through 13 was held in neighboring Mahableshwar, also for three days, and was directed by members of the New Era School staff. More than 50 youngsters studied the Bahá’í life at this conference.
Bahá'ís in Prayer Day

The National Spiritual Assembly of Barbados and the Windward Islands reports that the government on the island of Grenada recently sponsored a National Day of Prayer.

A Bahá'í served on the National Day of Prayer Committee, and recommended that drinking and alcohol be banned for that day. The committee agreed with the recommendation.

The first and last prayers read on the radio for the National Day of Prayer were Bahá'í prayers.

United States

Classes held on Faith

By the end of February, one person had declared his belief in Bahá'u'lláh while attending a series of seven ongoing classes on the Faith held each Saturday afternoon at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois.

The first in the series of self-contained classes was begun on January 14 of this year.

Classes are limited in attendance to non-Bahá'ís, and are seen as an opportunity for seekers who are reluctant to go to someone's home for a fireside to learn about the Faith in a more public setting.

South West Pacific

Teacher attracts interest

An extensive visit to New Caledonia, in the South West Pacific Ocean, by Meherangiz Munsiff, a Bahá'í from Great Britain, attracted considerable publicity for the Faith.

In Noumea, Mrs. Munsiff participated in a one and one-half hour television broadcast on the role of women, mentioning the Faith and its teachings on the subject.

The program was transmitted via satellite to the Hawaiian Islands, New Guinea, the British Solomon Islands, Fiji, the New Hebrides, Tonga, American Samoa, Western Samoa, the Cook Islands, the Gilbert Islands, New Zealand, and even to California.

On the same day, she was able to mention the Faith during interviews at the local radio and TV stations. Earlier, an article about her was printed in the local newspaper.

United Kingdom

A goal of the Five Year Plan was achieved January 25 when the first Local Spiritual Assembly of the Isle of Man, in the United Kingdom, was formed.

Man, in the United Kingdom, was formed.

Continuing on to Australia, Mrs. Munsiff was interviewed at two university radio stations and by two newspapers in Perth. She spoke at three universities there, and also introduced the speaker at a United Nations Week observance.

Malaysia

Fozdar booklet published

Karma and the Fallacy of Reincarnation, by Jamshed Fozdar, has been published by the Bahá'í Publishing Trust Committee of Malaysia.

A pamphlet-format extract from Mr. Fozdar's larger work, Buddha Maitrya-Amitabha Has Appeared, in which the author discusses the teaching of Buddha and the early Hindus about reincarnation and the laws of Karma, is available from the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of India.

The Gambia

Women's Conference held

The first National Bahá'í Women's Conference in The Gambia, a republic in western Africa, was held January 9 at the Bahá'í Center in Badjiran and was attended by 40 Bahá'í women from eight Foní and Kombo villages. Men and children at the conference brought the total attendance to about 90.

The conference included talks on the Messengers of God, famous women in religious history, the importance of women as the first teachers of their children, the need to learn prayers and to study the Writings, and a translation of a talk by 'Alí-Akbar Furútán on "Respect for Parents." There was considerable discussion of how women can most effectively teach the Faith to others.

Samoa

Malietoa luncheon guest

His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili of Samoa, the first monarch to embrace the Bahá'í Faith, was guest of honor December 22 at a luncheon in Apia sponsored by the Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia under the auspices of the National Spiritual Assembly of Samoa for the purpose of proclaiming the Faith.

Also present at the luncheon were the Malietoa's sister, Susugo Tooa Salamasina, and members of the United Nations and diplomatic corps. The gathering at the Tusitala Hotel was addressed by Continental Counsellor Peter Khan.

A cablegram to the World Centre said in part: "Feel results heartwarmingly effective and bid significant milestone annals Faith Samoa."

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Finland

33 attend conference

Finland’s Alan Islands were the site of a weekend conference January 7-8, a joint effort of the Bahá’ís of Finland and Sweden. Thirty-three believers including two Auxiliary Board members attended.

During the conference, the friends pledged themselves to 94 separate teaching activities in the following weeks. The spirit of the conference was enhanced when 10 non-Bahá’ís attended a Unity Feast held that same weekend.

Botswana

Deepening institute held

A week-long deepening and teaching institute was held December 10-15 in the village of Nata, about 160 kilometers (100 miles) from Francistown in the far northwest corner of Botswana.

Four Bahá’ís—the first outside believers to visit the village in two years—spent a week there with the purpose of encouraging the Bahá’ís to begin children’s and women’s classes, adopt an extension teaching goal, and make plans for the construction of a local Bahá’í Center.

When the four visitors arrived, they were given a place to stay and began immediately to hold informal deepening sessions with the Bahá’ís in the village.

They found, as they lived the daily routine of village life, that the people continually sought them out to ask questions about the Faith.

They found also that a women’s class, begun two years ago, was still meeting regularly, and the women showed them some of the work they had done during the class sessions.

The Bahá’ís in Nata chose a nearby Bushman village as their extension teaching goal.

For several weeks before the Bahá’ís visited Nata, it had not rained in the village. The people of the village had been gathering at the Kgotla (chief’s meeting house) to pray for rain, and the Bahá’ís were invited also. Just at the end of the week-long visit, it began to rain and continued for three days!

El Salvador

‘Expedition’ is shown

The educational television station in El Salvador broadcast The Green Light Expedition twice, then, unexpectedly, three additional hours were given to the Faith when a portion later was repeated.

The National Spiritual Assembly secured the 35-millimeter color film of The Green Light Expedition and showed it to an enthusiastic audience in the auditorium at the Caja de Credita, as many Bahá’ís had not seen the television program that was aired originally in black and white.

The 16-millimeter version of the film also has arrived for showing in outlying areas.

Canada

New film honors Hand

The film Retrospective, a Ciné Bahá’í production from Canada, was made as a tribute to the Hand of the Cause John A. Robarts on the occasion of his 40th anniversary as a member of the Bahá’í community.

In that period, the prosecution of the Ten Year Crusade, the passing of the beloved Guardian, the Trusteeship of the Hands of the Cause of God, and the emergence of the Universal House of Justice stand as signal events in the annals of Bahá’í history.

In the film, Mr. Robarts shares a wealth of anecdotes and recollections that illumine the story of this stirring era with humor and poignancy.

Retrospective is suitable not only for Bahá’í audiences but for other interested persons who are acquainted with the basic history and teachings of the Faith.

Retrospective is a 50-minute, 16-millimeter color film with an optical sound track. Each print is wound on a single reel. A 2,000-foot take-up reel is included in the packaging. The purchase price is $500 (Canadian dollars), plus mailing cost.

Orders and checks should be addressed to Bahá’í Distribution Service, 7200 Leslie Street, Thornhill, Ontario, Canada L3T 2A1.

Swaziland

Conference spurs action

Ninety Bahá’ís who met recently at the Swiss National Teaching Conference pledged that each of them would participate in teaching with the aim of winning Switzerland’s goals before the end of the Five Year Plan.

Continental Counsellor Adib Taheri-
Portugal

More than 130 Bahá’ís and their children from throughout Portugal gathered January 8 at Lisbon’s Hotel Embaixador for a National Teaching Conference, the third in Portugal within the last year and the largest Bahá’í gathering ever held in that country.

The conference, called to review progress of Portugal’s teaching plans and to focus attention on what must be done to win its remaining goals as quickly as possible, was blessed by the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery and his wife, Angeline.

Dr. Giachery, in an appeal to arise and win the victory, challenged the friends to sacrifice their all to win the goals of the Five Year Plan before Ridván 1979.

After the National Teaching Committee called on the friends to consider what they could do to help win the goals, 70 Bahá’ís offered their weekends for traveling teaching, 10 more offered to go homefront pioneering, and eight arose to pioneer internationally.

The friends also heard from the Auxiliary Board members for propagation and protection of the Faith in Portugal.

The National Children’s Committee arranged a special program for the 15 children who attended the conference with their parents. In the afternoon, the children sang a Bahá’í song for the conference that they had learned in their morning class.

A touching moment came when a woman, one of the earliest Bahá’ís in Portugal and a member of the first zadeh, who attended the conference, stressed that God is with us only when we teach.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland announced that it will be increasingly represented at teaching events, and that it will strive to improve communication between itself and the friends.

Zaire

Regional Conference held

Close to 1,500 Bahá’ís from 131 communities attended a Regional Teaching Conference December 25-26 in eastern Zaire.

The program, presented by Auxiliary Board members of the region, addressed the duties and responsibilities of the institutions of the Faith, particularly of Local Spiritual Assemblies.

The friends also learned about Bahá’í elections, family life, the station of women, activities for youth and children, laws of marriage and divorce, and Bahá’í morality.

The Regional Teaching Committee, which arranged the conference, presented the needs for universal participation in the teaching work and for transmitting correct statistical information, and techniques for teaching.

During the conference, the committee conducted an institute for traveling teachers.

Thailand

3 new Assemblies form

Between January 23 and February 8, three Local Spiritual Assemblies were established in Thailand.

One of the new Local Assemblies, in Maekachan, independently resolved to hold a deepening conference, and immediately adopted six neighboring villages as extension teaching goals.

More than 200 believers entered the Faith in the same two weeks. A new van
Argentina

Ted Dodge (left), a traveling Bahá’í teacher from the U.S., spoke at a fireside in January at Comodoro Rivadavia in Patagonia, Southern Argentina. To Mr. Dodge’s left is his daughter, Janet Dodge, a pioneer for eight years to Argentina, and to her left is María Isabel Barosa, an Argentine believer. In the front row are four seekers; the couple on the left, Mr. and Mrs. Caicheo, became Bahá’ís shortly after the picture was taken. Mr. Dodge and his wife, Isabelle, also stopped in Peru where they visited their son, Tom, and his wife, Laurie, who have been pioneers there since April 1977.

Panama

Assembly goal is won

News from its National Spiritual Assembly that Panama has surpassed its Five Year Plan goal of establishing 127 new Local Spiritual Assemblies was cabled January 29 to the World Centre in Haifa.

The National Assembly attributed the success to the support of the friends and to a concerted effort by Continental Counsellor Dr. Hidayatu'llah Ahmadiyyih, Auxiliary Board member Ruth Pringle, and its National Teaching Committee.

A new challenge has now been set before the Panamanian Bahá’í community with a supplemental goal of raising 13 additional Local Assemblies before the end of the Plan.

Seychelles

Land given for Centers

Land has been donated in Port Glaud and Anse Boileau, Mahe; and in Prealn for three of the nine local Hazíratu’l-Quds called for in the Five Year Plan for the Seychelles.

The Bahá’ís there have decided to provide the labor themselves to lower the construction cost.

Hawaii

Bahá’í chairs council

Tony Pelle, a member and public information officer of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the Hawaiian Islands, has been elected chairman of the Broadcast Commission of the Hawaii Council of Churches.

The Broadcast Commission’s membership is drawn from Council-related churches and other religious groups. It works for quality television and radio programming in Hawaii.

The Council produces a five-minute radio show, “Observations,” heard every Sunday over radio station KHSV, Honolulu, and a half-hour TV program, “Voices of Concern,” seen on the first Sunday of each month on KGMB-TV, Honolulu.

Mr. Pelle also is a member of the board of directors of Citizens for Community Cable, a community-action group interested in the promotion of public access on Cable Television in Hawaii.

Jamaica

60 enrollments reported

A cablegram from the National Spiritual Assembly of Jamaica received January 29 at the Bahá’í World Centre said that 60 persons, including a prominent news producer-announcer, have been enrolled in the Faith and five new Local Spiritual Assemblies formed in Jamaica.

The enrollments and Assembly formations came about during a visit to Jamaica by Shamsi Sedaghat, a pioneer to Trinidad and Tobago. She and Auxiliary Board member Hopeton Fitz-Henley, National Spiritual Assembly secretary Zohoori and other believers taught the 60 who later declared and helped to establish the Local Spiritual Assemblies.

With guidance from the National Spiritual Assembly, Miss Sedaghat made
New Hebrides

Conference at Port Vila

The first National Teaching Conference under the direction of the new National Spiritual Assembly of the New Hebrides was held December 16-18 at the Port Vila Bahá’í Center.

Work on repainting the Center was completed only hours before the conference began.

Attendance at the sessions ranged from 30 to 40 adults and around 40 children. The children had their own program of classes and games. Among those present were Bahá’ís from Efate, Santo and Tanna islands, and three New Zealand youth who were traveling teaching.

Talks were presented by Auxiliary Board members Alick Soalo and Palene Hnaolane on the Covenant and structure of the Administrative Order; by Kalman Kiri on the progress toward Five Year Plan goals; by Muna Delshad on “Do we know in what age we are living?” and by Ken Harrison on the needs of the Fund.

Perhaps the greatest inspiration came from the stirring talks given by friends who had recently returned from teaching trips. Such was the feeling of shared responsibility for the achievement of the goals that the National Teaching Committee received 10 offers for traveling teaching to goal areas and five offers of financial deputization.

Dr. F. G. M. Coupland and Mrs. Coupland accompanied by Mrs. V. K. Coupland, Miss D. M. Coupland, Mrs. R. Coupland and Mrs. M. Coupland called on the governor general, the mayor of Kingston, the wife of the Prime Minister, the news media, school officials and teachers, and police trainees.

Public meetings, a dinner and a reception were attended by some 80 prominent non-Bahá’í women.

During Miss Sedaghat’s visit to the nearby Canary Islands, 13 people were enrolled in the Faith and two Local Spiritual Assemblies formed.

She called on the governor, the chief magistrate, radio stations and newspaper offices, and lectured at the Kiwanis and Professional Women’s clubs.

Taiwan

Bahá’ís enter parade

Taiwan, the first religious organization in the town to enter a float in the national Independence Day parade.

One Bahá’í in the crowd of 100,000 who witnessed the parade said that as the Bahá’í float passed, people would read its message—“Unity, Sacrifice, Service”—aloud to themselves or their neighbors.

The Bahá’ís are already preparing a float for next year’s parade.

Sikkim

Friends host governor

The governor of Sikkim was the honored guest at a recent ceremony opening a new building at Tadong Bahá’í School in the Himalayan kingdom.

The governor spoke highly both of the school, which 200 students attend, and the Bahá’í Faith.

The Tadong Bahá’í School is one of three that have brought added prestige to the Faith in Sikkim.

India

Teaching accelerates

The National Spiritual Assembly of India sent a cablegram to the Bahá’í World Centre, received there on February 2, that read:

“5,275 declarations, 170 localities including 75 Local Assemblies (achieved in) January. Bangalore Conference very successful with over 400 participants. 105 offered join South India Project for periods one to 16 months, and 55 Persian student pioneers pledged travel teach for periods ranging three to 12 months. Beseech prayers humble efforts.”
The Peoples of God

A series of special reports

Part 1: Brazil
NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE 'ALÍ NAKHJAVANÍ HUSHMAND FATHEAZAM AMOZ GIBSON IAN SEMPLE DAVID RUHE CHARLES WOLCOTT DAVID HOFMAN HUGH CHANCE BORRAH KAVELIN. NEARLY 500 DELEGATES PRESENT FROM 107 NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES.

APPROXIMATELY 33 MEETINGS BETWEEN NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES HAVING COOPERATIVE PROJECTS. LATEST STATISTICS: MORE THAN 19,000 LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES. OVER 83,000 LOCALITIES. 50 NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES HAVE ACHIEVED OR NEARLY ACHIEVED THEIR TEACHING GOALS OF THE FIVE YEAR PLAN.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
April 30, 1978

ANNOUNCE APPOINTMENT HUSAYN AMANAT ARCHITECT FOR MASHRIQU’L-ADHKÁR SAMOA.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
May 4, 1978
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Cover

We begin this month a series of articles on indigenous believers in many countries around the world with a report on teaching among Indians in Brazil written by that country's National Spiritual Assembly. The series continues next month with a report from Alaska.
Counsellor Shirin Boman has but one purpose in life: teaching the Cause of God

(Shirin Boman, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South Central Asia, was interviewed in April during a visit she made to the Bahá’í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, while en route to the Bahá’í International Convention in Haifa. Mrs. Boman gave a public talk at the House of Worship the evening of April 2. —Ed.)

Teaching the Faith is as much a part of Shirin Boman’s life as breathing.

“When I can no longer teach,” she says, “I will be ready to die. What purpose would there be in living if one cannot teach?”

She has known the Faith all her life, having been born to Persian Bahá’í parents in Bombay, India, more than half a century ago.

“Victory is in movement,” says Mrs. Boman, “and the Bahá’ís in India are moving. Old and young, men and women... all are concentrating on teaching the Cause.”

In February 1978 alone, 168 new Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed and 5,681 people enrolled in the Faith in India.

“We are going into the interior of the country, to the tribes and villages,” she continues. “We tell the villagers about the Central Figures of the Faith and its history. Once they accept Bahá’u’lláh as the return of Krishna, we do not hesitate to enroll them.

“We do not expect these new Bahá’ís to know everything. The Bahá’í Faith is knowledge given by God to humanity, and we believe knowledge is something that must be acquired. For this reason, we tell the new Bahá’ís that Bahá’u’lláh has written many books containing vast knowledge, and that they should study the Writings.

“To deepen the communities as a whole, we find the best approach is to invite one or two community members to a three- to five-day deepening institute. Through mock Local Spiritual Assembly elections and meetings, and mock Nineteen Day Feasts, they learn. At the Institute, we tell them also about Bahá’í laws, the Administrative Order and the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh.

“We aren’t at the institute to be their bosses...
‘I think the whole world is ready for entry by troops. Why discriminate? The Sun is shining on Asia, America, Europe...’

and tell them everything, with them docilely nodding their heads. We want them to ask questions, so we all can learn.

"After all, we are all Bahá’ís in the making. In the Bahá’í Faith, nobody graduates."

She smiles, recalling earlier days: "When I was a youth, we were not given a teaching plan to follow, as are the youth of today. We never discovered that we could have gone out and taught on our own. We thought the Bahá’í Faith was our father’s property.

"It was so precious to us, so dear to us. We used to greet one another—Alláh-u-Abhá—on our festival days. We would have good Feasts and enjoy each other’s company. We were happy to be Bahá’ís. But now we understand that the Faith does not belong to us, it belongs to humanity as a whole.

"Our duty as Bahá’ís is to convey the Message to everyone and let the power of God work.

"In India, we are doing this. We are telling farmers, doctors, professors, lawyers, dignitaries... everyone!

"One question we continually have to answer is why, if the Faith is 135 years old, we waited so long to spread the good news. Our only reply is one of apology, and a suggestion that the new believers not make the same mistake we did. But that they teach everyone right away."

She reflects, "Teaching the Faith now is different than when I pioneered in 1942 at the behest of the Guardian with my husband and three small children, one of them only two months old.

"We went to Madhya Pradesh, a state in India, where there was not one other Bahá’í. God tested our Faith and we suffered. But praise be to God, there are now more than 1,000 Local Spiritual Assemblies in that state!

"In teaching, we used to come across an educated man, get hold of him and tell him about Bahá’u’lláh. Sometimes a person would say he wanted to become a Bahá’í, and we would test him well, sometimes too well.

"He had to know the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh, this and that. We were good judges. We judged people to find out if they really were Bahá’ís, but never looked at ourselves, as Bahá’u’lláh tells us to do, to see if we were living properly.

"Then, in the early 1960’s, the Hand of the Cause Rahmatu’lláh Muhájir visited us, and told us we should teach in the villages, because India lives in its villages. The Hand of the Cause Dorothy Baker tried to tell us the same thing earlier, but we didn’t understand.

"So we began teaching in the villages, and found that many people wanted to become Bahá’ís. In the early ’60’s we were not experienced in deepening large numbers of illiterate believers, but we soon found ways to do so.

"We used picture books to explain ideas such as work being worship and prayer being good for the soul, and used thumbprints on Bahá’í forms to enroll the new believers.

"They learned to say the prayers from memory. We gave literature to the village children, who were usually able to read.

"We felt we should educate the illiterate Bahá’ís, in keeping with the Bahá’í principle of compulsory education, but didn’t know how we could. But God assisted us, and now we have tutorial schools.

"The first schools were begun after villagers became Bahá’ís, so they could learn to read prayers and study the Writings. We were careful not to entice villagers to become Bahá’ís by promising them schools. That is why we waited until after the villagers were Bahá’ís to offer them schools.

"We worked up to about 40 rural schools, and had evening classes for adults.

"Now, many of our Bahá’í teachers come from among the children who went to those schools.

"But India’s population is very large, and whatever we do is only like a drop of water in the ocean.

"We pray and we hope that the cooperation of the Bahá’ís around the world, guided by the Universal House of Justice, will help us to do better."

She speaks about the strength of the Local Spiritual Assemblies in India: "We are trying our best to make them function. We don’t say that in a day’s time we can have a full-fledged Spiritual Assembly. In Asia and India the administration lags behind Bahá’í administration in the West. We have to learn from you.

"But that doesn’t mean we have forgotten our duty. We send notices to all Local Spiritual Assemblies a few days before each Feast, reminding them that Feast should be held. We ask them for reports. We do other things.

"My hope is that in the future the friends from the West will send us more materials, try to educate us. Let us share with one another. Then we will be in one world.

"Bahá’u’lláh said the world is one country and mankind its citizens. So you see," she says, smiling, "here in Wilmette I am in my own country. I am not a foreigner!"

When asked if she thinks India is ready for entry by troops, Counsellor Boman replies, "I think the whole world is ready for entry by troops! Why discriminate? The Sun is shining on Asia, Africa, America, Europe....

"There are waiting souls everywhere ready for Bahá’u’lláh. If we don’t tell them about the Faith, how will they find out? We are responsible to tell them. God will ask us if we did.

"We just have to make an effort to teach and God helps. The Bahá’í Faith is not from you or from me, after all. It is from God!"

As she walks outside for a photograph, Counsellor Boman stops four visitors to the House of Worship and asks them if they have heard the Message of Bahá’u’lláh.

June 1978/Bahá’í News
A long and remarkable record

She often was the speaker at public meetings. When other Bahá'í women fell ill, Doulat-Iran would stay with them, sometimes for a fortnight. She was usually the first to reach the docks or railway station when Bahá'í guests were to be met.

Doulat-Iran lived above the Bahá'í Hall in Bombay, and visitors to Bahá'í meetings would usually visit in her home. This meant extensive entertaining, as many of the Bahá'í visitors also were her guests for the duration of their stay in Bombay.

Prosperity and adversity go hand in hand, and Doulat-Iran had her share of difficult times, but she remained a firm believer, and her home was always open.

Doulat-Iran's daughter, Shirin Fozdar, needs no introduction to the Bahá'í community. She has traveled around the world to teach the Cause.

While living, Doulat-Iran would help her daughter by caring for Shirin's children while Shirin was away on teaching trips. Doulat-Iran did her utmost so that Shirin could fulfill her spiritual obligations.

One small incident in Doulat-Iran's life always comes to mind: I cannot forget it. She was bedridden for a number of years, and sometimes I would visit her. On one such occasion my wife and I were accompanied by another couple.

When the time came for us to leave, one of our friends said, "Doulat-Khánun, do you need something? I would be happy to render any service for you."

Doulat-Iran could not speak, but raised a finger toward a picture of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, meaning, "Give me 'Abdu'l-Bahá." She died 20 years ago at the age of 80, one of the truly remarkable Bahá'í women in the annals of the Faith in India.

Another Bahá'í woman from India, Gowhar Hakimian, served the Faith for more than six decades. Her husband, the late Jamshid Hakimian, enjoyed the love and trust of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was a Trustee of the Funds in India, a devoted follower of Bahá'u'lláh, and a scholar of the Faith.

Gowhar was the working spouse of this devoted man. Their home was the guest quarters for Iranian scholars who visited Bombay: Munir Nabilzadeh, Mishkin-Qalam, and many others stayed there for long periods of time, receiving continuous hospitality.

In the evening of her life, Gowhar pioneered to Miraj and was there for some years. She visited the sick in hospitals and stayed with them, and nursed Bahá'í patients.

Doulat Vajdi was another staunch champion of the Faith in India. She lived to be more than 100 years old, and spent her life in the service of the Cause. Her husband, Behmand Vajdi, was one of the first Bahá'ís in India, and was the first to translate Bahá'í books into the Gujarati language.

Doulat conducted children's study classes. She was punctual.
Since hard to equal. These remarkable Baha'i women began serving the Cause of shyness and trepidation of a young and inexperienced speaker. ready for future Baha'i women to arise and work diligently and at age 73 continues to teach around the world. with the light of these devoted servants. Rezwan Mobedzadeh has continued working at the New Era leave an indelible impression on the history of the Faith in India. The Universal House of Justice has referred to her as hope that others may conduct research and shed more light on zadeh, she worked at the school for some time before pioneering.

Jaipur, Gorakhpur, Delhi and Calcutta. India, becoming a Knight of respected and she was laid to rest in Delhi, the first Indian woman in London in 1957. when she died. There are many Baha'i women still living who continue to leave an indelible impression on the history of the Faith in India. They are working with a spirit and zeal that even the youth find hard to equal. The first name that comes to mind is that of Shirin Fozdar, who at age 73 continues to teach around the world. She gave her first public lecture in 1923 in Karachi, full of the shyness and trepidation of a young and inexperienced speaker. Since that day, she has set a unique record in the Baha'i annals of traveling teachers.

In India, her unceasing efforts have helped to bring numerous believers into the Faith and many Local Spiritual Assemblies into being. She has given the Baha'í Message to thousands, including Maharajas and Maharans, vice-chancellors and famous public figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Radhakrishna, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, and Shankaracharya.

In 1951 Shirin pioneered to Singapore, and was distressed to see the miserable condition of the women there. A man could marry any number of women, force them to earn a living for him, divorce them at will, and spend his days drunk or asleep at home. Shirin established a Women's Association that waged a crusade to ameliorate the conditions under which women in Singapore lived. Its slogan was "One Man, One Woman." It had such an impact that a political party used it in its election platform. In time, the slogan became a living truth in Singapore.

Age hasn't dimmed Shirin Fozdar's fire or slowed her movements. She remains as active and as agile as ever. She was the first woman ever to serve on the National Spiritual Assembly of India. Her youngest daughter, Zena Sorabjee, is a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors.

Shirin Boman, no less than Shirin Fozdar, is living history. She has been an active Baha'i since her youth, pioneering to an unopened state in India in 1942. She went to Palgarh near Bombay, then to Nadia, to Ujjain, to Indore, and finally to Gwalior, her present home when she is not traveling in her capacity as member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South Central Asia.

The author of Mass Teaching in India, she has not only given the Message of Baha'u'llah to thousands, but to tens of thousands, contributing greatly to the large increases in the number of believers and Local Spiritual Assemblies in India.

When the Continental Board of Counsellors was created in 1968 by the Universal House of Justice, Shirin Boman was among the first of those appointed to it.

Another outstanding Baha'i woman from India is Salisa Kerma in South Central Asia.

The Boards in India, and the...
We have collected a few stories about the Indian population who live in the four corners of this country, Brazil, and while we have no absolute statistics on them, we can say there are several such Bahá'í communities, some entirely Indian, and others with a mixture of African and Portuguese ancestry. Our Indian Bahá'ís all speak Portuguese.

In the state of Bahia, there are many all-Indian or mixed-blood communities; in the states of Sergipe and Alagoas, there are two communities, one all-Indian; in the state of São Paulo, there is one isolated Indian family, and in the area of Roraima in the far north, an Indian declared last December, opening up an entirely new possibility of growth for the Faith, as these Indians live in or near the city of Boa Vista, the capital, and are said to be interested in the Faith. Curiously, the new Indian believer speaks English, which indicates that the tribe might be from Guyana, where English is the official language.

1962: The first Indian believers
Inspired by the writings of the beloved Guardian, two youth from Salvador, Bahia, made preparations in 1962 to carry the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the Indians in Brazil.

The youth, Sergio Couto and Anthony Worley, investigated the whereabouts of Indians in their region, and set out by bus to the northeastern state of Pernambuco.

In Recife, they sought information at the office of the Regional Inspector of the Indian Protective Agency about how to contact the Indians. They were directed to an Indian settlement 18 kilometers (11 miles) from the city of Petrolina in Pernambuco state.

After a truck ride along a bumpy and potted country road, the youth came upon the village, nestled in a valley and surrounded on three sides by mountains. The Indians warmly welcomed their visitors, one of them placing a conch shell to his lips and calling to the others with it, as if to say, “Come, we have visitors!”

The Indians took the Bahá'ís with them to see their homes and lands and to talk with their families about the Faith.

The youth spoke first of the promise of 'Abdu'l-Bahá that the Indians, when they received the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, would become like the Arabs who had scattered the message of Muhammad far and wide.

They explained the concept of progressive revelation, and the relationship of Bahá'u'lláh to the Messengers of the past, and told how Bahá'u'lláh, born wealthy and noble, was stripped of His possessions, thrown into prison, and exiled from His homeland. Even under these conditions, they said, Bahá'u'lláh was able to spread His Message throughout the world.

That afternoon, the youth were privileged to attend a demonstration of a dance, the “tore,” presented by the Indians in celebration of the harvest. Afterward, the youth took photographs and started to leave. They were told that if ever they should return, they would be welcomed with open arms. One Indian illustrated this by opening his arms in a wide embrace.

On later visits some of these villagers became Bahá'ís, thus opening the Chukuru tribe to the Faith.

Teaching among the Kiriris
The following day, Sergio and Anthony learned of another tribe, this one much closer to their home state of Bahia in the north. Buoyed by their successful visit to the Chukurus, they decided to stop and visit these other Indians, descendants of the Tapula nation who are known as Kiriris.

The youth quickly gained the friendship of these Indians, and took photos of them, including one of the “cacique” (chief) and his son. In the afternoon they were invited to visit a cave seldom
The Kiriri Bahá'ís of Lagoa Grande, Brazil, depend on a spring-fed lake for their water needs. Here three women carry water from the lake to the village.

By the early 1960's members of the Kiriri tribe in Lagoa Grande, Brazil, had become Bahá'ís. Some of them, as shown here on the right, use music as a means of delivering the Bahá'í Message.

The first question they asked the Bahá'í youth was whether there really had been a flood. Starting at that point, the Bahá'ís explained progressive revelation and told the story of the Faith.

When Anthony and Sergio asked what prayer the Indians wished them to say, the Kiriris asked for a prayer for rain. The Bahá'ís prayed, then got up to leave. As they made their way down the hill toward the village, the sky darkened; there was thunder and lightning, followed by a downpour that seemed to come in answer to their prayers.

The youth returned several times to Lagoa Grande, the Indian settlement, sometimes in the company of other Bahá'ís; today there is a strong Bahá'í community there. The first Macuxí believer

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Brazil
Progress Report: Seat of the Universal House of Justice

1. Construction of the building for the Seat of the Universal House of Justice is shown in this photo taken April 12, looking in a northerly direction toward the Bay of Haifa.

2. A photo taken March 26, 1978, showing the building for the permanent Seat of the Universal House of Justice in Haifa with forms in place for the pouring of concrete on the top floor at the east end of the building.

3. Construction of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice is seen from the ground level on the northern side, where the main entrance of the building will be, in this photo taken in March. These forms are being erected to begin the fifth level of the building.

4. Completed ornamentation for the Seat of the Universal House of Justice is displayed for inspection at the Italian studio that is doing the carving.

5. At the left of this photo taken in March is a portion of the colonnade that will be erected atop the columns of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice in Haifa. At the right can be seen the capital for the columns, and portions of the columns themselves are in the background. The work is proceeding on schedule.

6. This photo of the permanent Seat of the Universal House of Justice, taken April 12, shows the rapid progress being made in its construction. The photo was taken looking in a southwesterly direction.

7. A photo taken March 26, 1978, shows workmen pouring concrete for the ceiling of the top floor of the building for the permanent Seat of the Universal House of Justice in Haifa. The view is looking in a northwesterly direction.
With the Madina Dawnbreakers

A teaching trip in Papua

(EDITOR’S NOTE: The following account of a recent teaching trip in Papua New Guinea by the Madina Dawnbreakers was forwarded to Bahá’í News by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Papua and New Guinea.)

The journey began at Lae. The Madina Dawnbreakers arrived there February 2 for meetings with Counsellor Peter Khan, the National Spiritual Assembly, and the Lae community.

The members of the Madina group are Michael Homerang, its leader; Jennifer Lundeng, Josephine Homerang, and Wilson Elias.

The first stop after Lae was the nearby village of Naromail where the residents erected a special canopy house for the Dawnbreakers to play under and prepared a muu muu feast for their guests.

Afterward, the Dawnbreakers, accompanied by National Spiritual Assembly member Gaibiri Sisia, flew to Popondetta in the Northern Province of Papua.

During their three-day stay at Popondetta the group held several meetings and was interviewed on Radio Popondetta. Michael Homerang spoke about their trip and the Teachings of the Faith, and the group performed 11 songs written by Bahá’ís.

On February 10, the group went by plane to Afore. They received a warm welcome in the village of Mansui where they sang many songs, then continued on the next morning to the village of Bua where they met with the friends.

The Dawnbreakers then walked to the village of Butamo where everyone is a Bahá’í and the people have built a large Ḥazíratu’l-Quds of bush material. A large gathering was held that night to celebrate their arrival; the feasting and dancing lasted until dawn.

At a meeting later that day Michael Homerang answered questions about the Feast, elections, and the Bahá’í Fund. Further questions dealt with Bahá’í schools and pioneering.

Back at Bua, the group met again with the friends and talked with them about the education of children. Mr. Homerang suggested that the friends there use the Bahá’í Center for a school, but the problem of teachers and books was unresolved.

More meetings followed at Mansui, after which the Dawnbreakers visited the village of Tambupari where the friends had prepared a large feast at the Ḥazíratu’l-Quds.

Mr. Homerang and the others offered encouragement to the believers in Tambupari and tried to help the community recover from the tragic loss of one of its strongest members, Counsellor Daia, who was killed last year. It was suggested that a Center be built in his memory and used to teach and deepen the believers.

From Tambupari the group returned to Popondetta. While waiting 10 days to secure seats on a flight to Moresby, meetings were held at which four people became Bahá’ís.

On February 24, the Dawnbreakers arrived at Port Moresby where they visited Auxiliary Board member Dr. Sirus Naraqi and the friends in Sogeri.

After three days the group traveled to Kwikila. Calling at the home of pioneers Dinyar and Mehru Mirshahi, they were told the Mirshahis had gone to visit a nearby village.

The Dawnbreakers found the Mirshahis there and helped with the teaching by singing Bahá’í songs. After supper, Dinyar made a tape recording of the Dawnbreakers singing. Next morning the group set out for a Medene village.

There they found only the women at home, as the men were away working on a forestry project. They waited at the home of the chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly until his return. He was surprised to see them, but quickly arranged a large meeting that evening at his home. Mr. Homerang said Medene would be an excellent site for a Summer School, as it is on the edge of a National Park and is quite beautiful.

Next morning the group walked to Gegofi, accompanied by some of the believers from Medene. A large meeting was held that night in the Gegofi Bahá’í Center.

Visits to two more villages, Gegofi No. 2 and Eho, followed, after which believers from each of the villages came to say
New Guinea

goodbye and showed the Dawnbreakers to a river where they could find a motorboat in which to return to Kwikila, which was much faster and easier than walking.

In Kwikila the group stayed at the home of the Mirshahis, then met with the friends to tell them of their journey before returning to Port Moresby for more meetings and stories about the trip.

On March 3, Dr. Naraqi escorted the group to a settlement near Kilakil school. The believers there requested a cassette recording of the Dawnbreakers to play at their meetings.

Then it was back to Lae, where on March 7 the Dawnbreakers met with the community and shared news of their travels. Next day the group was interviewed on Radio Morobe and made a recording that was played on March 21 to celebrate the Naw-Rúz festival.

The visit was highly successful, especially the radio publicity, the teaching work in Popondetta, and the deepening work among the believers in villages who seldom receive visits from Bahá'ís in other provinces.

New Bahá'ís in the village of LoSaka, Cameroon. Continental Counsellor Míhdi Samandari is at the left.

Dr. Muḥājir in Cameroon

The Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'lláh Muḥājir arrived January 9 at Douala, Republic of Cameroon. After two nights there, he departed for Yaounde where he met with the friends at the district Hazíratu'l-Quds, stressing the importance of child education and women's activities.

The following day Dr. Muḥājir was interviewed on radio, met with the believers and seekers, and, in the evening, was introduced to some distinguished friends of the Faith. He spoke to about 60 people at the university in Yaounde, after which a student declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh.

Although very tired, Dr. Muḥājir traveled to Buea to address a meeting at the National Hazíratu'l-Quds in Victoria that was attended by a number of newly-declared youth from the nearby Comprehensive School and other friends.

Dr. Muḥājir spoke of the importance of educating one's children, and suggested a way that parents could finance higher education. He encouraged them to plant a fruit or nut tree for each child born, and to save the proceeds from the sale of the fruits or nuts for the child's education. He also suggested buying a pig or goat and selling the piglets or kids.

Another recent visitor to Cameroon was Arnie Farhang-Imani from France, who arrived near the end of December.

Mr. Imani's visits to the Assemblies and Groups brought new life and enthusiasm for teaching. After three visits to Lisoka, it was possible to form a Local Spiritual Assembly there.

In January, Mr. Imani traveled from Buea to Bafoussam and then to Bamenda where he visited 24 towns and six villages, opening some, helping to form six new Local Spiritual Assemblies, and preparing three more for their election. Altogether, Mr. Imani was instrumental in helping to enroll 355 new believers in English-speaking Cameroon before ending his visit on February 25.

Following Mr. Imani's visit, Mr. and Mrs. Taghavi arrived in Cameroon and spent a month deepening and consolidating the communities visited by Mr. Imani.

Also spending time in Cameroon before taking a pioneering post in South America are Mr. and Mrs. Hemmat who are helping to prepare teachers for children's classes. Already, those who have attended their courses in Victoria, Kumba, and Kurume are holding such classes.

—Ursula Samandari

June 1978/Bahá'í News 11
**India**

**Teaching accelerates**

A cablegram from the National Spiritual Assembly of India, received March 5 at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel, included the following news:

"During February 5,681 declarations, 168 Assemblies plus 116 (new) localities; South India Project extended Kerala. Forty-one Assemblies incorporated. First Teacher Training Institute held in New Delhi . . . "

**Dangs host meeting**

A milestone in the development of the Faith in the Dang region of India was marked January 27-29 when its first Bahá'í conference was held in the village of Ahwa in Gujarat State north of Bombay.

The Dangs, one of India's aboriginal peoples, now have more than 200 Local Spiritual Assemblies in their tribal district that includes only 313 localities in all. The teaching work there has been planned, financed and carried out largely by the Bahá'í community of Bombay. Its goal is to establish Local Assemblies in all 313 localities in the Dang region.

To help work toward that end, a special Regional Teaching Committee of Dang has been appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly. The committee publishes a regular newsletter.

Many of the Dangs, male and female, are "natural speakers," even though they are mostly illiterate and speak a dialect, Dangi, that has no written form.

"The Bahá'í community in Dang is rising out of its downtrodden position," says Dipchand Khianra, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors. "People are realizing what a great privilege it is to be a Bahá'í . . . The future of the community is very bright."

**Norway**

**'Hidden Words' published**

For the first time in Europe, a commercial publishing firm has printed Bahá'u'lláh's own texts, *The Hidden Words*.

In December 1977 the Norwegian firm, Gyldendal Norsk Farlag, in cooperation with the National Spiritual Assembly of Norway, printed, distributed and advertised *The Hidden Words* for bookstores and the reading public throughout the country. The National Assembly arranged for translation of the text into Norwegian.

Reviews of the book have appeared in national and local newspapers. . .

Norway's Permanent Inter-Assembly Travel Teaching Team, composed of Norwegian, Persian, Swedish and English Bahá'ís from 17-73 years of age, has been going strong since its inception in the summer of 1977.

The teaching project, organized in several European countries under the guidance of the International Teaching Centre, the Continental Board of Counsellors and National Spiritual Assemblies, is among the strategies devised to help win the goals of the Five Year Plan in Europe.

After traveling the first few months to various goal areas, the Norwegian team settled in a goal town, As, where members dedicate their waking hours to teaching the Cause.

The most successful teaching method found has been to sit in cafés talking to people. Once the cafés close in the evenings, the team continues teaching with firesides, meetings, parties and other activities . .

In the fall of 1977, Norway's Bahá'í community enthusiastically undertook a nationwide prayer program to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the ascension of the Guardian.

The prayer vigil was begun in communities and by isolated believers throughout the country the weekend of November 5-6 while communities and individuals undertook trips to other localities to proclaim and teach the Faith. From each place that was visited the friends sent greetings via postcard to the National Teaching Conference held the following weekend.

The feeling of unity and cooperation was intense, especially when one considers that Norway's long distances and high mountains make it difficult for the friends to come together physically. —Victoria Wyszynski Thoreson

**Réunion**

**Teaching campaign**

In a cablegram received January 30 at the Bahá'í World Centre from the National Spiritual Assembly of Réunion, it was reported:

"First five weeks intensive teaching
The Continental Board of Counsellors for South America and members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Chile had a 15-minute interview with the country's President, Gen. Augusto Pinochet, who showed a marked interest in the Baha'i holy places. Seen here (left to right) are National Assembly member Elena Velasquez, Alejandro Reid of the Baha'i public relations department (hidden), Counsellor Peter McLaren, Gen. Pinochet, National Assembly member Carlos Rivera (seated), National Assembly member Lina Smithson de Roe, and Counsellors Mas'ud Khamsi, Athos Costas (hidden) and Donald Witzel.

gained five localities, 25 believers Baha'u'llah. Prayers, classes, firesides creating exceptional attraction. Regional Conference gathered teams, Auxiliary Board members, friends from seven localities; spirits high. Renewed dedication fulfillment Plan. Asking prayers confirmation.''

**Bangladesh**

**Winter School held**

About 300 Baha'is from 39 communities attended the National Winter School held February 3-5 in Bangladesh.

Among those present were seven members of the National Spiritual Assembly, two Auxiliary Board members, three youth from the Chakma tribe and a guest from the Garow tribe.

Most of the participants were from new localities and showed great interest in deepening their knowledge of the Faith. Topics covered at the school included Baha'i history, administration, living the life, teaching, and the Fund. Talks were followed by seminars and workshops on administration, living the life, and teaching.

Evening programs featured Baha'i songs, games, and question-and-answer sessions on material covered at the school, with prizes for the best answers.

One area of great interest was the participation of a good number of newly-enrolled women, many of whom came a long way to attend the school. There was a special workshop for women that was quite successful.

The more than 30 youth among the participants promised to arise and teach the Faith in their own and surrounding areas, and to establish around 50 new Local Spiritual Assemblies in the coming months.

Although only around 200 were expected to attend the school, and some 300 showed up, causing some inconvenience in food and housing, it was overcome by the warm spirit of love and friendship that prevailed throughout the sessions.

**Samoa**

**Declaration spreads**

Grass Roots, a publication of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia, reports that "one day Auxiliary Board member William White was passing the village of Aavao in Samoa when he was stopped by an elderly man who wanted to know what the Baha'i Faith was all about.

"William was in a hurry, but the man repeated his question, so William started to give him a brief outline and drew freely on Biblical prophecies. The man was impatient and stopped him, saying, 'I don't want to know what it says in the Bible. I want to know what Baha'is teach and believe.'

"So William sat down with his new
friend and gave him the story of Bahá'u'lláh and His Teachings for unity, and Fili (that was the name of the inquirer) could find no argument with what he heard. He became a Bahá'í.

"Now the village of Avao, where Fili holds a respected position, has a Local Spiritual Assembly and its Bahá'í Center was dedicated during the Savai'i Summer School on the Birthday of Bahá'u'lláh. There are those pure-hearted people just waiting to be found."

South West Africa

Namibia hosts school

The new Windhoek Hazíratu'l-Quds was the site January 8-15 of the first Bahá'í Summer School in South West Africa (Namibia). Official dedication of the Center was held during the school session.

Declarations were received from seven of the 80 persons who attended the school, three of whom are members of the Herero tribe, the first from that tribe to enter the Faith in the region.

Earlier, the second National Summer School in South Africa was held (December 26-January 1) at the Hazíratu'l-Quds in Cape Town. The attendance was 156, the majority youth.

As a result of teaching activities of the participants, 35 people in the area declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh.

Swaziland

Children's school held

The National Women's and Children's Committee of Swaziland held a children's school at the National Center December 9-11.

More than 130 children ages four to 16 attended.

Nationally, the committee has helped establish children's classes in 22 communities. Its magazine, Bomake Nebantfwana, is issued every two months.

The Philippines

Teaching conference

More than 500 Bahá'ís from 74 communities in 18 provinces attended the fourth annual National Teaching Conference in the Philippines.

The conference was held at Solano, in Nueva Vizcaya Province in North Central Luzon, the historic site of the first Local Spiritual Assembly in the Philippines, the home of the first Filipino Bahá'í, and the location of the first Bahá'í Center.

During the conference the friends were divided into 12 groups where they adopted individual goals. The sessions served also as deepening sessions in which participants discussed the Five Year Plan goals that have yet to be filled in the Philippines.

Vicente Samaniego, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Southeast Asia, attended the conference with 13 Auxiliary Board members, 76 pioneers currently residing in the country, and five traveling teachers who have been working there.

After the conference, the traveling teachers joined a local teaching team in Nueva Vizcaya and helped to establish two new Local Spiritual Assemblies in two days.

Mauritius

Hand of Cause Featherstone visits Mauritius

The Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone (second from right) presents a copy of the Bahá'í World to His Excellency the Governor General of Mauritius. Others present (left to right) are Roddy Lutchmaya, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly; Continental Counsellor S. Appa, and Mrs. Featherstone.


The Featherstones met with Continental Counsellor S. Appa, Auxiliary Board members and the National Spiritual Assembly, and more than 100 of the friends gathered to hear them speak of the important role of the Bahá'ís at the present critical stage in the evolution of mankind, and the necessity of winning the goals of the Five Year Plan.

On Monday, February 13, the Featherstones, Counsellor Appa and a representative of the National Assembly held a 35-minute meeting with the Governor General of Mauritius. The Bahá'ís presented the Governor General with the latest issue of the Bahá'í World, and told him of the aims and Teachings of the Faith including loyalty to government.

The following day, the same delegation called on the minister of Youth and Sports. The visit lasted for half an hour.

The editor of a daily newspaper and the director of the State Security Service were among the prominent persons who attended an evening tea on February 14 in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Featherstone.

On February 15, the Ombudsman was visited and presented with a copy of the Bahá'í World. The cordial meeting lasted about 45 minutes.

That night, Mr. and Mrs. Featherstone spoke at a fireside. And on Sunday, February 19, during an eight-hour stopover in Mauritius on their flight from Réunion Island to South Africa, they spoke at a Youth Camp near the airport. About 40 of the friends attended. —Roddy Lutchmaya
Portugal

Volunteers arise

More than half of the 130 Baha'is at the third National Teaching Conference to be held in Portugal within the past year volunteered to go pioneering or traveling teaching when the Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery urged them to "sacrifice to win the Five Year Plan goals before the end of the Plan."

Dr. Giachery issued the challenge as the conference was reviewing the progress of teaching work in Portugal to decide what must be done to win the goals.

Of the volunteers, eight offered to pioneer outside Portugal, 10 offered to pioneer on the homefront, and 70 offered weekends, vacations or other free time for traveling in Portugal to teach.

The 15 children at the conference attended classes arranged by the National Children's Committee.

Upper West Africa

Teaching goals won

The National Spiritual Assembly of West Africa reports the exciting news that its Five Year Plan teaching goals have been achieved and five village chiefs have recently become Baha'is.

Five Local Spiritual Assemblies have been established and 12 localities opened in Mauritania, and 30 Local Assemblies established and 76 localities opened in Senegal.

Papua New Guinea

Summer School success

A successful Baha'i Summer School has been held at Medina, Papua New Guinea. The National Spiritual Assembly reported in a cablegram received January 31 at the Baha'i World Centre:

"Many visitors from Solomons, New Zealand. Traveling teachers visited Sepik, Manus, Highlands; 27 declarations Siane, 2 Manus. Medina Project commenced; team visited village near Lae yesterday, warmly received. Team leaving tomorrow for Afore. NSA met, consulted with Counsellor Khan, fruitful meeting. Local teacher training projects aimed at deepening Local Assemblies commencing this month."

Canada

Family Festival held

Close to 40 adults and 20 children from Baha'i families in Saskatchewan, Canada, spent the weekend of November 26-27 at Fort San at a Family Enrichment Festival, organized by the North and South Saskatchewan Regional Goals Committees.

The weekend's events encouraged parents to explore their own roles, helped children gain a firmer Baha'i identity, and offered families an opportunity to share the experience of attending a Baha'i conference together.

Indian Baha'i honored

The government of Canada has honored Dorothy Francis, a Salteaux Indian and a Baha'i since 1960, for her outstanding services to Canadian Indians in her home province of British Columbia and in the Prairie Provinces as well.

Mrs. Francis will receive the Order of Canada, awarded each year by the government to a few Canadians who have distinguished themselves through outstanding achievements or service.

Mrs. Francis is particularly respected in Canada for founding several Indian Friendship Centers, which assist Indians to adapt to urban life and employment, and Indian Cultural Clubs, which seek to preserve and enrich Indian culture and tradition in Canada.

She also helped create the Winnipeg Arts and Crafts Center through which many native Canadians market arts and crafts. In 1975 she was elected president of the National Arts and Crafts Advisory Council.

Always an active Baha'i, Mrs. Francis has served on four Local Spiritual Assemblies in Canada and currently serves as an Indian Teaching Coordinator for the National Spiritual Assembly.

Finland

Teaching among Lapps

Teaching among the Same (Lapp) people in Finland is one of the goals of the Five Year Plan for the National Spiritual Assembly of Finland.

The National Assembly has designated the town of Kemi, in northern Finland, as a goal for the establishment of a Local Spiritual Assembly. The majority of Kemi's population is Finnish, but a few of both materials and funds for the construction of the Baha'i Center, which is six by eight meters (19.5 feet by 26 feet) in size and is located on Baha'i-owned property.

Colombia

When the Baha'i Center was dedicated November 19 in Leticia, Colombia, these Baha'i children entertained the 30 people present with music and dancing. The Baha'i is in Leticia contributed

June 1978/Baha'i News 15
The three specially designated goal states of the Five Year Plan, gathered momentum March 18 with the inauguration of a two-month-long campaign at El Centro, a small farming community in Southern California's lush Imperial Valley.

The California Victory Campaign is to spread throughout the state this summer. Teaching teams, coordinated by three Bahá'í youth acting under the direction of the California Regional Teaching Committee, will travel the length of California to open goal localities and help bring Groups to Assembly status.

In the first two weeks of the El Centro campaign, a total of 197 Bahá'ís from 67 communities in nine states and Mexico participated in the teaching. As of March 30, half of the 50 declantrants resulting from the project had been enrolled; the jeopardized Assembly at El Centro had been saved, with community membership raised from seven to 18, and some 172 people had signed cards either asking for more information about the Faith, or for information about how to become a Bahá'í.

The campaign was greatly aided in its initial stages by large numbers of Bahá'í youth who came to El Centro to teach during their spring break from school. At Naw-Rúz, some of the youth visited Mexico, where there were four declarations.

Proclamations in El Centro and the surrounding area made good use of Bahá'í entertainers such as England Dan and John Ford Coley, Walter Heath, Leslie and Kelly, Stu Gilliam, and Red Grammer.

The three specially designated goal towns chosen by the Inter-Assembly Teaching Project for Bahá'í activities.

Finnish and German Bahá'í youth have planned a teaching trip to Lapland for this summer in which they will hike in the Arctic mountains and teach the Cause whenever possible.

One Bahá'í pamphlet in the same language has been prepared by the National Spiritual Assembly of Finland.

United States

Victory Campaign launched

Teaching activity in California, one of the three specially designated goal states of the Five Year Plan, gathered momentum March 18 with the inauguration of a two-month-long campaign at El Centro, a small farming community in Southern California's lush Imperial Valley.

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Lesotho

Special deepenings

The National Spiritual Assembly of Lesotho reports that "the National Teaching Committee has held several deepening institutes with small but enthusiastic attendance . . . ."

The National Teaching Committee has "selected about 60 persons from representative areas for special deepening; these individuals are receiving personal invitations to the conferences. They receive deepening materials each month and are enrolled in a correspondence course. Some have been asked to go on small teaching projects . . . ."

"Several successful trips have been made to the mountains recently. Three trips in December and January have resulted in one new Assembly, several new communities opened, study materials distributed, etc."

"Both the Women's and Children's committees and the Youth Committee have recently sponsored institutes . . . ."

"Several new correspondence courses are planned for the next few months, based on three of the Star Study booklets . . . ."

"We are especially happy to have the three obligatory prayers now in duplicated form and available for the believers . . . ."

"Several communities now report holding dawn prayers (at least one day a week) and children's classes. . . ."

Sweden

National Conference

A recent National Conference in Stockholm, Sweden, was attended by 72 believers including two Auxiliary Board members, and was addressed by Continental Counsellor Adib Taherzadeh.

The friends, realizing the urgent need to win Sweden's Five Year Plan goals, resolved to rededicate themselves to teaching, based on a deeper love and devotion for Bahá'u'lláh. They decided "to make joyful teaching life's dominating purpose."

Zaire

Fishing village opened

Three Bahá'ís from Banalia, Zaire, trying to determine how they could help win the goals of the Five Year Plan in their area, decided to leave their homes, cross the Aruwime River, and set out by pirogue—a type of boat—to open localities.

They reached a village of fishermen, taught the Faith, and received declarations from many of its residents.

The three Bahá'ís plan to return soon to the village to help deepen the new believers.
The Netherlands

Localities Plan target

The National Spiritual Assembly of The Netherlands has launched a teaching campaign designed to open 77 new localities to the Faith and reach the Five Year Plan goal of 130 new localities.

Each of the 26 existing Local Spiritual Assemblies as well as the Baha'I Groups have adopted localities goals. Their efforts to win them are being coordinated by the Regional Teaching Committees.

Meanwhile, the National Consolidation Committee has begun a circuit teaching program whereby courses on a variety of topics are being offered to each Local Assembly and Group. Topics are selected from a list of available Baha'I subjects, and a teacher is sent to conduct classes in the local community.

Peru

117 enrolled in Amazon

Bahá'ís who attended a three-day institute in Peru early this year brought 117 people in the country's far northeastern Amazon region into the Faith. New Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed in two areas, and the teaching work is continuing.

The institute was conducted by Sérgio Cuoto of Brazil, who trained the believers in the teaching methods used successfully in Bahia at the time of the International Teaching Conference there in 1977.

Following the institute, a team of teachers set out in a new boat dubbed the "Luz Verde Maiden" (Green Light Maiden). They are teaching in the Amazon area, concentrating on villages along the river system.

Meanwhile, four pioneer families have arranged to settle in Iquitos, two pioneers have moved to Leticia and Maraco, three families and a single believer have moved to Manaus, and a family is settling in Belem.

Surinam/Fr. Guiana

Film introduces Faith

The Bahá'ís of Surinam have been using the motion picture The Green Light Expedition to introduce the Faith systematically to every Amerindian and Bush Negro tribe in the country.

The film was made three years ago during a teaching trip made by the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum that included voyages on many South American rivers. Many of the indigenous peoples of the region appear in the film.

A pioneer reporting on showings of the film in the village of Kamaloea said that after the first of them 'the captain of the village, whose noble countenance appears in the film, asked for another showing. So our little house was promptly darkened and soon was filled with another eager audience. Both showings were received with vast joy and excitement.

"Kamaloea has blossomed into a Bahá'í paradise. Alibé Afoisa Mimba, who accompanied Rúhíyyih Khánum on one of her voyages, and is one of Kamaloea's most distinguished citizens, is now the first Bush Negro to serve on the National Spiritual Assembly of Surinam."

To use the film, Bahá'ís had to repair an ancient gasoline-powered generator that hadn't been run for years. Now, an additional generator has been purchased to power a second projector.

The Gambia

About 70 Bahá'ís from the Foni and Kombo regions in the Republic of The Gambia met November 27 at the Bulenghat Bahá'í Center for a National Teaching Conference.

Nepal

Following the All-Asia Women's Conference at New Delhi, India, last October, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum traveled to Nepal where she addressed some 700 students at the Padma Kanya Women's College in Kathmandu. Seat-
To the Friends Gathered at National Bahá’í Conventions

Beloved Friends,

We joyfully hail the formation of seven more National Spiritual Assemblies, those of Burundi, Mauritania, the Bahamas, Oman, Qatar, the Mariana Islands and Cyprus; two in Africa, one in the Americas, two in Asia, one in the Pacific and one in Europe, raising to one hundred and thirty the number of pillars of the Universal House of Justice.

Your National Spiritual Assemblies will be sharing with you the message addressed to the International Bahá’í Convention and the news of the progress of the Five Year Plan that was released on that occasion. As you will see, many national communities have already completed, or virtually completed, their Five Year Plan goals. These communities must now ensure that the pace of expansion and consolidation which brought them victory is maintained so that they will advance strongly into the next plan. They can also, by pioneering and travel teaching, rally to the assistance of their sister communities which still have months of intensive work before them in order to win their goals. It is to these latter communities that we now address our call to redoubled, united and sacrificial effort. We are fervently supplicating at the Sacred Threshold that the followers of the Blessed Beauty will arise with enthusiasm, confidence and consecration to ensure that every goal is attained.

With loving Bahá’í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
Ríḍván 1978
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Our series of articles on indigenous Bahá'ís around the world continues this month with a series of three reports from Alaska written for Bahá'í News by Marilyn Patterson. The first of these discusses the impact of native-born believers on the Faith in Alaska; the second deals with the recently-established Native Councils that provide the indigenous believers with a new and comfortable format in which to express their ideas and concerns; and the third profiles Kotzebue, a progressive and active Bahá'í community that is composed mainly of Eskimo believers.
A Message From the Universal House of Justice

To the International Bahá'í Convention

Dearly-loved friends,

The Universal House of Justice takes great pleasure in addressing the members of National Spiritual Assemblies gathered in the Holy Land, in the presence of Hands of the Cause of God and Counsellors from all continents, at this fourth International Convention, pausing with you to review the course and needs of the Five Year Plan as we cross the threshold of its final year.

The opening of the Plan witnessed the eager response of the friends, careful study made by the national institutions of the Faith of its implications and requirements, the establishment of machinery and the setting up of projects to achieve its goals, and the often arduous struggle to fulfill the first of its three major objectives—the safeguarding and consolidation of all prizes won in earlier campaigns. This phase extended in many countries over a period of several months, and in others continued as far as the mid-way point of the Plan.

The middle year of the Plan saw the holding of the International Conferences and those many regional conferences which were held concurrently and diffused far and wide the inspiration flowing from these eight major assemblages of the believers. These gatherings motivated a great acceleration of the work and helped the believers throughout the world to arrive at a new realization of the responsibility entrusted to the followers of the Most Great Name for the spiritual regeneration of their fellow men.

We are now in the last stage of the Plan, and this Convention provides us with a welcome and auspicious hour in which to assess our progress and to direct our thoughts to the complete achievement of the goals.

Of the remaining 80 National Assemblies, some 40 are confidently forging ahead and are assured of victory if the present tempo in their teaching work is maintained. Nine National Spiritual Assemblies are restricted by conditions which make the fulfillment of homefront goals dependent on circumstances beyond their control. The remaining 30 national communities are, alas, seriously lagging behind, and only strenuous and sacrificial effort will enable them to win their goals.

The second of the three major objectives of the Plan—a vast and widespread expansion of the Bahá'í community—has seen great but geographically uneven progress. There are now more than 19,000 Local Spiritual Assemblies, and the number of localities where Bahá'ís reside is over 83,000. This expansion has been accompanied by an intensification of proclamatory efforts and by increased use of mass media such as radio and television.

There have been notable advances in the process of gaining wider recognition for the Cause of God and in fostering cordial relations with civil authorities, a matter of vital importance in these days when there is a growth of opposition to the Faith from those who, misconstruing its true nature and aims, take alarm at its progress.

Some of the most significant achievements of the Plan have been towards its third major objective—the development of the distinctive character of Bahá'í life—and in the consolidation and strengthening of the structure of the Bahá'í community. The beloved Hands of the Cause of God, who have been in the forefront of so many aspects of the work of the Faith, have rendered far-reaching services in this field.

The Local Spiritual Assemblies, focal centres for the teaching of the Faith and the consolidation of the community, are growing in experience, maturity and wisdom, are proving to be potent instruments for nurturing the Bahá'í life and are, in increasing numbers, carrying out plans for the establishment of the Faith in areas outside their own range of jurisdiction, under the
Universal House of Justice

over-all guidance of their National Spiritual Assemblies, and with the encouragement and help of the Auxiliary Boards and their assistants. The work of developing Local Spiritual Assemblies is a task without end in the foreseeable future. As the Bahá’í community, which is still very thinly spread around the world, moves continually and with increasing rapidity into new areas, new Assemblies will come into being and will need patient help and training in their sacred duties.

The devotion and self-sacrifice of the friends, which have drawn to them the confirmations of Bahá’u’lláh, have resulted in the very great advances made so far. Evidences of this striving are apparent in the growing number of national communities which, under the wise stewardship and challenging leadership of their National Spiritual Assemblies, are becoming financially self-supporting; in the fact that ever more individual believers are adopting for themselves specific goals and plans of service for the advancement of the Faith; in the settlement of more than 2,000 pioneers during the course of the Plan; in the upsurge of travel teaching individually and in teams; in a greater awareness of the power of prayer; and in many other ways. Three vital aspects of Bahá’í community life which have seen marked progress during the past four years are the development of the services of women and of youth, and the Bahá’í education of children. The youth have long been in the forefront of the teaching work, and now our hearts rejoice to see the women, in so many lands where previously their capacities were largely left unused, devoting their capable services to the life of the Bahá’í community. The education of Bahá’í children is also receiving much attention, which bodes well for the future generations of Bahá’ís.

Experience has shown that active and loving collaboration between the Continental Boards of Counsellors and National Spiritual Assemblies has been a particularly invigorating and strengthening factor in the progress of the Cause in all aspects of the work. Reflecting the growth of the community, the number of Continental Counsellors has been raised to 64 during the Plan, and the number of the members of Auxiliary Boards to 675. Under the authorization given to them, members of the Auxiliary Boards have till now appointed 3,358 assistants, who already are playing a significant role in the formation and consolidation of Local Assemblies and the fostering of the Bahá’í way of life in local communities. Coordinating and directing the work of these Continental Boards from the Holy Land, the International Teaching Centre is now well established in the conduct of its responsibilities, foreshadowing the mighty role that it is destined to play in the functioning of the Administrative Order of Bahá’u’lláh.

The Faith is passing through a time of tremendous opportunity and development, as well as of increasing opposition and of growing complexity in the problems confronting it. These opportunities must be seized and these problems overcome, for so crucial are these times that the future course of human history is daily in the balance. During this year the Universal House of Justice will be consulting on the nature, duration and goals of the next stage in the implementation of the Divine Plan. The firm base of the achievement of the Five Year Plan goals, both those of quality and those of quantity, is therefore the burning necessity of the months now before us. Let us go forward in a spirit of optimism, with confidence, determination, courage and unity. The greater the love and unity among the friends, the more speedily will the work advance.

May the Almighty bless the endeavours of His servants and inspire their hearts to arise in His Cause with that degree of radiant faith and self-sacrifice which will draw to their aid the conquering hosts of the Supreme Concourse.

The Universal House of Justice
Rídvan 1978
Laura Clifford Dreyfus-Barney was born into a family of scholars and artists in the United States. She completed her education in France during the last decade of the 19th Century. With her keen intellect, logical mind and inquiring nature, she devoted her whole adult life to improving human relations and bringing together peoples of different religions, classes and nations.

She was a brilliant speaker and made several trips around the world lecturing on the impelling necessity of a united world. She was a true pioneer in this field, at a time when the world was still geographically and politically divided and quite unresponsive to the call of spiritual unity.

Her enthusiasm never lessened. Those who had the rare privilege of knowing her over a period of many years can testify that her undaunted and unfettered ideal of the brotherhood of man remained alive and glowing to the very last moment of her life.

Laura was living in Paris with her mother and sisters shortly before the turn of the 20th century. It was there that she became acquainted with the Baha’i Revelation. It proved to be the spark that ignited a fire that was never to be quenched. Her ideals and aspirations found fulfillment in her many services to the Baha’i Faith, services that were joyfully rendered with steadfastness and perseverance for nearly four score years.

Of the early pilgrims from the West who visited ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during the end of the last and the beginning of the present century, Laura Dreyfus-Barney emerges as one of the most dedicated and active followers of Bahá’u’lláh. The writer recalls her vivid description of her first meeting with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the expression of rapture and wonderment with which from time to time she related many details of her visits to His household and the devoted services she was able to render.

Before one of her visits to the Holy Land, she later related, she was eagerly anticipating the joy of passing a few days in the Master’s presence and in spiritual communion with Him. After His loving welcome, however, He said: “I want you to leave as soon as you can to visit all the places connected with the life of Christ, as I wish you to realize how Christ was treated.” With these words her visit was terminated. The Master was preparing her to meet the indifference and opposition of a large segment of humanity that had been led astray by bigotry and superstition.

As her visits to the Holy Land became more frequent, she was privileged to spend long periods of time with the Master and His immediate family. She met Shoghi Effendi, the future Guardian of the Faith, when he was a boy of five or six years of age.

Her first-hand recollections of that extraordinary child were most illuminating, and she became aware of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s plan for His grandson’s education in English literature. At the time of her visits, Shoghi Effendi had an Italian governess. Laura Dreyfus-Barney was able to secure the services of a refined and cultured English woman who proved to be a great asset in the education of that gifted child. He eagerly pursued the study of English literature. These studies enabled him to master the idiom perfectly in the years that followed.

Laura Dreyfus-Barney’s affection for the child grew into a deep sense of admiration and respect.

Visits to ‘Akká had become the center of Laura Dreyfus-Barney’s life and inspiration. On one of these visits, in 1903, which lasted for a month, her mother, Mrs Alice Barney, accompanied her. The elder Mrs. Barney was a poet, painter, musician and architect. Some of her paintings can even now be seen in the National Collection of Fine Arts at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. In 1903 she had painted a portrait of the celebrated Baha’i teacher, Mirzá ‘Abdu’l-Fadl, during his visit to Washington.

Among Laura Dreyfus-Barney’s many achievements and services to the Faith, the most outstanding is the one that has immortalized her name the world over—the compilation of the renowned volume, Some Answered Questions. This collection of questions and answers was begun while ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was still confined in the prison city of ‘Akká under constant threat of deportation as a prisoner to the far-off desert of Fízáz.

The manner in which Some Answered Questions was compiled is described by Dr. Yunis Khán-i-Afrúkhthí, a physician who was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s secretary in the early 1900’s. In his memoirs concerning the years spent in the presence of the Master, Dr. Afrúkhthí relates that he had assisted by interpreting at those historic luncheon talks, when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá sat at the head of the table, Laura Dreyfus-Barney at His left and Ethel Rosenberg of England next to her.

Miss Rosenberg wrote down the questions presented by Laura Barney and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s answers as translated by Dr. Afrúkhthí into English, while Mirzá Múnír, another secretary, recorded at the same time the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in their original Persian. Two sons-in-law of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Mirzá Hadi,
Laura Dreyfus-Barney: a remembrance

The father of Shoghi Effendi, and Mirzá Huṣín, each of whom was an Afnán (that is, a relative of the Báb), together with Mirzá Nurí-Dín Zayn, assisted in translating and recording the text.

Two copies of the English manuscript were made, each bearing the seal of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. One of these Laura Dreyfus-Barney was able to take with her out of Palestine, in spite of the strict surveillance imposed on 'Abdu'l-Bahá, His Family, and all visitors.

The existence of such a remarkable manuscript prompted a distinguished French scholar, who in 1901 had become the first of his countrymen to accept the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, to offer to translate it into French. The scholar was Monsieur Hippolyte Dreyfus whose acquaintance with the early Bahá'í is in Paris and with those passing through the city had enkindled his love for 'Abdu'l-Bahá and for the Cause of God.

M. Dreyfus and Laura Dreyfus-Barney decided to collaborate on the French translation and, as she later related, it was during this undertaking that they discovered how well they could work together. They were married in 1911, but the intervening years were filled with many activities undertaken jointly—travels at the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Persia, to Máh-Kú, to 'Ishqábád where construction of the first Bahá'í House of Worship was being completed, and to eastern regions of Asia, including Indo-China, now Vietnam.

After the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but fortunately before the outbreak of World War II, the manuscript of the English translation of Some Answered Questions was transmitted through a trusted intermediary to the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, together with some important and precious Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed to Laura Dreyfus-Barney and to a close friend, Mrs. Tewksbury-Jackson, of whom mention will be made later.

Laura Dreyfus-Barney had kept a written chronological record of her experiences and travels since her acceptance of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, especially of her association with 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His Family, with the intention of publishing it in book form some time later. This precious material was kept in her Paris home inside a spacious mahogany cabinet that served as a repository of Bahá'í history. The entire contents of that cabinet, most unfortunately, were confiscated during the German occupation in World War II. The precious manuscript of Some Answered Questions, however, already had reached the Guardian.

In more recent years, the writer asked Mme. Dreyfus-Barney whether she would be able to rewrite her recollections as they had been noted in that chronological record, but she indicated that that would be impossible. Concerning the compilation of Some Answered Questions, the many details she had related in various conversations with the writer were confirmed by her in a letter that has been published in the Italian translation of that book.

Her abiding devotion to the Master and His Consort, and to the Greatest Holy Leaf, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's sister, was repaid with trust, love and gratitude. 'Abdu'l-Bahá extolled the variety of her services in many Tablets, and the women of the household presented her with many gifts, mostly pieces of jewelry, that were entrusted to the writer and delivered by him to the Universal House of Justice a few years ago.

During the early years of the 20th century, Laura Dreyfus-Barney traveled to the Holy Land on one occasion with her dear Bahá'í friend, Mrs. Tewksbury-Jackson. They reached Haifa soon after 'Abdu'l-Bahá had rented a house near the sea in that city. It was a house of modest dimensions, and hardly suited to the needs of the Master and His growing Family.

Mrs. Jackson was disturbed to see the hardships and limitations under which the Beloved Master was obliged to live, and felt that some relief should be offered to Him at once. As she explained, "It is an unbecoming and undignified abode for such a highly exalted and noble Personage."

Then and there she decided that a more suitable home should be built for 'Abdu'l-Bahá as soon as possible. She asked Mme. Dreyfus-Barney to take charge of the project. In relating this episode to the writer, Mme. Dreyfus-Barney said: "For some time, therefore, and meeting with many obstacles, I was occupied with purchasing the land, having a design for the house made—of course with the approval of the Master—and seeing that its construction was carried out efficiently and promptly."

After her marriage to M. Dreyfus, her activity in the service of the Faith increased considerably. They worked together to assist 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and were often His hosts and companions, particularly during His visits to France and Switzerland.

The scholarly translations of many Bahá'í texts into French made by M. Dreyfus, with his wife counseling and assisting, became the foundation of the Bahá'í Faith in France. Both were skilled linguists; Mme. Dreyfus-Barney had become proficient in the use of Persian, while her husband had an excellent knowledge of Persian and Arabic, a gift that permitted him to undertake and complete his translations into French. Both, of course, also had a fluent knowledge of English and French. During these years they were able to provide the French Bahá'í community with a generous supply of Bahá'í literature in French, often printed by the French University Press.

Shoghi Effendi made several visits to Paris as a young man, during which he enjoyed the hospitality of M. and Mme. Dreyfus-Barney. Shoghi Effendi was extremely keen and observant. During those early years a Bahá'í artist and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Scott, both Americans and both fiercely loyal to the Faith, had a studio in Paris that had become the center of many Bahá'í activities. 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke at the studio several times when He was in Paris in 1911.6

Laura Dreyfus-Barney introduced Mr. and Mrs. Scott to Shoghi Effendi, and this was the beginning of new interests for him, as he became keenly enamored of the world of the arts. His interest in architecture, sculpture and painting ripened into a wide field of knowledge under the devoted guidance of this distinguished artist. The Paris visits continued for a few years and were the source of much satisfaction and happiness for Shoghi Effendi.

Soon after he became Guardian of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi began to erect its administrative institutions, and called for the election of the first National Spiritual Assemblies. He asked M. and Mme. Dreyfus-Barney to represent him at the Bahá'í Convention for North America held at Green Acre in Maine, July 4-9, 1925.

It would require many pages to recount chronologically all the many Bahá'í services of Laura Dreyfus-Barney in America,
Europe and other parts of the world. We remember having seen her at one of the “Souvenirs” of 'Abdu'l-Bahá at Evergreen Cabin in West Englewood, New Jersey. Her inspiring account of her life in ‘Akká has remained engraved in the writer’s memory.

At that “feast” we had with us a color motion picture film, the first that had appeared on the market for a 16 mm amateur camera. We still have that film record, now historic, that shows Laura Dreyfus-Barney, Mountfort Mills, Roy Wilhelm, ‘Ali-Kuli Káhn and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Kinney ("Saffa" and "Vaffa"), Curtis and Harriet Kelsey, and many, many others.

Mention also should be made of Laura Dreyfus-Barney’s humanitarian and social activities in her work for world peace. During World War I she served in Paris in the American Ambulance Corps, took part in the creation of the first children’s hospital in Avignon, France, and worked in a hospital with the refugees. At the end of that conflict she placed her faith in the League of Nations, and represented the International Council of Women in that body, playing an important role in cultural exchange. In 1926, she was the only woman named by the League council to sit on the Sub-committee of Experts on Education, a post she held for many years. On July 23, 1925, Laura Dreyfus-Barney was named Chevalier de la Legion d’Honneur. In that same year she founded a Committee of the Major International Associations of the League of Nations, working for peace through education, and became a permanent member of the committee as well as its liaison officer. In 1934 she became a member of the Advisory Committee of the League of Nations on Teaching. She also was a member of the French Committee on Intellectual Cooperation.

Her services with international organizations were indeed extensive. She was the convenor of the Cinematographic and Broadcasting Committee of the International Council of Women, and in 1931 she organized, under the auspices of the International Institute of Educational Cinematography of the League of Nations, the first Congress for women, held in Rome, specializing in the dissemination of educational materials for peace by means of motion pictures. At the first International Congress of Educational and Instructional Cinematography in 1934, she was elected one of six vice-presidents, the only woman chosen.

In 1937 she was appointed by the French minister of commerce as a member of the cinema section of the International Exposition. In the same year, on the initiative of the French minister of foreign affairs, she was elevated to the rank of Officier de la Legion d’Honneur by a decree dated January 31, having earlier been elected president of the Peace and Arbitration Commission of the International Council of Women.

After the death of her husband in 1928, Mme. Dreyfus-Barney tried to overcome her loneliness by multiplying her efforts for the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh and the cause of peace. In 1941 she was a member of the American delegation to the Conference on Cultural Cooperation in Havana, Cuba. In May 1944, at the request of the Guardian, she attended the celebration in Wilmette of the Centenary of the Declaration of the Báb, although World War II was raging in almost every corner of the globe. On that special occasion the writer remembers her moving address that recalled her early days in ‘Akká and her review of 40 years of developments in the Faith.

For the duration of World War II, Laura Dreyfus-Barney had been the delegate of the French National Committee of Women to the Commission on Racial Affairs. At the close of the war, she became president of the UN Commission of the Council of Women for the Control and Reduction of Armaments, located in Geneva. As the writer had been named observer for the International Bahá’í Community, we frequently met at UN-sponsored gatherings. When the Food and Agriculture Organization moved from Washington to Rome, early in 1950, she often visited Rome and was a welcome guest at our home there. Those were unique opportunities to listen to the reminiscences of her dedicated Bahá’í life and to hear first hand many episodes and facts from her personal experiences with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, His Family, Shoghi Effendi, and her much-loved husband, Hippolyte.

In 1955, at the dedication of the first Hazíratu’l-Quds in Paris at 11 Rue de la Pompe, she was present, as was Miss Edith Sanderson, another early American believer living in Paris. After my wife and I returned to Europe from America in 1969, we called on Mme. Dreyfus-Barney whenever we went to Paris, and there spoke joyfully of all that was dear to our hearts.

For the last few years of her life, she remained at her home, seeing friends occasionally and living with the memories of her active and fruitful life. The last time we visited her was one of the most intimate and loving of our friendship. Although her body was wracked by rheumatism, her mind was as alert and brilliant as ever.

She had placed close to her, on a small table, a copy of the Italian translation of Some Answered Questions, the publication of which the writer had supervised. She was most happy with the quality and appearance of the book, and was proud to show it to friends and visitors. A few weeks before her death we received a letter from her secretary expressing Mme. Dreyfus-Barney’s desire to see us soon. But it was not to be. Her beautiful earthly life ended on August 18, 1974, five years before the centenary of her birth. She is buried in the Passy Cemetery in Paris. The famous French newspaper Le Monde took notice of her passing, the Bahá’í friends in France and the U.S. lamented her departure, and the Universal House of Justice sent the following cablegram to the friends in America:

“Ascension distinguished maidservant Laura Dreyfus-Barney further depletes small band promoters Faith Heroic Age. Member first historic group Paris taught by May Maxwell she achieved immortal fame through compilation Some Answered Questions unique entire field religious history. Offering ardent prayers Sacred Threshold progress her soul Abáh Kingdom. Urge all communities France hold memorial gatherings gratitude outstanding achievements.”

REFERENCES
2. These memoirs have never been published.
4. Published in Rome, 1961, under the title Lezioni di San Giovanni d’Acre, pp. 374-375.
5. Mrs. Jackson was from Boston, her family name being Tewksbury. Her husband, James Jackson, was a Frenchman, although possessing an English name. Mrs. Jackson’s home in Paris, near the Champs Élysées, was open for Bahá’í meetings. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá addressed many Tablets to her, which are preserved at the Bahá’í World Centre in Haifa.
6. When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá visited Paris, the address of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Scott was 17 rue Boissonade. A memorial article for Edwin Scott is published in The Bahá’í World, Vol. V, p. 418.
EDITOR’S NOTE: The second in our series of articles on indigenous Baha’is around the world features three articles on Alaska written for Baha’i News by Marilyn Patterson. The first discusses the impact of the native-born believers on the Faith in that country; the second deals with the Origins of the concept of Native Councils that were established for the first time four years ago; and the third profile the Raha’i community of Kotzebue, above the Arctic Circle, whose members, most of whom are Eskimos, are reaching out to bring the healing Message of Baha’u’llah to everyone in that area.
The Peoples of God Part 2 -- Alaska
To praise the outstanding native believers in Alaska is to pay tribute to the special station of each person who has enlisted there under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh.

The tremendous pressures from family and village to which nearly every native Bahá'í is subjected affirm the nobility, boldness, selflessness, purity and lofty station of every Indian or Eskimo believer who remains steadfast.

Bearing this in mind, the following sketches are a characteristic sampling of the meritorious services that have been and still are being rendered to the Faith by Alaska's native believers—many of whom cannot be mentioned in this brief article.

The first Alaskan native to enroll in Alaska itself was Agnes Parent Harrison, an Athabascan Indian. (Melba Call King is the first known native of Alaska to embrace the Faith. Melba, an Eskimo, was enrolled in the early 1940's in New Mexico.)

Agnes Harrison was enrolled as a youth in 1949, and has never wavered in her steadfastness. She has served the Faith in many ways including service as a pioneer, a Local Spiritual Assembly member, a public speaker, and a traveling teacher throughout North America.

Mary Brown was the first Tlingit Indian to enroll. That took place in Petersburg, in 1964. Aflame with the Faith, she set out immediately to teach her family and friends, traveling to a number of villages in southeastern Alaska. She served on the Spiritual Assembly of Petersburg and on several Bahá'í committees.

In 1970, she was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska and has served on that body each year since then. She has vigorously pursued the deepening of native believers with the goal of bringing them into full participation in the Bahá'í community.

It was largely through Mary Brown's efforts that the Native Council concept was born and adopted in Alaska. It is basically a teaching conference at which the Indian and Eskimo believers express their particular concerns.

She continues to work as diligently as ever in the fields of native teaching and deepening.

Lauretta King, a Tlingit Indian from Sitka, became a Bahá'í in 1961 in Tacoma, Washington, and has served the Faith in a number of capacities. In the U.S., she served on the Bahá'í Indian Council, a District Teaching Committee, and on several Local Spiritual Assemblies.

In 1969, she had the bounty of pilgrimage. She also made teaching trips to Canada during that period. Two years later, she and her husband, Lynn, moved back to Alaska where she has served on the National Teaching Committee and aided in the development of Native Councils, formed a flying club with her husband to make village teaching more accessible, and taught extensively throughout Alaska.

In 1974, Mrs. King was appointed an assistant to Auxiliary Board member Ray Hudson. In April 1977 she was named an Auxiliary Board member and presently is serving in that capacity.

Carolyn Baumgartner, an Eskimo believer, was reared in Fairbanks where in 1968 she became an active and enthusiastic Bahá'í youth.

She and her husband, Dave, moved in 1970 to Barrow, Alaska, to teach school. After participating in a mass teaching project in southeastern Alaska in 1971, followed by pilgrimage, they decided to make a long-term and serious commitment to Barrow.

At that time there was only one other Bahá'í in Barrow, who had been out of touch with other believers for a long time. Today there is a Local Spiritual Assembly in Barrow.

Through the years Mrs. Baumgartner has given institutes, taught in many villages, represented Alaska at the dedication of the House of Worship in Panama, taught at summer schools, attended the Inuit Policy Conference in Canada with Lauretta King, and served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Barrow since its inception in 1976.

That same year, she was appointed an assistant to Auxiliary Board member Ray Hudson. She presently serves as an assistant to Auxiliary Board member Mrs. King.

Maynard Eakan, another radiant Eskimo believer, was born in Kotzebue, but left that village many years ago. He was enrolled in 1969 after meeting Bahá'ís in Fairbanks and hearing a public talk by Mrs. Florence Mayberry, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors.

As a new believer, Mr. Eakan attended the Bahá'í National Convention, and afterward went to Matanuska Valley to help form its Local Spiritual Assembly.

Since then, he has been a member of Local Assemblies in several communities and has taught throughout much of Alaska. He has served on the National Teaching Committee, is presently on the Northwest Goals Committee, and is actively involved with the Native Councils.

He and his wife, Dolores, have now returned as pioneers to his home community of Kotzebue.

Mr. Eakan's joy comes from teaching. He says each village atmosphere is different, and since he knows the Faith well and has the answer to many of the problems confronting the village people, he loves to bring them the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

Although she was born in Carcross, Yukon Territory, Hazel Lovelace is a Tlingit Indian, and her people are from Juneau and
After pioneering to Sitka in 1963, she told Auxiliary Board member R. Ted Anderson she was worried about her sketchy knowledge of the Faith. He advised her to carry the book Bahá’í World Faith with her, and to look up the answers to questions as people asked them, thus teaching and learning at the same time. Mrs. Lovelace says she has been teaching that way ever since.

In 1970 she taught the Faith in Canada, and in 1973, following her pilgrimage, taught in England. In 1974 she traveled with Auxiliary Board members Fletcher Bennett and Lauretta King, teaching along the coasts of Alaska and British Columbia.

In 1975 she went to Barbados and the Windward Islands in the Caribbean, where the National Spiritual Assembly placed her in charge of a large teaching and consolidation project that lasted well over a year.

On her return trip from the Caribbean, Mrs. Lovelace taught among Indians in Arizona and New Mexico and on the Warm Springs Reservation near Portland, Oregon.

After returning to Alaska, she taught in many villages, helped set up Native Councils, served on the Northern Native Planning Council, and attended the International Teaching Conferences in Anchorage, and in Mérida, Mexico. Following the Mexico conference she remained for two extra weeks to teach the Faith in that area.

Mrs. Lovelace lives with her three daughters in Anchorage, but one can seldom find her at home. She is usually out making teaching trips—with her well-used copy of Bahá’í World Faith in hand.

Another outstanding native believer in Alaska is Jim Schoppert. Since becoming a Bahá’í in Anchorage in 1973, he has taught extensively in Alaskan communities as well as on the western coast of the U.S. and in Mexico.

Although he speaks only a little Spanish, Mr. Schoppert says he loved teaching in Mexico, and while there he taught the first person to enroll in the Faith in San Luis Potosí.

He and his wife, Debbie, pioneered for one year to Nome, Alaska, in 1975, where he taught art at the high school. He served on Local Spiritual Assemblies in Anchorage, Nome and Spenard, and at the Alaska National Convention in 1976 was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly.

Two months before becoming a Bahá’í, Mr. Schoppert completed his first work of art. Now, only four years later, he is well-known as an accomplished artist. His main mode of expression is totemic art, but he also does abstract sculpture, painting, print-making and jewelry.

Mr Schoppert employs a variety of media including stone, wood, metal, plastics and ivory. He says there is a direct relationship between the development of his artistic ability and his enrollment in the Faith. He believes that his talent has been developed as a vehicle through which to teach the Faith.

To say that every native Alaskan believer is special would be an understatement. Many are unsurpassed in their spiritual capacity, devotion, and service to the Faith. They truly are "raising the call of the Kingdom of God" in the vast and rugged state of Alaska.

Mr Schoppert’s sister, Jackie Schleifman, became a Bahá’í in 1975 and is serving on three national committees and a local committee in the Anchorage community.

There are a number of Alaskan natives besides Mr. Schoppert who not only serve the Faith in a variety of ways, but also teach the Faith through the arts.

Martha and Jerome Trigg, believed to be the world’s first Eskimo Bahá’í couple, are active teachers, and Martha has translated several Bahá’í prayers into the Eskimo language, and uses authentic Eskimo dances to share the Message.

Simon and Belle Koenig of Kotzebue and Paul George of Menana also teach through the medium of dance.

William Wiloya, the first Eskimo believer in Nome, has taught in many parts of the world, and is well-known as co-author of Warriors of the Rainbow, a book about prophetic dreams of the Indian peoples.

Rita Blumenstein, the first Eskimo from a Catholic background to enroll in the Faith, has translated four Bahá’í prayers into an Eskimo dialect, and is currently translating the “Tablet of Ahmad.” Professionally, she teaches Nelson Island basket weaving at the Matanuska Valley Community College and for the local school district and says that as a bonus for the students, she teaches them the Faith at the same time.

Artist Peter Sighyke, a Diomede Eskimo, uses his talents as an excellent dancer and ivory carver to promote the Cause.

David and Mary Seppilu of Savaonga are also active believers and accomplished ivory carvers.

So many other native Alaskans have served the Faith so well that a complete listing would be impossible. A few additional names that come to mind are these:

Velma Koontz and her husband, Keith, have been pioneering in Savaonga since 1972. Mrs. Koontz was the first Eskimo Bahá’í from the island of St. Lawrence. Interestingly, her grandfather was the first Christian on the island, and was shot for his beliefs. Mrs. Koontz owns and operates a trading post in Savaonga and sews Eskimo parkas and sealskin clothing.

John and Mary Sam are an older couple of Athabaskan heritage who have been active Bahá’ís for years in Beaver.

Joyce Shales, who is Tlingit and Haida, has been on pilgrimage and taught in many areas of the world including Greenland.

She and her family live in the tiny Eskimo village of Shishmaref, where she is working on a master’s degree in sociology from the University of Alaska.

Walter Austin, another Tlingit Indian, is well-known for his articulate explanation of the Bible’s relationship to the Faith, and presently serves as an assistant to Auxiliary Board member Fletcher Bennett.

To say that every native Alaskan believer is special would be an understatement. Many are unsurpassed in their spiritual capacity, devotion, and service to the Faith. They truly are "raising the call of the Kingdom of God" in the vast and rugged state of Alaska.
Alaska's Native Councils:
A new mode of expression

The Bahá'í Native Council was developed four years ago by the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska in response to the need to find an effective way for native Indian and Eskimo believers to express their concerns.

Basically, the Native Council is a teaching conference conducted for natives within a native setting.

The Native Council allows the native believers to participate fully and easily in their own unique way.

The Council also serves as an effective instrument for deepening and consolidating native believers, as it provides a creative environment in which the particular concerns of native peoples can be discussed, as well as a way to develop plans for the most effective means of teaching and deepening the friends.

Council participation is limited to native peoples, although non-native believers are welcomed as observers and are active in supporting roles such as bringing the believers to the Councils, cooking meals, etc.

If a Hand of the Cause of God, a Continental Counsellor, or a member of the National Spiritual Assembly or Auxiliary Board is present, he or she is acknowledged and given the freedom of the floor.

The intention, however, is to encourage the participation of native peoples and avoid domination by non-natives.

The Native Councils were conceived as a response to an instruction of the Guardian: "...much as the friends need administration, it must be brought to them in a palatable form; otherwise, they will not be able to assimilate it, and instead of consolidating the work you will find some of the believers becoming estranged from it."

Thus the Native Councils are likened to allowing a specific section (native believers) of the orchestra (the Faith) to perceive their relationship to the music, to practice their role, and to become more confident in playing their parts.

There are two Council planning committees under the National Spiritual Assembly—the Northern Native Council Planning Committee, and the Southeast Native Council Planning Committee.

These committees set dates for Council meetings that do not conflict with regular village activities such as hunting or fishing; find suitable locations for the Councils; design invitations; select keynote speakers, Council chairmen, secretaries and reporters, and arrange for a Local Spiritual Assembly or other body to host and secure the facilities for the Councils.

The committees encourage teaching as the main objective of the Councils, and lay the groundwork for teaching projects as a follow-up. They also choose the Council theme, such as "to try and achieve the destiny for our people as given to us by 'Abdu'l-Bahá."

Three-day sessions for larger Councils and two days for smaller ones have been found effective. With prayers in native languages and native dancing and singing throughout. One or two evenings are designated for public meetings, again using the native themes.

The first Native Council was held in February 1974 at Haines, with others held in Palmer, Dillingham and Petersburg in 1975, and Nome, Anchorage and Beaver in 1977.

The Councils have drawn believers from all parts of Alaska as well as from Canada and the United States.

The Councils are regarded as the most successful tool for deepening and consolidating native believers in Alaska. There is a need for Councils to be held in as many villages and remote areas as possible.

Alaska presently boasts 15 all-native Local Spiritual Assemblies—in Circle, Fort Yukon, Beaver, Sleetmute, Nikolai, Grayling, Shageluk, Holy Cross, Tanacross, St. Michaels, St. Mary’s, Hooper Bay, Kakac, Klukvan and Yakutat.

The state’s 10 predominantly Indian Local Assemblies are in Barrow, Kotzebue, Selawik, Nome, Hoona, Savoonga, Dillingham, Nenana, Unalaska and Aniak.

In these villages, there is a core of pioneers, a necessary ingredient in administrative functions until the native peoples can learn the ways of the New World Order and assume the reins of administration.

Having Native Councils in each area greatly facilitates the native believers’ understanding of the Administrative Order, and enhances their relationship and service to the Faith.

Most importantly, the Native Councils impart “a special measure of love” to the native peoples and play an important role in helping to bring about the destiny promised by 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "...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.”

—Marilyn Patterson

July 1978/Bahá’í News
Kotzebue, one of the largest Eskimo villages above the Arctic Circle, has a population of 1,800 Eskimos and 600 non-natives. It is a mother community to 13 smaller villages that lie within a 640-kilometer (400-mile) radius.

While the community may seem far removed from modern urban centers and their attendant problems, many of the ills plaguing modern society are rampant in Kotzebue. Alcoholism and drug abuse are common; suicide is frequent, especially among the teen-agers; children often are rebellious, the people are fearful, and a great culture is caught in a veritable blizzard of rapid change.

In the midst of this chaotic scenario is a tender, struggling, but vibrant and enthusiastic Bahá'í community.

The first Spiritual Assembly of Kotzebue was elected at Ridván 1974, and it began to function effectively in 1976.

In that year, six Eskimos and three non-natives were elected. The Assembly was on fire with the love of God. Officers were elected immediately, teaching plans were made, and the teaching work has been pursued vigorously ever since.

Traveling teachers were sent to the villages of Selawik and Noatak. Noatak soon had its first enrollment, while Selawik formed its first Local Spiritual Assembly.

The Kotzebue Assembly then set forth bold summer teaching and consolidation plans that began June 21, 1976, with a five-day team “spiritualization.”

Afterward, traveling teachers were sent to nine nearby villages—Selawik, Noovik, Kiana, Ambler, Shungnak, Kobuk, Buckland, Candle and Deering.

Four of these villages were thus opened to the Faith, filling one of the extension teaching goals of having at least one Bahá’í living in each of the 13 villages in the Kotzebue area.

Another teaching team, consisting of pioneers Jim and Val Wagner and their three sons, traveled for six weeks by boat, traversing more than 1,280 kilometers (800 miles) of the Koatak and Kobuk rivers, and reaching five villages on two different occasions.

The Kotzebue Bahá’ís were able to make four teaching trips by commercial air carrier including two to Nome. It was the first time that any Spiritual Assembly in an Alaskan village had planned and carried out such an expansive teaching plan entirely on its own.

The energy and enthusiasm of the Kotzebue community grows even more intense as it witnesses the bounties Bahá’u’lláh bestows on every effort made for His Cause.

There are presently 39 believers in Kotzebue including 27 Eskimos. The role of pioneers is one of deepening the friends, making teaching trips, and consolidating the victories already won.

A recent bounty was the gift to the Kotzebue community of a half-hour of free radio time each week on a local station. For the past year, Bahá’í radio programs have reached the entire Kotzebue and Norton Sound areas, as well as parts of Siberia.

Tapes by the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears entitled “Prophecy Fulfilled” have been used on the radio programs. The Assembly also uses the talents of local believers to produce its
own programs aimed at the needs of the area. The response from local people has been generally positive.

Books have been given to key village officials to inform them of the principles of the Faith. Also, there are regularly scheduled firesides and deepenings, weekly Assembly meetings and children’s classes, and a newsletter every Bahá’í month that is sent to every Bahá’í in the area.

The Local Assembly in Kotzebue becomes more solid and respected each day. It is constantly reaching out to assist each community member and to educate the people of the village about the principles of the Faith.

The Assembly sponsors a consolidation program, “Outreach,” schedules prayer meetings and public events for special days such as UN Human Rights Day, and has hosted an Auxiliary Board conference and a Native Council.

The Assembly reports that the act of becoming a Bahá’í in Kotzebue involves considerable courage because of the heavy opposition usually encountered from family and friends. Most of the residents in the area are fundamentalist Christians.

It is therefore vital, says the Assembly, that the new believer be given a solid and secure refuge under the protection of the Faith.

Two families have been brought into the Faith through one member’s having taken the first step, but ensuring the families’ steadfastness requires constant vigilance and hard work.

What seems to impress the native peoples most is the ability of each Bahá’í to “live the life,” and the community’s efforts to provide a joyous and wholesome community environment for every believer.

The force of individual example and the solidarity of Bahá’í community life attracts people, as does the positive attitude of the Faith toward the solution of contemporary problems.

The Kotzebue Assembly, which has accomplished much in a very short time, is laying the foundation for “entry by troops” in its area of Alaska. One of the believers there writes: “The power of Bahá’u’lláh is felt in all our activities. He is the Accomplisher, we are His instruments. We pray to become an example of strength to all our brothers and sisters in Alaska.”

The Kotzebue Bahá’í community has arisen valiantly to obey the instructions of the Master, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “God willing, the call of the Kingdom may reach the ears of the Eskimos . . . Should you display an effort, so that the fragrances of God may be diffused among the Eskimos, its effect will be very great and far-reaching.”—Marilyn Patterson

Seven members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Kotzebue, Alaska, elected at Ridván 1977. Front row, left to right: Grace Lincoln, Chris Pocock, Nita McQueen. Back row, left to right: Maynard Eakan, Doloris Eakan, Jim Wagner, Lori Eakan.
Costa Rica

14 Assemblies formed

Fourteen new Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed and 11 others were strengthened during a recent teaching project in Guanacaste Province, Costa Rica.

The effort was supported and encouraged by Hidayatu’llah Ahmadiyih, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Central America, and the National Spiritual Assembly of Costa Rica.

Team members included two Auxiliary Board members, two members of the National Spiritual Assembly, a Baha’i youth from the area, and youth who had remained to teach after attending an International Baha’i Youth Conference at San Jose early in January.

With emphasis on the teaching of families, Counsellor Ahmadiyih reported: “In every village where the Faith has been taught there are now 10 to 15 adult believers representing two or three families.”

An extension of the project into Meseta Province saw the formation of one new Local Assembly, another assured of formation, a jeopardized Assembly saved, and several Groups activated.

Other areas of activity in Costa Rica are in Belem, the site of the Baha’i Institute, where two pioneers have settled; and in Nicoya, where an Auxiliary Board member and new pioneer will organize consistent teaching work.

Colombia

Deepening Conference

Believers from Colombia and Venezuela joined members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Colombia and the Auxiliary Board and their assistants at Rio Hacha, Colombia, February 4-6 for a deepening conference directed by Continental Counsellor Donald Witzel.

More than 30 believers were deepened on the relationship between the elected and appointed arms of the Baha’i administration: the Universal House of Justice and National and Local Spiritual Assemblies on the one hand, and the Hands of the Cause, Continental Boards of Counsellors, and Auxiliary Boards and their assistants on the other.

The emphasis was on the growth and functions of the Counsellors, their Auxiliary Boards and assistants, as explained in a new compilation, The Continental Board of Counsellors, published by the National Spiritual Assembly of Colombia.

Two special sessions conducted by Auxiliary Board member Mrs. Judy Leeb dealt with the functions and responsibilities of the Auxiliary Board for protection.

When the goals of the Five Year Plan were reviewed, one believer, a native Venezuelan, generously offered a part of his land to help fill the endowments goal.

On the last day of the conference, some participants got together to repair the roof of the Institute and to clean the extensive gardens that surround it.

Mauritius

Goal teaching successful

A joyous and exciting teaching activity was initiated in January in a goal city of the island country of Mauritius where a group of about 15 Bahá’is spent a camping weekend.

The results of their efforts included the formation of a new Local Spiritual Assembly. The Baha’is intend to use the camping-and-teaching method in other goal localities as well.

The effort was triggered by the success of a small group of believers who spent a part of the school vacation in the summer camping and teaching, and succeeded in helping to form two new Assemblies.

Now, the National Spiritual Assembly of Mauritius has bought a tent, and two more tents have been donated, so the camping and teaching can continue.

“We are sure that this activity will gen-
erate a new enthusiasm among the friends, and that several teams will be formed,” said a member of the National Spiritual Assembly. “To maintain the new Local Assemblies it will be necessary for consolidation teams to follow the teaching teams.”

Surinam

New Center dedicated

The villages of the upper Surinam river in Surinam, South America, visited by the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Ruhiyyih Khánum in 1975 during the historic Green Light Expedition, can be reached only after a three-day journey by boat on a river dotted with treacherous rapids.

Still, these villages that have produced a member of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Surinam and French Guiana have remained steadfast in the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh.

On February 26, a conference was held to open the first Hájuratu’l-Quds on the upper Surinam, at Kamaloea, the village that served as a base of operations for the Green Light Expedition.

Auxiliary Board member Jamshid Ardjomandi reports that the friends at the conference collected funds to help the National Spiritual Assembly pay for its new boat and motor to be used on the numerous rivers in that tropical country.

Bahá’ís on the upper Surinam receive the Bahá’í newsletter of Surinam in the form of cassette-taped translations into their native language, Taki-Taki. In this way, they’ve been deepened in the Faith and have learned prayers and songs.

—Frances H. Jordan

Radio proclaims Faith

The wide, flat countryside around Nickerie, Surinam, in northern South America, is inhabited by thousands of Hindi-speaking rice farmers of the Hindu and Muslim religions.

Since 1975, when the area was opened to the Faith by traveling teachers, nearly 200 of these people have become Bahá’ís, and eight Local Spiritual Assemblies have been formed.

In February, during a 10-day visit to the area by Mrs. Shirin Boman, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South Central Asia, the Faith was proclaimed during a 15-minute radio program in the Hindi language. The response of the local people, including the District Commissioner, was heartwarming and enthusiastic.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Surinam and French Guiana has contracted with the radio station in Nieuw Nickerie for 52 weekly 15-minute Bahá’í radio programs in Hindi, and a local believer has begun delivering the programs to the station on its behalf.

—Frances H. Jordan

Togo

31 localities opened

The closing months of 1977 brought about the opening of 31 localities to the Faith in Togo and the establishment of eight Local Spiritual Assemblies.

Dapango, Bassar, Amlame, Tabligo and Niamtougou were the scene of vigorous teaching activity.

Thirty new believers, all of whom had to walk at least five kilometers (three miles) to get to Bassar, the site of a deepening institute, learned about Bahá’í administration and the functions of Local Spiritual Assemblies.

Brazil

Local Spiritual Assembly treasurers, representatives of local and national committees, members of the Auxiliary Board and their assistants, and other Bahá’ís who attended the second of two National Seminars on the Funds held recently at the newly-repaired Hájuratu’l-Quds in Bahia, Brazil. The first of the seminars was held at Saô Paulo.
Laos

Children sing, teach

Songs and dances performed by the Bahá’í children highlighted the Intercalary Days celebration held February 26 at the National Haziratu’l-Quds in Vientiane, Laos.

Some of the children invited their non-Bahá’í friends who were instantly affected by the warmth and love of the Bahá’í children and other friends at the gathering. Most of the non-Bahá’í children asked to be included in the Sunday children’s classes.

Among the forces that attracted the parents of non-Bahá’í children to request that their youngsters be enrolled in the classes is the prayer in English of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “O God, guide me, protect me, illumine the lamp of my heart. . . .”

“My daughter knows how to pray in English!” a Laotian mother would proudly tell her neighbors. In this country where English has spread in little more than a decade, the statement creates a special interest and delight when a youngster can recite something in English.

Daily activities are now being held at the National Haziratu’l-Quds starting with morning prayers and including a study-deepening class each evening on “The History of the Faith” interspersed with the slide show, “Land of Resplendent Glory.” There are music sessions on Saturday afternoons, and youth and children’s activities on Sunday mornings.

Zaire

Groups, Assembly formed

In a letter received February 20 at the Bahá’í World Centre, a believer in Zaire wrote that his visit to an unopened locality in December helped bring enough new believers into the Faith for two Bahá’í Groups to form.

On a second trip to the area, accompanied by a pioneer, the Bahá’ís received a warm welcome from the chief for the area. There were many more declarations, and a Local Spiritual Assembly was brought into being. The chief, not yet a Bahá’í, insisted that the friends return to tell the entire populace about the Faith.

“We did just that,” reported the pioneer. “Twelve of us returned.”

As a consequence, he added, the chief is now a Bahá’í and “a real community has developed. We are going to do this again in another place.”

Hawaii

Faith on sports page

Nancy Emerson of Maui, Hawaii, has achieved a possible “first” for the Bahá’í Faith there: a front-page article in the sports section of the Honolulu, Hawaii, Advertiser.

The 25-year-old Miss Emerson is a professional surfer and competed in the 1978 Professional International Surfing Grand Prix. She has been surfing since she was 11, and has won awards in 45 countries as an amateur.

As a Bahá’í, Miss Emerson recently wanted to pioneer to the Marshall Islands, but found there was no employment there in professional surfing, so did not go.

Now the firm that is her employer and sponsor has won a contract to build a small boat harbor and docking facility in Majuro, Marshall Islands. They have asked Miss Emerson to assist with the project.

El Salvador

Youth Conference

A Bahá’í Youth Conference that attracted 50 youth (and a few older Bahá’ís) from 16 communities in El Salvador was held March 23-26 in a rural setting near Cojutepeque.

The conference, planned by the National Youth Activities Committee, covered such topics as the lives of the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, life after death, love and marriage, Bahá’í Administration, methods of teaching the Faith, and the role of youth in the Five Year Plan.

As a guide for the conference, the letter from the Universal House of Justice to Bahá’í youth of the world published in 1966 was read and discussed.

The conference was marked by a new sense of urgency and responsibility on the part of the youth. A proclamation at the site brought four declarations.

North West Pacific

Island teaching trip

Traveling by ship, four Trukese Bahá’í believers, all members of the Penia-Fonono community on Udot Island in the Truk Lagoon, recently visited the island where they helped to establish a new Local Spiritual Assembly. The four Bahá’ís are Masa Koichi, Kai Becky, Thomas Becky and Waner Ynegaw.

They, along with several other believers, had attended a class organized by an assistant to an Auxiliary Board member that included more than 40 hours of preparation for teaching in the more remote islands.

Teaching in these islands is a goal of the Five Year Plan for the area.

United States

Refugee finds Bahá’ís

A Bahá’í in Carbondale, Illinois, teaching English to Indochinese refugees, was explaining the meaning of the word “counselor” to her class when a Laotian student asked, “Do you mean a person who comes to visit and help people, someone of religion?”

Puzzled, the teacher asked, “Do you mean a priest or missionary?”

The student replied, “No, I mean like the Bahá’í Faith; we have Counsellors.”

The teacher could hardly believe her
ears. ‘Bahá’í?’ she said. ‘‘I’m a Bahá’í!’

Now it was the young man’s turn to be overwhelmed. His face lit up as he told her he had been trying to contact Bahá’í’s since arriving in the U.S. but did not know where to look . . .

Thirteen non-Bahá’ís were among the 22 adults and four youth and children who attended a public Naw-Rúz observance hosted by the Spiritual Assembly of San Angelo, Texas. Publicity included announcements on one television station and six radio stations, one of them Spanish-language. Invitations to the observance also were extended personally by telephone and by mail . . .

During Ayyám-i-Há, Bahá’ís in Huntington and Cabell County, West Virginia, gave a party for children at the Huntington Orthopedic Hospital. The children were entertained, served refreshments, and presented with gifts. Puzzles, coloring books and crayons were donated to the pediatrics ward.

**Guam**

Visit makes news

When Hazel Lovelace, a Tlingit Indian Bahá’í from Canada’s Yukon Territory, stopped in Guam while on her way to Japan to assist in the teaching work, she was interviewed by a reporter from Guam’s Pacific Daily News.

The half-column article, printed February 4, listed many of the principles of the Faith, and was illustrated with a three-column photograph of Miss Lovelace in traditional Tlingit dress.

**Ethiopia**

50-plus at conference

More than 50 Bahá’ís attended the second Regional Teaching Conference for Sidamo, Ethiopia, held December 18 at the new Bahá’í Center in the village of Nure.

The Nure community organized and managed the meeting, and believers from other villages chaired the sessions.

The friends studied the Bahá’í Faith as the unifier of humanity. Other topics included how to live a Bahá’í life; the power of prayer; and the need for spirituality if one is to have true progress and happiness.

Future conferences will be held in the villages of Mudane and Dereba, where there are new Bahá’í Centers.

**Ecuador**

Women make shoes

Bahá’í women in Temuco, Ecuador, who meet together each Thursday to study the Faith and learn crafts, became shoemakers for an Intercalary Days project.

They made 40 pairs of shoes and gave them to patients at the Maternity Home of Nueva Imperial, enclosing a pamphlet of Bahá’í prayers with each pair.

The project gave the women an opportunity to explain something about Intercalary Days to the chief administrator at the home.

**Dominican Republic**

3rd Winter School held

The third annual Bahá’í Winter School of the Dominican Republic was held December 25-January 1 in Jarabacoa.

Despite heavy rains, the school was well-attended, and there was a wonderful spirit of cooperation, with everyone taking turns giving children’s classes, cleaning up, scheduling classes, and participating in evening programs.

Aside from classes, those attending were divided into six teams and took part in a coordinated teaching effort in the city of Jarabacoa. Many people there heard of the Faith for the first time, and many asked that they be visited again . . .

The first National Children’s Conference was held February 25-26 in San Juan de la Maguana and was attended by 10 children and several teachers.

The children attended classes, sang, made teaching materials, and learned prayers and passages from the sacred Writings . . .

Owing to the efforts of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Barahona and a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the Dominican Republic, all 40 programs in the Bahá’í series for radio, “El Nuevo Jardín” (The New Garden) are being aired on Radio Barahona.

The programs began at 6:30 a.m. March 1 and will continue until the entire series has been presented. The owner of Radio Barahona has a chain of five stations, and plans to rotate the programs on each of them to cover the entire southwestern half of the Dominican Republic. The Assembly in Barahona is preparing for what it believes will be a large response to the programs. —Steven Kozlow

The friends who attended the third annual Bahá’í Winter School of the Dominican Republic December 25-January 1 at Jarabacoa.
Baha'i News

The Fourth International Convention
The building for the Seat of the Universal House of Justice. The photograph was taken June 7, 1978. Workmen are erecting the forms preparatory to pouring concrete for the roof of the building and the base of the dome. The French artisans who will install the marble on the exterior of the building were to arrive in the Holy Land about June 18. The first marble was to be installed in July. Construction is proceeding on schedule.
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Cover

Members of 108 National Spiritual Assemblies were in Haifa, Israel, April 28-May 2 for the historic fourth Baha'i International Convention, held as construction on the permanent Seat of the Universal House of Justice on Mount Carmel neared completion. A comprehensive report of the Convention begins on Page 2.
As the Hands of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum and Paul Haney look on (top photo), the nine members of the Universal House of Justice stand before the delegates to the fourth Bahá'í International Convention. The newly-elected members are, from left to right, ‘Ali Nakhjaváni, Borrah Kavelin, Amoz Gibson, Hushmand Fatheazam, Ian Semple, Dr. David Ruhe, Charles Wolcott, David Hofman, Hugh Chance.

Following the fourth Bahá'í International Convention, consultations were held between the International Teaching Centre and members of the Continental Boards of Counsellors (bottom photo). The meetings took place May 3-7 at the World Centre. The photograph was taken at Mazra'áth.

Six new National Spiritual Assemblies were formed in May, in accordance with the goals of the Five Year Plan. A seventh, Burundi, was re-formed.

Listed here are the Hands of the Cause of God who represented the Universal House of Justice at the inaugural Conventions, the name of the new National Spiritual Assembly, its seat, and the dates of the Convention.

- Dr. Ugo Giachery, Cyprus (Nicosia), May 20-21.
- Dhikru'lláh Khádem, Qatar (Doha'), May 18-19.
- Dhikru'lláh Khádem, Oman (Muscat), May 25-26.
- Dr. Rahmatu'lláh Muhájír, the Mariana Islands (Agana, Guam), May 26-28.
- William Sears, the Bahamas (Nassau), May 19-21.
- Dr. ‘Ali-Muhammad Varqá, Burundi (Bujumbura), May 20-21.
- Dr. ‘Ali-Muhammad Varqá, Mauritania (Nouakchott), May 27-28.
Nearly 500 delegates from 108 of the 123 National Spiritual Assemblies then in existence gathered in Haifa, Israel, April 28-May 2 for the historic fourth Bahá'í International Convention whose main purpose was the election of the Universal House of Justice, the supreme administrative institution of the Faith.

Elected to the Universal House of Justice, each with at least two-thirds of the vote, were Hugh Chance, Husayn Dadfar, Fatheazam, Amoz Gibson, David Hofman, Borrah Kavelin, 'Ali Nakhjavani, Dr. David Ruhe, Ian Semple and Charles Wolcott.

Besides the 474 delegates, 13 Hands of the Cause of God and 52 members of the 12 Continental Boards of Counsellors attended, as did the nine members of the Universal House of Justice and the three Counsellors resident in Haifa.

Prior to the Convention, the delegates enjoyed three days of pilgrimage and prayers at the Shrines and Holy Places of the Faith.

The delegates were greeted on the first morning of the Convention, Saturday, April 29, in Haifa Auditorium, by the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, who said, “World society is disintegrating before our eyes—political, social, economic and religious systems alike—and the only refuge that remains for mankind is this gift of Bahá'u'lláh, the refuge and hope of mankind.

‘You are privileged to vote for the Universal House of Justice, the body that watches over the destinies of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, the body that guides, protects, and encourages us as we steer our course to the Kingdom of God on earth.’

She concluded, “How great, how sacred is the responsibility that confronts those who vote in this election, seeking help, guidance, and inspiration from Bahá'u'lláh.”

Then, as Rúhíyyih Khánum presided, the chief teller—Jameson Bond of Canada—called the roll of the 1,107 members of the 123 National Assemblies in the Bahá'í world.

Many of the delegates who moved to the stage to cast their ballots were dressed in the costumes of their homelands.

Fifteen of the 123 National Assemblies, through circumstances beyond their control, were not represented at the Convention, but the tellers cast their ballots, received by mail, as the roll was called.

Nine National Spiritual Assemblies had all their members present: Canada, Denmark, Germany, Iran, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

While the tellers retired to tabulate the ballots, the delegates spent the early afternoon assembled at the construction site of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, on the Arc of Mt. Carmel in the vicinity of the Shrine of the Báb, for a dignified but joyous ceremony in which a casket containing dust from the Shrines of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh was placed in the structure by Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum on behalf of the Universal House of Justice.

The Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery, who presided at the ceremony, recalled how Shoghi Effendi, in anticipation of the establishment of the Universal House of Justice, had called into existence the International Bahá’í Council.

Dr. Giachery introduced Ethel Revell who, together with Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum and himself, was a member of the original Council.

Then Rúhíyyih Khánum established the theme and purpose of the ceremony.

She pointed out that, to her, the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh is a “wellspring of peace” on the planet; that out of His resting place pours a fountain of peace.

“But from the building of the Universal House of Justice will emanate the laws of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh,” she said, since “the role of the Universal House of Justice is to protect, enforce, and enact new laws for the world in the Name of Bahá'u'lláh.

“From this source, the Universal House of Justice, will come the Justice that Bahá'u'lláh speaks of in His Writings,” she said, adding that today, when the Administrative Order is still being built and the Faith is still being spread through the world, we are enjoying the “paternal and loving forbearance of the guidance and protection of the House of Justice.”
The delegates and guests who attended the Fourth Bahá'í International Convention occupied a special platform erected in front of the new Seat of the Universal House of Justice (top photo) when, on the ninth day of Ridván, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum, on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, placed a casket containing dust from the Shrines of the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh in a niche in the new building.

The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum places a casket, containing dust from the Holy Shrines, in a niche above the front entrance of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, in the outer wall of the institution's meeting room (bottom photo). Assisting her are Husayn Amánat, the architect of the building, right, and 'Azíz Khabír-púr, the resident engineer for the building's construction.

Then she added, "But the day will come when it will blaze with Justice! That will be the day of the solution of all the problems of the world!"

Rúhiyyih Khánum then unveiled a box that contained a silver casket, a gift to her from the Guardian, in which were sealed two small boxes containing dust from the two Holy Shrines and a scroll written in English and Persian that describes the contents of the casket.

Rúhiyyih Khánum—accompanied by the building's architect, Husayn Amánat, and its resident engineer, 'Azíz Khabír-púr—ascended a set of temporary stairs to a small niche high above the main entrance. With her own hands, she placed the casket in the niche, took up a trowel and sealed it in place. As these emissaries descended the stairs, the assemblage quietly sang, "'Alláh'u'Abhá."

The ceremony began and ended with prayers and readings in Persian, English, Portuguese, Swahili and French.

Following this very special moment, the delegates proceeded to the Pilgrim House courtyard for the celebration of the ninth day of Ridván. The Hand of the Cause of God Abu'l-Qásim Faízí presided at the program, following which the friends circumambulated the Shrine of the Báb.

On Saturday evening, the friends reassembled in Haifa Auditorium for an audio-visual presentation by the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears on the status of the Five Year Plan goals.

The Hand of the Cause of God Paul Haney chaired Sunday morning's session which opened with the reading by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum of the Universal House of Justice's message to the Convention.

Consultation continued at the afternoon session, with the Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone directing the flow of conversation.

The Sunday evening session was given over to zonal meetings with consultation among representatives of National Assemblies...
The Hand of the Cause of God Abu'l-Qāsim Fāizi presides at the commemoration of the ninth day of Rıdvan, held in the precincts of the Shrine of the Báb in the Pilgrim House courtyard.

and Continental Boards of Councillors in their respective areas. Time also was available for National Spiritual Assemblies to discuss matters of mutual interest among themselves.

The Hand of the Cause of God John A. Robarts presided at the morning session of the third day of the Convention, which was devoted entirely to consultation.

During the closing moments of this session, Amatū'l-Bahā Rūḥiyih Khānum reminded the delegates of the value of setting an example for other believers by participating more actively in the teaching work. 

"That is more effective than writing the friends and encouraging them to arise and teach," she said.

The afternoon session was presided over by the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatū'llāh Muhājir. He invited the delegates to direct their attention to mass teaching, asking, "Would you expect anything else from me?"

"This is the time for growing," he said, "for gaining numerical strength for the Cause. The time is ripe—it was always ripe, for this. It is not enough that we have one Bahá’í for every 1,000 people, as in India, or even one for every 50, as in Bolivia."

Dr. Muhājir continued, "When mass conversion first began in Africa, there were no facilities. There were inadequate resources and manpower, yet it was accomplished. Let us have faith in Bahá'u'llah; let us go forth and teach."

On the final morning, the Hand of the Cause of God Dhiḵtu'llāh Khádem guided the consultation and told the friends that Shoghi Effendi was delighted to be able to say, "The Cause of God has reached places that are difficult to pronounce!"

In the closing address of the Convention, the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Giachery summarized the events of the preceding days, then repeated the theme that had recurred throughout the long sessions of the Convention: the members of National Spiritual Assemblies themselves have a responsibility to be an example of selfless devotion, of unremitting activity, of constant service to the Cause.

He warned that the administrators of the Faith must not believe that administration alone can win the victories of the Five Year Plan, or of the Plans destined to be unveiled in the future. "We must have a passion for the Cause," he said.

In the afternoon, the delegates assembled at the Mansion of Bahjí for the celebration of the twelfth day of Rıdvan. The Hand of the Cause of God 'Alī-Ākbar Fūrūtān presided. The nearly 600 Bahá'ís were seated in a giant arc around the outer perimeter of the Haram-i'Aqdas, the outer sanctuary of Bahá'u'lláh's Sepulchre, as prayers and readings were offered in Arabic, Spanish, English, Persian and French.

Then, in solemn procession, Amatū'l-Bahā Rūḥiyih Khānum and Mr. Fūrūtān led the assemblage in humble circumambulation of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, in Whose Name the Convention had gathered.

After the National Spiritual Assembly members began leaving for their homes, the 52 members of the Continental Boards of Councillors began a series of plenary zonal sessions with the 16 members of the International Teaching Centre and the members of the Universal House of Justice. (The Teaching Centre is made up of all 16 living Hands of the Cause of God and the three resident Counsellors. However, the Hands of the Cause Dr. Ādelbert Mühlschlegel, Enoch Olinga and Ḥasan M. Balyúzí were unable to attend the Convention.)

The meetings lasted from May 3-7, and were held for the purpose of discussing the objectives and status of the Five Year Plan and the development of the institution of the Counsellors and their Auxiliary Boards—including the use of assistants—in areas of concern such as protection of the Faith from internal and external enemies and the propagation of the Cause in years ahead.

The zonal meetings dealt with points of more regional concern.

August 1978/Bahá'í News
Teaching in Thailand

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following account of a teaching campaign in Thailand was written for Bahá’í News by Marguerite H. Birger of Collinsville, Illinois, U.S.A., who was in South East Asia from January 12-March 20 as a traveling Bahá’í teacher.)

A new wind is blowing over Thailand! A new light has dawned in its northern provinces, a light that is growing brighter, and could conceivably light up all of South East Asia. The Bahá’ís of the world may well look to Thailand ("Free-land") with firm and resolute prayers of expectation.

I was privileged to be among those on the first team to set out at the beginning of a five-month intensive teaching campaign to win the goals of the Five Year Plan in Thailand. Team members had come from the United States, Canada, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, Iran, and, of course, Thailand itself.

The first town was Meikajan, in northern Thailand, and all subsequent villages were approached in a similar manner. Under the coordination of the National Spiritual Assembly of Thailand, Jenabe Caldwell guided a systematic program, much like one used successfully in the Philippines, that was followed.

First, a three-member committee, including at least one Thai, would obtain an audience with the governor of the province to which we were going. The Faith was explained and a proclamation manual given, which showed a picture of some of the Bahá’ís in Thailand presenting The Proclamation of Bahá’u’l’láh to the King of Thailand.

After requesting and receiving an official letter from the province governor, the team could then go into the village selected to seek permission to teach from the "head man," the appointed leader in that village.

The first teaching team ranged in age from 20 to 79 years, and truly represented a "family" of Bahá’ís. When we gathered the first morning for dawn prayers, a 9-year-old girl who lived next door came and said she wanted to be a Bahá’í and had come to pray. She returned each morning, and later that week her mother was enrolled in the Faith. Several days later the child accompanied us on one of our teaching trips, and thus became the youngest member of the team—at least for one day, since she had to return to school.

The principal ingredient animating this battalion of Bahá’u’l’láh’s "Army of Light" was prayer. Never before had most of us poured so much consistent and concentrated effort into prayer. Each day we held dawn prayers from 6 to 7 o’clock. As the days passed, we looked forward with growing anticipation to these private and group periods of prayer.

(This, I must confess, was a new experience and feeling for me. Even though I have prayed daily, in some way, most of my life, I hadn't experienced the dynamics of group prayer, nor had I ever experienced such a sense of guidance from, and submission to, the Will of God. It was a dramatic example and a revelation to me.)

After prayers, and a briefing on the teaching areas for that day, teams would proceed in groups of three, four or five, depending on the size of the village. Each team was assigned a captain for the day, and at the close of the day we would hold consultation on the day’s activities.

Most of the direct teaching, of course, was carried out by the Thais, or by those from other countries who could speak Thai. The rest of us would converse through an interpreter.

We always formed a backdrop of cultural diversity that clearly demonstrated the universality of the Faith. What we could not communicate verbally we tried to transmit spiritually, and we prayed for the friends who were teaching. The rule was: "If you're not teaching, pray! Don't interrupt the one who is teaching, don't engage in idle talk, just sit quietly, love the seekers, and pray! And trust in Bahá’u’l’láh to do the rest."

Teaching in the towns and villages of Thailand is an unhurried procedure, and so it was in Meikajan, where there are many farmers, and some school teachers, shopkeepers, and their wives, children and other relatives. The team used visual aids such as a teaching album that explained in the Thai language and in pictures the Bahá’í beliefs and history.

The people read and looked and listened. Those who expressed a desire to become Bahá’ís were given a prayer book and a manual called "Guidance I." Again, prayer was the keystone; each would read a prayer, and we would, too. Afterward, a team member would explain carefully the Bahá’í Administration, laws and ordinances. This usually would take about two hours.

The Thais are gentle people who present the Teachings of the Faith in a most loving way. The people who were being taught were similarly loving and hospitable. They would bring water, tea and sweets, and everyone would relax and enjoy these refreshments.

When it was time to go, we would climb down the ladder-like steps from their homes and slip into our sandals that were by then
well-heated by the midday sun. Everyone would be singing "Alláh-u'Abhá," and as we left we would bow politely in the traditional Thai manner of greeting, with hands in an attitude of prayer, and fingertips touching the forehead just above the bridge of the nose.

The thoroughness of the teaching, combined with the prayers, proved again and again the overwhelming power of the Revealed Word of God. It was evident that the new declarants knew what they had done and what they believed. Soon we had enrolled and initially deepened 32 adult Bahá'ís in Meikajan, and it was time for them to elect their first Local Spiritual Assembly.

Names were divided among team members, and each of the new believers was contacted, given a list of those who had been enrolled, and told of the election process. They understood, they prayed, and they voted. That evening, seven or eight of them showed up at our "center" to tally the ballots and proudly announced the nine who would serve on the Spiritual Assembly of Meikajan.

By now, most of the team members had moved on to another town. Five of us remained in Meikajan as a consolidation team. Besides myself, those who stayed were a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Thailand, an Auxiliary Board member, and two Continental Counsellors for South East Asia.

The following day the Assembly in Meikajan met to elect its officers. What happened then was one of the most dramatic examples of the effect of prayer that I have ever seen.

Five ballots for chairman were cast, none with a simple majority. Each time, ripples of shy giggling were heard in the room. At that point, one of the Continental Counsellors arose and said, lovingly, "It is quite obvious that we do not have the proper unity here. We are not showing a unity of thought, spirit or action. Let us pause for a moment and say a round of the 'Remover of Difficulties,' believing strongly that we truly are one soul in many bodies."

A hush fell over the room. Then someone began, "Is there any Remover of difficulties save God? Say: Praised be God. He is God! All are His servants, and all abide by His bidding!" The prayers continued in Thai and English. Afterward, there was silence as the slips of paper were passed around. Quietly, the ballots were collected for the sixth time and tallied. Ya Bahá'u'll-Abhá! The chairman of the Spiritual Assembly of Meikajan had been elected.

Suddenly the believers, new and old alike, sensed a new Force present in the room. A galvanizing Power had been released through prayer, and the birth pangs of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh were felt. The Assembly was a viable, working organism, divinely protected—a pillar of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

We then explained that now that they were administratively sound, they should set goals, establish their Fund, etc., and that we were their servants, standing by to assist them in any way in carrying out their plans and goals.

Immediately, the chairman called for a prayer, after which the Assembly began its consultation. In an orderly and concise manner, the members followed the guidelines of the Universal House of Justice and the National Spiritual Assembly of Thailand, setting the schedule for dawn prayers, children's classes, six extension teaching goals, deepening classes for adults—and starting their Local Fund.

And so it was that in Meikajan a seed was planted, an embryo began to grow, and a healthy Assembly was born, with the team members serving as doctors, nurses and midwives to help the new baby into the world and nourish it until it was able to help itself.

I was with the team most of the time from January 20 to March 20. As I was leaving to return home, we received word that the ninth Local Assembly had been formed. In all, 40 localities had been opened and more than 400 declarations received.

I think an important point to make is that Local Assemblies that were formed in Thailand are strong and viable. These aren't "paper" Assemblies. They are functioning well—so much so that 20 newly-enrolled Thai believers organized their own deepening conference, which lasted more than a week, with concentrated study led by one of the Thai women who is an Auxiliary Board member.

These beautiful friends in Thailand remind me of Marcus Bach's description of the early Bahá'ís: "If these Bahá'ís ever get going they may take the world by storm!"

Members of the first Bahá'í teaching team in Meikajan, Thailand, in January 1978. Second from left (with glasses) is Jenabe Caldwell from Canada; standing center (wearing jacket) is Counsellor Yan Kee Leong; to his left is Counsellor Vicente Samaniego; kneeling in front are Auxiliary Board member Mrs. Monta Greenspoon and Mrs. Marguerite Birger from the United States; at the far right is Nasir Jaffari, pioneer from Persia and member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Thailand.
The Peoples of God
Part 3
Lesotho, a small, mountainous country in southern Africa, was opened to the Faith in 1954 when Fred and Beth Laws, Knights of Bahá’u’lláh, arrived during the Ten Year Crusade (1953-1963). The country presents obstacles to reaching the believers systematically because of its rugged terrain: mountainous areas that are bitterly cold in winter, often serviced by air strips that close periodically because of the wet and windy weather; and many areas, both lowland and highland, with roads that are impassable in wet weather, or with no roads at all. Some villages are accessible only on horseback.

Lesotho, however, has the highest literacy rate in Africa, and this has helped in the growth of the Faith and the possibilities for deepening believers. Many believers, and seekers too, correspond with the National Teaching Committee, asking for materials about the Faith, for prayer books, or for correspondence courses, several of which have been drawn from the Star Study booklets published by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States.

The following excerpts from letters to the National Teaching Committee of Lesotho, written by local believers, tell their own story and give an idea of the progress and the growing pains of a Bahá’í community struggling to “live the life”:

“Grateful for the cooperation of working together for the sake of our Lord in heaven. I am asking for a prayer booklet. As for the present correspondence course, I am asking for an English version, for I want to revive my English which seems to be deserting me. Blessings from the Lord.”

—From Sekonyela Mohlokoana, in the mountains

“I am very happy to tell you that I always read all important things in letters from you that you send to my mother, letters written in English and Sesotho. I want to make a pen friend with you, and I want to be one of the Bahá’í society. I live here in Mathata’s village.”

—From the daughter of a Bahá’í in a lowland village

“I am very happy to have this little opportunity of talking to Bahá’u’lláh. I am grateful to learn that you still remember me in your prayers. I would be glad again if the committee would send me a Tablet of ’Abdu’l-Bahá. Now, my brethren in the Faith, as you may know, I am far from you, I am not educated, so you will excuse me for the bad writing.”

—From Maria Tsetsotse, in a lowland village

Often, guidance is sought from the National Teaching Committee by believers who want to know more about the Teachings. The following letter is from a believer, Malefetsane Sebifinyane, who lives in an isolated mountain village. He has completed two correspondence courses, and writes regularly concerning the Faith.

“I hereby inform you that your letters do come to me, and we appreciate everything, although like I told you, we are those people who are still learning about the Faith. There are only three of us. Fortunately, a young man named Linaka Mosala has recently joined us. He was born in 1939. He also does not know how to write. Like I said, he has just joined the Faith, and this is the first religion he has joined during his lifetime.

Moreover, the village here has organized itself in forming an organization whereby if a man passes away, his burial is taken care of by the group as a whole. The organization started in the eighth month of 1976. Contribution per person is 10 cents a month. We therefore ask for further guidance as regards this practice.”

Traveling teachers are especially appreciated in the mountainous areas, where believers are hungry for information about the Faith and contact with fellow Bahá’ís. The following letter, from Mamontsi Thulo, secretary of the Spiritual Assembly of Thaba Limpe in the mountains, tells of the visit of one such teacher:

“Greetings to you, my beloved friends. We have to inform you that we have had a visitor here, Mr. Nthonyana. We thank him very much for the lessons he taught us. He arrived on December 5, 1977. When he arrived he brought with him books which he gave to the community of Thaba Limpe.

“We met to consult together about the Bahá’í Faith. He also went to Maitisi to hand out books to the community there. We also have to inform you that our member, Molikaliko Sethathi, is ill in the hospital.”

It is difficult for believers from the mountain villages to attend national conferences at the Bahá’í National Center in Maseru because of the time and distance involved, the high cost of traveling down from the mountains, the uncertainty of going to an unknown area, and greater involvement in traditional activities, as reflected in this reply from a believer in the mountains to an invitation to a deepening conference:

“Now owing to one problem, that I have not been to Maseru before, I cannot attend the conference. But because my greatest wish is to attend, I want to ask help from Thakea Phaketsi, who was also invited. Just now he has other things to attend to. His son is out of school, therefore he has to perform some traditional rituals on January 18, 1978.”

The National Teaching Committee is always happy to receive good news of the communities in Lesotho working to achieve the goals of the Five Year Plan.
Convention participants enjoy a meal near the kitchen at the Bahá'í National Center in Maseru, Lesotho.

Mathuso Pateli prepares food in her home for Bahá'ís attending a conference at the Bahá'í National Center in Maseru, Lesotho.

“You are informed that here in Lipelaneng, the Spiritual Assembly has started coming together to say prayers every Sunday at 8 a.m. at Florence 'Matente Sekoati’s home.'”

—From Mantoa Malopo, secretary of the Spiritual Assembly of Lipelaneng

And a longer report from a very active community:

"Beloved friends: Alláh'u'Abhá.

"This is the report we promised. We hope it will serve the purpose. The Bahá'í community of Hlotse holds Nineteen Day Feasts, dawn prayers on Saturday mornings, and meets on Holy Days in small numbers.

"The friends continue to teach the Faith, and as a result, two or three people have declared and there are a number of seekers. Bahá’í songs are becoming popular among the people; one hears a Bahá’í song sung here and there both by the children and adults.

"Children’s classes are held every Sunday, and the number of small children increases. Our gratitude goes to these people:

"1. Auxiliary Board member Shanta Basin who visits the friends, holding deepenings, inspiring them to learn prayers by heart, bringing visitors with her and her husband who encourage the class to learn more about the Faith.

"2. Auxiliary Board member Thozi Nomvete who visits the class and teaches Bahá’í songs. At one time he arrived with three traveling teachers from the United Kingdom who were on their way to Maseru from Butha Buthe; they met with the class and sang Bahá’í songs together, the visitors played their guitars. It was a day never to be forgotten.

"3. Dr. Carole Allen, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, who keeps in touch with the friends by continuous correspondence, deepening them, reminding them to hold Feasts, giving very good books for the library for both the friends and the children’s class, giving encouraging talks at the conferences in Hlotse, and showing pictures of international conferences which are enjoyed by Bahá’ís and non-Bahá’ís."

—From Florence Kaaba, secretary, and Jacobeth Maqutu, chairman of the Spiritual Assembly of Hlotse

The National Teaching Committee has translated and duplicated several pamphlets to assist the believers in building Bahá’í community life. One of these pamphlets includes laws about burial and appropriate readings for Bahá’í funerals. Hloma Masapo, chairman of his Local Spiritual Assembly, writes about the first Bahá’í funeral in his village:

"We were happy to find this opportunity of writing to you to inform you about things taking place in our village.

"It is with deepest sorrow that we Bahá’ís of Liphaleng have to tell you about the death of one member of our community who
died on December 30, 1977, and was buried the following day.

"The deceased was a true Bahá’í member. Even during the last days of his illness, although he was questioned a lot about his Faith, and was advised to agree to be baptised by ministers belonging to other churches, he refused, pledging his support to the Bahá’í Faith until the last day.

"Thus we inform you that he was buried by the Bahá’í members, and only Bahá’í prayers were said, and the funeral was conducted by Hloma Masapo.

"He was the first man here to be buried the Bahá’í way. His name was Mokete Morai. We ask for true condolences and prayers from you. With best Bahá’í greetings."

About one-third of the Local Spiritual Assemblies in Lesotho conducted their elections at Ridván 1977 without any assistance.

The Assembly secretary in Ha Rampa, site of the first regional Bahá’í Center, is Woodroffe Buti, who is more than 90 years old. On election day, he walked several miles to the post office to post the results of the election. His devotion to the Faith is reflected in this letter:

"The election took place April 21, 1977. It was carried out very satisfactorily. The members carried on joyfully. All members say, ‘We very specially want the building finished. When will the building commence?’ All’s well. Prosperity!

"Very unfortunately, Kaiser’s younger brother expired last night at 12 o’clock. And then the community, after a ceremony of prayers, elected me to substitute for Kaiser Matlou at the National Convention April 29-May 1. So expect me as the second delegate. Enclosed please find the ballots."

Andrew Mofokeng, who in 1959 became the first African pioneer to Lesotho, recently said this about the progress of the Faith in that country:

"The Bahá’í Faith in Lesotho has made tremendous strides and reached people in all walks of life in less than a quarter of a century. It has come to Lesotho to stay. It has come to change our outlook on life and create a new race of men. Racial prejudices have been overcome; the learned and uneducated meet for a common purpose in Bahá’í consultations and teaching work.

"As Lesotho is predominantly of Christian background, this has made people receptive in understanding the Station of Bahá’u’lláh and their role in establishing the Kingdom of God on earth. Even the most delicate step confronting our newly-declared believers—leaving their churches—seems no longer to be an obstacle.

"We now have the greatest potential for growth in the mountainous areas, where the ‘pure in heart’ are to be found. The flow will then grow from the mountains to the lowlands."
Guyana
Goals nearly won

The National Spiritual Assembly of Guyana reported in March that the country was on the verge of winning its last remaining goal of the Five Year Plan, that of incorporating the National Assembly.

More than 60 people attended a teaching conference in February where achievement of the Five Year Plan goals was discussed, and a call made for long-term traveling teachers and homefront pioneers.

The Women’s Activities Committee joyously announced the presence of more than 250 women January 29 at its first conference. The main theme was the liberation of women.

The National Youth Committee has produced a song book, and its singing group is making fine progress. Plans are under way for Guyana’s largest ever International Youth Conference next August.

Ivan Fraser, chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Linden, has been named an Auxiliary Board member for propagation for Guyana.

Samoa
Minister supports Faith

A conference of some 3,000 Christian Congregationalists held in Samoa in March included an extraordinary event: one of the ministers presented a paper on the Bahá’í Faith.

As a part of his presentation, the minister said he believes Bahá’u’lláh is a Prophet of God. He urged Samoans to investigate the Faith, as “the concourse is hovering over Samoa.”

Not only were his statements echoed by another minister, but he was asked to present the paper at two other conferences.

Also in Samoa, 12 youth declared their belief in Bahá’u’lláh at the end of March.

In an interview in Wilmette, Illinois, in April, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Samoa who was on his way to the Bahá’í International Convention in Haifa, said, “We are close to reaching the goal of the Five Year Plan of having 10 local Bahá’í Centers in Samoa. Eight Centers have been completed, and two more are under construction.

“We plan to win our Local Spiritual Assembly goals by taking teams into areas and teaching until Local Assemblies are formed. Right now we have 24 or 25 Local Assemblies. We need to open 30 or 40 localities to reach the goal of 200.”

The Samoans, he said, are early risers. In some communities, the friends meet for dawn prayers every day, once a week, or twice a week.

A project now under way in Samoa is to develop a glossary of Bahá’í terms in the Samoan language to assist those who are translating the Writings into Samoan.

Trinidad/Tobago
President’s daughter guest

Margaret Ann Clark, daughter of the president of the Caribbean islands of Trinidad and Tobago, was the guest of honor at a recent luncheon hosted by that National Spiritual Assembly.

Miss Clarke served during 1976-77 as an intern in the Social Development Division for the United Nations Non-Governmental Organizational Youth Caucus where she established a close friendship with the Bahá’í International Community’s UN representative, Dr. Victor de Araujo.

During the luncheon, she recalled with obvious pleasure her contact with the Bahá’ís at the United Nations.

Mrs. Boman attracts media

Media interviews were included in the visit March 7-26 to Trinidad and Tobago by Mrs. Shirin Boman, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South Central Asia.

Mrs. Boman was interviewed once on television, twice on radio, and was the subject of two newspaper articles.

She met twice with the National Spiritual Assembly, and spoke for 45 minutes with Mr. Bakshi, the first secretary to the High Commissioner from India, at his request. Mr. Bakshi said he would like to attend Bahá’í meetings, and invited Mrs. Boman and her escorts, Dr. and Mrs. Jamalabadi, to a gathering at his home.

Mrs. Boman spoke at many meetings in towns and villages in Trinidad and Tobago. At least two or three people accepted the Faith at each meeting, while others said they would read more and accept it. In the village of La Seiva in Maraval, a family of five declared their belief.

The final event of Mrs. Boman’s visit was the party at the home of the first secretary. The High Commissioner, Barakat Ahmad, greeted Mrs. Boman and the
Gilbert Islands

The Hand of the Cause H. Collis Featherstone, while on an extensive trip through the Pacific, met for two days with this group of Bahá'ís in the Gilbert Islands. The building in the rear is the Bahá'í Center in Kuria Village, Abaign, Gilbert Islands.

friends with a hearty "Alláh'u-Abhá," which he repeated as they were leaving.

Mrs. Boman told the National Spiritual Assembly that the potential for teaching in Trinidad and Tobago is immense. Her visit brought wonderful results, and broadened the vision of the friends as to what can be accomplished for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh in their country.

Alaska

Bahá'í float a winner

First place in the non-commercial category was won by a float entered by the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Anchorage in the city's annual Fur Rendezvous parade February 18.

The parade was broadcast on two television stations, one of which gave a good commentary on the Faith.

When the Anchorage assembly cabled the news to the Universal House of Justice, the following reply was received: "'Kindly extend Assembly Anchorage our congratulations award parade float. Delighted continuing proclamation principal city Alaska.'"

Colombia

Island teaching trip

Bonífaca Fuentes, a Bahá'í from Panama, recently made a teaching trip to the Colombian island of San Andrés, off the eastern coast of Nicaragua.

During a series of meetings, firesides and visits in four communities, Miss Fuentes and some other believers visited a family in which all were Bahá'ís except the father, who would not allow his family to attend meetings and also would order Bahá'ís to leave his house.

Laos

Nearly 40 attend Sunday deepening session

Nearly 40 Bahá'ís of all ages were present at the National Hazíratu'l-Quds in Vientiane, Laos, January 15 for a Sunday deepening and fellowship session that was attended by three members of the National Spiritual Assembly, five members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Vientiane, and members of the National Youth and Children's Committee.

Topics covered included loyalty and obedience to government, the distinctive characteristics of Bahá'í life, and prayer.

Afterward, those present went out of doors where sports and games helped them to combat the chilly weather. It is hoped that similar gatherings may be held later this year.

While the other Bahá'ís were visiting the family, Miss Fuentes sought out the father. She says, "We spoke amicably, and finally he said he wanted to become a Bahá'í. He offered the family's home for a site for Bahá'í meetings... The first meeting held there was a total success, and the happiness and enthusiasm of the host prevailed."

Mexico

19 localities opened

Nineteen localities in the Yucatán area of Mexico were opened during the period of the Fast (March 2-21) by pioneers and traveling teachers accompanied by Continental Counsellor Hidáyatu'lláh Ahmadíyyih. In 10 of these localities, Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed.

The teachers traveled by car and were divided into teams of two or three. In the town of Bokava, three teams went to the central park where many people were re-
When the Bahá'ís began to teach, people listened with great interest, some of them even running from one Bahá'í group to another so as not to miss anything. After an hour, some 40 people said they would like to become Bahá'ís. Bokova was the third pueblo (village) opened to the Faith that day. —Edna Ford

**United States**

Assembly, Bahá'ís honored

The Local Spiritual Assembly of Asheville, North Carolina, and two of its members—Dr. and Mrs. William Tucker—have been recognized for their efforts to combat racial prejudice.

The Asheville-Buncombe County Community Relations Council cited the Assembly and the Tuckers for fulfilling the organization's goal of helping to bring about the day “when all persons will look upon each other as equal and unified...when their outlook is purely loving and caring, and seeks to bring out the greatest potential in each individual on earth.”

A letter from the organization pointed out that “the Bahá'í Assembly of Asheville was recognized as a community of persons which has made this perspective a way of life,” and that “Dr. and Mrs. Tucker were recognized as individuals, who also happen to be Bahá'ís, in the community who in the face of social ostracism have held to this purpose in their home, in their work, in the community, and in the world.”

Dr. Tucker, a Bahá'í since 1946, first came to the attention of Asheville when he opened his optometric office there with a non-segregated waiting room, and instructed his employees to treat each patient with dignity, respect, and consideration.

He and Mrs. Tucker, who has been a Bahá'í since 1950, also began to hold interracial Bahá'í meetings in their home. Despite numerous threats, they lovingly and firmly continued to teach the Faith to their friends, neighbors and acquaintances, and to demonstrate the efficacy of its Teachings in their lives.

As a consequence of their efforts, the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Asheville was formed in 1964, and the institution quickly became widely known and respected in the community.

**Australia**

**Persian meeting held**

To increase the involvement of Persian believers in Australia in winning the country's Five Year Plan goals, conferences were held February 11 in Sydney and February 18 in Melbourne.

The conferences were organized by the Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia and members of the Auxiliary Board.

At the Sydney conference the daytime session, conducted in Persian, was attended by 66 adults and 20 children including the speakers, Counsellor Khudarahm Payman of Indonesia, Counsellor Su'ayl 'Alá'i of Samoa, and Auxiliary Board member B. Vahdat.

The evening session, conducted in English, was attended by 115 believers, not all of them Persian. Brief talks were given by Counsellors Payman, 'Alá'i, Peter Khan and Thelma Perks.

**Bahá'í prayers read**

Upon hearing of an ecumenical service that was to be held to open a “Week of Prayer for World Peace” in Australia, the Melbourne Metropolitan and Gippsland Regional Goals Committees offered two prayers for the service, with the request that they be read by a Bahá'í.

Since the service was to be televised, arrangements had to be completed sooner than expected, so the committee was informed that a Bahá'í reader could not be included in the program.

The committee later was delighted, however, to find in the program for the service, under the heading “A Bahá'í Prayer,” the prayer for Mankind, credited to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

**Lesotho**

**Funeral attracts throng**

Nearly 800 people attended the recent funeral of Chadwick Mohapi, the first Bahá'í in Lesotho. The service, in which followers of other religions also participated, was held at the Mohapi home in Seqonaka.
Among those attending were the Queen, several ministers and permanent secretaries of the government, the vice-chancellor and deputy vice-chancellor of the university, other government officials, many principal chiefs, business and professional people, and others.

For the Bahá’í portion of the program, Dr. Carole Allen, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, read a statement concerning the Bahá’í concept of death, described the position of Mr. Mohapi as the first believer in Lesotho, read cables from the Universal House of Justice, the Continental Counsellors, and the National Assembly, and read a Bahá’í prayer. Prayers also were read by Arthur Maqutu and Andrew Mofokeng.

"The Bahá’í readings were well-received, and many expressed the wish that the Bahá’ís had had a more extensive part in the program," said a report received May 3 at the World Centre. "The Bahá’ís were happy to be able to be included in this large funeral. It offered us a chance to read some of the Writings before the gathering, many of whom perhaps had not heard of the Faith previously."

Japan
Teaching trip a success

A month-long visit to Japan by Scarlett O’Hara Bill from Hawaii helped the Bahá’í community of Kurashiki grow from five to 20 believers. Most of the activity took place in the first week of April.

Mrs. Bill was accompanied by Nobuko Iwakura, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Japan. They succeeded in getting widespread publicity for the Faith in newspapers and on television.

The teaching trip brought enrollments in other parts of Japan as well.

Paraguay
Radio spreads Message

The Bahá’í Faith is becoming widely known in Paraguay largely due to a radio proclamation program begun in September 1977.

Just as importantly, the Bahá’ís are "becoming more enamoured with the Faith, more deepened and more identified in all parts of the country," said a report from the National Radio Committee received at the World Centre on March 24.

Traveling teachers, Auxiliary Board members and Bahá’í communities report that people who were contacted about the Faith prior to the programs are eager to learn more, and in areas openened to the Faith, but where residents have heard the programs, there is an interest in learning more.

In one community that had lost its Local Spiritual Assembly, a traveling teacher found that the remaining Bahá’ís had been listening to the daily five-minute broadcasts. A public meeting was organized in the town, and was attended by 25 adults and many children.

More than 20 people have written to enroll in correspondence courses on the Faith, and two have asked to become Bahá’ís.

Some of the responses have been from nearby Argentina. More Argentines are expected to hear the programming since a powerful station in Pilar is now broadcasting daily.

Tanzania

Bahá’ís at Kihesa Kilolo in the Iringa region of Tanzania who attended a one-day teaching conference last January 1. In the back row, second from the left, is Houshang Sheikh’u’l-Islami, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Tanzania.
India

Counsellors host institute

The Continental Board of Counsellors for South Central Asia sponsored an eight-day institute for Auxiliary Board members on “The Covenant: A Focus on Deepening and Protection” December 29-January 6 at Panchgani, India.

“As the institute focused on the sacred duties of the appointed institutions, and as the significance of their duties became clearer, a great spiritual thirst for searching out the guidance of the Holy Writings and in the letters of the beloved Guardian and the Universal House of Justice—plus a spirit of utmost love and unity—was experienced,” said a report from the Counsellors to the World Centre.

Zena Sorabjee and Salisa Kermani represented the Continental Board of Counsellors for South Central Asia at the conference.

A special guest, Dr. A. Jane Faily from Canada, gave four talks on the Covenant of Baha’u’llah.

Persians offer help

Professor Dipchand Khianra, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South Central Asia, suggested to Persian Baha’i students at a recent meeting at Madras University in India that they might use part of their free time to assist the Local Spiritual Assemblies in the area, many of them newly-established.

Seven of the Baha’i students have agreed to visit a Local Assembly every Baha’i month, offering assistance in whatever projects the Assembly suggests.

United Kingdom

Winter School draws 470

Of the 470 believers who attended the recent Baha’i Winter School at Henley in the United Kingdom, 40 traveled afterward to Gloucester to teach the Faith. At a public meeting that was held, 50 non-Baha’is attended, two of whom became Baha’is.

Baha’i conservationist feted

Dr. Richard St. Barbre Baker, the Baha’i who founded the worldwide movement known as “The Men of the Trees,” returned from New Zealand to Great Britain in May to receive the Order of the British Empire. He was named in the Queen’s New Year’s Honors List for the award, bestowed for his lifelong service to the promotion of conservation.

Dr. St. Barbre Baker, who is 88 years old, will spend two months touring Great Britain both to address local chapters of The Men of the Trees and to give talks on the Baha’i Faith.

Sri Lanka

Teaching conference held

About 130 Bahá’ís from 20 communities attended a National Teaching Conference held February 18-20 in Kandy, Sri Lanka. A one-day Women’s Conference followed the main conference.

Between formal sessions—most of which dealt with teaching—the believers from different areas consulted with the National Teaching Committee and Regional Teaching Committees.

At a session in which an appeal was made for traveling teachers and support of the Fund, 11 believers offered to travel and teach in Sri Lanka; eight volunteered to travel to the Maldives Islands; other Baha’is offered deputization funds to finance 21 months of traveling teaching; and postage stamps, envelopes and money were donated to help finance a correspondence course program.

Zaire

Women discuss Faith

A total of 548 Bahá’ís from 72 Local Assembly areas attended a women’s conference February 4-5 in Mwatembo, eastern Zaire.

The conference was organized by the

Switzerland

The Hand of the Cause of God Adelbert Mühlischlegel, seated in the center of the second row, was the honored guest at a conference held March 24-27 in Schüpfheim, Switzerland. Friends from all parts of Europe and four other continents were there. Dr. Mühlschlegel is now living in Greece.
**Cameroon Rep.**

**Villagers attend conference**

Bahá'ís from nine villages in Cameroon came together December 26-28 at Badan, 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) south of Garoua Boulaye, for their first Regional Teaching Conference.

The Bahá'ís in this vast region neither knew each other well, nor had they ever participated in any Bahá'í Regional Conference.

Its success, however, was assured by the loving help and support of the National Teaching Committee, whose representative, Ekema Agbaw, read and distributed to the 31 participants a message from the committee:

"During your conference, you can discuss these important subjects: How to increase the number of friends in certain localities to nine and form an Assembly, and how to strengthen and consolidate the existing Assemblies."

After the conference, Assemblies were formed in three nearby villages, and the Assembly in another village came together to organize the Nineteen Day Feast.

The participants learned how to elect a Local Spiritual Assembly by assisting in the actual election of the Spiritual Assembly of Badan.

During the conference, dates for the Bahá'í International Youth Conference at Yaounde were announced: August 11, 12, 13.

Many of the friends traveled great distances to attend the conference. Each one was responsible for his own transportation; housing and food were provided by the conference hosts, the Bahá'ís of Badan. - Ursula Samandari

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**New Hebrides**

**Exciting progress noted**

The Ridván period, April 21-May 2, witnessed some exciting and heartwarming progress for the Faith in New Hebrides.

Six members of its National Spiritual Assembly were in Haifa to participate in the Bahá'í International Convention and the election of the Universal House of Justice; the first Spiritual Assembly of Aore was formed and the 11 existing Assemblies were successfully re-elected; two Bahá'ís paid courtesy calls on two of the most important government leaders in New Hebrides and were warmly received; and nine declarations in the Tasmalum area of Santo meant that the establishment of another Local Spiritual Assembly was assured.

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**Women's Committees of the Collectives of Mutamba and Tanganiki in collaboration with the Zone Committee of Mutam­bala.**

The 20 teachers for the conference dealt with subjects such as Bahá'í family life, Bahá'í laws, social principles, marriage, Christianity, and developing the distinctive characteristics of Bahá'í life. A special seminar was held on the goals of the Five Year Plan.

During the conference, the men took care of the cooking and the children.

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**Hong Kong**

**Religion Day observed**

Fourteen religious groups and denominations were represented at a World Religion Day observance held January 21 at the Plaza Hotel in Hong Kong.

The gathering, sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of Hong Kong's National Proclamation Committee, consisted of the representatives giving brief outlines of the history and beliefs of their faiths.

Over coffee and cake at the end of the program, many of the representatives expressed appreciation to the Bahá'ís for arranging a forum for the exchange of religious viewpoints.

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During the conference, the men took care of the cooking and the children.

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**Niger**

**1st Women's Conference**

The first National Bahá'í Women's Conference to be held in Niger took place January 15 in Niamey.

Classes were held on the Central Figures of the Faith, Táhirih, the significance and functions of the Universal House of Justice, the importance of the education of children, the role of women in the home, and the Five Year Plan.
the lapps in norway
The Mother Temple of India
(An architectural rendering)
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Cover

For a quarter of a century, a handful of devoted individuals has determinedly carried the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the Lapps of Norway, a people struggling to retain their identity and way of life. While the Lapps haven't yet embraced the Faith in large numbers, inroads have been made, seeds have been planted, and there are signs that the harvest may not be far away. A report on teaching the Faith among the Norwegian Lapps begins on Page 2.
The Peoples of God:
Part 4

ARCTIC OCEAN
NORWAY
SWEDEN
FINLAND
U.S.S.R.
Baha'is have been told that the indigenous peoples of the world will someday become spiritual leaders of the Faith. Who are these indigenous peoples? They are the original inhabitants of the nations of the world: among others, the American Indians, the Australian aborigines, and, in Norway, the Lapps.

Background

The theory that the earliest inhabitants of northern Scandinavia may have been Lapps was formulated in the 19th Century, and has gained increasingly wider acceptance.

The number of Lapps in Norway alone is estimated at 20,000, the majority of whom live in the three northernmost counties—Finmark, Troms, and Nordland—with smaller Lapp populations farther south.

The most important Lapp cultural centers in Norway are Karasjok and Kautokeino, where most of the Lapps are nomadic reindeer herders.

Traditionally, reindeer-herding Lapps have preserved the distinctiveness of the culture, which is why the term “Lapp” is to many synonymous with “reindeer-herding Lapp.”

Actually, only about one in every 10 Lapps earns his living in this way. The rest are, for the most part, farmers, fishermen or laborers.

A great many of these people live today outside the traditional communities. The Norwegian capital, Oslo, is home to some 2,000 Lapps. Movement by Lapps to the cities has resulted in a certain degree of intermarriage with Swedes, Finns and Norwegians, and a hybridization of the Lapp language.

Because this mixing process has been going on for several generations, there is no ready answer as to who is or is not a Lapp. Generally, a person is considered to be a Lapp if he has a Lapp ethnic background and regards himself as a Lapp, even though he may not speak the language. Some Lapps, on the other hand, have denied their heritage for fear of not being accepted by society.

Before World War II, the Lapp minority in Norway was looked down on, socially and culturally. In 1906, a writer described them as “primitive, dirty, lazy and of inferior morality,” an attitude that led a well-known Lapp artist to say that Norwegian society followed the principle of “people first, Lapps later.”

Education for Lapps was little more than Norwegianization. The Lapp language was forbidden in schools and the culture was suppressed.

The attitude in Norway toward these peoples began to change after the war, partly because the outside world focused its attention on them. This increased attention led to agreement on the spelling of Lapp words, the founding of Lapp organizations, and broadcasts in their language.

Some traces of discrimination linger on. It was not until 1965, for example, that a law was repealed that required one to speak Norwegian to be eligible to buy government land in Finmark.

While the government now demonstrates an attitude of good will toward the Lapps, it is impossible to say that a real and deep appreciation exists for that which is distinctively Lappish, because the Lapps have a way of life, a language, and a culture all their own.

In former times the Lapps roamed freely over vast areas from the Norwegian coast in the west, eastward through Sweden and Finland, and even into northern Russia. As national boundaries were drawn, it became more difficult for Lapps to pursue their traditional way of life—hunting, fishing and reindeer-herding.

Roads were built in the traditional Lapp districts, many times for commercial mining or prospecting. Dams were built and power lines strung, all creating problems for the reindeer herders.

Other aspects of modern life also are eating into this community as radio, television, and wider educational opportunities tend to erode what is traditionally Lappish.
In recent years, however, the interest in Lapp culture has grown stronger in Norway. The *joik*, a Lappish song, or way of singing, is gaining acceptance after years of being branded as sinful by missionaries. Their art and architecture likewise are experiencing periods of growth.

The cultural revival has been paralleled by the awakening of Lapps to their own ethnic identity. A more aggressive attitude can be seen among their younger politicians. This straightforwardness is not a Lapp trait, and is in marked contrast to the more modest and reserved attitude of the older generation.

It is not possible at this point to say whether the Lapp culture will survive or perish. The reindeer-herding nucleus has been successful thus far in preserving the language and culture. As the central and regional authorities make decisions that determine the fate of the reindeer-herders, they will also be determining to a large extent the fate of traditional Lapp culture.

In terms of religion, most Lapps are Laestadians, followers of the brand of Christianity preached by Lars Levi Laestadius, a Lapp minister from Sweden who started a revival movement in the 19th Century in northern Scandinavia. The younger generation can hardly be said to be actively religious; nevertheless, these younger Lapps have been greatly influenced by their parents in their general religious outlook.

**Bahá’í teaching among the Lapps**

The story of teaching the Faith to the Lapps in Norway begins in 1953 with the arrival of Loyce Drugan Lawrence, an American pioneer, in the Lofoten Islands off the northwestern coast of Norway.

Mrs. Lawrence, a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh, was accompanied by Helene Drechsler on a teaching trip to Finmark where they became acquainted with some Lapps. The date of the trip is unknown; however, the contacts made have to some extent been maintained through the years.

After 15 years as a pioneer, Mrs. Lawrence died in 1968 of cancer. Either that same year, or in 1969, the first Norwegian Lapp was enrolled in the Faith.

Her name is Olaug Borgen. She was living in the Lofoten Islands, where she learned about the Faith from Mrs. Lawrence. Mrs. Borgen says the spiritual quality of the Bahá’í prayers first attracted her to the Faith.

Mrs. Borgen’s mother was a Lapplander; her father was of Finnish/Danish descent. Her enrollment in the Faith, she recalls, caused “quite a stir” in her family.

The second Norwegian Lapp to embrace the Faith was Jorunn Hagan, who was a student in Trondheim, Norway, when she declared on March 21, 1971.

Mrs. Hagan remembers that Lappish was the first language of her mother and father, but the stigma of being “different” led them to teach their children only Norwegian. Mrs. Hagan has since made efforts to familiarize herself with her ancestral language, completing a one-year course on Lapp history and language in 1975 at the University of Oslo.

The year of her declaration, 1971, Jorunn, her husband, Holger, and another believer, Bodil Fonbeck, spent a week in the Lapp community of Kautokeino, where Mrs. Fonbeck has many Lapp friends, and held a public meeting there. Mrs. Fonbeck has lived for many years in Finmark, and usually spends the Easter holidays in Kautokeino.

In August 1972, Mr. and Mrs. Hagan moved to Kautokeino, where they remained until December 1973. They were able to tell friends about the Faith, and the local school board learned of the Faith when Mr. Hagan, a teacher and a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Norway, applied for a leave of absence to attend the third Bahá’í International Convention in Haifa, Israel, in 1973.

On January 20, 1973, the most recent Lapplander to become a Bahá’í declared in Bodo. He is Gunnar Lile, who became strongly interested in the Faith because of the logical nature of its Teachings.

He says his relatives and many of his friends were unhappy with his declaration. Others of his friends were indifferent.
In the summer of 1973, following a Baha'i conference in Jokkmokk, Sweden, a team of five believers taught the Faith in the Norwegian Lapp communities of Kautokeino and Masi.

Another team of believers left the Jokkmokk conference for the Norwegian Lapp community of Karasjok where they met a Lapp who went with them to a Baha'i conference in the Lofoten Islands and rode with them to Denmark for the Scandinavian Baha'i Summer School.

Two years passed, and in 1975 the Swedish Lapp newspaper Samefolket featured a lengthy article on the Faith, illustrated with a photo of 'Abdu'l-Baha.

In September 1975, Hubert Schuurmann and his family, from Canada, moved to an isolated area in northern Norway near Kautokeino where their nearest neighbors were five Lapp families. The Schuurmanns remained until August 1976, when Mr. Schuurmann completed making two films for the Canadian government. His daughter, Nadine, worked for a local silversmith and made many friends.

During their stay in northern Scandinavia, the Schuurmanns visited the Lapp communities of Jokkmokk, Karasjok and Landselv. While they were in Norway, two teams of Baha'i teachers traveled in the area.

The first team was composed of two Baha'is from Oslo who visited Lapp communities following the Baha'i International Teaching Conference in July 1976 at Helsinki, Finland.

The second of the teams was made up of Wayne Steffes and his family, American Indians most recently from California, who taught in northern Norway in July 1976. They met Lapps in Nordreisa and Kautokeino, were interviewed on a Lapp radio program, and were the subject of articles in local newspapers and one national daily paper.

Prior to these visits, an ad in Lappish and Norwegian was run in several newspapers, saying that Baha'is from many countries soon would be traveling through northern Norway spreading the Message of Baha'u'llah—that there should be unity among all peoples, regardless of national or religious background.

At the present time, only one Baha'i pamphlet is available in the Lapp language. It was produced by the National Spiritual Assembly of Sweden and is entitled, "Oappastus Bahai Ap'ii," which a prominent Lapp scholar says could be taken to mean, "Introduction to the Study of That Which Is Evil." In Lappish the word "Baha'" means "bad" or "evil," a regrettable coincidence. The title of the pamphlet actually means, "Introduction to the Baha'i Faith." The National Spiritual Assembly of Norway has no plans at present to produce Baha'i literature in Lappish.

It seems that it is necessary to live among these peoples to win their trust and friendship for the Faith.

Jan Emil von Krogh lived in Kautokeino from 1976 to 1977, moved to the Lapp community of Karasjok in April 1977, then back to Kautokeino, where he now lives.

Gunnar Lile and his wife, Noora Khosravi, a Persian pioneer from Kuwait, live in Alta, in northern Norway, where Mr. Lile is studying the Lapp language.

While in Kautokeino the Schuurmanns made many Lapp friends whom Baha'i teachers should be able to re-contact. Teachers of Indian or Eskimo background would be most helpful in the teaching work and most welcome.
Italy
A progress report

An eight-page brochure depicting the Seat of the Universal House of Justice has been published by the Italian firm of Industria dei Marmi Vicentini. The brochure is designed to acquaint potential customers with the quality of its work in architectural marble.

In pictures and accurately-written passages, the brochure tells of the history of the Faith, the role of the Universal House of Justice, and gives some details of the design of the building itself.

The firm points out that its quarries will provide 85,000 cubic feet of "Caesar's White" marble of Pentelikon quality, the same type of marble that was used in building the Parthenon in Athens, Greece.

The brochure also says that the Parthenon has 46 columns, each 31.5 feet high, while the Seat of the Universal House of Justice has "a peristyle of 58 columns, each 33 feet high... decorated with magnificent entablatures and surmounted by a great dome."

More than a million people had an opportunity recently to visit a booth at the Sardinian Trade Fair in Cagliari, Italy, sponsored by the Baha'is of Cagliari and Quartu S. Elena.

It was the fourth year in a row that the Faith was represented at the fair.

While posters and all available Italian-language Baha'i literature were displayed, the item that seemed to attract the most attention was a copy of The Hidden Words in Braille. Most visitors to the fair were unfamiliar with Braille.

Nearly everyone who stopped at the booth said they had seen or heard the name 'Baha'i' prior to the fair.

Those who manned the booth reported later that teenagers, more than any other age group, appeared to show a great interest in the Faith.

—Hazel Holmlund

Three million people visited the Trade Fair in Milan, Italy, April 14-23 at which a booth displayed literature from Baha'i Publishing Trusts around the world. About 11,000 copies of the Fair's catalog, in which appears a paragraph about the literature available from Baha'i Publishing Trusts, are being distributed internationally.

The Faith was proclaimed at the 56th annual Milan Trade Fair April 14-23 in Milan, Italy, with a booth representing Baha'i Publishing Trusts from around the world. The fair was attended by three million people.

The booth, sponsored by the Baha'i Publishing Trust of Italy and the Local Spiritual Assembly of Milan, displayed Baha'i literature in Arabic, English, Esperanto, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Portuguese and Spanish, as well as two books in Braille.

More than 5,400 information pamphlets in Italian alone were taken by visitors to the booth. Those who manned the booth commented favorably on letting people take literature from the display by choice rather than having it handed to them.

An advertisement for the booth, with a short paragraph on the types of books published by the Baha'i Publishing Trusts, and in what languages they are published, appeared in a Fair newspaper for two days.

The newspaper was distributed to each of the Fair's 9,000 exhibiting booths as well as to Italian and foreign commerce houses, local hotels, and Italian and foreign businessmen.

About 11,000 copies of the Fair's catalog, again with a short paragraph describing the types of books published by the Baha'i Publishing Trusts, is being distributed internationally.

The booth was in an area of the Fair where the most important publishing houses in Italy also had booths.

A special guest at the booth was the French Baha'i author, Andre Brugiroux, who presented his film La Terre n'est qu'un Seul Pays (The Earth Is but One Country) four times, outside the Fair, to 390 non-Baha'is.

The positive results of the Baha'i presence at the Fair has been felt in Milan with an increased number of seekers attending firesides.

The Milan community hopes to participate in the Fair again next year.

—Elaine Klappal
The Baha’i wedding of Persian believers Fereidun Sanai, seated left, and Ilgen Assaturian, seated right, was the first in the town of Scandicci, Italy. It was also the first wedding to take place in the meeting chamber of the City Council.

The marriage of Fereidun Sanai and Ilgen Assaturian, both Persian Bahá’ís, was the first Baha’i marriage in Scandicci, Italy, a city of 60,000 inhabitants near Florence. It took place at City Hall in a large salon used exclusively for City Council meetings except for the Baha’i wedding.

In fact, it was not until the third time the Baha’is requested use of the room that permission was granted. The City Council even decorated the room with flowers, brought in extra chairs and offered the use of an adjoining room for the reception.

The Lord Mayor, who originally had been in disagreement with the spiritual principles of the Faith, was present at the wedding. The 180 guests present—excluding 110 non-Baha’is—listened to the prayers and the Marriage Tablet, and heard a talk on the principles of the Faith and Baha’i marriage. Never had so many people in Scandicci heard about the Faith at one time. After the ceremony, many guests asked the Baha’is about the Faith.

A leading national newspaper carried an account of the wedding.

Verona, the most rapidly growing Baha’i community in Italy, held a month of intensive teaching in October 1977. The City Council of Verona kindly granted the believers the use of a room at the Museum of Natural Sciences, where five public meetings, a debate and a Baha’i get-together were held.

On October 20, the friends commemorated the Birth of the Bab with a concert performed by the internationally famous Baha’i concert pianist, Maestro Alfredo Speranza, who played some of his own compositions that were inspired by the Faith and the music of Liszt and Chopin.

The well-attended meetings had been announced in the local newspaper and on radio.
A letter from the friends in Sweden

1 A serious moment at Sweden's National Convention. Shown here (left to right) are Ezzai Dizayeti. Auxiliary Board member Hadi Afsahi. Continental Counsellor Dorothy Ferraby. Auxiliary Board member Åke Johansson.

2 Some of the friends who attended the 1978 Baha’i National Convention in Sweden.

3 The National Haziratu’l-Quds of Sweden.


5 Baha’i is in Sweden from (left to right) Persia. Africa. Canada.

6 Some of Sweden’s Baha’i youth and children at a playground.

7 A group of Baha’is in Sweden gathers at a pizza restaurant for a lunch break.
Beloved Friends,

Alláh'u-Abhá! Sweden won—actually surpassed—her goals during the Nine Year Plan. Eleven Local Spiritual Assemblies existed then, three more than the Plan required. Today, with less than one year left in the Five Year Plan, Sweden has 13 Local Spiritual Assemblies, nine short of the goal. Sweden is among those 30 nations mentioned in the Rídvan message from the Universal House of Justice that must witness tremendous sacrifice if the goals are to be won.

In Europe, and perhaps especially in northern Europe, the Baha’is face the great tests spawned by rampant materialism and secularism. While their brothers and sisters in Africa, Asia and other places struggle to consolidate the thousands of new Baha’is, the Scandinavians sacrifice enormous amounts of time, energy and love in activities that may not even result in one new believer over a period of many months.

We in Sweden stand on a threshold. The excitement, the nervousness, the wonder inherent in that position can be felt all over Sweden. It is the threshold of sacrifice. The time is so short, the believers so few. Courage is required—courage to reach out and find the receptive souls and love them into the Faith. New teaching methods must and will be found this year, especially in the area of individual teaching and use of Baha’i hospitality in our homes.

We are blessed here in Europe with our beloved Counsellors, four of whom have visited Sweden since January. Their presence has contributed greatly to the new energy and spirit among us. Adib Taherzadeh gave us two days of deeply inspiring talks on teaching; Erik Blumenthal devoted a weekend to child education; Betty Reed met with the National Spiritual Assembly; Dorothy Ferraby met with the National Spiritual Assembly and with Auxiliary Board member Hadi Afsahi. Ms. Ferraby also attended our National Convention, urging us to teach, to pioneer, and to open new localities. “This,” she said, “will be the most exciting year we’ve ever lived in.”

In every area of our Baha’i community life there are signs of a new life, an intensification, a new channeling of energy. These signs include the relatively sudden growth of the Faith in one of the goal towns that now has eight believers; the existence until Rídvan of permanent teaching teams in the north and south of Sweden; the opening of Lithuania to the Faith, a Five Year Plan goal; the assignment of 38 (previously 19) delegates to the National Convention this year; the near-completion of a detailed history of the Faith in Sweden; the increase in assistants to the Auxiliary Board to nine; the sacrificial work of the Publishing Trust as it nears completion of a Swedish edition of Gleanings and a new prayer book; the sacrifice present in our monthly Baha’i newsletter that regularly includes several pages of drawings, stories, puzzles, and other items for children.

Exciting news has come from the famous university town of Uppsala where Mehr Afsahi, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Sweden, is a student at the Pedagogical Institute in a course on “Education for Peace.” Recently, Mehr was invited to lead a seminar on Baha’i consultation during which the process was practiced by everyone present on a simulated problem. The response was quite positive, and the professor, a good friend of the Faith, has asked Mehr to write a paper on Baha’i consultation.

Also in Uppsala, a Baha’i researcher at the University, Dr. Pakzad, recently arranged a Rídvan party and invited his colleagues. Seventy people, including the Baha’is, attended, an unusually large number. Many of them received information about the Faith for the first time.

Some other personal glimpses...

Did you know that we in Sweden have a stamp fund? There is a Local Spiritual Assembly that has an opportunity to sell used stamps and contribute the income to the National Fund. One can always spot a Swedish Baha’i when he suddenly dives headlong into a trash basket to retrieve an old envelope with a used stamp on it...

We have a pioneer in Greenland who recently married an Eskimo... One of our earliest Baha’is, and perhaps the first ever to fulfill a homefront goal in Sweden, Martha Collander, has celebrated her 90th birthday... A group of believers recently took a two-week trip specifically to visit isolated believers, and were most happy to meet these precious jewels who hadn’t been visited for some time...

Many groups of Baha’i teachers from other countries will be coming to Sweden this summer including a group of American Indians. Two goal towns, Helsingborg and Luleå, have been publicized to the Baha’i world as places for traveling Baha’is to visit and teach in this summer.

But it is we in Sweden who must make the necessary sacrifices; the goals must be won, and we are the ones who must win them. You can help too, through your prayers and your loving support. “Therefore, you who are in Europe, do not be discouraged because you are few, or because people think that your Cause is of no importance. If few people come to your gatherings do not lose heart, and if you are ridiculed and contradicted be not distressed, for the apostles of Christ had the same to bear. They were reviled and persecuted, cursed and ill-treated, but in the end they were victorious, and their enemies were found to be wrong. If history should repeat itself and all these same things should happen to you, do not be saddened but be full of joy, and thank God that you are called upon to suffer as holy men of old have suffered. If they oppose you, be gentle with them; if they contradict you, be firm in your faith; if they desert you and flee from before you, seek them out and treat them kindly. Do harm to nobody; pray for all; try to make your light shine in the world, and let your banner fly high in the heavens. The beautiful perfume of your noble lives will permeate everywhere. The light of truth kindled in your hearts will shine out to the distant horizon!”

The indifference and scorn of the world matters not at all, whereas your lives will be of the greatest importance. “All those who seek truth in the Heavenly Kingdom shine like the stars; they are like fruit trees laden with choice fruit, like seas full of precious pearls.


With warmest Baha’i greetings.

Your brothers and sisters in Sweden

September 1978/Baha’i News 9
On May 23, 1978, exactly 134 years after the historic Declaration of the Báb, the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, the Mother Temple of the West, was designated "one of the Nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation" and listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the United States was notified of the listing by Keith A. Scalle, National Register coordinator for the Division of Historic Sites, Illinois Department of Conservation.

The notification came shortly after the House of Worship had received the four millionth visitor since its public dedication in May 1953.

Other visitors last May included Spiros Kyprianou, the president of the Republic of Cyprus, and the 60-member national ballet company of Poland. Thirty-five tours of the House of Worship were counted in May, the largest number for any month since its opening.

President Kyprianou, accompanied by his wife and several government officials, was greeted at the House of Worship by four members of the National Spiritual Assembly, and Mary Sawicki of the Bahá'í International Community office. The president was given several pamphlets and Volume XV of The Bahá'í World.

President Kyprianou's visit on May 28 came during the final session of the 69th U.S. Bahá'í National Convention. Only a few days before that visit, the first National Spiritual Assembly of Cyprus was elected.
Bahá'ís in the continental United States, Canada, Alaska and Hawaii launched a second "Victory Weekend" Saturday, June 24, with a festive celebration described by the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears as "the largest picnic the world has ever seen."

The picnics, held in many Bahá'í communities throughout North America and Hawaii, commemorated the visit by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in June 1912 to Teaneck and West Englewood, New Jersey.

Mr. Sears was at Evergreen Cabin in Teaneck where more than 1,500 Bahá'ís and their guests gathered for the 66th annual "Souvenir of 'Abdu'l-Bahá."

Recalling the words of the beloved Master, Mr. Sears urged the friends in North America to "arise with superhuman strength and energy" to win the goals in the last few months of the Five Year Plan.

Also present at the Teaneck observance were Continental Counsellors Edna True and Dr. Sarah M. Pereira, and Soo Fouts, the National Spiritual Assembly's assistant secretary for teaching.

More than 1,000 persons gathered Saturday evening in West Englewood where Mr. Sears hosted "An Evening With the Beloved Master," and more than 300 were present the following day for a "Victory Rally" with Mr. Sears in New York City.

In Chicago, more than 200 Bahá'ís and their guests enjoyed a picnic at Lincoln Park, where 'Abdu'l-Bahá also walked in 1912, and heard a talk on the travels of the Master by Auxiliary Board Member D. Thelma Jackson.

Other large observances were held in California, South Carolina, Minnesota, Texas, Georgia, Missouri, and other states...

In Texas, the first three weeks of the North Texas Victory Campaign, which got under way early in June, produced 95 declarants whose enrollment could increase the district's Bahá'í population by 70 percent and the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies from three to nine.

The campaign is being assisted by a full-time teaching team whose members include four adults, one Bahá'í youth, and six children ages 10-14.

The California Victory March continues its northward swing through the state this summer following its initial successes in El Centro, Lemon Grove, and Watsonville.Shown here are Bahá'í entertainers including England Dan and John Ford Coley, Leslie and Kelly, Bob Gundry, Red Grammer and drummer Gary Bulkin performing during one of the many concert appearances that are an integral part of the teaching campaign.
Bolivia

Nearly all goals won

In late May the National Spiritual Assembly of Bolivia reported that the Bolivian Bahá'í community had won all of its Five Year Plan goals except for the translation of literature into one goal language and the incorporation of some Local Spiritual Assemblies.

On the first day of Ridván more than 1,000 Local Assemblies were formed in Bolivia. At that time there were some 4,800 localities open to the Faith in Bolivia, which has a population of a little more than five million.

The National Assembly of Bolivia has pledged to help neighboring countries win their goals, and to rededicate itself to programs of expansion and consolidation within Bolivia.

New Book

'Tablets' published

The Universal House of Justice has announced publication of Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the second of three compilations scheduled to be prepared and published by the World Centre during the Five Year Plan.

The House of Justice appointed its Research Department to prepare the compilation, and Habib Taberzadeh, with the assistance of a select committee at the World Centre, was responsible for the translation of those Tablets and passages of the Tablets not previously translated by Shoghi Effendi.

The book includes 16 of the most significant and much-loved Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh including the Most Holy Tablet, the Glad Tidings, Tablet of the World, Table of Wisdom, Words of Wisdom, and Book of the Covenant. Some were translated into English many years ago at the request of the Master, and many of these same passages later were re-translated by the Guardian.

Alaska

Teaching accelerates

The National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska launched the biggest teaching and consolidation effort in the history of the state at a series of training institutes beginning in June.

Fourteen institutes, beginning June 2-11 in Anchorage and scheduled to close September 1-10 in Juneau, have been designed to train believers to serve on teaching or consolidation teams in every part of Alaska, including the Aleutian Islands.

Winter Conference held

Eight Bahá'í communities were represented among the 32 adults, three youth and 37 children who attended a Winter Conference in Petersburg, Alaska, April 28-30.

Guatemala

10 Assemblies formed

Ten new Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed in Guatemala during the last two weeks in March after 156 adults and 62 youth were enrolled in the Faith, largely through the efforts of eight traveling teachers.

The teaching project was centered in the Department of Zacapa, where the team used informal gatherings in homes and with individuals to present the Faith, rather than the "proclamation" approach.

A report by Dr. Hidáyatu'lláh Ahmadíyyih, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Central America, said, "It was felt that the proclamation method in a new community would be likely to arouse opposition against the Faith prematurely, and those who are enrolled in such a situation often are not properly prepared to face the challenges of their friends and the tests involved with their newly-embraced Faith.

The conference dealt with many aspects of teaching the Faith, from teaching family members to making teaching trips away from home.

The participants discussed "priorities" in a class led by Auxiliary Board member Howard Brown, and, in another class, "Muhammad and the Koran."

A banquet was held Saturday evening in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the first mention of the Faith in Petersburg.
Mexico

The first Bahá’í Campus Club at the Autonomous University of Guadalajara, Mexico, School of Medicine was formed in April 1978. Three of its four members, all of whom are pioneers from the United States, are (left to right) Don Burt, Dayton Haigney, Jack Jacobs. Not shown is the club’s fourth member, Jennifer Scott. All the members are active outside the club as well, serving on Local Assemblies, Regional Teaching Committees, and as traveling teachers. Students from all over the world attend the Autonomous University at Guadalajara.

Consequently, new believers were deepened as they were taught. The teachers spent up to a full hour with them, leaving them with copies of the booklet, “The New Garden,” and with prayers and pamphlets about the Faith.

After 10 days, second visits were made to the new communities to form new Local Assemblies. “In the majority of cases we found wonderful spiritual growth and enthusiasm and joy in belonging to the Faith,” said Dr. Ahmadiyyih. “The prayers, particularly, had made a deep impression.”

On the follow-up visits, opportunities were found to use proclamation materials, such as slide programs, in the new communities. The new believers welcomed the material, because it gave them a deeper understanding of the Faith.

Malaysia

Regional Conference set

The National Spiritual Assembly of Malaysia, on behalf of the Malaysian Bahá’í community, extends a warm invitation to the friends throughout the world to attend the Southeast Asia Regional Conference at Kuching, Sarawak, from December 16-19, 1978.

Kuching, the capital of Sarawak, is on the eastern side of peninsular Malaysia.

This marks the first time that a major conference will be held in eastern Malaysia. More than 1,000 believers from Southeast Asia are expected to attend, including Bahá’ís from the jungles of Sarawak and Sabah.

The conference theme is “The Mighty Forces Within . . .”

Botswana

Building new World Order

The Bahá’ís of the village of Tlikweng, Botswana, faced with the task of gathering materials for the construction of a local Bahá’í Center, made 1,000 bricks within a week. The enterprise began when one Bahá’í woman started making bricks on her own.

The 1,000 bricks are sufficient to begin construction on the new building.

Hand of Cause visits

The Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone, while visiting Botswana on March 18-23, appeared at a public meeting, a teaching conference and other gatherings, and was interviewed on radio.

United Kingdom

‘Fairest fruit’ ripens

“The fairest fruit of the constant labors of the friends in Scotland is this historic formation,” the March issue of the Nineteen Day Feast Newsletter of the United Kingdom said in reporting that the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Perth and Kinross in Scotland has been formed.

The newsletter also reported the acquisition of property in Edinburgh, Scotland, for the site of its Hazíratu’l-Quds, thus winning a Five Year Plan goal for the United Kingdom that a Hazíratu’l-Quds be established in the capital cities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Three believers in Scotland appeared recently on a program dealing with the topic, “Was Jesus God?” on Scotland’s British Broadcasting Corporation television network. The three Bahá’ís, said the newsletter, made “significant contributions” during the 35-minute program.

Scottish Bahá’í wedding

The first Bahá’í wedding to be recognized by Scottish law took place recently at the new Bahá’í Center in Edinburgh, Scotland, according to a cablegram received June 11 at the World Centre in Haifa.

The wedding of the couple—Pamela and Brian O’Toole—received local and national publicity.

Bahá’í float a winner

A float entered in the District Festival Parade by the Local Spiritual Assembly of Stirling, Scotland, won first prize as the “Best Organization” entry.

The float theme was “Ye Are the Flowers of One Garden,” and Bahá’í youth and children on the float threw freshly-picked flowers to the thousands of spectators.

Extensive coverage was given to the parade by the local newspaper, and for the second year in a row, a photo of the Bahá’í float was printed.

The Local Assembly donated its prize money—50 pounds sterling—to a local children’s home.
Canada

Teaching plan a success

A team of Bahá'ís from Saskatchewan, Canada, developed a unique teaching plan that was used successfully in the town of North Battleford, an extension goal of the Spiritual Assembly of Saskatoon.

"We did not depend on public meetings, street teaching or door-to-door invitations. We felt we wanted to teach, to confirm people in the Faith," said a report from Don Rogers, an Auxiliary Board member who helped organize the project.

The team, after meetings with other Local Assemblies in the area and the Goals Committee, held a weekend class on teaching, traveled to the goal city, rented a motel room with an attached sitting room for firesides, "and started to invite people to hear about the Faith."

The report said, "We told them we were in North Battleford to tell people about this new Revelation and to build a Local Assembly in the town, as every town in the world has to have one!"

The team telephoned people who knew a Bahá'í, were known to the Bahá'ís, or were relatives of Bahá'ís who lived elsewhere. They were invited to informal meetings at the motel, or were asked if they would like to host firesides in their homes.

"One couple, who had not heard of the Faith before, held two meetings in their home. Both declared their Faith and were enrolled two days after we first telephoned them," the report said.

Some of the people who were telephoned said they were not interested in the Faith themselves, but gave the team the names of others they knew who were "searching for something," and suggested they be contacted. Many of them were "caught in the vision of building Assemblies," the report said.

On some evenings as many as four firesides were held at one time in the town. Included was at least one meeting on a nearby Indian Reserve that had once had an Assembly.

After the one-week experiment was over, the team's report pointed out that "if we could have kept the high level of involvement and collaboration going for one more week, the Assembly would have been formed. Everyone worked as an organic whole in an attitude of prayer and with full confidence that an Assembly would be built."

The town had five enrolled believers when the week was over.

Laos

Dr. Heshmat Ta‘eed (left), the first Bahá'í pioneer to Laos, was reunited recently in Shrewsbury, England, his present home, with Bui Van-an (right), the first native-born Bahá'í in Laos, who learned of the Faith from Dr. Ta‘eed. Also present was Vu Van Khang, a Vietnamese Bahá'í who is living in Paris. Dr. Ta‘eed was in Laos for six years; today the Laotian Bahá'í community includes more than 150 Local Spiritual Assemblies.

Argentina

Shown here are participants in a three-week teaching trip to Argentina's Mapuche Indian area in February. The team traveled in a Land Rover equipped with battery-powered slide projectors, guitar, and teaching materials in the Spanish and Mapuche languages. Left to right are Reed Chandler, Antonio Lizama, Pedro Salvador, Alejandro Caballero, Sharon and Carlos Ewing and children, Felipe Jara, Karime Abara. Members Salvador, Lizama, Jara and Chandler traveled from Chile to teach; the last three are members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Chile. The teaching effort was culminated by a Summer School attended by more than 30 persons.
**Tonga**

**Faith’s status enhanced**

The Bahá’í Faith in Tonga received unique government recognition this year when the National Spiritual Assembly was certified as a permanent member of the Viola Hospital Board of Visitors.

The permanent members of the organization are the heads of the major religions in the country.

Also, since January, the Tongan Bahá’ís have sponsored a weekly 15-minute radio program, broadcast every Sunday evening at 10:30 over the only radio station in the country.

Entitled “The New Era,” the program has generated a great deal of interest in the Faith. The first five broadcasts were in English, but the remainder have been in Tongan.

**Chile**

**Community comes alive**

Who can say why a Bahá’í community lies dormant for a time, then suddenly bursts into new bloom?

In February, the province of Valdivia, Chile, received spiritual impetus through a rejuvenating Summer School and the arrival of a new pioneer. In the three months that followed, more was accomplished for the Faith than in all the previous years of the Five Year Plan.

Things started happening when one person accepted Bahá’u’lláh during Summer School; later, four adults and one youth were enrolled in the Faith.

Then, after many teaching trips, the extension goal community of Panguipulli was opened to the Faith with the enrollment of a married couple. This won the most elusive Five Year Plan goal of Valdivia: the opening of a new department in the province.

Feeling the growing momentum, the friends began to turn their attention to the other two departments in the province.

The community was intrigued by a report from the Statistics Department showing five Bahá’ís on Isla Huapi, an island in a beautiful lake called Ranco. The believers there had been visited by a Bahá’í only once, in 1968, when they entered the Faith during a teaching trip by Hooper Dunbar, now a member of the International Teaching Centre in Haifa.

On April 29, Isla Huapi was visited by Bahá’ís for the first time in 10 years. Kenneth Dunbar and Chuck French arrived on the island after a journey of four hours by bus and two hours by rowboat. Within a short time, they ascertained that three of the people on the Statistics Department’s list were indeed Bahá’ís, even after years of no contact with other believers!

When the two teachers returned to the city of Valdivia, prepared to open the fourth and only remaining department, they were told the goal already had been met.

Manuel Salvo had visited the city of La Unión in the fourth department, had discovered an isolated believer and had taught the Faith to another person, who subsequently was enrolled.

In February, there had been one Local Assembly and one department open to the Faith in the province of Valdivia. By May 1, there were two Local Assemblies, two Bahá’í groups, and four departments open to the Faith.

Before February, there had been no declarations in the province for two years; by May 1, there were 23 declarations!

—Kate Sundby de Aparicio

**Burma**

**Homefront pioneers arise**

Twenty Bahá’ís volunteered to become homefront pioneers in Burma during a semi-annual teaching conference in February, despite the fact that Burma has won all of the goals assigned to it for the Five Year Plan except for the establishment of two new Haziratu’l-Quds. The homefront pioneers were assigned to three areas in Irrawaddy Division and in Shan State.

More than 1,000 believers attended the teaching conference, held at the Haziratu’l-Quds in Daidanaw. Later, a youth conference was held at the same time as the dedication of the new District Haziratu’l-Quds in Ngabyema. About 150 Bahá’ís attended; 10 other attendees declared during the conference.

Meanwhile, the National Spiritual Assembly of Burma is making plans for the celebration of the Centenary of the Bahá’í Faith in that country. The observance is scheduled for October 18-20 at the National Center in Rangoon.

**Centenary observance**

Bahá’ís all over the world are warmly invited to attend the centenary celebration October 18-20 of the establishment of the Bahá’í Faith in Burma. The observance is to be held at the Bahá’í National Center in Rangoon.
Bahamas

150 attend Convention

In a cablegram received May 23 at the World Centre, the newly-elected first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahamas reported that the National Convention May 19-21 in Nassau was attended by native believers from every island in the Bahamas on which Bahá’í is reside, plus a host of pioneers and visitors from the United States, bringing the total to around 150 people.

The Convention, said the cablegram, was publicized “through all forms of mass media,” attracting considerable public attention and prompting the Chief Justice of the Bahamas to request Bahá’í literature.

The members of the new National Spiritual Assembly were drawn from four of the five islands open to the Faith: Andros, Eleuthera, Grand Bahama, and New Providence.

In a second cablegram, received May 23 in Haifa, the National Assembly said: “In a rarefied atmosphere new pillar Universal House of Justice elected 20 May 1978. Assembled delegates, visitors first Na-

Peru

Teaching creates community of 250

A new Bahá’í community of more than 250 believers in San Antonio, a barrio settlement near Iquitos on the Amazon River in Peru, has been created with the assistance of a successful teaching project known as “Ensenanza en Masa” (Teaching the Masses).

A team of volunteers from Lima and elsewhere, after a short training session in techniques used successfully in Brazil, turned its efforts to San Antonio, a sprawling collection of adjoining homes and unpaved streets without lights or sewers. To reach the barrio, the teachers had to struggle across makeshift bridges of planks and boards, as the barrio is surrounded by swamps. About 1,000 families live there.

“Soon the enrollments began to spiral,” the report said, adding, “but the purpose of this work was not only to enroll new believers, but to consolidate and deepen them immediately.

“Thus, the teaching efforts were carefully limited to a four-square-block area, and this made it possible for the three teams of two teachers to visit the community two or three times each day, repeating the initial message in depth.”

The essence of their teaching technique was: “We are Bahá’ís; we believe in one God. Bahá’u’lláh is the new Messenger from God. He taught the principles of unity and justice.”

The teachers gave the listeners short histories of the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, explained the meaning of the Covenant, and spoke about the power and necessity of prayer, the equality of men and women, the role of the mother as the first educator of children, and the need to train children in both spiritual and intellectual matters.

Presently, weekly dawn prayers are held at four homes in San Antonio, a Women’s Committee is becoming increasingly active, and a new Youth Committee has been formed to work with the Youth Committee in nearby Iquitos.

“In every way, we have tried to unite the activities between San Antonio and Iquitos,” the team report said.

As another result of the teaching in San Antonio, Bahá’í activity in Iquitos itself has increased, as have teaching efforts in other cities in the region.

New Local Assemblies were established in Santa Clara and Santo Thomas, and the activities of the Rumo Cocha community were strengthened.

The “Ensenanza en Masa” team plans to “move on to other areas and new goals,” the report concluded.

Children attending Bahá’í classes in Iquitos, Peru, learn songs and hear stories about the Faith.
Greece

Airline promotes Faith

In a special television program in Greece designed to increase tourism to Israel, Olympic Airways spent seven of 15 minutes entirely on the Faith, illustrating the narrative with films of the Shriners and gardens in Haifa.

The narrator explained the history and principles of the Faith accurately and fairly, emphasizing that it is a universal religion.

The program, aired in February, was the first in which the Faith has been mentioned on Greek television.

Finland

Teaching Conference held

More than 70 Bahá'ís attended a National Teaching Conference held March 25-26 in Turku, Finland, at which Continental Counsellor Dorothy Ferrar was present.

The National Spiritual Assembly, National Teaching Committee, and National Youth Committee each reported on the present state of the Faith in Finland and outlined their plans for the teaching work during the summer.

Zambia

Youth open village

Following a recent deepening institute at Kabwe, Zambia, two youth from Lusaka were asked to arrange a deepening class and teaching project in a nearby village.

They agreed to go, but got lost on the way and went instead to an unopened village, Likimbi.

While waiting for a bus to take them to the village they had agreed to visit, the youth taught the Faith, and in three hours found seven people who wished to become Bahá'ís.

Jamaica

This display depicting nine World Religions was developed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Jamaica and exhibited for two weeks in January in the lobby of the main Kingston Public Library. The display attracted thousands of viewers.

Marianas

National Assembly elected

Every one of the delegates voted in May in the election of the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Marianas Islands, and afterward each of them resolved to focus “maximal thinking on entry by troops and financial self-sufficiency” for the Faith in the islands.

The Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatulláh Muharrir represented the Universal House of Justice at the National Convention.

Ecuador

Galapagos Assembly raised

During a teaching trip last fall, two believers from Ecuador helped establish the first two Local Spiritual Assemblies in the Galapagos Islands, a small archipelago off the western coast of South America that is a possession of Ecuador.

Nestor Bariwell, accompanied by his daughter, Tamaré, and Bahá'íhí Rashidpour conducted a two-month program of teaching, deepening and children's classes, resulting in the formation of the first Local Spiritual Assemblies of Santa Cruz and San Cristóbal. Several other localities were opened to the Faith during their stay.

“We found the inhabitants of these islands very receptive to the Faith and very kind,” they said. “This was a wonderful experience for us, for we realize that the seeds sown by the devoted Knights of Bahá’u’lláh, Hag Kevorkian and Gayle W. Wolsen, the devoted pioneer, Juan Vargas, and others who were privileged to teach in these islands, through the Spirit of Bahá’u’lláh have sprouted, grown and become beautiful fruits that it was our privilege to harvest!”

Surinam/Fr. Guiana

Bush Negroes active

The second National Convention in Surinam was attended by an “overwhelming majority of Bush Negroes,” said a cablegram to the Universal House of Justice received on May 30.

Contributions made at the Convention include land for Hazratí-Quds in five Bush Negro villages, funds for an outboard motor to be used in teaching along the Marowini River, and a cassette duplicator to “spread the words of the Blessed Beauty.”

At Rudián, 39 Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed in Surinam.

September 1978 Bahá'í News
International Year of the Child 1979
Seat of the House of Justice

Upper left: Construction of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, in a photograph taken July 6, 1978. Workmen are shown pouring concrete for the roof of the building, while forms for the base of the dome are nearly complete. Lower left: In a photo taken August 7, 1978, the forms for the dome are nearly complete. Lower right: Forms for the concrete dome of the building are first constructed inside the structure on the ground floor before they are fitted into place on the roof. Top three photos on the right: in pictures taken August 7, 1978, workmen are attaching marble facings to the northern side of the building.
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Cover

In December 1976 the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution proclaiming 1979 the International Year of the Child. The Bahá’í International Community, which represents the Faith at the UN, is cooperating closely with UNICEF (the United Nations Children’s Fund) in planning and developing appropriate activities for IYC, and is requesting that Bahá’í communities throughout the world support these events or plan their own, as IYC affords an excellent opportunity to teach the Faith and promote Bahá’í ideals as well as to help the world’s children improve their existence. This issue of Bahá’í News is focused primarily toward children, with the UN Declaration of Children’s Rights on the back cover and articles inside dealing with the rearing of Bahá’í children and a proper world perspective for Bahá’í children.
A worldwide competition of drawings by children who are under the age of 12 as of January 1, 1979, is being organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in cooperation with Air France.

The 10 first prizes in the contest, which coincides with the International Year of the Child, are eight-day trips to Paris.

The theme of the competition is "My Life in the Year 2000."

The first stage in the competition is the launching this summer of national competitions. Baha'i children are asked to submit their entries to their own National Spiritual Assemblies, who will then forward the materials to the United Nations organizations.

The 10 best drawings from each country will be displayed at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris by April 30, 1979. An international jury will meet in Paris on May 15, 1979, to award the prizes.
Special Issue:

International Year of the Child 1979

This issue of Baha'i News focuses on children, in preparation for 1979, which the United Nations has proclaimed to be the Year of the Child. Articles include a special letter to children, on page 8, and an article for parents on raising children who will adhere to the Baha'i principles of the equality of men and women, on page 4.
Raising children of the Kingdom

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article on rearing Bahá'í children to recognize and accept the equal role of women in society as defined by Bahá'u'lláh was written for Bahá'í News by Linda Jones of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.)

As mankind approaches the age of its maturity, it becomes ever more necessary to redefine and re-evaluate human relationships, and to discard outmoded and meaningless concepts that belong to an earlier time.

Bahá'u'lláh, the Lord of the New Age, stresses the importance of education as an instrument for reshaping human ideals and values:

"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 the education of the child." (Bahá'í Education: A Compilation, compiled by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice, p. 4)

The purpose of this article is to explore ways in which Bahá'í parents may rear their children to recognize and accept the distinct yet equal roles of men and women as defined by Bahá'u'lláh, and to internalize that recognition and acceptance as one aspect of the oneness of mankind.

According to the Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "there is no distinction to be made between them (men and women). The only difference between them now is due to lack of education and training. If woman is given equal opportunity of education, distinction and estimate of inferiority will disappear." (Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 169-70); and further, "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." (Bahá'í World Faith, p. 241)

Our children need to hear the principles of Bahá'u'lláh enunciated by their parents and, as they grow older, to memorize and recite them. But it is in the day-to-day, moment-to-moment atmosphere of relationships in the home that the essence of such principles as the equality between men and women is absorbed. As 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: "... qualities of spirit and heart are extremely contagious." (Bahá'í Education: A Compilation, p. 20)

In a home where both parents are present, their interaction forms the basis for the child's impressions about male and female roles.

In a one-parent home where, for example, the man or woman is divorced or widowed, the child will use his internal "radar" to sense how the parent feels about himself or herself and how he or she deals with others—friends, relatives, employer, employees or co-workers.

Let us examine five specific ways in which parents interact and what message is thereby conveyed to the child:

1. How parents deal with tests and difficulties.
2. How decision-making occurs.
3. How conflicts are handled.
4. How work is distributed.
5. How individual rights and needs are handled.

Tests and Difficulties:

A child will notice whether or not his parents support one another equally in times of stress. In some families it is more acceptable for a woman openly to express sadness, self-doubt, a need for comfort. When a father is "permitted" the same freedom to seek emotional support, to experience his feelings authentically, his son will remember it when he is faced with pain.

In some cultures, men mask their emotions in the name of preserving male dignity. As a result, their families often suffer from their resultant frustration and anger, helpless to support them in times of need.

When there are tests and difficulties—loss of a job, illness, the death of a family member—children are especially tuned in to how mother and father interact. Are both free to react naturally? Do they turn toward one another and the children for support? Do they become isolated from one another and put a freeze on feelings of grief or disappointment? Do they come together in prayer?

Decision-Making:

It is not unnatural for two people of diverse character and temperament to become attracted to one another and to marry. If they can learn to use their differences to complement rather than to conflict, their relationship may grow deeper and flower over the years; "... 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." (The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 42)

Given the many shades of human character and temperament, it is altogether natural that one partner should be more dominant than the other, whether it be the man or the woman.

In many cultures there is an underlying assumption that the male should dominate. If in fact he does, the woman may become resentful and/or devious. And if he does not, he may risk her displeasure for forfeiting his "natural" role.

If, however, a Bahá’í couple applies the principles of mutual decision-making, it will not matter who is naturally the more dominant. If God is the guiding force, the marriage partners need not compete for a "station" of authority. It would serve them well to remember ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s statement that "the conditions of existence are limited to the conditions of servitude, of servitude, of servitude, and of Deity." (Some Answered Questions, p. 267)

The child who observes his or her parents discussing and deciding issues together will learn automatically that both men and women are worthy of respect for their ideas and opinions. He will learn that power is not to be vied for, or wrestled over—a "competition" between the sexes. He will learn the power of unity as a force for good.

Handling Conflict:

Just as individual differences are inevitable, conflict is a normal aspect of family life. It can become a divisive force or a unifying force for growth, depending upon whether or not the adults in the home marshal consultative skills to alleviate the problem.

Consultation is one of the Divine gifts of the Bahá’í Dispensational to the order of the world. The attitudes and skills inherent in the process of consultation, when applied to family life, offer the ultimate means of dealing with conflict.

The principles of consultation, viewed from a Bahá’í perspective, may be summed up briefly as follows:

(a) Defining issues or problems through attentive listening, and frank and loving self-expression.

(b) Establishing the facts and the spiritual principles involved.

(c) Full and frank discussion, maintaining a balance between "the individual’s undoubted right of self-expression" and a moderate, courteous manner of speaking. The "avoidance of petty and cooling remarks" during family or marital consultation is of utmost importance.

(d) Developing possible solutions, a creative process that aims at meeting the needs of both or all parties involved.

(e) Choosing a proper solution; that is, "discovering the truth.

"When meeting for consultation, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá advises, "‘each must use perfect liberty in stating his views and 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.’" (Bahá’í World Faith, p. 406)

This advice, directed toward members of the Local Spiritual Assembly, applies as well to discussions between members of a family.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá also says: "‘Antagonism and contradiction are unfortunate and always destructive to truth. . . . He who expresses an opinion should not voice it as correct and right but set it forth as a contribution to the consensus of opinion; for the light of reality becomes apparent when two opinions coincide.’" (Promulgation of Universal Peace, p 68)

The very idea that the truth of an interpersonal situation is to be discovered, arising from an open, loving, free but disciplined interchange of "views, thoughts, and feelings" is an extraordinary new concept in the sexual arena. The implications of this process are that each person, male or female, mother or father, sister or brother, is of equal value, and deserving of an equal voice in consultation.

This contravenes generations of tradition and custom in which woman has been subject to the will of her husband. She is frequently enjoined in her marriage vows to "honor and obey" him. In the Bahá’í marriage ceremony, however, it is the Will of God by which she and her husband promise to abide.

As Bahá’í couples gradually learn to appreciate these principles and to guide their interaction by them, their children will be watching and learning. They also should be participating, when appropriate, in the consultative process.

Distribution of Work:

The woman, says Bahá’u’lláh, is the first educator of the children, and so important is that role that if a choice is to be made between educating a man or a woman, the woman should be given preference.

Many women today are able successfully to rear their children while planning an on-going education and career for themselves. Others are happy to stay at home and devote full time to the children’s education. Bahá’í women have the added dimension of a large range of Bahá’í community activities that challenge the mind and spirit. For family life to be well-organized, the cooperation of family members in the "work" of the household is essential.
Some Bahá’í couples may share household tasks equally; some may find that life is better organized if mother carries out all household duties while father earns a living, or vice versa. The important thing for the children to learn is that the management of the home is based on mutual planning and cooperation rather than sexual stereotyping. The child should be encouraged by his parents to participate in service to the home as well as to the Bahá’í community.

For example, he may be asked to prepare and serve refreshments at a fireside, or to help clean the house before a Feast. Activities in which all family members share, whether in the weekly chores or preparation for community events, provide a special bond and prevent any one person, whether mother or father, from feeling overburdened.

Handling Rights and Needs:

One of the basic needs people have is the need to be appreciated. It is most important in the child’s training that he or she witness and experience appreciation. If parents have fixed assumptions about what each is “supposed” to do, based on the expected male or female “role,” they may remain unaware of the power of mutual courtesy and praise.

Time and attention should be given in family life to identifying and preserving the rights of each person. Equal rights for women must begin at the family level in the training of the child.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “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.” (Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 163)

The rights of individual family members include such things as privacy, respect for one’s belongings, the right to have one’s feelings and opinions heard, the right to a just share of responsibility for family life and family decisions.

When a woman expects these rights to be respected for herself and other family members, whether she is a married or lone parent, she is training her sons and daughters to respect the individuality of women.

In essence, the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh provide a unique and spiritually dynamic framework for the relationship of man and woman that we can only set as a goal to be approached nearer each day.
A letter to children

(This open letter to Bahá’í children of the world on the eve of the International Year of the Child was written for Bahá’í News by Debbie and Phil Christensen of Cornwall, Ontario, Canada.—Ed.)

Dear Bahá’í children:

"The newly born babe of that Day excels the wisest and most venerable men of this time..."

Does that quotation make you feel special? It should. The Báb is talking about you. He is saying that you have been selected by God and given a wonderful gift.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells you the same thing: "O beloved child! Praise be to God that thou hast entered the divine Kingdom while of tender age and that thou hast received a share of the manifold bounties of the Lord of Hosts."

Your gift is the knowledge of Bahá’u’lláh, God’s latest Teacher. It is the most important knowledge that anyone can possibly have.

God’s Teachers are like doctors. When you are sick, you visit a doctor to
find out how to get better. The doctor can also tell you what to do to stay well. And a doctor looks after lots of other people so that everyone can be healthy. If people didn’t know where to find a doctor, or if they didn’t listen to his or her advice, soon everyone would be sick and unhappy.

God’s Teachers do the same things for souls that a doctor does for your body. When we are unhappy or worried or confused we can listen to Their teachings and find the answers we need. When we follow these teachings, we grow more spiritually healthy every day. And when all mankind obeys Their laws, the world becomes full of peace and joy and love.

You know that God’s Teacher for this Age is Bahá’u’lláh. This is most important because He is the only Doctor Who can cure the world’s sicknesses—hunger, war, hatred, ignorance, and so on. But most people don’t know where to find Him. That is why we still have so many problems.

It is sad but true, that the world’s children suffer terribly because their parents have not been able to find Bahá’u’lláh. It may be hard for you to understand this, because you may live in a country where children are usually happy and safe. But in many places on this earth, things are different. Some
children don’t have enough food. (Have you ever been hungry and had nothing to eat? Can you imagine what it would be like to be hungry all the time?) Some don’t have enough clothing. (What would it be like to go without warm clothes when it is cold outside?) There are no schools for them. (What if you never learned to read or write?) There are no doctors and hospitals where they can go. (What would you do if you were very sick and no one could help you?) Because these children lack so many things, it is very hard for them to develop healthy bodies, minds, and souls.

The United Nations (UN) is an organization of the world’s countries. It represents a tentative first step toward the world government that Bahá’u’lláh told us about. The UN says that more than 350 million children are suffering because they don’t have enough food, clothing, schools, and doctors. That’s a lot of children—more than all of the people who live in the United States, Canada, and Mexico combined. The United Nations has been trying to help these children for many years. It established the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) for this very reason. Maybe you have seen birthday cards made by UNICEF, or, in some countries, gone trick-or-treating for UNICEF and sent in the money you collected to help.

Now the UN is trying something new. It has decided that 1979, next year, will be the International Year of the Child. For 12 whole months, people everywhere will be talking about how to help the world’s children. Governments will be planning what should be done to solve some of these problems. Rich nations will be looking for ways to assist their poorer neighbors.

What can you do about all of this? Well, for one thing, you might be able to help support the International Year of the Child yourself. You could tell your friends and teachers at school about it. Maybe you could suggest a class project or a school fair on this theme. How about going to visit your mayor or city council or other government officials and asking them to do something? You might write a letter to your local newspaper about it. What about helping your public library make
a display for the International Year of the Child? You could write and perform a play or puppet show about the world’s children, or organize a fundraising project for UNICEF. Perhaps you could contact the UN Association where you live and ask for their help.

But there is one thing you can do that is more important than any of these ideas. You can teach people about Bahá’u’lláh. None of the world’s ills can be completely cured until everyone turns to Bahá’u’lláh for help and guidance. Since you are one of the few who know about Him, you can share this good news with others. You can tell your friends and your classmates, and you can help the other Bahá’ís in your area with their teaching work.

In fact, you can even use the International Year of the Child as a way of telling others about Bahá’u’lláh and the Bahá’í Faith. If you try some of the projects we have suggested, make sure the people you meet know why you are doing something—because you are a Bahá’í and you want to serve all mankind. You can talk about these ideas with your parents. Maybe they can help. You might even make some suggestions at a Feast and see if your whole community wants to make a teaching project out of the International Year of the Child.

When God gives you a gift, He expects you to use it well. He has given each of us different special gifts—good health, enough food to eat, intelligence, the ability to help other people, and so on. But most important, He has given you the Greatest Gift, Bahá’u’lláh.

You are special. And you have a very special job—to share the gift of Bahá’u’lláh and His Teachings with everyone you can. Good luck!

Warmest Bahá’í love,
Debbie and Phil Christensen
Argentina

Participants in the Bahá’í Summer School held February 17-19 at San Martín de los Andes, Argentina. Among those present were several traveling teachers from Chile.

Benin

Masses ready for Faith

Seven of 20 Bahá’í communities in Benin’s Zou Province were visited June 24-25 by Auxiliary Board members Frederic Hodonou and Samuel Zodeougan, and assistant to the Auxiliary Board Calixte Aissi. The visits led Mr. Hodonou to observe that “the masses are ready to accept the Faith.”

At Abomey, the oldest of the Bahá’í communities, the teachers were greeted by more than 100 people who listened eagerly while Mr. Hodonou explained the principles of the Faith.

A visit to the newest Bahá’í community, Houegbo, where a Local Assembly was elected at Rîvân after the declarations of 25 people, began with the beating of “tam tams” in a community welcome, and the applause of about 200 people as the teachers arrived.

After Mr. Hodonou’s talk to the villagers, the mayor said he could see that Bahá’ís are happy people and that Bahá’u’lláh’s Teachings do bring unity.

The mayor added that he had seen other Bahá’í villages and believes the Faith is good for the villages. He asked for a prayer book and Bahá’í literature.

Other villages visited by the three were Bohicon, Zogbodomey, Yokon, Ataougan, and Aglimey.

—Kiser Barnes

Belgium

Teaching Conference held

A National Teaching Conference held January 28-29 at Charleroi climaxed a year of steadily increased teaching activity and enthusiasm in the Bahá’í community of Belgium.

Adib Taherzadeh, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors, spoke on “The Hour of Challenge,” comparing God’s love for mankind to an electrical generator that produces a current (love), humanity to the appliance that is dependent upon that current to function, and prayer to the cord through which the power is received.

Top left, an attractive Bahá’í exhibit is displayed at a shopping mall in Belgium.

Lower left, some of the friends who attended the National Teaching Conference in January at Charleroi, Belgium.

Below, Continental Counsellor Adib Taherzadeh with Bernadette Ambergen at the National Teaching Conference in January at Charleroi, Belgium.

The teaching conference came at the end of a remarkable period of growth in Belgium during which:

- A children’s Summer School was held for the first time and was attended by 21 children. New children’s classes were formed.
- The number of Local Assemblies was increased from nine to 13, with a good possibility of forming four more at Rîvân 135.
- New opportunities were found for proclamation by radio, and the number of telephone inquiries received at the Publishing Centre grew from an occasional call to a steady stream.
- Large panel exhibits were displayed at shopping centers and grocery stores. Books were being distributed in all local and university libraries.
- Intense proclamation activities in goal cities such as Arlon and Gerpinnes saw the immediate attraction to the Faith of seekers who, hearing of it for the first time, accepted the Message of Bahá’u’lláh.

Teaching teams have given weeks or months of their time and energy in helping to open goal towns and assisting Local Assemblies in consolidation. In Mons, recent efforts to present the Faith in the context of a university conference were successful.
Caroline Islands

National Convention

The first National Convention of the Caroline Islands was held May 19-21 on Truk. It was conducted in Trukese and English.

With 20 delegates voting, those elected to the National Spiritual Assembly were Dr. David Earl, Enjoy Eram, Seraphin James, Kintoki Joseph, Johnny Makaya, Kay Maloney, Derek Patton, Taum Paul and Stem Salle.

A special meeting was held the evening of May 20 following the arrival of the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláh Muhájjir.

At the beginning of the Convention, the 25th anniversary of the opening of the islands to the Faith by Virginia Breaks, a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh, was observed. Miss Breaks is now a resident of Ponape in the Caroline Islands.

Minorities join Faith

Every one of the 18 separate peoples, tribes, minority groups and ethnic groups in the North West Pacific Ocean is now represented in the Faith, the National Spiritual Assembly of the North West Pacific Ocean reported in May.

Members of the Satawalese and Woleaian peoples, the last two to be represented, were enrolled during a recent teaching trip by Martin Retak from Yap.

Mr. Retak is a cook on the M.V. James F. Cook that sails as a field trip ship among the islands of the Western Carolines.

On an earlier trip Mr. Retak taught members of the Sonsorolese and Tobian peoples in Palau District, some of whom were enrolled. Their enrollments were the first among these peoples.

Switzerland

Teaching among Gypsies

A delegation of Bahá’í observers made more than 60 valuable contacts with representatives of the Gypsy people when they attended the second annual Romano Kongreso held April 8-11 in Geneva, Switzerland.

About 200 representatives from Gypsy communities all over the world attended the meeting, which was strictly non-political in nature and focused on matters of language, culture and education.

The Bahá’ís contacted representatives from Austria, Belgium, the Crimea, Denmark, France, Germany, Finland, Hungary, India, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the U.S., and Yugoslavia.

Teaching the Gypsy peoples is one of the specific goals of the Five Year Plan. “It really was exciting when the delegates from India knew of the Bahá’í communities in their towns,” said one of the Bahá’í observers.

Pioneers honored

Seventeen years of dedicated service in Switzerland are among the fond memories of pioneers Janet and Edvard Lindstrom who have decided to return to the United States.

Each had served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland, and Janet Lindstrom was official representative of the Bahá’í International Community to the United Nations in Geneva from 1971 to 1975.

The Lindstroms helped to form the first Spiritual Assembly of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, in 1961. They’ll make their new home in Bedford, New Hampshire.
5 Covilhãns declare

The Bahá'í community in Covilhã, Portugal, is stronger by five new believers as a result of a successful teaching effort supported by Bahá'ís from five countries.

In April, a small display was mounted in front of the city hall, and the public was invited to attend a music, slide and talk presentation about the Faith at the town's movie theatre.

During two weeks of teaching more than 200 people were contacted personally, and around 100 of them attended the meeting at the theatre.

The public talks were given by Auxiliary Board member Ana Costa and her assistant, Amadou Rocha.

—Leo Caraco

35 attend meeting

Thirty-five Bahá'ís and seekers attended a public meeting May 22 in the goal city of Oeiras, Portugal, following a determined teaching effort coordinated by the Regional Teaching Committee for the Center of Portugal.

Among those at the meeting, held in the sports club of Oeiras, were Auxiliary Board members Ana Costa and Fedross Imani. The main speaker was Lisete Strack, a pioneer to Portugal from Brazil. Entertainment was provided by a group of Bahá'ís from Angola who performed songs about the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh that they had written themselves.

A film was shown, and the audience asked many interesting questions about the Faith.

The director of the sports club, who was at the meeting, invited the Bahá'ís to return whenever they wished. As a result of the meeting, the club director and others are studying the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

—Jack Harmsen

Top left, five persons in Covilha, Portugal, embraced the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh in April following a two-week teaching campaign by Bahá'ís from five countries. More than 100 attended a public meeting at which talks were given by Auxiliary Board member Ana Costa (second from right) and her assistant, Amadou Rocha (kneeling).

Middle left, Bahá'ís and seekers who attended a public meeting May 22 in the goal town of Oeiras, Portugal. Among the 35 persons present were Auxiliary Board members Ana Costa and Fedross Imani.

Lower left, thirty-five Bahá'ís and seekers were present May 22 at a public meeting in the goal town of Oeiras, Portugal. Shown addressing the meeting is Lisete Strack, a pioneer to Portugal from Brazil. Also attending the meeting were Auxiliary Board members Ana Costa and Fedross Imani.

Above, some of the friends who attended the 17th Bahá'í National Convention of Portugal held May 27-28 at Lisbon.

National Convention

Bahá'ís in Portugal gathered May 27-28 at Lisbon for the 17th National Convention in the presence of Continental Counsellor Louis Henuzet.

Including the delegates, 100 adults and youth attended the Convention along with 25 children.

Many of the delegates who were there to elect the National Spiritual Assembly of Portugal and to take part in consultation represented Local Spiritual Assemblies that were formed during the year.

Counsellor Henuzet spoke about the importance of the spirit of love and unity at the heart of every Bahá'í activity.

Consultation was especially fruitful, focusing primarily on the education of children and ways of winning the remaining teaching goals of the Five Year Plan. Concerning the latter, delegates adopted a national goal of winning the teaching goals by October 20, the anniversary of the Birth of the Báb.

—Jack Harmsen
El Salvador

4 declare at conference

Four people declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh during a proclamation held March 23-26 in connection with a National Youth Conference in El Salvador in a rural area near Cojutepeque.

The conference itself was attended by about 50 youth and a few older Bahá'ís from 16 communities. They attended sessions on the lives of the Central Figures of the Faith, on living a spiritual life, on life after death, courtship and marriage, Bahá'í Administration, teaching methods, and the role of youth in the Five Year Plan.

Deepening conferences

Each month, a small group of Bahá'ís from various parts of El Salvador meets for a deepening conference at the endowment property known as El Nuevo Jardin (The New Garden).

Liberia

Television proclamations

The Spiritual Assembly of Monrovia, Liberia, recently sponsored a 15-minute television program on comparative religions.

The Bahá'ís in Monrovia also are given five minutes of free time on TV each Tuesday night to say prayers and read from the Writings on the program Epilogue that ends the broadcast day.

On February 28, 6-year-old Suzanne Mahabat and her 5-year-old sister, Nazaneen, were chosen by the Bahá'ís to appear on Epilogue.

Since this was the first time that children had appeared on the program, the TV crew was reluctant to allow them to do so, as they were uncertain about how the children would perform.

After much persuasion the crew relented, and Suzanne and Nazaneen each chanted, by heart, two prayers and two Hidden Words with such clarity and confidence that the staff came out of the recording booth especially to see them.

The TV staffers were so impressed that they congratulated the children and invited them to appear again on the program. Many viewers expressed appreciation to the Bahá'ís for spiritually training their children.

Mexico

Mayan teaching plan

A plan to increase the teaching and consolidation work among the Mayan people of Mexico has been launched by the National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico in collaboration with the Continental Board of Counsellors for Central America.

Bahá'ís will be trained at institutes to work near their home communities in the states of Yucatán, Campeche and Quintana Roo—where there is the largest concentration of Mayan Indians in Central America.

Already, two Mayans are teaching full-time and two others part-time in the area.

During a visit March 6-15 by Dr. Hidáyatullah Ahmadíyyih of the Board of Counsellors for Central America, 15 villages were opened to the Faith, with four of them reaching Assembly status.

Three full days are spent studying the history, principles and spirit of the Faith in classes conducted by Continental Counsellor Artemus Lamb, members of the National Spiritual Assembly and others.

Those attending are selected by their Local Spiritual Assemblies or Bahá'í Groups.

Cyprus

National Convention

In a cablegram received May 22 in Haifa, the first National Spiritual Assembly of Cyprus described its National Convention:

"Friends gathered first National Convention Cyprus honored presence Hand Cause Gaichery, Mrs. Gaichery, Counsellor Blumenthal, Board member Bogie, representative National Assembly United Kingdom. Rejoice election truly representative Assembly heralding dawn New Age this divided island now linked World Centre; divine guidance assured. Praise God it is achieved!"

Liberia. The children demonstrated such poise and confidence that they were invited to appear again on the program.
Brazil

Fund seminars held

Two National Seminars on the significance and importance of universal participation in the Bahá'í Fund were attended by more than 60 Bahá'ís from 28 communities in Brazil.

The first was held January 27-29 in São Paulo, and the second February 4-5 in Salvador.

Most of those attending were treasurers and other members of Local Spiritual Assemblies. Others were members of various national committees, assistants to the National Treasurer, and members of the Auxiliary Board.

120-year-old believer

A new member of the Bahá'í community in Brazil is 120-year-old Bernadina de Piedade of Cipriano, Minas Gerais State, whose tearful response on first hearing the Teachings was, "How much I have suffered to finally hear of Bahá'u'lláh!"

India

8,800 Assemblies

More than 8,800 Local Spiritual Assemblies were reported as of Ridván in India, including six in the district of Andamans and 20 in the district of Bhutan. All 312 villages in the Dang tribal district now have Local Assemblies.

Dominican Rep.

Pioneers in Baharona

The town of Baharona, in the Dominican Republic, was a Bahá'í community with an all-too-familiar history.

Some years back, a flurry of teaching brought a large number of new believers into the Faith. Soon, a breakdown in consolidation efforts, combined with a failure to maintain the teaching momentum, caused a decline in Bahá'í activity, and the new believers did not develop the "distinctive characteristics of Bahá'í life."

In the summer of 1977, a pioneer couple moved to Baharona, and their efforts have brought abundant fruits. The Local Spiritual Assembly of Baharona is now active and self-sufficient. Attendance at weekly firesides and deepenings regularly exceeds 20 people. A corps of a dozen or so Bahá'ís makes regular teaching and consolidation trips to Baharona and surrounding areas.

Radio has been an effective tool in rebuilding the community. In trying to reach long-lost believers whose names appeared on membership lists with old, useless addresses, the Bahá'ís made radio appeals, and not only turned up a number of the "missing" Bahá'ís, but also proclaimed the Faith to the entire town.

Currently, a radio series developed by CIRBAL, the international committee for the use of radio in Latin America, is being used in Baharona. The series consists of 42 15-minute programs.

Some 60 believers attended the 18th Bahá'í National Convention of the Dominican Republic held May 19-21 in Puerta Plata.

Alaska

Bahá'í receives award

Raymond L. Hudson, a school teacher in Unalaska and a member of the Auxiliary Board, has been given the Willard Bowman Award for Human Rights, which is presented by the Alaska Education Association to an educator who demonstrates leadership and creativity in advancing civil and human rights.

Mr. Hudson, also a poet and author, was honored for his efforts to preserve the culture and crafts of the Aleut peoples of Alaska. "You know, it is very easy for a Bahá'í to win a human rights award," was his comment on receiving the honor.

Only one of her seven children is still living, and she has lost count of the number of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

When the believer asked if he might have the bulletin board notice, the principal said he would prefer to leave it there, so that when students asked why the meeting had been canceled, the principal himself could tell them about the Faith!
Samoa

National Convention

Samoa held its ninth National Convention May 26-28 in Lelata with more than 100 believers, including three Auxiliary Board members, in attendance.

The 19 delegates present, and 11 others who cast absentee ballots, elected the following people to the National Spiritual Assembly: Sam Ale Ale, Moli Chang, Reuben Busby, Lilian Ala'i, Fuiono Aniseto, Lina Kava, Khosrow Mogheli­pour, Fili Pe'epe'e and Leala Tasi.

It was reported at the Convention that 122 of the 200 goal localities have been opened, and 34 of the 50 goal Local As­semblies formed.

Fiji Islands

National Convention

A cablegram from the Fiji Islands, received May 30 in Haifa, read in part: "Exciting Convention, wonderful spirit love, unity, joy. Joyfully report 36 As­semblies elected . . . . Pledge continue ex­ansion, consolidation beloved Cause year ahead. . . .".

New Books

Bahá’í Prayers and Tablets for the Young, by Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá; 30 pages; hard cover.

This illustrated selection of Bahá’í prayers and Tablets for children and youth was prepared by the Universal House of Justice. The book, which contains many previously untranslated passages, includes 28 prayers revealed by Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, together with 10 prayers of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for children and youth.

From Strength to Strength: The First Half Century of the Formative Age of the Bahá’í Era, by Eunice Braun; 64 pages; soft cover.

This book is a moving account of the extraordinary expansion of the Bahá’í Faith throughout the world from the time of the Master’s passing in 1921 to the end of the Nine Year Plan in 1973. The text was written at the request of the Universal House of Justice and will be included in a forthcoming edition of The Bahá’í World.

These books may be ordered from the Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 415 Linden Avenue, Willmette, Illinois 60091, U.S.A.

Cameroon

The new District Ḥazīratu’l-Quds at Mamfe, Cameroon, is the third in that country and completes a goal of the Five Year Plan. Purchase was com­pleted in February.

Costa Rica

80 Assemblies formed

The Bahá’ís of Costa Rica have attained their Five Year Plan goals of raising 80 Local Spiritual Assemblies and opening 200 localities.

Naw-Rúz proclamation

The Naw-Rúz celebration sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of Costa Rica was attended by about 150 Bahá’ís and their guests, and was covered by a local television station.

The celebration was held in an auditorium provided for the Bahá’ís by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports.

The program included talks by Sharokh Zargarpour, a pioneer to Costa Rica, and National Spiritual Assembly member Esquilo Monge; Bahá’í songs with guitar accompaniment, and violin pieces. Refreshments were served afterward.

The following week, the TV station presented a five-minute program that included quotes from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, a brief explanation of the significance of Naw-Rúz, shots of the audience, and a portion of Mr. Zargarpour’s talk.

About 150 Bahá’ís and their friends attended a Naw-Rúz celebration that was sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of Costa Rica and covered by a local television station.
United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child

THE RIGHT

to affection, love, and understanding.
to adequate nutrition and medical care.
to free education.
to full opportunity for play and recreation.
to a name and nationality.
to special care, if handicapped.
to be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster.
to learn to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities.
to be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood.
to enjoy these rights, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national or social origin.
Bahá'í News

Panama
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Cover

High on a mountain overlooking the blue Pacific Ocean stands the Mother Temple of Latin America, its brilliant white dome a beacon symbolizing the unity of east and west, and its presence a silent tribute to the enormous contribution to the growth and development of the Faith in this hemisphere made by the Indians of the Americas. A report on the progress of the Cause of God among the Indians of Panama begins on Page 8.
‘We joyfully hail the formation of seven more National Spiritual Assemblies, those of Burundi, Mauritania, the Bahamas, Oman, Qatar, the Mariana Islands and Cyprus...’

The Universal House of Justice
Riḍván 1978
The historic first National Convention of the Bahá'ís of the Bahamas was held May 19-21, 1978, in Nassau, the capital of the Bahamas. The Convention site was the Pilot House Hotel on New Providence Island.

preceding the event, whose purpose was to elect the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Bahamas, a group of dedicated Bahá'ís that included the Bahá'í Teaching Committee of the Bahamas and other willing friends worked long and hard to prepare the setting for the Convention. They redecorated the lovely National Bahá'í Center and attended to the many details and arrangements necessary to ensure a smoothly-functioning National Convention.

Among those present at the Convention were the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears, representing the Universal House of Justice; Lloyd Gardner, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for North America; Glenford E. Mitchell, representing the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, and Dr. William Tucker, Auxiliary Board member for the Bahamas.

also present were many pioneers and teachers who had served in the Bahamas and participated in the growth and development of the Faith there. Among the guests was Gerald Curwin, who was among the first to open the area to the Faith in 1953. Arnold Wells and Mrs. Ela Williams, the two oldest native-born Bahá'ís in the Bahamas, also were present.

The nine delegates elected to carry out the business of the Convention were Cyril Archer of Eleuthera; Mrs. Kathleen Pratt of Abaco; Mrs. Patricia Newton of Freeport; Charles Thompson of Lewis Yard; Poul Jensen of Andros; Henry Wigfall, Mrs. Beryl McSweeney and Brian Smith of Nassau, and Glenn Lissner of West New Providence.

The Convention was conducted in a highly spiritual atmosphere, due in no small part to the beautiful periods of devotional prayers and music that opened each session. The readings were offered with unusual eloquence, and the music brought a gentle flow of lovely harmony to inspire the hearts.

Mr. Mitchell, who had only recently returned from the fourth Bahá'í International Convention in Haifa, gave a stirring welcome to Convention participants at the first session on Friday evening, May 19.

He then related highlights of the International Convention and presented a series of slides showing the beauty of the gardens and the progress of construction at the World Centre of the Faith. The representative of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly gave the friends a sense of perspective about the worldwide growth of the Faith, and caused them to reflect and ponder the significance of the Bahamas becoming one of the newest pillars of the Universal House of Justice.

The evening ended in an atmosphere of great happiness and joyous fellowship, as the friends retired to a garden with palm trees, a pool of sparkling blue water, lovely lights, soft and lively music, and a delicious feast of traditional Bahamian foods.

On the second day of the Convention, Mr. Mitchell explained Convention procedures and purposes: (1) to offer a forum for consultation and recommendations to the new National Spiritual Assembly for teaching and advancing the Faith; and (2) to elect the National Spiritual Assembly. Following prayers and meditation, the delegates elected permanent officers for the Convention: Cyril Archer, chairman, and Patricia Newton, secretary.

With its officers elected, the Convention then called on Mr. Sears to present the message from the Universal House of Justice.
In its message, the Universal House of Justice emphasized the significance of raising up a new National Spiritual Assembly, and the responsibilities that honor entails.

The message reviewed and warmly praised recent achievements in the Bahamas including the acquisition of a Temple site, the establishment of a national headquarters and national endowment, and the establishment of seven Local Spiritual Assemblies on the more populous islands. The message then offered further guidance and direction for winning the goals set for the remainder of the Five Year Plan.

After reading the message, Mr. Sears reminded the Convention that the Bahamas are mentioned prominently in Tablets of the Divine Plan, the charter for the spiritual conquest of the planet, and that raising up a new pillar of the Universal House of Justice in the islands is an historic undertaking of greater significance than we are able to understand at this time.

He urged the friends to understand that it is through the Universal House of Justice that God’s hidden powers will be manifested and the unity of mankind realized. He reminded them of the transcendent power of this Revelation: “The Báb,” he said, “wrote for six years. Following Him, Bahá’u’lláh, the Supreme Law-Giver, gave us 46 years of the revelation of new Truths for this Age. Afterward, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Master, gave us 29 years of written interpretation of His Father’s Writings, and Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian, gave us another 36 years of further writing and explanation.

“Thus,” said Mr. Sears, “the Universal House of Justice can draw upon 117 years of Divine guidance in making its decisions.” Realizing this, he said, helps us to understand the great importance of erecting a pillar of the House of Justice, and the fact that all the institutions of the Faith are under the guidance and protection of Divine Providence.

Following Mr. Sears’ address, the Convention turned to prayers and consultation. Counsellor Gardner urged the incoming National Spiritual Assembly to consider relating its interest in training children and youth to the United Nations programs for the International Year of the Child in 1979.

The afternoon session that day began with an address by Mr. Gardner, who explained how the Boards of Counsellors aid the Hands of the Cause and ensure the continuation of that institution’s functions into the future.

He urged the friends to love, respect and pray for the new National Spiritual Assembly, and to serve it loyally, understanding that it is through such service and devotion that individual Bahá’ís place themselves in the mainstream of the energies released by this Divinely-ordained Bahá’í institution.

Following Mr. Gardner’s talk, Auxiliary Board member Dr. Tucker presented an outline of the history and development of the Faith in the Bahamas. The report generated much interest that a recommendation was passed that the incoming National Spiritual Assembly maintain an accurate and detailed history of the Faith in the islands.

At 4 p.m. the delegates adjourned to the National Bahá’í Center on Shirley Street for prayers and the election of the National Spiritual Assembly. Other participants went by bus to view the site, on New Providence Island, where a future Mashriqu’l-Adhkar will be built, and to pray for guidance for the delegates.

Following the Convention banquet, the friends reassembled for the evening session. At 9 p.m. the names of the members of the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the Bahamas were announced: Michael Horton, Cyril Archer, Beryl McSweeney, Henry Wigfall, Gadville Newton, Brian Smith, Patricia Newton, Poul Jensen, Rosemary Bailey.

The National Assembly received an enthusiastic standing ovation from the Convention. The feeling was one of great joy, happiness and support. The National Assembly was then presented with a number of gifts for the institution and the National Center.

The final day of the Convention, May 21, will long be remembered by its participants as one of thought-provoking consultation, deep inspiration and great emotion.

The morning session began with an announcement of the officers elected by the new National Spiritual Assembly: Michael Horton, chairman; Cyril Archer, vice chairman; Henry Wigfall, treasurer; Mrs. Patricia Newton, secretary; Mrs. Rosemary Bailey, assistant secretary.

Mr. Mitchell then explained the role of future National Conventions, pointing out the opportunity they would afford for assessing the year’s work, and for entertaining proposals for the coming year. He stressed the fact that a National Convention only offers advice on matters of policy, and does not continue to act beyond the Convention period.

Next, attention was turned to the establishment of the National Bahá’í Fund, which was the first priority of the new National Spiritual Assembly. A Fund box was placed before the Convention, and Mr. Mitchell made the first contribution on behalf of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly. Thereafter, in a spirit of loving and generous giving, the believers came forward with gifts, contributions and pledges for the new National Fund.

The Convention next drafted a message to the Universal House of Justice that was approved by the delegates and sent.

Mr. Mitchell then presented each participant at the Convention with a gift from the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly, and a standing ovation greeted the recognition of the efforts of the Bahamas Teaching Committee in preparing for the Convention.

The final session ended with an address by Mr. Sears. His words were so eloquent and filled with love that the entire assemblage wept, their hearts lifted to new heights of dedication.

Mr. Sears began by presenting a letter from the Universal House of Justice that enclosed a $1,000 check for the National Fund. He next gave copies of the compilation Victory Promises to each Local Spiritual Assembly in the Bahamas, and to the two oldest Bahá’ís in the islands, Mr. Wells and Mrs. Williams.

Framed pictures of the Master were presented to each member of the new National Spiritual Assembly, and another that will grace the Assembly’s council chamber at the National Center.

Mr. Sears then recalled the many promises of assistance and ultimate victory set forth in the Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and in the writings of the Guardian. He reminded the friends that they can always rely upon help and confirmation when they persevere in the path of God.

In closing, he related two marvelous stories illustrating the power of faith and deeds. One concerned the first African martyr, whose devotion sustained him through persecution and cruel death; the other was that of a simple Bahá’í villager who resolved to help win his Assembly’s goals. He faced many obstacles, disappointments, and the skepticism of his fellow Bahá’ís, but changed every disappointment into a victory. New believers were confirmed and every goal of the Assembly was achieved.

Tears were flowing freely as Mr. Sears related these heart-stirring stories of sacrifice. Sharing a spirit of love, devotion, and inspiration, the Convention came to a close with prayers, and the friends dispersed to transform their feelings into acts of service to the Cause.
Cyprus...

The first National Convention of the Baha'is of Cyprus was held May 21-22. Seated (holding the Greatest Name) is the Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery, who represented the Universal House of Justice at the Convention. Mrs. Giachery is seated to his right, and Eric Blumenthal of the Continental Board of Counselors for Europe is at Dr. Giachery's left. Standing to the right of the pillar is John Long, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom, the sponsoring Assembly.
Shown here are some of the friends who attended the first National Convention to elect the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the Mariana Islands. The Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Rahmatu’l-‘lāh Muhájjír, seated at the far left, represented the Universal House of Justice at the historic election. The Marianas Assembly is one of three formed from the National Spiritual Assemblies of the North West Pacific Ocean. The others include the National Spiritual Assembly of the Carolines, which was formed this year and is the successor to the North West Pacific Assembly, and the National Spiritual Assembly of the Marshall Islands, which was formed for the first time in 1977.

The historic formation of the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the Mariana Islands took place May 26-28 at the National Convention in the ITC Building, Agana, Guam.

Representing the Universal House of Justice was the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláh Muhájjír.

Others attending included Continental Counsellor Richard Benson; Auxiliary Board members Kazuko Bray, Virginia Breaks and Masaki Ushibata; and Hazel Mori and Rufo Laroya, who represented the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the Philippine Islands.

The election of this new pillar of the Universal House of Justice came almost 25 years after Cynthia Olson, a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh, first set foot in the Mariana Islands in 1953.

 Appropriately, she was present as a delegate, participating in the coming-of-age of the community she has served so steadfastly for so many years.

Jack Spock, chairman of the “parent” National Spiritual As-
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the North West Pacific Ocean, officially opened the Convention. He introduced the Hand of the Cause Dr. Muhajir who read the message to the Convention from the Universal House of Justice.

Elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Mariana Islands were Jack Spock, Rudy Jones, Tony Gomez, Wes Daniels, Sisan Suda, Andrew Ken, Cynthia Olson, Anna Smithwick and Herb Johnson.

An emotional moment came when the newly-elected National Spiritual Assembly announced that the Mariana Islands would not need financial assistance from the Universal House of Justice and would return its gift of $500.

To further strengthen this resolve, the delegate from Yona, Herb Johnson, presented a check for $815 to the National Fund from the Yona community.

A Convention treasurer was appointed and contributions to the Fund poured in until the end of the Convention. The total was $4,350, a substantial base from which the new institution can grow.

Saturday evening, a banquet was held at the Guam Reef Hotel for the governors of Guam and the Northern Marianas, Baha'is and friends.

The Sunday morning session was devoted to consultation on teaching and expansion. Inspired by the plans outlined by the National Teaching Committee, the friends made many pledges to travel and teach during the coming months.

Teaching was emphasized throughout the Convention. The Hand of the Cause Dr. Muhajir called for the friends to step forward and spread the Message of Baha'u'llah.

At its close, those in attendance voted to meet the following morning for prayers and teaching in the communities of Talafofo and Barrigada.

Twenty-six believers including Counsellor Benson, the three Auxiliary Board members and the newly-elected National Spiritual Assembly members went to the villages to hand out 1,000 invitations to watch the Baha'i television series that began June 4 on KUAM-TV, and while there to deliver when possible the healing Message of Baha'u'llah.

After lunch, each group reported the results of the morning's efforts. Great enthusiasm for the teaching was felt, and a new commitment was made to make this the year for "entry by troops" in the Mariana Islands.
In 1961 the vast majority of the indigenous peoples of Panama still remained relatively untouched by the outside world. While there had been some Christian missionary work among them, most had been left largely to themselves, and their lifestyle was almost a mirror image of their 17th-century forbears.

Since then, however, change has come rapidly. Ancient patterns of living are breaking down, and traditional values are being lost in a struggle to bridge the gap between yesterday and today.

The establishment of modern schools and the extension of medical supervision into these remote areas have had an enormous impact on the people there. Longevity has increased, while mortality has decreased, giving rise to an over-all increase in population.

As a result, land that formerly was adequate to sustain life is now insufficient. Great shifts are taking place in the economy as agriculture becomes more diversified and people move to other areas to earn a living.

The glamor of the larger cities is beckoning Panamanian youth. Large numbers of them have abandoned their native homes to seek their fortunes in the populous centers of trade and commerce where they usually are condemned to live in squalor and poverty.

Meanwhile, the outlying areas are more and more becoming communities of the unemployable old and unproductive young. Daily it becomes more difficult to harmonize old values with such a rapidly-changing world while retaining the roots of tribal uniqueness and individual identity.

The purity of heart of the native Panamanians is being destroyed by the corruption of a materialistic civilization. It is against these growing forces of darkness that the forces of Light must battle, and time is at a premium. All, however, is not darkness.

The growing Bahá’í community among the Indians is becoming steadily more unified and is contributing an ever-increasing share to the growth of Bahá’u’lláh’s “slowly evolving World Order.” As this Order grows in Panama, the influence of the Indian believer is being felt more heavily than ever, for he has become an integral part of the process.

The Promise

In 1916 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá made a promise. He said: “You must give great importance to teaching the Indians, that is, the aborigines of America. For these souls are like the ancient inhabitants of Peninsular Arabia, who previous to the Manifestation
of His Holiness Muhammad were treated as savages. But when the Muhammadic light shone forth in their midst, they became so illumined that they brightened the world. Likewise, should these Indians and aborigines be educated and obtain guidance, there is no doubt that through the divine teachings, they will become so enlightened as in turn to shed light to all regions. 1

Signs of Fulfillment

There are three major indigenous tribes in Panama: Cuña, Chocó and Guaymi. They comprise 5.5 per cent of the total population of the country, and approximately 32 per cent of total Bahá'í membership. Wholly indigenous Local Spiritual Assemblies make up more than 47 per cent of the total foundation of basic Bahá'í administrative units in Panama. To these communities belongs the distinction of having been the first to acquire local Hazíratu'l-Quds and local endowments. They have contributed 66 per cent and 81 per cent, respectively, of such properties now in existence in Panama.

Forty-five per cent of local communities that regularly contribute to the National Fund in Panama are made up of indigenous believers.

As Bahá'í teachers and administrators, the Indians are playing an ever-expanding role. They have been represented continuously on the National Spiritual Assembly since 1964; presently, two indigenous members serve on that august body.

The first indigenous Bahá'ís ever to represent their country at a Bahá'í international teaching conference were from Panama. The Panamanians also have attained the distinction of being the first to arise as international traveling teachers in Central America. One indigenous believer from Panama is presently serving with distinction as a pioneer to Venezuela.

On a national and regional level indigenous Panamanian believers are quite active; from among them have come one Auxiliary Board member and many assistants to the Auxiliary Board.

Within their respective areas, Local Spiritual Assemblies composed primarily of indigenous believers administer, in varying degrees, their own affairs, assuring that the annual election is held, organizing and carrying out teaching projects, providing for the observance of Holy Days and Feasts, and organizing and executing their own deepening institutes. More and more, daily life is being patterned around the Bahá'í calendar.

Native participation in recent International Conferences has
added dignity to the events and given them a special and distinctive flavor. Perhaps the most exciting participation was in the spring of 1977 at a satellite conference that followed the International Teaching Conference at Mérida, Mexico.

At this satellite conference, the indigenous friends addressed a gathering of more than 400 Bahá'ís, and in moving terms communicated the spirit of the Mérida conference. They spoke in their own languages, with other Indians translating into Spanish and Indian dialects. What a proud moment it was for them and for all Bahá'ís present!

Initiation of Indigenous Teaching

The teaching work among the Indians of Panama dates back to 1947 when Louise Caswell, a pioneer from the United States, found and taught the first Indian believer in the country, Manuel Gorgas, a Cuña Indian from Playon Chico.

Manuel served diligently until 1954 when he became ill and returned to his birthplace, hoping to recover his health so that he might arise to promote the Cause of God among his own people. But destiny willed otherwise.

Manuel Gorgas passed on to the Abhá Kingdom on November 3, 1954, without realizing his heart's desire. But he will forever have the undying honor of having been the first Indian in Panama to accept and swear allegiance to the Supreme Manifestation of God to man.

Six years were to pass before a second Indian was guided to the Message of God for this Day. His name was José Tugri, a Guaymi who was living in David, Chiriqui Province.

It was not until 1961 that the Message was carried to the Panamanian Indians in their homelands. Between July 1961 and February 1962, all three zones in Panama were opened to the Faith, and the teaching work was actively begun.

The response from the Indians was immediate and wholehearted. Consequently, teaching rose to new heights and took on new qualities. The national community in Panama was revolutionized. By Ridván 1963 the first all-indigenous Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed, and the first indigenous deepening institutes established.

Since that time many changes have taken place. From the outset, and even today, the goal of Bahá'í teachers working among the Indians has been to share with them the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, let them drink It in at their leisure, assimilate It fully, and then make It an integral part of the fabric of their lives, weaving their own distinctive patterns. While each of their communities is today united with all other Bahá'í communities around the world in the essentials of their Faith, each of them retains something of its own uniqueness, demonstrating the principle of "unity in diversity."

Three Outstanding Bahá'í Teachers

No account of the Faith in Panama would be complete without some personal glimpses into the lives of outstanding native-born Bahá'ís. Three, therefore, have been selected from among the Guaymi Indians for their exceptional achievements and contributions.

Bernabé Bejerano

Bernabé Bejerano, even before declaring his belief, began a long period of service to the Faith as a guide for a group of traveling Bahá'í teachers, a position he accepted to test their sincerity.

The first trip lasted 12 days during which the Bahá'í teachers stumbled on foot up steep and treacherous mountains while

Bernabé rode along on horseback. It was a discouraging journey. Blistering sun, heavy rains and deep mud were constant companions.

And after arriving, exhausted, at a village—that is, a gathering of thatched huts separated by distances of 15-20 minutes tucked away in the hills—the Bahá'ís would invariably find that the villagers had departed, leaving only a spokesman to say that the "intruders" were not welcome.

At night, the teachers would sleep on palm leaves spread on the damp ground under a starlit sky. At village after village, they received the same treatment. They were not welcome there.

Although Bernabé did not yet consider himself a Bahá'í at the end of the trip, he was so impressed by the teachers and what he had learned of the Faith that he made them a promise: they would not have to return to those villages unless they really wanted to.

Instead, he told them, he would return there to nurture the seeds that had been planted. "Be patient," he said to the teachers. "In time all the people we have visited will become Bahá'ís."

Bernabé was correct. He kept his promise, and the teachers later returned to find warm, friendly Bahá'í communities in these same villages.

Shortly after accepting the Faith, Bernabé Bejerano made another promise. He would, God willing, raise up during his lifetime nine Bahá'í communities. At Ridván 1977, Bernabé, now quite old, reflected on that promise, and observed that his health was failing and that he still had two communities to raise to
fulfill his pledge. He asked for prayers that he might gain the strength to make good his promise.

From the original communities whose existence stands as a testimony to Bernabe Bejerano’s faith and service, many new ones have been born, more than 20 in all. Believers from these communities have made outstanding contributions to the Faith through the years. Fidel and Carmela Bejerano are two.

Fidel and Carmela Bejerano

Fidel Bejerano, now an Auxiliary Board member, was a child of 10 when Bernabe made his first historic trip with the Bahá’í teachers. Fidel remembers the occasion. His wife, Carmela, who lived in one of the villages visited at that time, was only three years old. Soon the parents from both families had accepted the Faith, and the children were reared in the bosom of its Spirit.

With patience and fortitude, Fidel and Carmela endured and overcame many unexpected obstacles that arose when they decided they wished to marry. In the end, patience won out, and they were married in strict conformity with Bahá’í law, becoming the first among the Guaymi Indians to have a Bahá’í wedding.

They have established a warm and loving Bahá’í home with a spirit of unity, harmony, understanding and humility.

Their saintly character is a source of inspiration to all who know them. Wherever Fidel travels he is loved and admired for his devotion, his simplicity and directness, the depth of his wisdom, his unobtrusiveness and purity of heart.

His service is reinforced and enhanced by Carmela who renders an outstanding service to the Faith in the rearing of their son, and in her participation in children’s and adult activities in their home community.

Future Prospects

The Cause of God has taken enormous strides forward among the indigenous Panamanians since Manuel Gorgas became the first native-born believer in 1947. Today, atop Cerro Sonsonate, overlooking the blue Pacific Ocean, surrounded by hills resplendent with tropical verdure, the Mother Temple of Latin America stands, its dome a beacon of light to all who pass by, its very presence a silent tribute to the Indians of the Americas, especially of Panama, and to their tremendous contributions to the growth and development of the Cause of God in this hemisphere.

Their role in the Faith will be of even greater importance in the future. Thus shall the promise of the Master be kept, and another promise as well: “That place (Panama) will become very important in the future. The teachings, once established there, will unite the East and the West, the North and the South.”

Teaching in

A special two-week teaching campaign was launched June 16 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Puerto Rico after consultation with Continental Counsellor Hidayatu'llah Ahmadiyyih. It resulted in the enrollment of more than 60 new believers and doubled the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies on the island, from nine to 18.

The campaign, named for Gordon Laite, the "devoted, fervent" pioneer from the United States who had passed away on May 26, derived its inspiration from the memory of his radiant spirit, and from a cablegram from the Universal House of Justice that promised "success projects augmenting intense individual teaching will discover legion uniting souls transform verdant island rose garden Cause."

On June 17 Counsellor Ahmadiyyih, members of the National Spiritual Assembly, local believers, pioneers and visiting teachers arrived at Caguas—about an hour's drive from San Juan.

A member of the National Assembly and his family who live in Caguas vacated their home for the two-week period so that it could be used as a full-time center for the project.

Each morning, after breakfast and prayers, the teachers would consult with members of the National Assembly, Counsellor Ahmadiyyih, and Auxiliary Board member David Hunt to plan the day's activities.

One team soon returned from the mountain village of Cidra...
Puerto Rico

with two newly-enrolled Bahá'í youth to join the team for dinner. Another returned from Humacao with radiant faces and a gift of pana and platanos (breadfruit and plantains) from a whole family of new believers.

Each day the number of declarations grew larger, and the teaching teams resolved to stay out longer. Sometimes they would return after 10 o'clock at night to eat and share their experiences with the others.

As team members attempted to relocate older believers and find new ones, some would go directly to town plazas where interested people often could be found. Others would go to specific neighborhoods to which they had been led by prayer. In each case, a simple booklet was used to illustrate the Bahá'í Teachings.

On evenings and weekends the full-time teachers were joined by others who could not come on weekdays. One weekend a believer went to sing at a proclamation on Vieques, a small island off the east coast of Puerto Rico that is a goal area. When she returned she found that another team had "accidentally" taught the Faith to her own family, and her parents had embraced the Cause.

The teachers were especially happy to find two young men who had become Bahá'ís several years earlier but had hardly been seen since. One of them, Peter Carrasquillo of Laiza, had sustained his belief for four years while receiving only the island newsletter. He was surprised and delighted that the Bahá'ís happened to arrive on his 21st birthday. That same day his mother and sister embraced the Faith.

Another young man, Ramón Hernandez, who had accepted the Faith eight years ago in Massachusetts, hadn't seen other Bahá'ís for some time. His visitors had only to glance at his small, well-worn Bahá'í library to know that he had remained steadfast in his belief.

In Vieques, pioneers Greg and Dara Shaw and their young daughter had been struggling for years to find enough new believers to form a Local Spiritual Assembly.

One of the greatest confirmations during the "Laite Project" occurred when two members of the teaching team flew to Vieques and within 48 hours assisted in finding seven new believers and helped to form its local Assembly. Each of the new believers was a friend of the Shaws who had been well-taught by them, and each felt moved to become a part of the historic occasion.

Although the goals of the campaign were won within the two-week period, the teaching continued, aided by traveling teachers Don Newby from Venezuela and Beverly March from St. Lucia. The team accepted the additional goal of opening seven new localities by August 9, thus completing the island's Five Year Plan teaching goals.

—Roberta Smith
Around the World

Fiji

Faith is recognized

History was made in August at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji, when the Bahá’í Faith was given equal recognition with the Hindu, Muslim and Christian religions at a multi-religious service to mark the opening of the university’s annual “Pacific Week” of regionally-oriented events.

It was an especially significant achievement for the university’s Bahá’í Club which, although large in spirit and heart, is smaller in numbers than the Hindu, Christian and Muslim bodies on campus.

Each religion was given 15 minutes and was asked to prepare its own program. Unlike the other groups, which invited guest speakers to deliver short talks, the Bahá’í Club presented only readings from the Bahá’í Writings, read by club members of various racial backgrounds.

The simple but moving Bahá’í program began with the prayer for mankind, followed by readings on the unity of mankind, the unity of religion, unity in diversity, the oneness of the human race, and a brief selection from The Hidden Words.

The program ended with the prayer for unity.

These readings, in the form of a booklet with an attractive cover, were made available to the approximately 130 people who attended the service.

Guest of honor at the event was Professor Frank Bresnahan, deputy vice-chancellor of the university, to whom the Hand of the Cause of God Abu’l-Qásim Faizi had presented proclamation material during Mr. Faizi’s visit to Fiji last year.

Italy

Radio airs message

Reports the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy:

“At 6:35 p.m., May 26, a 15-minute radio program on the Bahá’í Faith was broadcast on national radio. Six Bahá’í friends took part in the program which presented the Message of Bahá’u’lláh, its goals and its Teachings.

“Several people from different Italian towns called the National Bahá’í Centre after listening to the program and asked for more information.

“This is a great achievement for our community, as it is very difficult to have permission to take part in national radio or TV programs. We hope that it will be possible to use radio and TV more and more, as it is a very good way to proclaim the Faith.”

The program originally was scheduled to be aired on May 9, but had to be postponed because the body of slain former Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro was found on that day, and all regular radio programs were canceled.

The decree of November 21, 1966, designating the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy as an “Ente Morale” (i.e., recognizing under law its incorporation) was signed by Aldo Moro, who was then prime minister.

—Hazel Holmlund

Cameroon Republic

Teacher aids growth

Amir-Farhang Imani, a Persian Bahá’í who is now living in France, completed in February a successful 63-day teaching trip to Ivory Coast and Cameroon in Africa.

The first eight days were spent in Ivory Coast where Mr. Imani visited the friends in Abidjan, participated in a teaching institute at Bouaké, taught in two villages and visited three others in the Daloua region to prepare for the establishment of a teaching institute in that area.

During his 55 days in Cameroon, Mr. Imani visited some 35 towns and villages. As a result, seven or eight new villages were opened to the Faith and more than 10 were strengthened through teaching, deepening and new declarations.

Ten new Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed, and the total number of new believers was around 380. In 10 colleges in six towns and two schools in two villages, about 200 students, four teachers and two headmasters accepted the Faith.

More than 1,500 Bahá’í pamphlets, 150 books, and 100 pictures of Bahá’í places were distributed to individuals, newly-formed Spiritual Assemblies or college libraries.

The Faith was presented in detail to more than 2,500 persons including officials of police and government, headmasters of colleges, teachers and students.

Left, community members who attended the first Sunday meeting held at the recently-purchased Mamfe district Hazíratu’l-Quds in the Republic of Cameroon, West Africa.

Right, the National Hazíratu’l-Quds in Cameroon was the site of the Victoria Child Education Institute January 19-23, presented for the purpose of training the friends as teachers of Bahá’í children. Eight classes have been started as a result. The teacher trainers were Katherine Hemmat (back row, left) and Ehsanollah Hemmat (back row, second from left).
Mexico

Teaching plan succeeds

To help meet its Five Year Plan goals, the National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico sponsored an eight-month teaching project from October 1977 to May 1978.

A team of 10 to 15 full-time teachers traveled throughout six states of the country, giving public meetings, holding firesides, proclaiming the Faith and using the mass media. The team taught in urban, rural, indigenous and non-indigenous areas.

The National Assembly set goals for the team to open new localities, form Local Spiritual Assemblies, and raise a Local Assembly in a state where none existed. Each of the goals was met.

The team included Mexican believers and friends from the United States and Canada. Two members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico and two Auxiliary Board members from that country were members of the team.

Encouraged by the results of the project, the National Assembly planned similar projects for July and August of this year with the goal of forming Local Spiritual Assemblies in the states of Baja California Sur, Chihuahua, Tlaxcala, and Veracruz.

—Christine Hoyt

Faith at UN meeting

The Bahá’í International Community was represented at the fourth Ministerial Session of the World Food Council, held June 5-7 and June 12-15 in Mexico City, by Carmen de Burafato, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Central America, and her assistant, Francisco Chiu Garcia.

The World Food Council is the agency of the United Nations dealing exclusively with world food problems. It consists of 36 member states (all of whom were present), represented by a minister of state or an ambassador. Other countries were invited to the conference as observers.

The gathering afforded several opportunities for presenting the Message of Bahá’u’lláh to delegates of the governments represented.

During the preparatory session June 5-7, Counsellor Burafato read to everyone present a statement by Bahá’í representa-

tives to another session of the council, in Rome in 1974, in which the Bahá’í position toward solving the problems of worldwide hunger and food distribution was outlined.

A copy of the statement later was given to each delegation.

Many valuable contacts were made, among them a distinguished ambassador who is a professor of comparative religions and was most happy to learn of the Cause.

The newspaper in Counsellor Burafato’s community printed a substantial article about Bahá’í participation at the conference.
New Zealand

Official receives Bahá'ís

Sir Keith Holyoake, the governor-general of New Zealand, and his wife received a four-person delegation representing the National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand at the Government House on March 6.

They expressed regret that the Bahá'ís could not join them at tea, as it was during the Fast, a fact that had been previously communicated to the governor-general.

The governor-general asked many questions about the Faith: its beliefs, structure, practices, Administrative Order, and membership.

The delegation—Mary Robinson, Tilly Hurst, David Warren and Hugh Carden—presented the governor-general a copy of The Bahá'í World, Volume XV. He then asked if the Bahá'ís have any scriptures, and where one could go to learn more about the Teachings.

Bangladesh

Almost 500 people attended their concert in the town’s main plaza, and they were invited by officials to inaugurate the local Fair of Peñuelas, one of the area’s largest events. Members of the group (left to right) are Roberto Rivera, Fernando Jiménez, Carlos Rivera, Claudio Rivera, Mauricio Veliz, Claudio Salom.

Chile

"Arthachana," which in the Aimara language means "proclamation," a six-member group of young Bahá'í musicians from La Cisterna, Santiago de Chile, traveled last January to La Serena, the second oldest town in Chile. They were well received and gained much publicity including three radio performances, three newspaper interviews, and two television shows.

New tribes enrolled

The following cablegram from the National Spiritual Assembly of Chile was received February 19 at the Bahá’í World Centre in Haifa, Israel:

"Overjoyed announce enrollment first nine believers Aymara race in Putre and Chuzuma near Bolivian border. Also communicate joyous fulfillment goal Alacalufe Tribe with translation three prayers their language by first Alacalufe believer."

President greets Bahá'ís

Four members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South America and three members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Chile had a half-hour audience in December 1977 with the President of Chile, Augusto Pinochet.

During the interview the President asked for and received photographs of the teaching work that is going on in Chile.

News of the interview, with accompanying photographs, was published in all of the country’s major national newspapers.
Colombia

3-day institute held

About 30 Bahá'ís from Colombia and Venezuela attended a three-day institute February 4-6 at the Bahá'í Institute in Rio Hacha, Colombia. Donald Witzel, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South America, chaired the sessions, most of which dealt with the relationship between the elect and appointed institutions of the Faith.

In one of the sessions, during consultation on the remaining five year Plan goals, a Venezuelan woman offered to donate a part of her land as an endowment that would fill one of the goals.

On the final day, several of the friends repaired the roof of the Institute and cleaned and pruned the lemon orchard and garden surrounding it.

India

Paper promotes Cause

An excellent article about the Bahá'í Faith appeared in the July 8 issue of Mathrubhoomi, a prestigious daily newspaper printed in Kerala, India. The newspaper is published in the Malayam language and has a circulation of more than 200,000.

The article, written by an editor who is sympathetic to the Cause, included a summary of the history and teachings of the Faith, and explained the significance to Bahá'ís of the Martyrdom of the Báb. A photograph of the Shrine of the Báb accompanied the article.

Additionally, press releases sent by the State Teaching Committee of Kerala resulted in numerous other articles. Many newspapers devoted prominent display positions to the stories.

Correction

In the May 1978 issue of Bahá'í News (page 13), the booklet Karma and the Fallacy of Reincarnation, by Jamshed K. Fozdar, was said to be available from the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Malaysia. The booklet actually is published by the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Malaysia, P.O. Box 95, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia.

Canada

Bahá'ís at symposium

Bahá'ís were among 48 groups invited to the Symposium of Philosophies and Religions held April 6-9 in Montreal, Quebec, at the Windsor Hotel. The Master was a guest there in 1912.

The Bahá'í community of LaSalle, Quebec, prepared, in cooperation with the National Information Committee, a kiosk for the symposium that featured quotations from the Writings, a continuous slide program, and examples of Bahá'í literature.

Many people stopped at the kiosk to ask questions about the Faith, request literature or express an interest in attending a Bahá'í meeting.

During the hour-long presentation on the Faith at the symposium, Dr. William Hatcher addressed some 200 people, setting forth the history and principles of the Faith, and emphasizing the need for "something new" to meet the needs of humanity in this new age.

Press coverage of the symposium was extensive, and included an interview between the director of the event and Dr. Shapur Javanmardi, a member of the Spiritual Assembly of LaSalle.

After seeing the Bahá'í display, a producer from the national French-language television and radio network expressed an interest in producing a half-hour TV program about the Faith.

A display of the Bahá'í Faith was prepared by the Bahá'í community of LaSalle, Quebec, Canada, for use at the Symposium on Philosophies and Religions held April 6-9 at the Windsor Hotel in Montreal. 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed at the hotel during His visit to North America in 1912. The Hand of the Cause John A. Robarts, left, is being shown the display by Jim Milne, one of its designers.

Special newspaper section

The Bahá'ís of Cornwall, Ontario, saw the result of two full years of planning and saving when, on the first day of Rívdán, a four-page insert in their local newspaper was devoted entirely to the Bahá'í Faith.

The special section, part of the Standard-Freeholder, was sent with the newspaper to its 16,201 subscribers in Cornwall and several nearby communities that are goal teaching areas of Cornwall.

"The goal of this insert is to provide the public with more details about the history and teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and the progress of the Faith, and to stimulate inquiries that will lead to active teaching and new declarations," the community reports.

The special section, printed at a cost of about $1,000, includes Bahá'u'lláh's short prayer for unity, reprinted in its entirety, as well as many pictures, and articles entitled "The Bahá'í Faith: Dawn of a New Age," "Basic Facts about the Bahá'í Faith," "The Story of Bahá'u'lláh," "Why They Became Bahá'ís" (consisting of comments from some of the community's members), "Questions and Answers," "Living the Bahá'í Life," "The Growth of the Bahá'í Faith," and "Coming Bahá'í Events."

A coupon was provided for the convenience of inquirers.

November 1978/Bahá'í News 17
‘Lights of the world’

Part 1
Seat of the Universal House of Justice

The building for the Seat of the Universal House of Justice is in a photograph taken from the roof of the Bahá’í International Archives Building on October 10, 1978. The camera is facing in a southeasterly direction to show the upper garden of the Arc on Mt Carmel. The Shrine of the Bab is immediately behind and below the camera position. The resting places of the Sister, Mother, and Brother of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá are just out of sight to the far left of the picture.
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Cover

As a part of our year-long tribute to the United Nations Year of the Child, we present this month the first article in a three-part series on children and learning, ‘Lights of the World,’ written for Bahá’í News by Deborah H. Christensen of London, Ontario, Canada. The article begins on Page 8.

Change of address should be reported directly to Office of Membership and Records, Bahá’í National Center, 112 Linden Avenue, Wilmette, IL 60091, U.S.A. Please attach mailing label. Subscription rates: one year, U.S. $8; two years, U.S. $15. Second class postage paid at Wilmette, IL 60091. Copyright ©1978, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States. World Rights Reserved. Printed in the U.S.A. Bahá’í News is published monthly for circulation among Bahá’ís only by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States, as a news organ reporting current activities of the Bahá’í world community. Manuscripts submitted should be typewritten and double spaced throughout; any footnotes should appear at the end. The contributor should keep a carbon copy. Send materials to: Bahá’í News Editorial Office, 112 Linden Avenue, Wilmette, IL 60091, U.S.A.
"We visited all the coastal towns we could," said a member of the traveling teaching team working in northeastern Honduras this past July and August. "We started at Bahia del Espiritu Santo, Justice of the Peace and his two secretaries were the first to embrace the Faith, and worked our way west along the coastline.

"We went from door to door, guided by young Bahai [usually a youth] in each town, inviting people to a meeting— in the school, the civic center, or in our own car. The Bahais, the results were astonishing. People everywhere embraced the Faith of Bahai! We went to 25 towns and had 30 new Bahais in each public meeting we held.

"There were a total of 41 new Bahais in the Bahai population on the northern coast of Honduras, in the pueblo of Cusun, 86 people accepted the Faith.

"Team members felt that their success was due to the key in their success. "In addition to Auxiliary Board member Slaven (and his guitar) which was very effective in towns, there were: Alejandro Montalvo, a 15-year-old comic artist of Honduras; Mrs. Jesusa Sarmiento, a Peruvian Bahai in Tegucigalpa; middle-aged Edelgard Wilson, a Missionary from England; 70-year-old Wanda George, a present for 15 years from the United States.

"So far, we have surpassed our goal of 100 new Bahai Local Spiritual Assemblies in Honduras. In four towns we visited, where no Bahai land were made for Bahai! In every town we visited, a real Bahai spirit was felt that the whole community managed to locate a compact audio-visual program, and deliver us to the next town as we worked. Our work was well received by the people.

"The team continued west until it reached Palmar, where we went inland by bus to Olancho, where we met the first Baha’is! He had a dream of Bahai! and there, too, a Local Spiritual Assembly formed.

"We couldn’t stop teaching. One young woman youth who had never before heard of the Faith, was so enthusiastic that what we told her. We took Bahai’s materials. Now we have another Bahai in the coastal town near San Pedro Sula Progress.

"We plan to return to the coastal villages soon for a follow-up deepening trip. There is freedom to teach the Faith in Honduras—we found absolutely no opposition. We are amazed why Honduras cannot become a Bahai country. Our teaching trip was a glorious experience, with confirmation after confirmation of the promises made to us if we arise to teach this Day of God."

—Wanda M. George
Latin American Reports

On the opposite page:

Top: two Bahá'í are from Tacaya, Peru, helping build the Vegetable Center in November 1977.

Middle left: Bahá'ís of Chimbote, in the Peruvian Amazon region, are shown building their local Vegetable Center in December 1977.

Middle right: some of the friends in Tacaya and other regions are shown building their local Vegetable Centers in November 1977.

Bottom left: Bahá'ís in Rumañcocha, Peru, are donating to the newly dedicated Vegetable Center in the Peruvian Amazon region.

Bottom right: the dedication of the Vegetable Center in Rumañcocha, Peru's Andes Hills area was held 25 September 1977. The site was donated and the building erected by the Bahá'í community following a visit by the renowned Ahdut'a Bahá'í Ra'is Bahá'í Ráisulmahráshí to that region.

At the heart of the Five Year Plan for Peru—and for some National Assemblies—is the "increase the use of radio for broadcasting in Spanish and Quechua with the objective of reaching the Faith to a larger number of listeners."

This year the National Radio Committee began fulfilling this plan. Early in 1977, four Bahá'ís chose to take a million-square-mile (800,000 square kilometer) area, the greater part of it covered by the province of Junín, where the Bahá'í community is widely scattered, says a Bahá'í in the National Radio Committee. "Traveling teachers are of great help, and the only way to reach the thousands of people in the remote towns is by radio. With this in mind, the committee decided to take the plunge in early 1977, with the support of covering at least half the country with Bahá'í programs.

We acquired some basic recording equipment and mailed it to the committee.

We contacted radio stations whose broadcasts covered the large Bahá'í populations or areas where people were going to be traveling.

The radio stations we selected had a wide broadcast range, covering parts of the country, and three short-wave stations in the south and one in central Peru.

Contracts were signed, and the Radio Committee—inspired by a visit to the first Bahá'í-owned radio station in the world, in Brazil—promised to prepare 15-minute programs to be broadcast daily by two stations, and on weekends by a third station.

This means that the Faith—God's word—would be on the air for half an hour daily, every day of the month. It was a tremendous step for the Five Year Plan.

We began to prepare programs in Spanish and Aymara, an Indian language. We contracted for someone to help four hours a day, with additional help from volunteers. The scripts would come from CIRBAL, a center for the broadcasting of Bahá'í programs in Latin America, located in El Salvador.

"During 1977, we trained 120 announcers and operators at the studio in Peru's capital. Lima, and put well over 40 hours of tapes in the language. In fact, the Radio Workshop that was well attended."

"One important reason for the success of the participation of the entire national community in the project: A Local Assembly here the efforts of Group paid for the air time, and individual Bahá'ís in the project.

"In the jungle, a group of pioneers has reached the entire Peruvian Amazon and the Bahá'ís sponsored daily programs in their own language. As valuable help, we extended radio time to reach the entire country, and our coverage to be first among millions of potential listeners.

"This year we are concentrating on preparing the scripts, aiming for coverage of 120 hours. We are attempting to coordinate the activities of the radio programs.

"We also will prepare the first regional program in Puno. Puno is in the south, and has been a key factor in enrollments in the Faith. New equipment has been acquired for the center.

'We are thinking not only of increasing our coverage in different areas, but of using our time more effectively and planning for better coverage. This year we will produce local and regional programs in Spanish, Quechua and Aymara, and radio announcements in three languages.

'The experience we have acquired to date have given us new perspectives in our radio projects. We are deepening the work in the field by radio, which is so vital for expansion of the Faith in the country."
Latin American Reports

Above, Bahá'ís in Santa Teresa, Chalatenango, an area renowned for its coffee production, have constructed a Bahá'í Center. The town is located in the interior of the department, about 12 miles from the capital.

Opposite, top left, Bahá'ís in San Nicolás de los bustos are working in the rural community to organize a Bahá'í Center. The town is located in the interior of the department, about 12 miles from the capital.

Opposite, middle left, Bahá'ís in San Miguel de los Baños are working in the rural community to organize a Bahá'í Center. The town is located in the interior of the department, about 12 miles from the capital.

Bottom right, Bahá'ís from the village of San Miguel de los Baños are working in the rural community to organize a Bahá'í Center. The town is located in the interior of the department, about 12 miles from the capital.

Below, Bahá'ís in Santa Teresa, Chalatenango, an area renowned for its coffee production, have constructed a Bahá'í Center. The town is located in the interior of the department, about 12 miles from the capital.

And so on June 24, 1978, in the sun-drenched Sierra, the Bahá'ís were able to see the fruits of their labors. The Center was dedicated, and the Bahá'ís were able to reflect on the progress that had been made.

The dedication of the Center was a significant event for the Bahá'ís of the area. It marked the end of a long process of planning, construction, and hard work. And it was a symbol of hope for the future, as the Bahá'ís looked forward to the continued growth and development of their community.
In August 1977 the Bahá'í community of Santa Tecla, El Salvador, purchased a piece of land in Cantón Las Moritas, Department of La Libertad, as an endowment to fulfill a Five Year Plan goal assigned to it by the National Spiritual Assembly of El Salvador.

Some months ago the Spiritual Assembly of Santa Tecla, a community of some 100 Bahá'ís about 12 kilometers (7½ miles) from the capital city, San Salvador, decided to fence the property. The Assembly set a date of June 17 for the fencing. Barbed wire was purchased, and a sign for the endowment was begun.

Fence posts were difficult to find, but finally some were located at a farm called "El Retiro." A day before the fencing, Eduardo Ortiz and Don Saturnino Lorenzana selected the posts, and arranged for their transportation to Cantón Las Moritas.

At 10:30 a.m. June 17, the posts arrived by ox-cart. Members of the community (men, women and children from three to 70 years old) set about making holes for the posts, working together in a spirit of love and harmony.

Thirty-eight fence posts were placed with four rows of barbed wire around the land. A sign was posted which reads "Property of the Bahá'í Community of Santa Tecla."

During the day the Bahá'í Message was given to Don Marcos, the next door neighbor to the property, and his family who also helped install some posts.

At 6 p.m. the job was completed and a prayer was said. At the Feast of Rahmat, the community decided to adopt Cantón Las Moritas as a teaching goal and help to establish a Local Spiritual Assembly there.

The community effort in fencing the endowment helped the Santa Tecla community to understand more fully the words of the Universal House of Justice: "The acquisition of local endowments is to help in the consolidation of local communities and to develop the spirit of unity and collaboration among the believers."

The Santa Tecla endowment is one of 25 endowment goals given to El Salvador in the Five Year Plan. As of July, nine local endowments had been obtained with the remaining 16 to be acquired in the final nine months of the Plan.

El Salvador also has a goal of 20 local Haziratu'l-Quds to be acquired, of which five structures have been purchased along with four pieces of land for construction of Bahá'í Centers.
"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." ('Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted in Bahá'í Education: A Compilation, p. 31)

Most of what we believe about how children learn depends on how we answer one basic question: What is a child?

We Bahá'ís are fortunate to have divinely-inspired Writings that clearly illuminate this question, thereby laying a firm foundation for our understanding of how children learn and how we can help them do it.

The above statement of 'Abdu'l-Bahá explodes much of the nonsense about children that is being peddled today.

Children are not "noble savages" who can be left alone to develop perfectly. They are not evil creatures tainted by original sin or uncontrollable subconscious drives. Nor are they like rats or pigeons without free will. They are human souls, capable of reflecting every one of God's attributes if their latent potential is brought forth.

When we mine the "gems of inestimable value" that lie within a child, that child can truly become "the light of the world." If the gems are left untouched, however, that same child can sink into darkness.

To learn means to develop a capacity. In other words, learning is the process by which the "gems" are mined and light is assured. These articles will explore, in fairly basic terms, what learning is and how children do it, and offer some ideas about how Bahá'í parents can guide learning.

At the outset we must remind ourselves that there are many dimensions to a human being: physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual. We Bahá'ís know that all these capacities must be fully developed, with particular attention to each individual's unique potential.

Learning is not just memorizing multiplication tables, for example, although that is an important part. Learning is also becoming coordinated enough to catch a ball, or developing the ability to cooperate with others, or achieving control over anger, or acquiring the spiritual habits and virtues of prayer and meditation.

Learning: Some basic principles

Although the physiology of learning remains pretty much a
mystery, we do know some things about the learning process itself. One is the fact that we can always learn more, especially given the many capacities to be developed. For example, not only can we always learn new facts, we can also acquire new social skills and improve our spiritual qualities.

Perfection is endless. Even though capabilities vary, each individual can continually progress.

Timing is an important factor in learning. There are critical periods, or "best times," for learning things. This is an integral part of the process of human development.

For example, languages are best learned between the ages of one and 10 years. Before age one, most children lack the maturity and experience to talk, and after 10 it is usually hard to learn another language, especially without an accent.

This is equally true of spiritual matters. How hard it is to unlearn old habits!

"It is extremely difficult to teach the individual and refine his character once puberty is passed. By then, as experience hath shown, even if every effort be exerted to modify some tendency of his, it all availeth nothing. He may, perhaps, improve somewhat today; but let a few days pass and he forgetteth, and turneth backward to his habitual condition and accustomed ways. Therefore it is in early childhood that a firm foundation must be laid. While the branch is green and tender it can easily be made straight." ('Abdu'l-Bahá, in Bahá'í Education: A Compilation, p. 24)

Sequence is another important aspect of learning. Learning always proceeds from simple to complex.

In learning to read, a child must first recognize letters, then remember the sounds they make, and finally put the letters and sounds together into words. A toddler first speaks single words, then two- to three-word phrases, and eventually sentences.

Jean Piaget, a well-known Swiss researcher, has done considerable work identifying the timing and sequence of intellectual skills. Parents who understand these sequences can more effectively help their children learn.

Children want to learn. They are motivated to do so from the day they are born. Indeed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá tells us that the soul begins to develop (spiritual learning) in the womb.

What often seems random movement in an infant is really his initial attempts to make sense out of his body and his world by exploring at whatever level he can. The need for learning, as real as any physical need, is what drives a child forward and ensure his development.

Children learn by interacting with their environment and by getting feedback from it.

By environment is meant everything, human and material, that surrounds the child. It is a critical factor in human development.

An infant learns security and emotional well-being if the feedback he gets from his mother is in the form of satisfied physical needs, warmth, and love. His interest in the world is aroused if he is presented with a variety of objects to manipulate.

In research with six-month-old infants, a choice was given between two objects, one familiar and one new. The babies invariably chose the new object. Could one wish for a clearer statement about human motivation?

A corollary to this principle is that learning builds on itself. The richer a child's experiences, therefore, the more he or she will learn.

The more opportunity he has to explore his surroundings, manipulate many objects, discover likenesses and differences, experiment with, take apart, and recombine objects and elements, the more chance a child has to learn the myriad skills and ideas he must acquire.

This should not suggest a frantic, constantly changing environment, but one with a few constants—from a family to a familiar blanket and bed—with a rich variety of things with which to interact.

Another closely-related principle is that children learn best when they are active participants.

It is hard to imagine an infant simply looking at a new toy or other object and not grabbing it, fondling it, placing it in his mouth, and thoroughly wearing it out through exploration, or a pre-schooler merely watching someone make mud pies without joining in the preparation, tasting, smelling, and serving of such a treat.

Research reinforces this point by revealing that the more the senses are involved, the better something is learned. It is also true that the child's focus is on the process of learning, the hows and whys, and not necessarily on the product of learning.

The fun of finger-painting lies in the absolutely glorious sensations of squashing, smelling, swirling, tasting, and dabbling with the paint. The end result, albeit something of value (particularly to parents), is of secondary importance to the child.

In summary, learning is a never-ending process that proceeds according to specific sequences, some of which we can now predict in advance, and is timed by the human being's physical, mental and spiritual development.

Children want to learn, and the key to guiding and reinforcing this basic drive is a rich, varied, supportive environment in which they can be actively involved in the learning adventure.

Human Development

Every gardener knows the steps involved as a seed develops into a mature plant. He can even predict roughly when these steps will occur.

Like plants, human beings also develop in a predictable fashion. As the gardener nurtures his plants in different ways at different stages, parents should support their child's learning...
"Every child is potentially the light of the world—and at the same time its darkness."

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá
of the figures. White suggests attaching attractive shapes to the bottoms of the mobile figures, where a baby can see them.

The infant's need for a strong bond with one adult, who gratifies his overwhelming needs and brings delight to the child, cannot be overstated.

The same bond is further strengthened and developed through toddlerhood and beyond. It is so critical that, according to current research, placing children under three years old in schools or day-care centers is less desirable (although sometimes necessary) than leaving them in a good family environment.

'Abdu'l-Bahá states that children should not be gathered in groups for formal education until the age of five, but that many concepts should be made clear to them in the nursery—through play and amusement.

Traditionally, of course, this bond has been the mother's responsibility. She is identified in the Bahá'í Writings as her child's spiritual educator.

This does not and should not exclude a strong relationship between father and child, which is also important to development, or developing ties with many other people.

The Guardian has confirmed, however, that the mother continues to have primary responsibility for child rearing:

"The task of bringing up a Bahá'í child, as emphasized time and again in Bahá'í Writings, is the chief responsibility of the mother, whose unique privilege is indeed to create in her home such conditions as would be most conducive to both his material and spiritual welfare and advancement. The training which the child first receives through his mother constitutes the strongest foundation for his future development. . . " (Shoghi Effendi, in Dawn of a New Day, p. 202)

Another general stage in human development is toddlerhood (from walking, through talking). A child's life at this point is focused on mastering walking, language, and a sense of self—a pretty tall order, to say the least!

In this period the child's developing bond with his mother changes a bit. She, with the help of other adults like the father, becomes the buffer between the child and his ever-expanding world—encouraging, stimulating, praising, cheering his attempts to master walking and talking.

He is still dependent on her for food, diapering, warmth, love, and to feed an ever-growing desire for new experiences with objects and places. His world should be at the same time stable and changing—a world with a few clear no-no's and lots of yes-yeses.

Most children, given reasonable freedom and encouragement, teach themselves to walk. Learning a language is far more challenging. It is one area where parents' help can really make a difference.

Children learn what is repeated and reinforced. We now know that infants begin to learn a language long before they can speak. Parents who provide a rich language environment for their children (in other words, who talk and read to them) are, therefore, helping those children learn even though the infants cannot yet talk back.

This parental assistance should continue into toddlerhood. Between a year and two years children begin to put recognizable words with objects, usually beginning with nouns, then moving on to phrases, and finally sentences.

Learning language gives children power over their world. They can manipulate it by substituting words for objects, which grows into imagination, fantasy, projection, and rational thought. It is a highly individualized process.

How and when a child talks is not necessarily a measure of his intelligence; many factors are involved in this complex, miraculous achievement. What does make a difference is having adults who talk to, listen to, and read to their children, and who applaud their experiments with language.

The toddler has a growing awareness of his own individuality. One day, either outwardly or inwardly, he will point to himself to say his name and know his uniqueness.

This is a terribly exciting discovery. It brings with it joy and pain—joy because he's utterly delighted with the prospect of being and growing, and yet at the same time pain because he's caught up in the ambivalence of it, wanting to be independent but also being dependent, trying to make choices but being stymied by indecision.

This is a very important struggle. With the support of loving, patient parents the child emerges as the victor, very much aware of his good feelings about himself and his mastery of the world.
(The following article on the role played by indigenous Bahá'í is in the growth of the Faith in Benin was written for Bahá'í Newsby Kiser D. Barnes. The five believers profiled here have been instrumental in the formation of nearly all of the country's 65 Local Spiritual Assemblies. Among them are Benin's first Auxiliary Board members, the first assistant to the Auxiliary Board, and the first native believer to pioneer on the homefront. –Ed.)

In the 27 years since the Bahá'í Faith was first brought to Benin (formerly Dahomey) by Knight of Bahá'u'lláh David Tangry, a number of Beninese believers have arisen and, on fire with love for Bahá'u'lláh, distinguished themselves by their teaching victories and their steadfastness in the Cause of God.

These believers have watered, nourished and brought to fruition the seeds planted by Bahá'í pioneers and traveling teachers, and have firmly established the Faith in each of this west African country's six provinces. Their dedication and tireless labors have helped to bring about the formation of most of the Local Spiritual Assemblies in Benin.

Five of the front-rank "soldiers" in this Beninese army of believers are Vincent Aguemon, Denagan Chancouin, Adrien Gnambodé, Frederic Hodonou and Samuel Zodeougan.

Vincent Aguemon became a Bahá'í in December 1973, and made his first teaching trip five months later. The entire village of Douhométo became Bahá'í during his visit, and he helped to open seven areas to the Faith.

"When I became a Bahá'í," he says, "I was very happy. I wanted to tell everyone in Benin about the Faith, and so I began to teach right away. When I have teaching difficulties I am never

Left. Adrien Gnambodé, who in 1978 attended the 4th Bahá'í International Convention and became the first native-born Beninese believer to visit the Holy Shrines of the Faith on Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel.
sad, because I know God is always with me."

At the age of 25, Mr. Aguemon became the first Beninese believer to pioneer on the homefront when he moved in May 1976 to the northern city of Parakou, some 960 kilometers (600 miles) from Porto-Novo, his home in southern Benin.

The move was particularly courageous because of traditional differences that have divided the northern and southern parts of the country.

When, four days after his arrival in Parakou, Mr. Aguemon met with the Baha'is there, he found many problems. Only three members of the Spiritual Assembly remained active, and there was no place for the friends to meet. Mr. Aguemon promised the believers that the community would be rebuilt.

"At first, we couldn't hold meetings," he recalls, "because meetings of every kind were banned. We visited the District Chief, explained to him the principles of the Faith, and were given permission to meet and hold Feasts."

By Ridván 1977 there were 18 new believers in Parakou. Mr. Aguemon has remained at his post, and presently serves as chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly.

In March 1976 he was named Benin's first assistant to the Auxiliary Board, and also serves as assistant secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Denagan Chancouin, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Benin since 1971 and its chairman since 1972, became a Bahá'í in 1969.

He was a member of the first Spiritual Assembly in his hometown, Porto-Novo. His teaching efforts helped to establish that Assembly as well as those in Chivié, Houngbome, Malanhui and Pobé.

As a member of the Regional Teaching Committee for Oume Province, Mr. Chancouin has worked closely with each of the 31 Local Spiritual Assemblies there. He has also worked with Assemblies in other provinces.

Mr. Chancouin operates a dispensary in Malanhui, a town he opened to the Faith. His homes there and in Porto-Novo are focal points for Bahá'í activities in those communities.

Following a meeting of the National Spiritual Assembly in December 1977, Mr. Chancouin and his wife, Josephine—the second Beninese woman to be elected to the National Assembly—were seriously injured in an automobile accident.

While still hospitalized, Mr. Chancouin remarked to friends, "With the assistance of the prayers of the Bahá'ís, we are recovering, and we see that the pain from our injuries is a lesson. The lesson is this, that the prayers of all the Bahá'ís in the world are truly the sacred remedy for the world's illnesses. We must be proud that we are in this great family of Bahá'u'lláh, and we must have the courage to teach."

Adrien Gnambodé, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Benin since 1974, was one of the first people in the village of Dowa to become a Bahá'í when he accepted the Faith in 1964. He served on the first Spiritual Assembly of Dowa, which also was the first Assembly in Oume Province.

As a member of the Regional Teaching Committee, the 50-year-old Mr. Gnambodé has walked or bicycled throughout the hilly region around his home, helping to establish 15 of the 31 Local Spiritual Assemblies in the province.

"The thing that motivates me," he says, "is the glory of the Faith. Once I had heard and understood Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings, I wanted to go out to teach, to wake people up. This still motivates me."

Today every resident of Dowa, including Mr. Gnambodé's 11 children, is a Bahá'í.

Frederic Hodonou, an eloquent speaker who punctuates his addresses with compelling examples, says, "I am happiest when teaching the Faith."

Mr. Hodonou was the first to accept the Faith in Cotonou, Benin's largest city and its commercial center, and taught it to three other members of Cotonou's first Spiritual Assembly, which was elected seven months after his declaration.
In July 1976, Mr. Hodonou became Benin’s first Auxiliary Board member for the protection of the Faith. He had served as a member of the country’s first National Spiritual Assembly and was re-elected to the National Assembly each year until his appointment to the Auxiliary Board.

The 45-year-old accountant’s wife is a Bahá’í, as are their nine children.

When Samuel Zodéougan declared his belief in Bahá’u’lláh, in April 1970, there was one Local Spiritual Assembly in Zou Province, his home. Today there are 19 Assemblies, 16 of which have been formed primarily through his efforts. He has opened many other localities to the Faith as well.

Mr. Zodéougan has served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Benin since 1975. In January 1978, he was appointed Benin’s first Auxiliary Board member for the propagation of the Faith.

An indefatigable teacher, Mr. Zodéougan prefers to teach in villages rather than in the larger cities.

“The villagers have an innate wisdom,” he says, “and automatically sense the truth. Intellectuals, on the other hand, prefer to wait and study the Faith. Many of them never accept the Cause. Their intellect often blinds them to the Light of God.”

Mr. Zodéougan’s first teaching experience was in his own village of Zodobome, which formed its first Local Spiritual Assembly at Ridván 1970.

Asked to explain why teaching is an integral part of his life, Mr. Zodéougan replies, “I was taught to await the coming of the
Promised One. Since I have attained the blessing of recognizing Him in this Day, I feel it is my sacred obligation to spread His Teachings. I am most happy to rise up and carry the flame of Bahá'u'lláh to others. I pray that I will not fail in the work He has given to me.

A retired soldier and a prince of the country’s royal family, the 41-year-old Mr. Zodéougan is one of 105 children of his recently-deceased father. His immediate family are Bahá’ís, and the brother who has replaced his father as head of the family has accepted the Faith.

The purpose of this brief discourse has been to inform the friends in other countries of a few of the facts surrounding development of the Faith in Benin and the part played by native Beninese believers in its growth. Were anyone to praise these Bahá’í teachers for their efforts, they would be the first to reply to him: “Should such a man ever succeed in influencing any one, this success should be attributed not to him, but rather to the influence of the words of God, as decreed by Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Wise. In the sight of God he is regarded as a lamp that imparteth its light, and yet is all the while being consumed within itself.” (Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 277)
Sweden

Sweden was blessed this summer by the participation in its teaching work of many beloved friends. Foremost among them was the Hand of the Cause of God Abu'l-Qasim Faizi who, after inspiring the friends at the Norwegian Summer School, visited several towns in Sweden where his gentle spirit encouraged everyone to greater service.

Claire Honigman, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of France, traveled and taught in Sweden this summer, as did Victor and Victoria Priem from England. In addition, there were teaching groups composed of Americans and American Indians.

Sweden has noted several signs of impending victory in the Five Year Plan. On July 29, Raymond L. Hudson, a school teacher in Unalaska and a member of the Auxiliary Board, has been given the Willard Bowman Award for Human Rights, which is presented by the Alaska Education Association to an educator who demonstrates leadership and creativity in advancing civil and human rights.

Mr. Hudson, a poet and author, was honored for his efforts to preserve the culture and crafts of the Aleut peoples of Alaska. “You know, it is very easy for a Bahá’í to win a human rights award,” was his comment on receiving the honor.

Alaska

Helsingborg, its 14th Local Spiritual Assembly, was formed. Singing Coral, the internationally known book written by Bahá’í Sverre Holmsen, has been translated into several languages, and recently appeared in a new edition whose foreword mentions the Faith.

One of Sweden’s newest Bahá’ís is Sven-Olof Illar of Karlstad, already a well-deepened member of its Spiritual Assembly. He declared his faith in July only four days after first hearing the word “Bahá’í.”

Several pioneers have recently arrived in Sweden, while many of the Swedish believers have changed jobs, taken fewer hours at their jobs, or left them to devote more time to serving the Faith through traveling teaching or homefront pioneering. Sweden is witnessing true sacrifice, and there is a rising tide of certitude that every goal will be won.

Left, the Bahá’í community of Karlstad, Sweden, at the Feast of Kalimát in July. Sven-Olof Illar, a newly-enrolled Bahá’í, is in the back row at the right; Mark Finn, a new pioneer from the United States, is in the back row at the left.

Below, a Bahá’í information table was set up in June in the goal town of Örebro, Sweden.
One of the participants at the first Bahá’í Children’s Conference in Laos explains the unity of races using photos clipped from a magazine. The conference was held May 7 at the National ʿHaẓiratu’l-Quds in Vientiane.

The 26 children who attended the first Bahá’í Children’s Conference in Laos held May 7 at the National ʿHaẓiratu’l-Quds. The children ranged in age from 4 to 14.

Children enjoy folk dancing at the first Bahá’í Children’s Conference in Laos. Bahá’í youth provided the musical accompaniment for the dancing.
On August 25, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Barbados and the Windward Islands sent the following cablegram to the Universal House of Justice:

"Joyously announce surpassed LSA goals. Two new LSAs Dominica, nine village LSAs St. Lucia, 44 total. Grateful assistance Counsellors.

The week of June 11-18 witnessed a major Bahá'í teaching event in Houston, Texas. After three months of preparation and planning by the Houston Teaching Committee, Race Unity Week got under way.

The week was highlighted by a semi-formal dinner on June 18 attended by 150 people. The Bahá'ís of Houston presented an award to a Houston resident who had made an outstanding contribution toward racial unity. The recipient of the award was Father Jorge Duran, a Mexican-American Roman Catholic priest whose actions are credited with doing much to avert continued animosity and property destruction during a recent racial flare-up in his Houston neighborhood.

Father Durán’s church has requested Spanish-language firesides, and the Spanish-English newspaper, La Pensa, has expressed an interest in printing articles on the Faith.

On June 11, Race Unity Day was observed with a picnic and proclamation that attracted 65 people and was publicized in newspapers and on posters throughout the city.
Indian-Eskimo teaching teams have returned home from an active and rewarding 45-day teaching tour throughout 10 countries of Europe. The teaching project was a cooperative effort between the National Spiritual Assemblies of Alaska, Canada and the United States as well as the Continental Pioneer Committee for Europe and the European National Spiritual Assemblies who received the teams.

The project, which was financed by the International Teaching Centre, was planned over a two-year period following a visit to Europe by an American Indian family.

The team consisted of four members: Melba Loft, an Ojibway Indian from the Tyendinaga Reservation near Ottawa, Canada; Scott Tyler, a Makah Indian from the Neah Bay Reservation in Washington State; Ida Bergamaschi, an Eskimo from Anchorage, and Maynard Eakan from Kotzebue, Alaska, the first Eskimo ever elected to serve on a National Spiritual Assembly.

Mr. Tyler and Ms. Loft, the Indian half of the team, traveled to Ireland and the Middle Scandinavian countries. The Indian teachers brought with them colorful costumes of their tribes. They shared with the European communities native Indian stories as well as Makah songs and dances.

The Eskimo teachers demonstrated several types of Eskimo dances and displayed many interesting Eskimo items such as masks, dancing fans, dolls and mukluks. Both teams had well-prepared talks on the Faith that were appropriate to many situations.

Before leaving for Europe, the team came together July 7-14 in Palmer, Alaska, for a week of prayers, deepening, and program preparation.

Some reports from the countries visited have begun to come in. They glow with the successes of the team. The project will undoubtedly leave a lasting mark on those European countries.
This year, in the week before Naw-Rúz, an eight-member teaching team (composed of one Canadian, one Costa Rican, one El Salvadoran, two Guatemalans and three Persians) found and welcomed into the Faith 226 new believers in the states of Zacapa and Izabal in northeastern Guatemala.

Ten Local Spiritual Assemblies were elected as a result of this teaching effort, and two communities were prepared for formation later.

The team was accompanied by Dr. Hidáyatu’lláh Ahmadiyyih of Belize, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Central America. It brought a system of teaching new to Guatemala in which the emphasis is on teaching family units.

The team was divided into small groups that taught in homes in a small area. The goal was to form Baháʼí family units that would be easier to form into Local Spiritual Assemblies, easier to deepen, and easier to re-form at Ríḍván.

Two or three days after teaching in an area, the group would return to visit, deepen and hold elections. By waiting for this short period of time, they felt better able to evaluate what had been done, while at the same time letting the new Baháʼís know they would not be left alone.

The new success in teaching has greatly encouraged and inspired the Guatemalan Baháʼí community. Said Auxiliary Board member Soheil Shahidinejad: “It appears as though there is a new spirit of Divine confirmation here in Guatemala.”

Shown below are some of those who attended a Baháʼí Women and Children’s Conference at Satara, Maharashtra, India, in March. The conference was held largely through the efforts of Muhammad Hussain Eshraghi, a pioneer from Iran, who moved with his four children into the challenging Satara District three years ago. Although there were few Baháʼís in the District at that time, there is now a strong and active Local Spiritual Assembly. Recent events in Satara include the purchase of land and completion of building plans for a permanent Baháʼí Center.

A deepening class was held May 24-26 at the Teaching Institute in Keolali (Nasik), India. Nearly everyone who attended the class was from a tribal area called Surgana, adjoining the tribal district of Dang. The area recently was opened to the Faith through the efforts of the State Teaching Committee of North Maharashtra; the friends hope now to establish the Faith in all 60 villages of the area.
Jackie and Ted Vitale, a young couple from San Diego, California, sailed recently in a 32-foot trimaran all the way to Samoa. The couple docked at Vaito’omouli, Savai’i, where a Bahá’í family helped them find their way around and introduced them to the Faith. Mr. Vitale had heard of the Faith in Hawaii, but wasn’t ready at that time to accept it. While in Sava’i, he and his wife became enthusiastic seekers.

When Mr. Vitale contracted hepatitis, Bahá’í friends took him to the hospital. While he was hospitalized and later recuperating, he and Mrs. Vitale continued to study the Writings. Soon afterward, both the Vitales joyously embraced the Cause, and sailed for Port Vila, New Hebrides, to meet more Bahá’í friends before returning home to California.

—from “Nusipepa Bahá’í,” Samoa

Nearly 200 people, including the Hand of the Cause of God ‘Ali-Akbar Furútan, attended an 11-day Bahá’í Summer School held in early August outside of Charleroi, Belgium. Additionally, six individuals declared their belief in Bahá’u’lláh, the greatest number at any Belgian Summer School to date.

Mr. Furútan conducted classes on “Living the Bahá’í Life” and “Bahá’í Administration.” Prior to the Summer School, he spoke to the French-speaking Bahá’ís in Bruxelles, and participated in a conference in Brugge for the Bahá’ís of Flemish Belgium.

—from “Nusipepa Bahá’í,” Samoa

In a photo on Page 14 of the September 1978 issue of Bahá’í News, Bui Van-an is identified as “the first native-born Bahá’í in Laos.” Mr. Van-an actually is Vietnamese, and the caption should have stated that Mr. Van-an, having heard of the Faith from Dr. Heshmat Ta’eed, was the first person to accept it in Laos. Bahá’í News regrets the error.
Radio Bahá'í in Ecuador
Because recent disturbances in Iran, in addition to endangering the devoted and persecuted friends in that country, have led to misrepresentations of the Bahá'í Teachings in the world news media, the Universal House of Justice asked the Bahá'í International Community to release the following statement, dated November 1978:

The recent disturbances in Iran have attracted the attention of the world's news media and frequent mention has been made of the Bahá'ís of that country, their tenets and their activities.

Since the Bahá'ís in Iran have been persecuted for over a hundred years by fanatical elements in their country, the Bahá'í International Community is concerned that the recent developments in Iran may soon lead to a country-wide onslaught on the lives and properties of individual followers of the Faith. Indeed, already in many provinces in Iran frenzied mobs have ruthlessly attacked and injured Bahá'ís, threatened their lives, desecrated their Holy Places and burned their houses, business premises, and livestock, caused them to flee from their homes, and have tried to force them to recant their faith.

A disturbing factor is that political adversaries are using the name of the Bahá'í Faith to discredit their political opponents. In order to inflame the passion of the fanatics they refer to certain political leaders as Bahá'ís.

The Bahá'í International Community, and indeed Bahá'í institutions throughout the world, have noted with dismay and frustration the publication of misrepresentations of the Teachings of the Bahá'í Faith. The Bahá'í International Community is particularly concerned at the erroneous impression being given to the world press of the clear position of the Bahá'í Faith on such basic issues as loyalty to government and non-involvement in political and subversive activities. To these have been added the distortions of truth reflected in the local press in Iran about the attitude of the Bahá'ís toward Islam.

The Bahá'í International Community categorically states that as an article of faith no Bahá'í is allowed to participate in partisan politics or to accept any political post. Furthermore, the Bahá'í International Community affirms that the Bahá'ís believe in the validity of all divinely revealed religions, including Islam, and disclaim any intention to belittle any of the Prophets of the past or to whittle down their teachings. It is hoped that the deliberate and vicious misuse of the name of the Bahá'í Faith and the misrepresentations of its Teachings may not provide cause for further persecution and hardship for the Bahá'ís in Iran. The Bahá'ís are law-abiding citizens, loyal to their respective governments, and anxious to share wholeheartedly in whatever promotes the best interests of the countries in which they reside.
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Cover

About 200 Bahá’ís and their guests gathered at the Amatú’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum Institute in Otavalo, Ecuador, last August 20 for a joyous and significant event: the formal inauguration of Radio Bahá’í, the world’s first Bahá’i-owned and operated radio station. Among those attending were three members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South America. A report of the ceremony begins on Page 10.
The Peoples of God:
Part 7

Rhodesia
Background

The cultural and tribal background of the indigenous peoples of Rhodesia makes it easy for them to identify many similarities between the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith and their traditional cultural orientation.

For example, just as the Bahá'í Faith requires parental consent before marriage, a couple in Rhodesia who wishes to marry must also have the consent of all living parents in order to do so.

The Bahá'í principle of service to others is also easy to accept, as it is customary for Rhodesians to extend love and hospitality to friends and strangers who visit them.

In a Rhodesian village, one person's troubles are of concern to everyone. If a member of a family dies, everyone helps with the funeral. If there is a wedding, villagers shower the couple with gifts, usually money or utensils.

Children in the villages have unquestioning respect for their parents. Unmarried young people seek their parents' approval in whatever they undertake. Even married offspring usually consult their parents before making big decisions, in keeping with the strong Rhodesian belief that doing anything against the advice or wishes of one's parents can bring misfortune in future endeavors.

Among educated Rhodesians, these native customs are practiced less; but they haven't yet been completely replaced by the Western-style customs the Rhodesians are seeking to adopt.

Arrival of the Faith in Rhodesia

The first Bahá'ís in Rhodesia were 'Izzatu'lláh Zahrá'í and Claire Gung, who arrived in 1953. Kenneth and Roberta Christian, 'Áynu'd-dín and Tahirih 'Alá'í, and Joan Powis arrived one year later. Each of them was designated a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh by the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, for pioneering to Southern Rhodesia.

From 1953 to 1963, the Faith was centered in the two major Rhodesian cities of Bulawayo and Salisbury, and in a few rural areas.

The first indigenous believer in Rhodesia was Charles Zauyamakando. He and other indigenous Bahá'ís spread the Faith from the cities, where they were taught, to their native villages.

With the help of the pioneers, the new believers taught the Faith in the Tribal Trust Land of Chief Chisweshe, opening the communities of Musarara, Madyavanhu and Manjomwe.

One new believer from Salisbury returned home and introduced the Faith in the village of Mondoro, which led eventually to the formation of Spiritual Assemblies in Matemera and Bangira. More recently, many more Local Assemblies have been formed in the Hondoro area.

In October 1970, the National Spiritual Assembly of Rhodesia sponsored a two-week teacher training institute that was attended by a dozen young indigenous believers who were taught by four pioneers.

After the teachers were trained, they were sent across the country to spread the Faith. Numbers of believers soon were enrolled in the Mtoko and Gokwe regions, and Local Assemblies were formed there. Local Hazíratu'l-Quds acquired in these areas were the first in the Tribal Trust Lands.

Today, even though the Faith is becoming increasingly well-
known in Rhodesia, it still takes considerable courage for one to become the first person in his or her village to accept the Faith, because of the ostracism and hostility these believers often receive from uninformed and suspicious friends and neighbors.

Sometimes new Bahá'ís are convinced by their fellow villagers to turn away from the Faith. Despite such occasional setbacks, however, the task of teaching the Faith in villages is becoming easier as the Faith becomes better known and its principles more widely understood and accepted.

Current Bahá'í Activities

A number of Local Spiritual Assemblies in rural villages in Rhodesia are making strong efforts to administer the affairs of their communities.

Some Local Assemblies have identified extension teaching goals and have been instrumental in carrying out teaching work that has led to the establishment of new Assemblies.

Other Assemblies have diligently developed women's, children's and youth activities. Some communities have written special Bahá'í songs that have become popular throughout the country.

When a new Bahá'í community is established in a village that is some distance from other deepened Bahá'ís, one or two believers from that community will usually attend a deepening institute at the national Hazíratu'l-Quds in Salisbury, then return home to deepen their fellow believers.

Typical of these rural village Bahá'í communities is Nyamayaro, in the Mrewa district.

The first person to accept the Faith in Nyamayaro was a youth. He was discouraged from remaining in the Faith by other villagers who knew nothing of its Teachings.

Instead of bowing to their wishes, the young man invited traveling teachers to the village where they were able to acquaint his neighbors with the principles of the Faith. One by one, the youth's relatives and friends became Bahá'ís, until there were enough believers to form a Local Spiritual Assembly.

The Assembly in Nyamayaro is quite active, and the community certainly gives women an opportunity to serve the Faith. Eight of the Assembly members in 1977-78 were women.

At present, the Assembly is striving to obtain land for a Bahá'í Center and a local endowment. The community often sends representatives to national Bahá'í gatherings.

Indigenous Teachers and Pioneers

Indigenous believers and pioneers constantly coordinate their efforts and undertake numerous teaching trips together. The strong spirit of unity and brotherhood between them makes people curious as to the basis of that relationship, and thus attracts many people to the Faith.

Today, believers throughout Rhodesia are valiantly striving to teach the Faith to an ever-increasing number of waiting souls. The remaining months of the Five Year Plan will no doubt be a time of tremendous activity, as the Bahá'ís pour their energies into a final effort to win the highly challenging goals that have been assigned to them in the Five Year Plan.
The preschool years (roughly ages three to five) offer a time of consolidation for the child. The toddler's internal struggles give way to the more settled, focused behavior of the three-year-old. He works fairly constantly at learning.

It is sometimes said that by the age of four we have learned half of what we will ever know. As 'Abdu'l-Bahá says, "Many elementary sciences must be made clear to them (children) in the nursery; they must learn them in play, in amusement." (Star of the West, Volume 7, Page 142, December 12, 1916)

What should a preschool child be learning? Intellectually, there are a number of concepts that contribute to his growing foundation of knowledge. Classifying—seeing likenesses and differences, and grouping according to a similarity—is one. Helping children focus on similarities and differences, giving them many opportunities to sort things according to size, color, shape, use, etc., supports the development of this mental skill.

Seriation—ordering a set of objects from largest to smallest or heaviest to lightest—is another important concept. It develops slowly. A three-year-old may be able to choose the biggest and smallest object, whereas a five-year-old could put a group of objects in order.

Parents can assist children to learn the concept of numbers by associating numbers with objects ("Let's count one block, two beads, three balls, etc."). Letter and word recognition can also be introduced if older preschool children are interested, but in a casual way so as not to put undue pressure on them. Concepts like up-down, above-below, here-there, and left-right can be taught through informal games.

Language development should also be stressed at this stage. Parents can be helpful in several ways—by giving children labels for new things and experiences, by being available for answering questions and chatting, by reading stories and poetry to them, by singing with them, by listening to their feelings and opinions. These may seem obvious, but their importance cannot be overstated.

Socially, the preschool child has a large agenda. He has to learn the basic social skills for getting along in the world. The roots of success, of course, lie in the quality of the child's past experiences.

Learning to share and cooperate are difficult skills to acquire, and children need much loving guidance and modeling from adults and older friends to master the arts of consultation and cooperation. It is unrealistic to expect a 2 1/2-year-old to share automatically. This ability develops gradually and, from the child's point of view, is quite difficult, for he considers everything in the world his.

Positive efforts should be richly rewarded and negative reactions lovingly and firmly handled without harsh punishment or words. ("You choose which toy Sally can play with. Sharing your pail makes Sally so happy! I know you don't feel like sharing right now, but it is something we must learn. Sally can play with the pail and we can build a sandcastle over here with this shovel.")

Giving preschool children reasons for rules and decisions is very important. It helps develop their rational powers and teaches...
the value of solving problems through reason. A major step in the reasoning process is being able to see another person’s point of view. Parents can assist this process by expressing their feelings and opinions and helping a child see himself in another’s shoes.

Physically, the preschool child is very much in control of himself, to his great relief. He also has many skills yet to challenge him. Many opportunities to climb, run, jump, skip, hop, and ride are necessary. Obstacle courses, for example, can be useful along these lines. His small muscles can be helped by activities like coloring, drawing, painting, simple sewing and embroidery, clay modeling, or building with bricks, blocks, and the many other available construction toys.

Emotionally, the preschooler vacillates between periods of equilibrium and disequilibrium. So much is happening inside, in terms of development, that it’s little wonder a normally easy-going three-year-old seems to fall apart on his fourth birthday. Parents must be lovingly sympathetic, offer what help they can, and at the same time not give in on non-negotiable rules.

All things considered, the preschool years should be a time of processing large quantities of information in an unpressured, enjoyable way. One is reminded of a part of the Master’s first Tablet to Shoghi Effendi, who was then only five years old:

‘Now is not the time for you to read and write, it is the time for jumping about and chanting ‘O my God!’ therefore memorize the prayers of the Blessed Beauty and chant them that I may hear them, because there is no time for anything else.’ (The Priceless Pearl, page 8)

The school age child, hopefully, greets the world with an extraordinary amount of knowledge about it and skills for manipulating it. Beginning formal education marks a major transition in a child’s life. It is probably his first extensive contact with the outside world. This is a mixed blessing, providing a host of new challenges and new opportunities.

Intellectually, his major tasks are reading and acquiring some basic math/science skills. Furthermore, these must develop in the midst of the social challenges of associating with other children.

Like learning language, learning to read is an incredibly complex process. Parents can support the teacher’s efforts by providing the child with a rich language environment, by reading to him, by listening to him read, and by patiently applauding his attempts.

It is also important to be sensitive to his struggles. Some children are developmentally ready to read at five, some not until seven, and some have special problems. Parents should be wary of their expectations and try not to put pressure on children to do something they are, as yet, incapable of doing.

This applies equally to computation skills. Children should have lots of opportunities to work with concrete materials in relation to math and science concepts (such as counting, adding, and subtracting with raisins, blocks, fingers, etc.). Only after much practice can a child do math problems in his head.

All through these early years, but particularly with school-age children, parents should be on the lookout for each child’s individual strengths. Of course, some are more obvious than others. One child’s gift will be intellectual brilliance, another’s will be physical coordination, or artistic ability, or deep sensitivity to the feelings of others. These capacities need to be encouraged through formal training, opportunities to practice them, and general support.

The basic aim is to help each child understand and love himself, develop his spiritual, intellectual, and physical capacities, compete against himself to improve, and learn how to use his abilities to serve his fellow man.
Helping Our Children: Some Techniques

Perhaps the most important reason for finding out more about how children learn is so that we can help them. What is our real objective as Bahá’í parents? A brief statement by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá about what children should learn will help to put the goals into perspective:

“...My hope is that your parents may educate you spiritually and give you thorough moral training. May you develop so that each one of you shall become imbued with all the virtues of the human world. May you advance in all degrees material and spiritual. May you become learned in sciences, acquire the arts and crafts, prove to be useful members of human society and assist the progress of human civilization. May you be a cause of the manifestation of divine bestowals; each one of you a shining star radiating the light of the oneness of humanity toward the horizons of the east and west. May you be devoted to the love and unity of mankind and through your efforts may the reality deposited in the human heart find its divine expression. I pray for you, asking the assistance and confirmation of God in your behalf.”

(Promulgation of Universal Peace, Vol. 1, page 88)

Just as a brief article such as this cannot do more than highlight a few basic principles about learning, it cannot hope to offer a comprehensive list of everything parents should do. It can, however, suggest a few examples and encourage you to develop other possibilities on your own.

One of the most effective teaching techniques is the power of example. Deeds have a far greater impact than words. The two most important examples, or models, for a Bahá’í child are ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and his or her own parents. The Master, of course, is God’s unique gift to mankind, the Perfect Exemplar. Children can and should be taught about Him in a comprehensive way. They should learn about the qualities He exemplified—love, courtesy, justice, patience, honesty, courage, happiness, etc.—not just an isolated few.

Hearing stories and seeing Bahá’í devotion to Him can help children understand ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. The approach should be positive so children don’t feel threatened by Him, or come to think of Him as an imposing Figure Whom they frequently disappoint and Whose forgiveness they cannot seek. Children should know the Master’s unfailing love for them so that He becomes an inspiration.

Parents are also an important example to their children, for good or ill. Indeed, for younger children they are the most important example. Children will imitate what they see and hear, eventually forming their own habits and behaviors based largely on this modeling.

Children who see parents serving others will learn to serve, too, without the need for lectures on the subject. Children who do not see their parents as servants will have a much harder time acquiring this attribute. Children who see their parents argue will argue more readily. This principle can be applied in hundreds of different ways. Its importance cannot be overemphasized.

Developing good habits is another way to support learning. A habit is an action that is repeated over and over until it becomes second nature. We can develop good habits (spiritual habits) in the same way that we acquire bad habits, by practicing a virtue repeatedly until it no longer requires any conscious effort.

As already stated, example is one way to highlight habits the child should develop. It is best to develop good habits as early as possible. Parents can aid children to develop spiritual habits by taking guidance from the Writings. Morning and evening prayer

‘Now is not the time for you to read and write, it is the time for jumping about and chanting “O my God!” , therefore memorize the prayers of the Blessed Beauty and chant them that I may hear them, because there is no time for anything else!’

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá
should become an eagerly expected part of the child's day, as should opportunities to be of service, to think of others, to contemplate the Teachings, and to strive for excellence.

One often overlooked habit that should be developed as early as possible is persistence—the ability to stick to something and carry it through to completion.

Our world with its constantly distracting barrage of stimulation makes acquiring this ability difficult, to say the least. At its root lies our will, or volition. Learning how to set goals and achieve them is critical to becoming an effective human being. We must be aware of this, and as early as possible help our children set and attain realistic objectives. We can help by not unnecessarily interrupting them at play, helping them with daily music practice, or assisting them to learn how to break difficult tasks into smaller, more manageable ones.

Another technique for teaching children is the use of analogy. We know that children learn from concrete to abstract. Concrete examples are needed to help clarify abstract concepts ("God is like the sun," and so forth). This is true for material as well as spiritual principles.

In an article reprinted in the June 1953 issue of Child's Way, the Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Akbar Fúrústán said that we must teach our children the way Christ taught the people of His time, through the use of the familiar in the form of parables and the like. "A rose has the innate capacity to grow, but it cannot without the sun. The bounty of God is like the sun; it makes things grow." He gives another example for older children about the Administrative Order:

"There is a fountain here, and we are standing at a distance from it. How can we get the benefit of the water? We must build a canal to bring it to us. If we throw dirt into the canal, the water will become muddy. Our own opinions and the things which we do that are wrong are like throwing dirt into the water. They block the passage."

A child is reported to have asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá why all the rivers in the world eventually flow to the ocean. He replied that the ocean sets itself lower than the rivers. Is this not also a perfect description of humility?

Parents must strive to explain physical and spiritual principles in language such as this, so that their children will understand the concepts involved.

This is one of a series of articles on children, parents and families that will appear in Baha'i News during 1979, the International Year of the Child.
South America.

Visitors had been arriving all week including National Spiritual Assembly representatives from Bolivia, Colombia, Panama and Peru. These moments of happiness were exceeded by even greater joy when the news was received that three members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South America would be present for the inauguration.

On inauguration day, August 20, 1978, the first session, at the Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum Institute in Otavalo, Ecuador, was opened at 10 a.m. with a warm welcome to the participants from Donald Stewart, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador. Mr. Stewart then offered a brief explanation of the purpose of Radio Bahá’í.

Counsellor Raul Pavón, who was chosen by the Universal House of Justice as its representative at the opening ceremony, spoke of the universality of the principles of the Bahá’í Faith, of the spiritual, educational, cultural and humanitarian purposes of Radio Bahá’í, and of the fact that although radio has been used by the Bahá’ís for many years to proclaim the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh, it is a great challenge and a singular honor for Ecuador to have been chosen to initiate the first Bahá’í-owned radio station, thus making the country the parent for future Bahá’í-owned stations. As its offspring are born in country after country, he said, they will grow and develop based on the experiences of this “pilot project” undertaken by the Universal House of Justice during the Five Year Plan.

The message from the Universal House of Justice was read by Counsellor Pavón and translated into the Quechua language by Sra. María Peraguachi:

WITH JOYOUS HEARTS WE HAIL OFFICIAL INAUGURATION IN ECUADOR OF THE FIRST RADIO STATION IN THE BAHÁ’Í WORLD. AUSPICIOUS MAJOR STEP FULFILLMENT GOAL OF THE FIVE YEAR PLAN OF INCREASING THE USE OF MASS COMMUNICATION IN PROCLAIMING AND TEACHING THE FAITH OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH. MAY THIS HAPPY EVENT BE THE FORERUNNER AND THE INSPIRATION FOR THE EARLY ESTABLISHMENT OF RADIO STATIONS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD AS A NOTABLE SERVICE NOT ONLY TO THE FOLLOWERS OF THE BAHÁ’Í FAITH BUT TO ALL PEOPLES. WE WILL SUPPLICATE BAHÁ’U’LLÁH IN THE HOLY SHRINES THAT HIS BLESSINGS AND CONFIRMATIONS WILL DESCEND UPON ALL WHO LABOUR FOR THE SUCCESS OF THIS WORTHY UNDERTAKING.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Counsellor Masu’d Khamsi, who represented the Board of Counsellors for South America, brought loving greetings from those Counsellors who were unable to be present. He paid special tribute to the “Mother of South America,” Counsellor Leonora Holsapple Armstrong, who so ardently desired to be present at this historic event, but owing to her age and frailty, could not come.

Counsellor Khamsi called the attention of the indigenous participants to the words spoken by Abdu’l-Bahá during World War I: “... For these souls are like the ancient inhabitants of Peninsular Arabia... should these Indians and aborigines be educated and obtain guidance, there is no doubt that through the divine teachings, they will become so enlightened as in turn to shed light to all regions.”

Counsellor Khamsi added that he believes this first Bahá’í-owned radio station, situated in the territory of these indigenous friends, came about as a result of Abdu’l-Bahá’s
prophecy about them—giving them the means whereby they can learn and advance more rapidly, participate in its programs, and attain the heights to which they have been divinely called. It is their responsibility, he said, to support and nourish this gift of God ordained for their advancement.

Athos Costas, Counsellor from Argentina, spoke briefly but enthusiastically concerning the significance of Radio Bahá’í, the lofty purpose it will fulfill, the interest it has engendered throughout the Bahá’í world, and the blessing bestowed upon the indigenous people of Otavalo as well as others in that area who will be reached by this radio frequency.

Mr. Pavón, who acted as host for the ceremony with the National Spiritual Assembly, introduced the visiting dignitaries from Otavalo. Dr. Osvaldo Parades, director of Colegio Otavalo, said he was pleased to have been invited to this significant event sponsored by the Bahá’ís, that he has been impressed by the Bahá’ís for some time, and that he welcomes Radio Bahá’í as a further enhancement, spiritually and culturally, not only of his native city of Otavalo but of the country as a whole.

The distinguished anthropologist, Sr. Coba, who represented the Institute of Anthropology in Otavalo, expressed his admiration for the cultural and spiritual purpose of Radio Bahá’í. The work of the institute, he said, is closely related to the work the Bahá’ís are performing with the indigenous people in the area, and Radio Bahá’í lends further prestige and advancement to the city of Otavalo and to Ecuador.

The representative of Radio Turismo (a station that was utilized for many years to broadcast Bahá’í radio programs) said that some years ago his station had seen the need for the types of programs that Radio Bahá’í is now developing, but was unable to carry it through because of inadequate financial support. He expressed best wishes to Radio Bahá’í along with a desire for continued collaboration and understanding between the Bahá’í station and his own.

Visitors from other radio and television stations also were present. Sr. Edmundo Espinosa, a newsman and cameraman from Quito, did a live TV interview with Counsellors Costas and Khamsi that dealt with the purpose of their visit to Ecuador and the inauguration of Radio Bahá’í.

Many lovely songs were interspersed in the program including several composed by Sra. Clementina de Pavón that were sung as a tribute to the herculean service she has rendered and continues to render, in spite of her own disabilities, to the Otavalean Indians.

On behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador, Ralph Dexter, program director of Radio Bahá’í, presented an inscribed silver plaque to Sra. Isabel de Calderón in recognition of her marvelous service in seeking and finally securing government approval of a radio frequency and permission to broadcast. Time and again it seemed an insurmountable task, as government approval was denied three times. The Universal House of Justice wrote to the National Assembly of Ecuador, applauding Sra. Calderón’s history-making service, and adding that “only through her personal initiative and persistency was the allocation of the frequency . . . made possible.”

Kamram Mansuri, Auxiliary Board member Charles Hornby, Anita Miller, Diana Celleri, Piedad Celleri, Wolfgang Werle, Rodriguez Quintero and others who have played vital roles in the management of Radio Bahá’í and the construction of the station and its antenna, were called to the stage to receive recognition for their unforgettable and, at times, perilous labors. In tribute to their efforts, the Universal House of Justice wrote:

“‘The House of Justice requests your Assembly to extend its warm commendation to the radio production personnel for their hard and disciplined pioneering labour in developing the basis for a full-time broadcasting station. It is their devotion alone which can make the vision of the National Assembly into a reality fulfilling their hopes for an effective instrument of proclamation and teaching to support the goals of the Faith.’”

Among those who could not be present but who was lovingly and gratefully remembered was Dean Stephens, the consultant/engineer for Radio Bahá’í who designed and installed the antenna, gave freely of his time and knowledge to those responsible for the project, and rendered countless services so that Radio Bahá’í might become a reality.

The ceremony ended at midday, and was followed by a luncheon for the dignitaries with members of the Board of Counsellors, National Spiritual Assembly and Auxiliary Board.

That afternoon, the indigenous believers presented a music festival that was attended by more than 1,500 people including indigenous professional musicians from many localities. The mood was festive; everyone was rejoicing at the formal opening of the Bahá’í radio station, and no one wanted to leave, so the music lingered long into the night even though most had to walk many miles in the dark to return to their homes.
Around the World

Costa Rica

For more than a year, the National Women’s Committee has sponsored monthly teas in communities all over Costa Rica. The purpose of the teas is to give Bahá’í and non-Bahá’í women a chance to discuss their changing role in society, and also for non-Bahá’ís to be able to hear the message of Bahá’u’lláh.

These events have been quite successful, and many non-Bahá’í women in the Central Valley are regular attendees. The teas have been so successful, in fact, that the Bahá’í men have asked to be included.

It came as a great surprise to the non-Bahá’í visitors to hear the men discussing the importance of the equality of men and women and to observe them helping out in the kitchen.

José Miguel Alfaro (second from right), acting president of Costa Rica, was presented with a copy of the book, The Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh, September 25 by (left to right) Esquilo Monge, Mrs. Rita de Tomás, and Neda Aghdasi, representing the Bahá’í community of Costa Rica. The friends took the opportunity to inform government officials of the non-political character of the Faith and the Bahá’í principle of obedience to government.

For the first time, a Bahá’í float was entered this year in the annual Fiestas in Santa Cruz, Costa Rica. It consisted of a truck covered by palm leaves, a large globe of papier maché, and the words ‘La Fe Bahá’í’ and ‘El Mundo Es Un País, Y El Hombre Sus Cuidados’ (The Earth Is One Country, and Mankind Its Citizens).

Bahá’ís in Santa Cruz, Costa Rica, prepared this booth for the annual Fiestas in Santa Cruz this summer. The booth was set up in the front yard of a Bahá’í pioneer whose home is on the corner of the plaza where the Fiestas are held.
A dramatic upsurge in teaching brought the U.S. Bahá'í community by mid-November to the brink of achieving the Five Year Plan goal of 1,400 Local Spiritual Assemblies in that country.

From early October to November 12, the 161st anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, more than 200 Local Assemblies were formed, bringing the total number in the U.S. on that date to 1,318. By November 22 the total stood at 1,373.

The U.S. National Teaching Committee called for 1,400 Assemblies by November 26, the Day of the Covenant, with a supplemental goal of 1,550 Assemblies by the end of the Plan on April 20, 1979.

For the first time since the start of the Five Year Plan, the number of U.S. localities in which Bahá'ís reside has risen above 6,000.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Central African Empire reports that it has prepared and broadcast more than 260 consecutive weekly Bahá'í radio programs on the government radio station during the last five years. The programs were originally 15 minutes long, and were lengthened to 30 minutes in 1976.

The broadcasts, prepared in the French and Sango languages, serve as opportunities to deepen the Bahá'ís as well as teach the Faith. Program topics have included:

- Bahá'í history.
- Social principles of the Faith.
- Bahá'í Administration.
- Living the Bahá'í life.
- Unity of religions.
- Teachings of the Prophets of God.
- Bahá'í Holy Days.
- Bahá'í laws.

Music is included in the programs, as well as announcements informing the Bahá'ís throughout the country of upcoming Feasts, Holy Days, Local Spiritual Assembly elections, conferences, conventions, and so on.

About 80 Bahá'í children ages 6 to 15 attended a Regional Institute held August 2-5 at Port Dickson, West Malaysia. The success of a similar program for children last May in connection with the 15th National Convention of the Bahá'ís of Malaysia, attended by some 100 children, and this most recent effort encouraged the planning of a third such gathering for November.

Also in August, the first Bahá'í Summer School to be held on the east coast of the Malaysian peninsula, with 180 believers attending, enjoyed the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'lláh Muhdíjír and four members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South East Asia—Inparaju Chinúñah, Vicente Samaniego, Yun Kee Leong, and Dr. Chellie Sundram.
Alaska

A large photo on the front page of the July 21, 1978, issue of the Kodiak (Alaska) Daily Mirror is of Ray Tufts, a Bahá'í and professional boat-builder from Kodiak, and his 42-foot powerboat, the “Cedric,” named after the ship on which 'Abdu'l-Bahá came to America in 1912.

The photo caption explains the meaning of the boat's name and points out that it will be used part of the year for halibut fishing and the rest of the time “to spread the Bahá'í Faith in Kodiak villages.”

Peru

The first Aymara Bahá'í Conference was held August 26-28 in Juli, Peru, on the shores of Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world. More than 200 Bahá'ís from Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru attended.

Continental Councillors Mas'ud Khamsi and Raúl Pavón participated in this historic event, as did members of the National Spiritual Assembly and the Auxiliary Board.

Local authorities of Juli cooperated fully by offering the municipal theater and accommodations for participants. The mayor, Mrs. Denise Iturry, opened the conference. In her address, she complimented the Bahá'ís for working toward the unity of mankind.

The entire conference was conducted in the Aymara language. A capacity audience listened attentively to a talk by Counsellor Pavón on “Man and the Modern World.” Mr. Pavón's talk was followed by parts of the film, The Green Light Expedition, that concerned Peru and Bolivia.

The mayor of Juli and the Councillors participated in a ceremony that formally opened the newly-decorated Dr. Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir Teaching Institute, named in honor of the beloved Hand of the Cause of God who so greatly inspired the friends in Peru during his visits to that country.

The Aymara conference was announced a week beforehand on national radio and television in Lima, the capital of Peru. Auxiliary Board member Fernando Sciantarelli was interviewed with an Aymaran believer who spoke of the conference in his native language.

Local believers designed posters and created hand-woven name tags that were worn with pride. Each name tag included a nine-pointed star and the word “Bahá'í” embroidered on cloth.

After the conference, teams of six teachers each were formed to implement the “Spiritual Conquest of Lake Titicaca” plan.

More than 200 Bahá'ís from Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru were present August 26-28 in Juli, Peru, for the first Aymara International Bahá'í Conference. The entire conference was conducted in the Aymara language. Those who attended witnessed the formal opening of the Dr. Rahmatu’llah Muhajir Teaching Institute in Juli.
Following a brief radio program on the Bahá'í Faith, the interviewer told pioneers to Zaire John and Bahin Newport that he thought the interview was too short, and wondered if a longer program could be prepared.

Subsequently, the station's director and two other staff members interviewed the Newports and another Bahá'í for more than an hour.

At the end of the interview, the station employees were so enthusiastic about the Faith that they asked for more information, and some made appointments to visit the Newports to hear more about Bahá'u'lláh.

The radio interview attracted considerable attention. On the morning following the program, a number of reporters who had heard it visited the Newports and asked questions. One of the reporters requested a book, and was given a copy of Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era.

He read the book, then returned with five questions in writing. The Newports wrote careful answers to the questions, and delivered them to the newspaper office.

The next day two of the questions and answers—exactly as written—appeared in the paper. On the second day two more were printed, and on the third day the final question and answer appeared.

This was done despite the fact that the newspaper, because of a shortage of paper, had reduced its size to four pages and reportedly had been holding some articles for up to six months, waiting for space to print them.

The newspaper articles, coming so soon after the radio interviews, attracted many more people. A woman television announcer told the Newports she was a Bahá'í; another woman—a reporter—declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh and asked for more books to read.

Wide publicity was given to recent visits to several Italian cities by Mrs. Meherangiz Munsiff, a Bahá'í visitor from the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Munsiff was interviewed on radio, television, and in newspapers, and was the featured speaker at several public meetings. Her talks centered around the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith on education, the role of women in society, and the oneness of mankind.

Mrs. Munsiff received an enthusiastic response to her presentations.

Mrs. Meherangiz Munsiff (center), a Bahá'í from the United Kingdom, paid a visit to the gravesite of Marie Ciocca Holmlund, a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, in Sardinia, while on a recent teaching trip to Italy. With Mrs. Munsiff are Mrs. Holmlund's son, Michael (left), and Mrs. Livia Pargentino, the first native-born Bahá'í in Sardinia.

A mobile classroom prepared by the Bahá'ís of Italy has been instrumental in establishing several new Local Spiritual Assemblies there. It consists of a small enclosed trailer and a large plastic tent. The equipment includes a slide projector and screen, chairs, a selection of posters, photographs, and pamphlets, and a small Bahá'í library. Everything fits inside the trailer for easy transport. The classroom cost about $6,500.
In Sri Lanka in April, seven Bahá'í women—local friends and pioneers—fulfilled a pledge they made at a women's conference last February to travel and teach.

They traveled to Jaffira, the northernmost Tamil-speaking province in Sri Lanka, to teach the Faith.

During their four-day visit, they spoke at a fireside and to a group of 50 children who attended an evening class. Also, the youngest member of the team gave her first public talk on "The Removal of Prejudice" at a meeting in a community of Tamils.

The team then visited Point Pedro and held a children's class on the beach. The diversity of the women’s group, and the sight of foreigners wearing saris, attracted attention wherever the women went.

Other women have formed an active women’s committee in Kandy. It has organized successful teaching picnics and fund-raising socials.

Above, seven Bahá'í women undertook a teaching trip in April to Jaffira, the northernmost Tamil-speaking province in Sri Lanka.

Shown on the left is a children’s class at the beach in Point Pedro, Sri Lanka. The class was conducted by a four-member Bahá'í teaching team that visited there in April.

The Tokyo Bahá'í Center was the scene last March of a fireside given by Dr. Glenn L. Booman, a traveling teacher from the United States. Among those present were visitors from Egypt and Iran.
Eight members of the Bahá'í Esperanto League (BEL) from Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, the United States and the Soviet Union attended the 63rd Universala Kongreso de Esperanto (Universal Esperanto Congress) July 29-August 5 in Varna, Bulgaria.

The Congress was attended by more than 5,000 Esperantists from 50 countries, making it the largest such gathering in recent history. According to the *World Almanac*, there are more than a million people who speak the International Language (the official name of the Esperanto language).

The BEL held its own mini-Congress on August 3. Seventy-five people from 14 countries, mostly eastern European, attended. Slides were shown, and a question period ran three hours past the scheduled time.

Boxes of Bahá'í literature including 25 copies of the newly-published Esperanto edition of *Paris Talks* were distributed. Two people, one from Poland and one from Czechoslovakia, declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh while several others expressed an interest in corresponding in Esperanto about the Faith.

On July 31, the BEL observed the Feast of Asmá (Perfection) in Esperanto and discussed a recent proposal by Australian UN Ambassador Ralph Harry to introduce Esperanto into the UN experimentally over a five-year period.

—John Dale
Taiwan

For the third year, Taiwan's Baha’i Summer School has been held at a Catholic retreat and convent in the village of Kwanchi that is rented from time to time to non-Catholic groups for meetings and seminars.

The three-day Summer School, which was preceded by a nationwide newspaper ad campaign, was well-attended by Baha’is and seekers, with nearly 50 people on hand.

It marked a significant step forward in the teaching work in Taiwan, as it was conducted almost entirely in Chinese with translations into English.

Classes were held on the Central Figures of the Faith, the Guardian, the Covenant, and the institutions of the Faith. Two lovely slide shows were presented, both of them scripted in Chinese.

Miss Tim Reed, a Baha’i from Alaska who was traveling and teaching this summer in Taiwan, provided musical entertainment.

—Douglas Terrel

A summer in Taiwan proved to be a successful teaching venture for Miss Tim Reed, a journalism student at the University of Alaska. Though Miss Reed speaks no Chinese, she is an accomplished singer, and drew large crowds of seekers and music lovers wherever she appeared. These people then learned more about the Faith from local believers and members of the teaching team who accompanied Miss Reed.

Her appearances, which were coordinated by the National Teaching Committee of Taiwan, played a large role in a summer of intensive teaching in that country.

Miss Reed’s parents settled many years ago as Baha’i pioneers in the village of Nenana, near Fairbanks, Alaska. Although she has traveled throughout Alaska teaching the Faith in remote villages, this was Miss Reed’s first overseas teaching trip.

—Douglas Terrel

Amar Mal (second from left), a Bahá’í in Goth Chandio, Pakistan, founded and operates a school for some 35 Bahá’í children. He opens each class with Bahá’í prayers and gives lessons on Bahá’í history and Teachings. Mr. Mal is employed by the government education department, which has promised to encourage the school’s further development.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Pakistan, recognizing the importance of educating Bahá’í children, has built a new Bahá’í school at Tharkarpar. Shown here are some of the friends who helped with the construction. The school was to open last May with attendance limited at first to 60 children, and only the children of Bahá’ís is admitted. The staff is composed of educated Bahá’ís, and the school imparts primary and secondary education.
The Baha'is of Bermuda took part in a series of proclamation events at the Baha'i Center in Hamilton on October 20-24 with Baha'is visiting from the U.S.

Walter Heath, a Baha'i from San Fernando, California, entertained a full auditorium with music in celebration of the anniversary of the Birth of the Bab on Friday evening, October 20.

On Saturday evening, Donald Kinney, the son of Baha'i parents in whose home 'Abdu'l-Baha stayed during His visit to America, shared with the friends many wonderful stories of those early believers. The following day, he gave a public talk, "Religion for a New Day," and presented a slide program of the Holy Land. Mr. Kinney, his wife, Pat, and their son are residents of New Jersey.

Mr. Heath and Mr. Kinney also appeared on the popular TV show, Bermuda Today.

On October 24, United Nations Day was observed with a public meeting at which Mrs. Nancy Mondschein of New York City spoke on "The Rights of Children."

Top left, Bahá'ís who attended the celebration in Bermuda of the anniversary of the Birth of the Bab included (left to right) Marcus Richmond, Pat Kinney, Georgia Sánchez, Donald Kinney, Reta Martin, Walter Heath.

Second from the top, Mrs. Nancy Mondschein of New York City spoke on 'The Rights of Children' at the United Nations Day observance October 24 in Hamilton, Bermuda. The event was sponsored by the Bermuda Teaching Committee.

Left, Walter Heath, a Baha'i musician from California, entertains Baha'is from Bermuda and their guests during the United Nations Day observance October 24 at the Baha'i Center in Hamilton.
Report from Zaire
An architect's rendering of the design for the Bahá'í House of Worship in Samoa that will be erected at a site near Apia, Western Samoa. The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum represented the Universal House of Justice at the groundbreaking and cornerstone dedication ceremony January 27-28. The architect is Husayn Amónat, who also designed the building for the permanent Seat of the Universal House of Justice. Initiation of construction of the House of Worship in Samoa is a goal of the Five Year Plan.

Shown here is the architect's model of the design for the Mother Temple of the Indian Subcontinent, to be erected near New Delhi, India. The cornerstone for the building was laid last October 17 by the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum on behalf of the Universal House of Justice. The architect is Faríburz Sáhba. Initiation of construction of the House of Worship in India is a goal of the Five Year Plan.
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Cover

In spite of hardships and some setbacks, the growth of the Faith in the central African country of Zaire has been steady if unspectacular. The Zairian Bahá'í community is growing stronger and more vibrant thanks to the active involvement of women, children and youth. Our cover photo shows Bahá'í women in the Kivu region of Zaire with Bahá'í pioneers to the area. Second from left is pioneer Deborah Butler whose report of recent developments in Kivu begins on Page 2.
More than half the Bahá'í population of Zaire lives in Kivu, one of nine regions in that central African country.

There are almost 500 Local Spiritual Assemblies in Kivu, most of them in the southern area, and many of which are accessible only on foot after a journey of several days through the mountains.

The Faith first reached Zaire through Kivu by way of a handful of Zairian believers who were taught in the neighboring countries of Rwanda and Burundi before returning to their native country around 1960.

Legal recognition of the Faith by the Zairian government hasn't entirely prevented instances of abuse; despite some persecution and harassment, however, the Faith is growing rapidly in Kivu, and the Bahá'í communities are becoming stronger and better able to practice the Bahá'í way of life.

Women

One example of the development of Bahá'í communities in Kivu is the emergence of Bahá'í women within them.
Traditionally, the role of women in Kivu, as in many other areas of Africa, has been one of subservience. Bahá’í women, however, are taking an active part in community affairs. They frequently are elected to serve on Local Spiritual Assemblies, and nearly every Assembly has a women’s committee.

Since the start of the Five Year Plan no less than nine women’s conferences have been held in various parts of the Kivu region under the sponsorship of Local Assemblies or teaching committees.

Bahá’í men encourage the participation of women, sometimes help them to prepare food for conferences, and, since a high percentage of the women are illiterate, the men volunteer to take minutes at women’s committee meetings and to send reports of women’s activities to the National Spiritual Assembly or Regional Teaching Committee.

Women are the backbone and heart of Zairian society, and one can already see the vast changes being set in motion by Bahá’í women and the impact such changes will have on the family, the culture and the social order as more and more Zairian women
realize their potential through the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Children

One direct benefit of the expanding role of Bahá'í women in Zaire will be better educated children, as it is the women who care for the children until they are ready to enter school.

The Five Year Plan directive that the education of children "must become a firmly-established Bahá'í activity during the course of this Plan" is of special importance to the Zairian friends who generally have large families with many children. In Kivu, the largest segment of the Bahá'í population is under 15 years of age.

In response to the goals of the Five Year Plan for children, institutes are being held in Kivu in which more than 100 Bahá'ís have thus far been trained as children's teachers.

Because of the difficulties sometimes faced by Bahá'í children who attend mission schools, some Bahá'í communities in southern Kivu have obtained approval from the Universal House of Justice to establish their own schools. Such schools must be accredited by the Zairois Educational Bureau.

Youth

The integration of youth into Bahá'í community life has proven to be one of the more difficult aspects of the Five Year Plan for the friends in Kivu.

One of the reasons for this is the large and steadily widening generation gap in Zaire. Its present-day youth are the first generation to have received formal education on a large scale; hence, the differences between them and older members of the community have been greatly magnified as the youth are exposed to new ways of thinking and are influenced by modern technology and contemporary ideas.

Borne on the current of western culture, Zairian youth are moving away from tribal customs and traditions more rapidly than their parents, and their ideas, opinions and motives reflect their new way of thinking.

Typical of these changes is the young people's concept of marriage. Whereas most members of the older generation have polygamous marriages, the youth have accepted monogamy as a more stable and beneficial relationship, not to mention more economically feasible. The youth are far more aware of the importance of spiritual love and mutual sharing than their parents, who in most cases merely contracted marriage under social obligation for the purpose of bearing children. These new ideas have made such traditional concepts as the dowry far less important to Zairian youth.

Progress in the development of its young people has been made by encouraging the presence of younger pioneers in the region and by appointing many youth as assistants to the Auxiliary Board. Younger adults are being elected to serve on Local Spiritual Assemblies, and most Assemblies now have youth committees.

Periodic conferences address themselves to the special concerns, interests and problems facing the Bahá'í youth. One can see clearly that it is these friends who are struggling hardest to make the difficult change from traditional ways of life to today's fast-paced, rapidly changing world.

The Bahá'í youth who have taken the opportunity to study the Teachings for answers to the unique problems posed by this transformation have gained an insight and clarity of purpose unequalled by their peers. As these Bahá'í youth mature and take their place in the forefront of its administrative institutions, the character of the Faith in Zaire will undergo great changes, as is already beginning to happen in Kivu.—Deborah Butler
On April 19, 1978, Mrs. Dorothy Francis, a Bahá’í and member of the Saulteaux Indian tribe, was awarded membership in the Order of Canada by Governor General Jules Léger, Chancellor of the Order, at Government House in Ottawa, Canada. Mrs. Francis was recognized for her outstanding achievement in promoting the understanding of Indian culture throughout Canada.

The Order of Canada was created in 1967 to recognize the achievements and merits of Canadians in every major field of endeavor. Roger de C. Nantel, Director of Honors, said, “It is a way for the country to say ‘thank you’ to the people who have done more than their share.”

Mrs. Francis, first chairman of the National Indian Arts and Crafts Committee, has served on four Local Spiritual Assemblies in Canada and currently serves as an Indian teaching coordinator for the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada. She is a member of the Continental Indigenous Council, which consists of Alaskan, Canadian and American Indian Bahá’ís.

Mrs. Francis hosted and produced a popular series of programs for CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) radio and TV and traveled throughout the western parts of Canada performing concerts. She collected documents and interpreted the legends, music, art and philosophy of the Saulteaux, Sioux and Assiniboine tribes so that people might understand more fully the Indian culture.

As economic development officer and Indian culture worker for the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, Mrs. Francis inspired artists and craftsmen to use traditional motifs and techniques in making crafts that are representative of the Indian culture.

An accomplished artist and craftsman, she has helped stimulate a renewed interest in Indian art forms. Her work is exhibited at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto.

Her knowledge and expertise in promoting Indian arts and crafts proved invaluable to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development where she served on the National Advisory Board of the department.

Recently, Mrs. Francis has traveled in Northern Ontario helping communities there to form their own crafts committees and assisting with native Alcoholics Anonymous groups. She has also devoted many hours as a volunteer social worker and counselor to native patients in hospitals and inmates of penitentiaries.

“I speak to the Indian people in the prisons, especially the young men,” said Mrs. Francis, “and I try to lift their spirits. I try to make them feel important, because they are important.

“But I also want them to understand that they have a responsibility, too. We tend to blame society when things don’t go right, but sometimes we create our own problems. People should try to better themselves. There are people out there ready to serve and to help you. Every single Indian is responsible for the betterment of his race.”

Understanding many of the problems that confront native newcomers to large cities, Mrs. Francis initiated Friendship Centers and founded Pow Wow Clubs to help many Indians through the difficult period of transition to metropolitan areas.

When asked about her efforts to help the Indian people, Mrs. Francis said, “I try to put good thoughts into people’s minds. It is important that we learn to work together to foster love and unity amongst one another.

“As long as Indian people remain divided we will never get anywhere; we need each other so badly. The only way we can really progress is to work together and build from good foundations with good leaders and never forget about our Great Spirit.”
Every day, opportunities present themselves that Bahá’í parents can exploit to help their children learn. These are sometimes referred to as “teachable moments.” At these times your child is interested in something, and you use that interest to take him one step further toward understanding.

For example, let us say that your three-year-old child is building with various colored blocks, and you ask him or her to build a tower using only red blocks. In so doing, you have made a game out of sorting and color recognition.

Or perhaps you are reading a story about sacrifice (such as Oscar Wilde’s The Happy Prince) to your eight-year-old, and you use the opportunity to talk about why sacrifice is pleasing to God.

You don’t have to wait until your child finds his own teachable moments; you can plan them yourself. Informal activities like baking bread or special craft and service projects can teach many things. Family excursions can be educational as well as recreational. Trips to museums, historic sites, or even a park offer many opportunities for learning. Your interest in your child’s learning teaches him that you value education; therefore, he will too.

For better or worse, television is a large part of the lives of many children. It certainly has its good points, but it also can be dangerous. One study indicates that by the time a child enters first grade he will have seen between 25,000 and 50,000 acts of violence on the TV screen!

The principles that come to mind with respect to TV are moderation and interpretation. We should certainly know what our children are watching and limit the amount of their viewing. Each family has to decide what is acceptable to watch and what is not.

It is also of great value to watch TV with your children. Besides sharing entertainment, you can help them interpret what they see by highlighting Bahá’í principles and by pointing out godly and ungodly behavior. Again, there is no need to be heavy-handed about this. Such discussions, like many family learning experiences, should be spontaneous and enjoyable.

Children can be excellent teachers of other children. One of the best ways to reinforce what one has learned is to teach it to someone else. An older or more mature child, having just learned something, is often in a better position to explain it to another child—more in tune with the child’s perspective than an adult would be. It helps the older child, too. In the words of an African proverb, “He who teaches, learns.” Such mutual assistance fosters cooperation and service.

Many useful techniques relate to communication. Feedback and reinforcement are critical factors in learning. ’Abdu’l-Bahá used the term “awaken” in reference to education. He was always praising and uplifting people. This is a parent’s responsibility to his children: showering them with praise and encouragement, cheering and sharing in their victories, whether they are learning to walk, ride a bike, control their temper, or show kindness. Stating limits in positive terms (“we walk” rather than...
“don’t run,” “let’s do this” rather than “don’t do that”) preserves the child’s dignity and addresses his potential.

It is also true that children need accurate feedback. They need to know the standard, that they should strive for excellence, and how to measure themselves against it in a constructive way, the difference between a pretty good job and one’s very best job. Parents can help children make these distinctions. (“Which of your gymnastics routines was the best? Why?” “What was the nicest thing you did today?”)

Children need room to make mistakes and still know that they can do better next time. Punishment should educate the child. It should always be made clear to him why he is being punished, and parents should work especially hard to distinguish between the child and his actions. (“I love you, but I don’t like it when you play outside in your good clothes.”)

Open communication in a family is critical. Consultation should begin with very young children. They should be given choices, listened to, and reasoned with. This communicates love and respect for the child, and helps teach the techniques of moral reasoning. It does not mean that children have to agree with every parental decision, only that they should see parental authority as just, rather than dictatorial and arbitrary. In the words of the Master:

“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 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.”

(The Promulgation of Universal Peace, Vol. 1, page 163)

Play is a child’s work. It is how he learns what no one else can teach him, and how he consolidates and expands what others have taught. It does not merely refer to experimenting in a sandbox or building a block tower. For the sake of this discussion, play includes all the ways in which a child interacts with his environment. It begins in the infant and expands as the child develops more skills. It starts with concrete objects and expands into imitation of the daily activities he observes.

As a result of the development of language and imagination, a child can assume different roles, test hypotheses, and, through fantasy, explore what he sees in the world at large within the safety of his prescribed limits. Imagination is a wonderful gift that should be encouraged. It allows children their first contact with something beyond themselves, thereby laying the foundation for creative expression and spiritual understanding.

As imagination develops, the two- or three-year-old child often confuses reality and unreality, claiming such things as “I saw an
elephant in my sandbox," or waking from a nap screaming, "That monster's gonna eat me!"

Parents need to patiently help children learn the difference between what is real and what isn't. Obviously, children need to know this so they can distinguish truth from falsehood. Parents can help by giving children the proper language to express the situation and making the distinction for them. ("You saw an elephant in your sandbox? Let's pretend there is a whole zoo in there and build cages for them. Can you make believe you are an elephant?")

Parents can also encourage children to talk out their experiences. ("You were dreaming about a monster? Tell me about it. . . . Really?") The child can then explain what he remembers, and in this way along with verbal and non-verbal support from the parent can master his fear. Two good books about imagination from the child's point of view are Where the Wild Things Are, by Maurice Sendak, and And To Think That I Saw It on Mulberry St., by Dr. Seuss. As children learn to distinguish what is real from what is not, they can begin to understand truth and falsehood.

Parents can keep in mind several principles to assist their children's learning through play. One basic but not necessarily obvious principle is the importance of order and clarity in the child's world. We want our children to learn to be orderly. It is certainly a Bahá'í virtue. Children won't learn it, however, if their surroundings are always chaotic.

One simple way to help create order for a child is to provide a separate container for each toy or type of toy, and shelves for convenient, accessible storage. The child can then see individual choices (not just a jumbled mess to dig into), make a selection, and easily return it. Again the parents' example is critical.

As in learning any other attribute, the standard, order, must be applied in different ways according to the child's age (i.e., his stage of development). A toddler, for example, should know that his toys have a proper place, and should observe basic limits ("We draw on paper, not on walls.") But he can't be expected to put everything away neatly. A four-year-old, on the other hand, usually can. The important thing is to help each child develop orderly (or cooperative, or loving, or confident) habits appropriate to his capacities.

Ground rules that everyone follows help a child learn because they provide order in his world. He knows what he can expect and what he is responsible for. For example, rules like picking up and putting toys away after use mean that a child can expect to find what he wants. Rules specifying quiet areas, noisy areas, and individual property rights serve the same function.

The introduction of novelty is another principle that parents can use. To introduce novelty means to somehow change the environment so that it catches or redirects the child's interest. It can be a new toy, a recycled toy, moving a piece of furniture, inviting a friend over, a special project, etc.

Too much change over-stimulates children and too few changes mean a child is bored. The wise parent has only a few of a child's toys available to him at any one time and the rest put away until he wants a change. Special activities stored away in a parent's mind and closet can prove invaluable on rainy days or when a child is sick.

Children benefit from a variety of activities: quiet things to do and times and places to be loud, chances to engage in messy play,
opportunities to play with many children, a few children, and by themselves.

Conclusion

To learn means to develop a capacity. Even though these articles have been far too brief for anything more than a few highlights of the learning process and examples of how parents can help it, it should be clear by now that we are exploring something that is complex, challenging, extraordinary, and only partially understood. It involves every aspect of human nature: physical, mental, and spiritual. It begins at conception and continues through all the worlds of God. It is His gift to us and our obligation to Him:

"O ye beloved of God and the maidservants of the Merciful! Teaching and learning, according to the decisive texts of the Blessed Beauty, is a duty. Whoever is indifferent therein deprieth himself of the great bounty." (Abdu’l-Bahá, in Bahá’í World Faith, page 399)

Although our understanding of how people learn is still in its infancy, parents can, at least, glean a few basic principles to guide them. We know that learning builds on itself, and that sequence and timing are important factors. We know that human beings are born with a desire to learn. We know that one of the most important keys to learning is active involvement in a rich, varied, supportive environment.

Learning is one part of the larger process known as human development. Educators have now learned enough to describe roughly many of the developmental stages through which children pass. This, in turn, gives us insight into their growing capacities: what they can and cannot do, what should and should not be emphasized, and, therefore, how to help them.

Finally, we have looked at a handful of the many techniques available to parents who wish to support their children’s learning. These include the power of example, developing good habits, the use of analogy, capitalizing on “teachable moments,” using television properly, letting children teach other children, communicating effectively, and some thoughts on play.

Bahá’í parents face an overwhelming responsibility to help their children learn. It is placed upon them by the Bahá’í Writings, confirmed by research showing the importance of a child’s early years, and amplified by a disintegrating society whose schools are increasingly unable to address the true potential of a child’s foundation, Bahá’í parents can use their own ideas and the suggestions contained in this article to help create a haven for their children where, safe from the tempests of this age of transition, the “gems of inestimable value” can be mined and these young lights can learn to shine ever brighter.

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This is one of a series of articles on children, parents and families that will appear in Bahá’í News during 1979, the International Year of the Child.
Brazil

Brazil, which earlier had announced the victorious completion of its Five Year Plan goals, held its fifth National Teaching Conference of the Plan October 20-22 at Pati do Alferes, a city near Rio de Janeiro.

Brazil presently has 161 Local Spiritual Assemblies and 427 localities open to the Faith. The goals were 130 Assemblies and 400 localities. The National Spiritual Assembly has adopted supplemental goals of 180 Assemblies and 500 localities by Ridván 1979.

Among those attending the Teaching Conference were Continental Counsellors Leonora Armstrong and Raúl Pavón, six members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil, seven Auxiliary Board members, and representatives of national and regional teaching committees.

Consultation focused on expansion of the Faith in those areas of Brazil in which teaching efforts during the Five Year Plan have been relatively unsuccessful.

Twenty Bahá'ís offered to undertake teaching assignments to remote areas of the country for periods of a month or more, while several others offered to pioneer on the homefront.

The conference also dealt with ways to increase the number of prepared radio programs available to Bahá'ís. Brazil has three centers that are responsible for production of radio materials, but more are needed.

The Faith receives wide radio publicity in Brazil. Many radio station owners or managers have offered to air programs and interviews about the Faith.

An institute sponsored by the Continental Board of Counsellors for Central America was held August 20 in Martinique, French Antilles. Hooper Dunbar, one of three Counsellors who are members of the International Teaching Centre in Haifa, is standing at the left in the back row. The four Counsellors for Central America who attended are Artemus Lamb of El Salvador (fourth from left, back row), Alfred Osborne of Panama (third from right, back row), Dr. Hidayatu'llah Ahmadisyyih of Belize (third from left, third row), and Carmen de Barroso of Mexico (fourth from left, second row). Among the other friends pictured, from the islands of Martinique, Guadeloupe and St. Martin, are eight members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the French Antilles and several visiting traveling teachers.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the United States announced November 27 the establishment of a total of 1,400 Local Spiritual Assemblies in that country, marking the swift and dramatic achievement of one of its most difficult Five Year Plan goals.

The following cable, responding to the report of victory, was received from the Universal House of Justice:

"OVERJOYED SUCCESS NATIONWIDE CAMPAIGN DESIGNED ATTAIN LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY GOAL FIVE YEAR PLAN. VICTORY EVIDENCES SPIRITUAL PRIMACY CONFERRED BY MASTER ON VALIANT AMERICAN COMMUNITY. BE ASSURED OF OUR ARDENT PRAYERS BEHALF DEDICATED EFFORTS NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE AND FRIENDS THROUGHOUT NATION WIN NAY EXCEED GOAL LOCALITIES ENABLING ESTABLISHMENT BASES FUTURE LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES."

The total number of Assemblies reported to have been formed in the U.S. by November 26, the Day of the Covenant, stood at exactly 1,400, a goal that a bare two months before had appeared to be almost out of reach.

At Ríḍván 1978, the number of recognized Local Spiritual Assemblies was 987, only 165 more than the number in existence at the outset of the Plan.

On October 1, with less than seven months remaining before the end of the Plan, the number of Assemblies in the U.S. was 1,100.

By November 26, thanks largely to a fresh wave of teaching and consolidation, primarily in the southern states, the number had risen to 1,400, an astonishing increase of 300 Assemblies in less than two months. The figure is even more remarkable in view of the fact that the net increase in Assemblies formed from Ríḍván 1977 to Ríḍván 1978 was only 49.

With the Assembly' Goal won, the U.S. National Teaching Committee was directed to focus its attention and resources on winning the goal of establishing 7,000 localities in which Bahá'ís reside in the U.S. The target date for winning that goal was December 31.

In addition, the National Assembly adopted a supplemental goal of establishing a total of 1,550 Local Spiritual Assemblies in the U.S. by next April 20, the end of the Five Year Plan.

Approximately 55 Bahá'ís, representing all nine of Tanzania's Regional Teaching Committees, attended a National Teaching Conference held September 15-17. Seated in the center of the gathering is Continental Counsellor for South Central Asia Burháni’d-Din Afshin who came to Tanzania at the request of the Universal House of Justice.
Bahá'ís in El Salvador were quite active in September, October and November with teaching, dedication of a local Bahá'í Center, observance of United Nations Day, and the election of delegates to next year's National Convention.

Four teaching teams, accompanied by Continental Counsellor Artemus Lamb, members of the National Spiritual Assembly, and Auxiliary Board member Gabriel Torres, visited El Salvador's four districts in September. Eighty-five persons embraced the Faith as a result of the teaching trips, and two new localities were opened.

The Bahá'ís of Caluco, in western El Salvador, dedicated their new Center on September 23. Seventy-three adults and youth El Salvador, with a Five Year Plan goal of acquiring 20 local Hazíratu'l-Quds, has found the going quite slow.

Many of the people are extremely poor; few have land that could be given for use as a Bahá'í Center.

Recently, however, a most exciting development took place in a small village in the mountains.

Bahá'ís in the village are poor, and the land on which they live belongs to the government, yet they manage to hold Feasts and Assembly meetings and to teach in other villages.

These villagers have faith that they will one day acquire the land on which to build a Center. So they began making plans for that day by establishing a building fund.

Then a new Bahá'í in the village donated earth to make tiles for the roof of the Center. Others offered to cart the earth; women offered to bring water and gather weeds for baking the tiles.

And so, without any land, they began. Because it was the dry season, fires for baking had to be carefully planned.

The villagers made 2,000 tiles by hand, more than enough to roof a large hut. They wanted to bake them on a Holy Day—the anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb—but because of high winds, were unable to do so.

Soon, however, the day for baking arrived. Women and children arose at 2 a.m. to begin gathering the weeds and twigs needed for the fire.

At dawn the baking began. With sufficient tiles for roofing, the villagers then awaited a government resolution granting them land for the Center.

This was the first community effort to try to build a local Bahá'í Center in El Salvador without the help of pioneers, and already its repercussions are being felt.

In another town a Bahá'í had donated land for a Center, but the community wasn't consolidated and no Bahá'í activities were going on.

For two years nothing happened. Then the donor heard that another village had baked tiles for a Center without even having land, and was more determined than ever to have a Center built in his town.

A date was set, materials were donated, a building fund was started. One Sunday at noon, the believer telephoned other Bahá'ís from the country phone near his community and exclaimed, "We did it! We built it! We just finished putting up our 'glorieta' (Center)... it's only four posts and a grass roof, but it's ours!"

And so on June 25, 1978, the first Center built by only a few Bahá'ís with some help from two other believers from nearby towns was completed. It stands by a path in the mountains with a sign painted black with white letters reading, "Centro Bahá'í" (Bahá'í Center).

—Jean T. Farrand

Seventy guests were present in October at a United Nations Day observance in San Salvador, El Salvador. Seated in the center of the photo (wearing a white shirt and dark jacket) is Continental Counsellor Artemus Lamb. Graciela Gonzales of the El Salvador United Nations Organization, who spoke about the history, structure and purpose of the United Nations, is seated third from the right. and 43 children took part in the event.
Two members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for South Central Asia participated in a four-state conference August 13-15 to help train assistants to Auxiliary Board members. Nine board members and 70 assistants from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra states attended.

Counsellors Mrs. Salisa Kermani and Prof. Dipchand Khianra spoke on many aspects of the Faith, its teachings and laws, and the work of the

An event of great significance took place October 24 at Canterbury Cathedral, the seat of the Anglican Church in England, when a prayer by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the song, "Blessed Is the Spot," and three other readings from Bahá'í Scriptures were heard as part of an "Inter-Faith Prayer Vigil" held during One World Week.

Eight members of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canterbury were among those present.

For the Bahá'ís, the memorable occasion was not without poignancy, since two members of the community had passed to the Abhá Kingdom only one week before.

One was Edith Coltham, Canterbury's newest Bahá'í, who had declared her faith eight weeks earlier. The other was Joan Giddings, the first Bahá'í in Canterbury who as a pioneer had opened the city to the Faith. She was the ninth member of the Spiritual Assembly of Canterbury.

As the Bahá'í representative to the United Nations Association, Miss Giddings had helped lay much of the groundwork for the prayer vigil and Inter-Faith Exhibition at the cathedral.

Following her Bahá'í funeral on October 27, the guests gathered at the Giddings home where one of the visitors, brought by the Bahá'ís of Maidstone, declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh. The declaration assures the re-formation of the Spiritual Assembly of Maidstone—one of the goals of the Canterbury community.

More than 1,800 Bahá'ís are gathered September 24 at Alexandria Place, London, to hear the Hands of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Ruhiyih Khánum and 'Ali-Akbar Frank speak on ways in which to fulfill the remaining goals of the Five Year Plan. The meeting generated 100 offers for homefront pioneering, and about $12,000 was donated to the National Fund of the United Kingdom. It was the largest gathering of Bahá'ís from the United Kingdom ever held.
Nearly 400 Bahá’ís from 19 countries were in Yaounde, Cameroon, August 12-14 for the fourth Bahá’í International Youth Conference to be held in West Africa.

The conference was blessed by the presence of four members of the Continental Board of Counsellors: Thelma Khelgati, Friday Ekpe, Zekrollah Kazemi and Mihdi Samandari.

Dr. Samandari, who assisted greatly in planning the conference, missed its first two days because of illness, but was well enough by the third day to participate, and to visit with other Counsellors and friends a number of local officials and dignitaries in Yaounde.

A large group of the friends from Persia was on hand along with many believers from the Central African Empire and Chad.

Inspired by a message from the Universal House of Justice, 112 Bahá’ís offered their services as traveling teachers, while 18 offers to pioneer were made, including five from African believers.

As at most youth conferences, songs, dancing and music enlivened the sessions. There were special classes for the approximately 40 children who attended.

Although the weather in Yaounde was pleasant, many teaching teams later braved the torrential rains that prevail at this season, and their devoted efforts resulted in the formation of 30 Local Spiritual Assemblies in only 15 days.
The Spiritual Assembly of Nandaime, a small town in the Department of Grandad, Nicaragua, collaborated with the National Women’s Committee to host a recent Bahá’í Regional Women’s Conference.

About 40 Bahá’ís, half of whom were women, attended the day-long series of classes on such themes as “Early Bahá’í Women,” “The Education of Children,” “Courtship and Marriage,” “Prayer,” and “The Role of Women in Achieving World Unity.”

Of special interest was a presentation on agriculture and nutrition by a young Bahá’í, Srta. Rosadela Miranda.

Despite adverse travel conditions, six Bahá’í communities were represented at the conference. Lunch was prepared by several of the participants and a variety of dishes sold, with proceeds going to the National Bahá’í Fund.

The second in the series of conferences designed to deepen the Bahá’í community on the significance of family unity and the importance of the woman’s role in the search for world unity was to be held August 26-27.

—Louis Bergner

Participants at a recent Bahá’í Regional Women’s Conference at Nandaime, Nicaragua, included several families who brought their children. Also attending were pioneers Jaime Cortez from Colombia, Joye Lucas and her daughter, Mary, and Lou and Lorna Bergner and their four children from the United States; and Farideh Fletcher and Neydah Bahremand from Iran.

The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Paramaribo, Surinam, recently completed a goal of placing Bahá’í books in all public and school libraries in Surinam.

Copies of The New Garden and The Bahá’í Faith: An Introduction were presented to all public libraries through their central office, the Cultural Centre Suriname.

Then, on August 9, copies of the same books were presented to the Ministry of Education for distribution to school libraries. The Honorable Minister R. Venetiaan accepted the books on behalf of the Ministry of Education. He showed a keen interest in the Faith and its activities, and was pleased to receive the books for the school libraries.

Doolarie Veira (left) and Marijke van Lith (right), on behalf of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Paramaribo, Surinam, presented the books The New Garden and The Bahá’í Faith: An Introduction to the Honorable Minister of Education, Dr. R. Venetiaan.
Completion of its Five Year Plan goals for establishing Local Spiritual Assemblies was announced by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Portugal at a teaching conference September 14-15 in Lisbon.

Five other localities have been designated as supplemental Assembly goals to be raised before the end of the Plan.

The teaching conference, attended by 110 Bahá’ís and their children, was one of several regional conferences scheduled in Portugal during the remaining months of the Plan. Talks on teaching and consolidation were presented by Auxiliary Board members Ana Costa and Fedross Imani, and a public meeting, held in conjunction with the conference, was attended by many non-Bahá’ís.

Children’s classes were organized by the National Children’s Committee, and the children presented a skit and songs at the conference’s closing session.

A call for traveling teachers and pioneers produced nine Bahá’ís who joined teaching teams already at work in Portugal, and two youth who arose to fill Portugal’s pioneering goals in Africa.

On July 21, the Bahá’í youth and children of Pago Pago, American Samoa, presented a check for $200 to the Western Samoa Association for the Blind.

The $200 had been awarded to the Bahá’í youth and children who took part in this year’s Samoan Arts Festival.

In a letter advising the Association for the Blind of the donation, the National Spiritual Assembly of Samoa wrote:

"Such monies received in this manner are donated to the humanitarian and welfare organizations that are dedicated to helping the handicapped or those less fortunate in our society.

"The Bahá’í Faith recognizes the good work of your organization and we are happy to have the opportunity to help in this tangible way."

On the 110 participants at the Bahá’í regional teaching conference held in Lisbon, Portugal, September 14-15.

Some of the 110 participants at the Bahá’í regional teaching conference held in Lisbon, Portugal, September 14-15.

Shown here is the children’s class of Desamparados, Costa Rica. The class traveled an hour by bus recently to visit the children of Pavas. The 25 children in attendance expressed their desire to visit together again soon.
The Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone served as official "guide" last September for a New Zealand radio producer who was preparing a half-hour documentary program on the Bahá'í House of Worship in Sydney, Australia.

Mr. Featherstone, who was in Sydney attending a National Teaching Conference, answered many questions about the House of Worship and the Faith. A prayer, read in the House of Worship, was included in the program.

The producer, Errol Pike, who works for the Religious Programming Department of Radio New Zealand, produced two earlier programs on the Faith, including one that covered the 1977 International Bahá'í Conference at Auckland. He is planning another about the Martyrdom of the Bab.

Mr. Pike hopes to make the program on the House of Worship available to the Australian Broadcasting Commission after it has been aired in New Zealand.

More than 200 Bahá'ís attended Australia's final National Teaching Conference of the Five Year Plan held September 2-3 at Land Cove National Park near Sydney. The conference, which marked the last mighty push to achieve all the goals of the Five Year Plan, was attended by Bahá'ís from almost every region of Australia.

The meeting was blessed by the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone and Mrs. Featherstone, as well as Counsellors Thelma Perks and Peter Khan, six Auxiliary Board members and five National Spiritual Assembly members.

A highlight of the conference occurred when the National Spiritual Assembly and National Goals Committee informed the friends that seven of the 15 remaining Local Spiritual Assembly goals had been won. The national conference had been set as the target date for these seven new Assembly formations. Ninety-two of the 100 Five Year Plan goals were accomplished. The spirit mounted as enthusiastic applause greeted the announcement of each new Assembly.

The conference also featured workshop sessions on how to teach youth, Aborigines, Chinese, and Greeks. Children's activities included a mini-conference and outings on the park's paddle steamer and to the zoo. The evenings were filled with music, dancing and songs by a Persian choir. One person declared his belief in Bahá'u'lláh.

The conference ended with a renewed assurance that all of Australia's goals would be won.

More than 200 Bahá'ís attended Australia's final National Teaching Conference of the Five Year Plan September 2-3 at Land Cove National Park near Sydney. This photo was taken at a special worship service at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Sydney following the conference. Attending were the Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone and two members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia, Thelma Perks and Dr. Peter Khan.
Raising the flag of international peace: Bahá'ís and the UN
ANNOUNCE WITH UTMOST JOY DECISION TO LAUNCH DURING FORTHCOMING RIDVAN FESTIVITIES A SEVEN YEAR GLOBAL PLAN CONSTITUTING NEXT STAGE MASTER'S STEADILY UNFOLDING DIVINE PLAN. CONFIDENT MOMENTOUS DECISION TAKEN IN MIDST SEVERE CRISIS SHAKING CRADLE FAITH AND WHILE EFFORTS BAHÁ'Í WORLD COMMUNITY ARE STRENUOUSLY BENT UPON FULFILMENT GOALS FIVE YEAR PLAN WILL RELEASE OUTPOURING SPIRITUAL ENERGY ACCELERATE DESTINED PROGRESS BAHÁ'Í WORLD COMMUNITY NOW GRADUALLY APPEARING IN SHARPER RELIEF BEFORE EYES OF A BEWILDERED HUMANITY FLOUNDERING IN DEPTHS OF CONFLICT AND MORAL DEGRADATION.

DETAILS PLANS NATIONAL COMMUNITIES FOR INITIAL TWO-YEAR PHASE NEW PLAN NOW BEING EVOLVED IN CONSULTATION WITH INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE WILL SHORTLY BE ANNOUNCED TO EACH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. THIS INITIAL PHASE WILL CALL FOR GREATER PROCLAMATION, CONTINUED CONSOLIDATION AND WIDER EXPANSION. NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES ARE THEREFORE URGED ENSURE THAT TEACHING ACTIVITIES ARE PURSUED WITH CONTINUING VIGOUR INTO OPENING YEARS NEW PLAN, THAT PIONEERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO REMAIN AT THEIR POSTS, THAT PROCESS DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY LIFE IS UNINTERRUPTEDLY SUSTAINED, AND THAT MOMENTUM NOW IMPELLING BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY FORWARD IS MAINTAINED.

URGE ALL NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES SHARE THIS MESSAGE IMMEDIATELY WITH FRIENDS UNDER THEIR JURISDICTION INVITING THEM MAKE SPECIAL EFFORT ATTEND NATIONAL CONVENTIONS NEXT RIDVÁN CELEBRATE VICTORIOUS CONCLUSION FIVE YEAR PLAN SIMULTANEOUSLY INAUGURATE SEVEN YEAR PLAN.

Owing importance next convention request national spiritual assemblies consider extending wherever practicable its duration by one or two days. We are calling on counsellors in addition to their own participation to encourage auxiliary board members to attend these portentous conventions.

As the turmoil of an agitated world surges about them the supporters of BAHÁ'ULLÁH'S MAJESTICALLY RISING FAITH MUST, AS THE BELOVED GUARDIAN SO CLEARLY INDICATED, SCALE NOBLER HEIGHTS OF HEROISM, SERENELY CONFIDENT THAT THE HOUR OF THEIR MIGHTIEST EXERTIONS MUST COINCIDE WITH THE LOWEST EBB OF MANKIND'S FAST DECLINING FORTUNES.

FERVENTLY SUPPLICATING BAHÁ'ULLÁH BOUNTIFULLY BLESS STRENuous EFFORTS HIS DEVOTED SERVANTS EVERY LAND WIN EVERY GOAL FIVE YEAR PLAN ENSURE FIRM FOUNDATION NEXT STAGE WORLDWIDE DEVELOPMENT GOD'S HOLY CAUSE.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
December 26, 1978
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Cover

This issue of Bahá’í News is devoted to the activities of the Bahá’í International Community at the United Nations. The photo on the cover shows United Nations Headquarters in New York City. On the back cover, top, is a photo of the United Nations General Assembly Hall, also located in New York City. The bottom photo on the back cover shows the United Nations office in Geneva, Switzerland, the Palais des Nations, once the headquarters for the League of Nations.
Right, French artisans who are installing marble for the permanent Seat of the Universal House of Justice on Mt. Carmel guide a capital into place atop one of the building's 58 columns. The photographs on the left, taken January 24, 1979, show all 58 columns erected. In the top left photograph, portions of the marble entablature can be seen installed on top of the Corinthian capitals of the columns, as well as part of the marble facing on the drum of the dome. The bottom left photograph shows the marble facing installed on the outside wall of the upper basement level.
Raising the flag of international peace: Bahá'ís and the United Nations

The close relationship shared by the Bahá'í Faith and the United Nations (UN) has its roots in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the United States in 1912.

On the morning of October 26, 1912, in the crowded Assembly Hall of the Hotel Sacramento in Sacramento, California, He spoke about the need for international peace. "The greatest need in the world today," 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "is international peace. The time is ripe. It is time for abolition of warfare, the unification of nations and governments. It is the time for love. It is time for cementing together the east and the west . . . May the first flag of international peace be upraised in this state."

Thirty-three years later, as the Centenary Celebrations for the Birth of the Bahá'í Faith were drawing to a close, the Bahá'ís in California were busy making plans to proclaim the Faith during the Allied Nations Conference, scheduled to begin in San Francisco on April 21, 1945. "The calling of the Allied Nations Conference at San Francisco," said a report in the April-May 1945 issue of Bahá'í News, "unexpectedly and most gloriously provided the unique occasion of occasions to promulgate the Bahá'í principles on universal peace. This international action filled the hearts of the believers to overflowing, as they saw in it the providential fulfillment of the Master's mission in America, His fertilizing of the continent with the seeds of the future order, and His prophetic utterances and promises concerning America's role; and His words concerning California."

The Bahá'í proclamation activities included:

- radio broadcasts
- extensive newspaper coverage
- "the largest meeting (650 in attendance) of any peace organization held in San Francisco during the Peace Conference"*
- a special banquet for dignitaries attending the conference
- publication of a Bahá'í Peace Pamphlet* which was distributed to all persons connected with the conference, to the "leading citizens of the San Francisco area,"** and was used in a local teaching effort
- exhibits that featured a model of the Bahá'í House of Worship, Bahá'í literature, maps, and placards
- the appointment of official Bahá'í observers at the Allied Nations Conference—Marion Holley and Sylvia Ioas

The conference met for two months and drafted the United Nations Charter, completing its work in June 1945. The Charter came into effect on October 24 of that year, almost 33 years to the day from the time 'Abdu'l-Bahá prayed that the flag of international peace would be raised in California.

The Bahá'í participation in the Allied Nations Conference made a lasting impression on many official delegates there. One, Sir Ramaswami Mudaliär, the representative from India, wrote: "A little group of Bahá'ís who were at the conference and met me afterwards, congratulated me on having given expression on that world platform to some of the beliefs they held dear. That is how I have become acquainted and soon deeply interested in the Bahá'í

Below, one of the many Bahá'í exhibits used for proclamation of the Faith during the Allied Nations Conference. This one was in the Yazdi Bookstore in San Francisco.
Top, Ugo Giachery and Mildred Mottahedeh were two of the first official representatives of the Bahá’í International Community. This picture was taken in 1948, at the first United Nations Conference that the International Community ever attended.

Bottom, Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar (left), the official delegate from India at the Allied Nations Conference, and his secretary, Mr. Nadar, visiting the Bahá’í House of Worship in 1945. Sir Mudaliar first heard about the Bahá’í Faith at the conference.

Faith... The Bahá’í Faith remarkably speaks not of one Prophet for all time but of a succession of prophets as Divine Dispensation sees the need for them... How much the world needs such a spirit today.16

The Bahá’ís in North America continued to maintain an active interest in the development of the United Nations until, in the spring of 1947, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States and Canada became affiliated with the United Nations Office of Public Information (OPI) as a national non-governmental organization (NGO).

The National Assembly then established a United Nations Committee, appointed official observers, and, as an NGO, submitted two formal statements to different UN bodies.

The first, “A Bahá’í Declaration of Human Obligations and Rights,”17 was presented to the Human Rights Commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. The Commission was at that time drafting a world bill of rights. The second statement, submitted to the UN Commission on the Status of Women, dealt with the Bahá’í view of the rights of women.8

It was during this period, also, that Shoghi Effendi, at the request of the UN Commission on Palestine, submitted a statement explaining the relationship between the Bahá’í Faith and the Holy Land. In the statement, he also elucidated the principles and aims of the Faith.

A short time afterward, under the direction of the Guardian, the eight existing National Spiritual Assemblies, represented by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, applied for recognition as an international NGO, under the name “Bahá’í International Community.”9 This affiliation with the OPI was granted in March 1948.

“‘Recognition extended to the Faith by United Nations as an international non-governmental body,’” cabled Shoghi Effendi, “enabling appointment of accredited representatives to United Nations conferences is heralding world recognition for a universal proclamation of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh.”10

1948 was the first year that the United States and Canada elected separate National Spiritual Assemblies. In his cable to the convention in the United States, the Guardian included internationally-based recognition of the Faith by the United Nations as one of the outstanding achievements of the American
community, "... whose spokesmen are securing recognition of the institutions of Bahá'u'lláh's rising world order in the United Nations." 11

The Bahá'í International Community first officially participated in a United Nations conference in May of 1948, at an NGO conference on human rights. Ugo Giachery, Mildred Mottahedeh, and Mason Remey represented the Bahá'í International Community. They presented a prepared statement to the delegates attending the conference, and introduced resolutions based on Bahá'í principles that were adopted by the body of the conference.

Mildred Mottahedeh continued on as the official UN observer until 1967, when the Universal House of Justice took over supervision of the Bahá'í International Community office from the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States. Dr. Victor de Araujo was then appointed as the first full-time accredited representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations.

The Universal House of Justice has continued the policy established more than 30 years ago by Shoghi Effendi, and places great importance on strengthening the relationship between the Bahá'í Faith and the UN. There have been several significant milestones in this relationship recently, beginning in 1970 when the Bahá'í International Community was granted consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). "Joyfully announce Bahá'í world," cabled the Universal House of Justice on February 18, "attainment consultative status United Nations Economic and Social Council thereby fulfilling long cherished hope beloved Guardian and World Centre goal Nine Year Plan. Sustained persistent efforts more than twenty years accredited representatives Bahá'í International Community United Nations devoted support Bahá'í communities throughout world finally rewarded. Significant achievement adds prestige influence recognition ever advancing Faith Bahá'u'lláh." 12

Other milestones include the Bahá'í International Community's affiliation, in 1973, with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, and, in 1976, the achievement of consultative status with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The Bahá'í International Community office staff at UN headquarters in New York has currently been expanded to six full-time

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At the far right is Dr. Victor de Araujo, the first full-time accredited representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations. At Dr. de Araujo's right is Kurt Waldheim, Secretary General of the United Nations.
One of the ways in which Bahá’ís around the world help support the broad aims of the United Nations Charter is by participating in the observance of special UN events. 1979 is the International Year of the Child, and many Bahá’í communities around the world have planned special activities to help celebrate it. At the left, children from five continents ring the Peace Bell at the United Nations, in honor of Universal Children’s Day, October 10.

The relationship between the United Nations and the Bahá’í International Community has dramatically expanded in scope during the last 30 years. The International Community’s current involvement in UN activities includes the areas of human rights, social development, status of women, environment, human settlements, world food, science and technology for development, population, law of the sea, crime prevention, narcotic drugs, youth, the family, and the UN university. It has furnished information, submitted statements and reports, or published brochures on most of these subjects, presenting them at different UN world conferences and congresses, regional conferences, and seminars.

The Bahá’í International Community has also continued to cooperate fully in UN public information programs both at UN headquarters in New York as well as on a local community level around the world by observing such annual events as UN Day, World Development Information Day, Human Rights Day, Universal Children’s Day, and World Environment Day. Bahá’í communities around the globe have also become well known for their vigorous support of UN special years, such as International Women’s Year, or the current International Year of the Child.

“Daily the doors open to further evolution in our collective relationship to UN,” wrote the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States in September 1948, “and, through it, in our contacts with other organizations. These possibilities are to be cherished by every believer. United Nations is vital to the establishment of the Lesser Peace, and in this role it is part of the destiny unfolding within mankind under the guidance of Bahá’u’lláh.”

“If the work of the United Nations,” commented the October 1975 issue of Bahá’í News, “—eighty-five percent of it in the economic and social areas—represents a preparation for the Lesser Peace, so does that of the Bahá’í world community. We are building the Most Great Peace; but as the Guardian explained so many years ago, the work Bahá’ís do is also essential for the coming into being of the Lesser Peace: ‘He (the Guardian) cannot urge you all sufficiently, and through you the . . . believers, the importance of Bahá’ís realizing that direct, concentrated and efficiently carried out Bahá’í work is not only their supreme duty but the best way they can serve the interests of humanity and hasten the day when at least the Lesser Peace will become a reality.’”
The Baha’i International Community’s statement to the World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination

The Baha’i International Community wishes the World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination all possible success in its deliberations. The observations that follow, resulting from the experience of Baha’i communities around the world in the progressive eradication of all kinds of prejudice and discrimination—including those based on race—are offered as a contribution to the Conference proceedings.

Since, in the view of the Baha’i International Community, the progress of the world, the development of nations, the tranquility of peoples, and the peace of all who dwell on earth are among the principles and ordinances of God, the elimination of prejudice and discrimination—whether of race, nationality, sex, creed, or class—cannot be achieved without proper education, without proper attitudes and values, without proper motivation. It is possible to achieve the organic unity of the entire human race—the fundamental need of our world and the goal of the Baha’i world community—but it cannot be done without appropriate guidance and will.

In the Baha’i view, the elimination of racism and racial discrimination is dependent on a consciousness of world unity. It involves a spiritual awakening of the peoples of the world to the realization that, first of all, the attainment of even their own happiness is dependent upon the realization of a like condition for all others in the human family. Beyond this change in attitude, and underlying it, there must be a conscious recognition of our human dependence upon one God and a desire to become educated to values and teachings which today can alone rescue man from his pursuit of selfish interests and the oppression of his fellow beings.

The Baha’i International Community is multi-national, multi-racial, and multi-lingual. Baha’is regard all people as invaluable members of society, whose talents and unique contributions, as individuals and groups—whether in the minority or the majority—are equally important factors in building a world order; and they regard their individual culture, heritage, and mother-tongue with pride and admiration, but at the same time are conscious of their existence in a diversified world in which other peoples, cultures, languages, and heritages must live in harmony.

The Baha’i world community is attempting to put into practice the Teachings and principles of Bahá’u’lláh, Founder of the Baha’i Faith, which it has accepted as the source of spiritual education for humanity and the guidance for the well-being and happiness of all members of the human race. It is oriented to the new standards of life in every aspect, and believes that in a world society, “science and religion, the two most potent forces in human life,” must be reconciled, cooperate, and develop harmoniously.

Today, more than 1,600 tribes and ethnic groups are represented in the more than 80,000 centers of the growing Baha’i world community. Thus, in more than 300 countries and territories (151 of these independent nations), Baha’i communities
are experiencing the joy of bringing into unity people of the most diverse backgrounds.

Minorities and indigenous peoples in many cultures and territories have become part of the Bahá’í International Community, sometimes in great numbers. Every Bahá’í community, in fact, should feel it to be its first and inescapable obligation to nurture, encourage, and safeguard every minority belonging to any faith, race, class or nation within it. 2

In addition, Bahá’ís are aware that to discriminate against any race, on the ground of its being socially backward, politically immature, and numerically in a minority, is a flagrant violation of the spirit that animates the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh . . . If any discrimination is to be at all tolerated, it should be a discrimination not against, but rather in favor of the minority, be it racial or otherwise. 3

A few passages from the Bahá’í Writings will serve to illustrate even more clearly the Bahá’í position on race:

Close your eyes to racial differences, and welcome all with the light of oneness. 4

Man is endowed with powers to investigate reality, and the reality is humanity is one in mind and equal in the creative plan. Therefore false distinctions of race and nativity which are factors and causes of warfare must be abandoned. 5

In the estimation of God, all men are equal. There is no distinction or preference for any soul, in the realm of His justice and equity. 6

The central obstacle preventing the abolition of racism and racial discrimination is, in the view of the Bahá’í International Community, a limited understanding of the nature of the human being and the source of his happiness. As a being not only endowed with body, but with mind and spirit—a physical, intellectual, and spiritual person—the aspirations—and the happiness—of a human being depend on the development of his high spiritual potentialities, individually and socially.

The qualities that are inherent in all peoples, and that need nurturing and full expression in society, are love and compassion, justice, and such moral qualities as trust, honesty, and truthfulness. The development of these virtues is the basis for unity, and can provide a true appreciation of the spiritual value and worth of all human beings.

The education that Bahá’ís recognize as essential in the elimination of prejudice is therefore the recognition of divine teachings and law, and obedience to them. A clear view of the progressive nature of religion and the gradual unfoldment of a divine plan destined to bring about world peace and a world civilization enables Bahá’ís to strive for the elimination of prejudice in themselves and in their communities. In actuality, 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. 7

The goal for which the Bahá’í International Community is striving is, therefore, in essence, a world society in which national rivalries, hatreds, and intrigues will cease, and racial animosity and prejudice will be replaced by racial amity, understanding and cooperation. 8

1. Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh, pp. 129-130.
2. The Advent of Divine Justice, p. 29.
3. ibid.
4. ibid., p. 31.
8. ibid., p. 204.
The Bahá’í International Community’s statement to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament

The Bahá’í International Community, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), has the pleasure of submitting the following observations, and excerpts from the Bahá’í Writings, as a contribution to the important work of the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament:

In the view of the Bahá’í International Community, disarmament is essential for the abolition of war as a solution to human problems. It is a goal for both governments and peoples. We—one interdependent race—live on one small planet, in an age of transition between nationalism and globalism, when the needs of one country and its people are still set above the needs of humanity as a whole.

General and complete disarmament by the nations of the world demands, then, that governments and peoples increase their awareness of the organic oneness of the human race: every person as a cell in the body of humanity, each nation an aggregate of cells in the body of the planet, all living in health and happiness only when the body itself is well.

Disarmament requires also the creation of a world federation, with the necessary organs to rule with justice on behalf of all governments and peoples. The health of both the nation-state and the world as a whole, in the Bahá’í view, will continue to suffer until all governments agree to establish such a supra-national body, an institution with power to control—and gradually eliminate—the disunity between nations.

Such a world body must have at its command enough arms and armed forces to prevent one nation from attacking another or, if this occurs, to put down the aggressor; and each nation will retain only sufficient arms to keep internal order. Only then will a devastating world war become impossible and limited wars be stopped permanently. Nations will join with one another to resolve not only the global problems of education, food, employment, etc., but also those crucial issues of international morality, law, and order, without which there can be no lasting peace.

The Bahá’í International Community recognizes that there is no easy road to world peace. National governments certainly bear a responsibility to prevent war, to seek ways to unite and disarm, reaching out to a political agreement—the first stage of world peace:

*Today, the task befitting great rulers is to establish peace, for in this lies the freedom of all peoples.*

Ultimately, however, it is also the task of each person, through an awareness of his real nature as a servant of one Creator and member of one human family, to fulfill the divine will of bringing all peoples into harmony and peace, freeing the planet from poverty and war. In this second stage—of true world unity and peace—individual and social well-being will be expressed in a civilization reflecting the spiritual values of love, compassion, and
Disarmament, Peace, and True Civilization

Bahá’u’l-khána... wrote to all the kings and rulers encouraging, advising and admonishing them in regard to the establishment of peace; making it evident by conclusive proofs that the happiness and glory of humanity can only be assured through disarmament and arbitration.

By a general agreement all the governments of the world must disarm simultaneously. It will not do if one lays down its arms and the others refuse to do so. The nations of the world must concur with each other concerning this supremely important subject, so that they may abandon together the deadly weapons of human slaughter. As long as one nation increases her military and naval budget other nations will be forced into this crazed competition through their natural and supposed interests.

How many thousands have given up their work in useful industries and are laboring day and night to produce new and deadlier weapons which would spill out the blood of the race more copiously than before. Each day they invent a new bomb or explosive and then the governments must abandon their obsolete arms and begin producing the new, since the old weapons cannot hold their own against the new. The staggering cost of it all must be borne by the hapless masses.

The following words of Bahá’u’l-khána are indeed significant as we pause to reflect upon the present state of a strangely disordered world: “How long will humanity persist in its waywardness? How long will injustice continue? How long is chaos and confusion to reign amongst men? How long will discord agitate the face of society? The winds of despair are, alas, blowing from every direction, 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.

True civilization will unfurl its banner in the midstmost 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 fundamental principles underlying the relations of governments towards one another definitely laid down, and all international agreements and regulations ascertained. In like manner, the size of the armed forces of every government should be strictly limited, so that the provocations for war and the military forces of any nation which are allowed to increase, they will arouse the suspicions of others. It is the fundamental principle underlying this solemn Pact that should be fixed that if any government later violate any of its provisions, all the governments on earth shall arise to reduce it to submission, may the human race as a whole should regard as 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.

Observe that if such a happy situation be forthcoming, the government would need continually to pile up weapons of war, nor feel itself obliged to produce ever new military weapons, which to conquer the human race. Small forces for the purposes of internal security, the correction of criminal and disorderly elements and the prevention of local disturbances, would be required—no more. In this way the entire population would, first of all, be relieved of the crushing burden of expenditure customarily imposed for military purposes, and secondly, great numbers of people would cease to devote their time to the continual development of new weapons of destruction—those testimonies of greed and bloodthirstiness, so inconsistent with the gift of life and mercy, instead bend their efforts to the production of whatever will secure human existence and peace and well-being, and would become the cause of universal development and prosperity. Then entire nation on earth will reign in honor, and every people will be cradled in tranquility and content.

A few, unaware of the power latent in human endeavor, consider this matter as highly impracticable, nay even beyond the scope of man’s utmost efforts. Such is not the case. On the contrary, thanks to the unfailing grace of God, the loving-kindness of His favored ones, the unrivaled exaltation of the world and capable souls, and the thoughts and ideas of the prophets and exemplars of this age, nothing whatsoever can be regarded as unattainable. Endeavor, ceaseless endeavor, is required. Nothing can be achieved by 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 beautiful light shall shed illumination upon the assemblage of man.
The Oneness of Mankind

"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." 7

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 cooperation 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 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. 8

A World Super-State

Some form of a world Super-State must needs be developed, in whose favor 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 the purposes of maintaining internal order within their respective dominions. Such a 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 judgment 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 Labor definitely recognized; in which the clamor 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 judgment 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. 9

2. Foundations of World Unity, p. 25.
3. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted in Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, p. 175.
5. The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 32.
7. The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 41.
8. ibid., pp. 42-43.
The Department of Publishing at the Bahá'í World Centre has been requested to gather original poetry, essays and music with or inspired by Bahá'í themes for consideration by the Editorial Committee in compiling the volumes of The Bahá'í World.

Believers who have composed poetry, essays or music that they feel have merit are invited to submit their compositions, whether or not they have been published previously, together with a letter consenting to their publication by the World Centre if they are selected for inclusion.

Copyright clearance should be obtained where necessary. Submission of material to the World Centre does not preclude submission of the same material to other sources of publication, Bahá'í or non-Bahá'í. Although only a small selection can be used, a necessity dictated by the limited size of the international record, all material will be considered and its receipt acknowledged.

Kindly address submissions to the Department of Publishing, Bahá'í World Centre, P.O. Box 155, Haifa 31-000, Israel.

On October 28, Continental Counsellor Mas'ud Khamsi, members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Peru, and more than 60 members of the Peruvian Bahá'í community met with 83-year-old Dr. Victor Raul Haya de la Torre, the newly-elected president of Peru's Assembly of the Constituent.

The Assembly of the Constituent is formulating a new constitution for Peru, especially focusing on laws governing the election of future presidents of the republic. The purpose of the Bahá'í visit was to present Bahá'í viewpoints on justice and administration that might prove helpful to the lawmakers in drawing up the new constitution.

President de la Torre was impressed with the diversity of the Bahá'í delegation that included young and old, men and women, Indians and whites, villagers and city people. "I receive with much sympathy this visit," he said, "because it represents ideals that we also profess, even though imperfectly.

One hundred members of the Assembly of the Constituent were given a Bahá'í pamphlet and brief statement of Bahá'í administrative, elective and consultative principles.

Permission to visit the president was given less than 24 hours after the request was made by the National Spiritual Assembly. The visit received coverage in some newspapers.

Dr. Victor Raul Haya de la Torre (right), president of the Assembly of the Constituent in Peru, shakes hands with Continental Counsellor Mas'ud Khamsi, a member of the Bahá'í delegation that met with him October 28. Isabel de Sánchez, secretary of the Peruvian National Spiritual Assembly, is standing to the president's right.

Among the Bahá'ís who visited Peruvian President Victor Raul Haya de la Torre October 28 were (right to left) Auxiliary Board member Fernando Schiantarelli; Grover Gonzales, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Peru; and a newly-enrolled Shipibo Indian Bahá'í woman from the Peruvian Amazon.
While waiting for harvest time, Thong Di, a Baha'i in the Baan Don Klang village of Thailand, decided to look up a long-lost friend and do some teaching at the same time.

Mr. Di, a shy man, went to the Baha'i Center in his village, prayed for assistance, and set out for Baan Thung Nang Ohk village to find his friend, Boon Si. Once there, Thong Di greeted his friend humbly, told him briefly about the Faith, and asked that he investigate it for himself. He advised his friend to go to the Baha'i Center for more information.

Boon Si was so excited about what he had learned that he returned to his village and told others. Soon he came to the Baha'i Center with a paper on which eight of his neighbors had indicated that they wished to become Baha'is. He asked the believers to accompany him to Baan Thung Nang Ohk.

Eleven of the villagers were waiting to be enrolled, and wanted to form a Local Spiritual Assembly immediately. They did so and elected officers the same day. The next morning, all of them reported that they had had “the most beautiful dreams in their lives,” and that they were more relaxed and happy than they had ever been before.

One of the new believers took some teaching material, in the form of an album, and walked around the village, sharing the news of the Baha'i Faith with the other villagers. The others, too, promised to share the Faith with their families and relatives.

That evening, a meeting and deepening class was held at which the new believers studied Baha'i prayers and The Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah. About 20 men and 15 women attended. The separate discussion held by the women was conducted by Boon Si's daughter, who, like the others, had been enrolled as a Baha'i for exactly one day.

"Their knowledge and understanding of the Writings was deep, simple, and pure," a witness to the event reported. "One of them said, 'God is in our hearts if we love and obey Him; if we disobey, He goes away.'" They studied the short obligatory prayer word for word.

Meanwhile, Mr. Di is going to other villages, hoping to tell other long-lost friends about Baha'u'llah. "Soon the Faith will encompass this whole region," one person reported.

An arts and crafts competition was held during the National Teaching Conference at Um-gababa, South Africa, October 14-15. Helping to judge the various entries are (from the left) Mrs. Anisa Cumberbatch of Durban, Mrs. Tabitha Tombisa of Pretoria, Auxiliary Board member Mrs. Cecilia Nodada of Transkei, and Miss Dawn Jensen, a newly-arrived pioneer from California. The Teaching Conference also included a demonstration children’s class as part of its activities.
Last August, a month-long teaching trip to the Republic of Cape Verde by Jack and Wandra Harmsen, U.S. pioneers to Portugal, resulted in the establishment of a Local Spiritual Assembly at Praia, the capital of Cape Verde, for the first time in 20 years.

The Republic of Cape Verde is an archipelago of nine islands off the coast of West Africa. The islands received their independence from Portugal in 1975. Cape Verde does not have a National Spiritual Assembly yet, but is under the guidance of the National Spiritual Assembly of Senegal.

Cape Verde was opened to the Faith in 1954, during the Ten Year Crusade, by Howard and Joanne Menking, both of whom are Knights of Bahá'u'lláh.

The Menkings were instrumental in helping to form the first Spiritual Assembly in the islands, at Praia. Owing to restrictions placed on the Bahá'ís by the government, however, the Assembly was unable to function after 1957 and Bahá'í community life in the islands came to a virtual standstill.

With independence came greater religious freedom, and the Bahá'ís of Praia once again were eager to form their Local Assembly. One purpose of the Harmsens' visit was to help in its formation.

Upon the Harmsens' arrival on August 5, plans were made to re-establish the Assembly before the end of that month.

Nine public meetings were held. The friends in Cape Verde participated actively by bringing a steady flow of non-Bahá'í friends and relatives. One meeting was attended by 35 adults and 15 children.

Within two weeks, 14 Cape Verdians had accepted Bahá'u'lláh. Deepening classes soon were set up for the new believers.

On August 18, the first election in 20 years of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Praia was held. Every adult Bahá'í in the community took part in the election, and two days later all nine members of the newly-elected Assembly were present for the election of its officers.

The Cape Verdian Bahá'ís are being confirmed for the long years they patiently kept the fire of Bahá'u'lláh's Cause alive in their hearts, and are confident and excited about the prospects for the Faith in their country.—Jack Harmsen

Top, the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Praia, Republic of Cape Verde, elected last August 18. Fourteen Cape Verdians accepted Bahá'u'lláh during that month, making the Praia community (left) large enough to form its first Assembly in 20 years. Below, children entertain the adults during the Nineteen Day Feast of Asmá (Names) last August 20.
Eleven of the 50 Bahá’í women who attended a special conference October 29-30 in Tawaimane, South Malaita, in the Solomon Islands offered either one or two weeks of their time for teaching, deepening and consolidation work among Bahá’í communities in remote areas.

After a special training session, the teams would travel and teach, returning to share their experiences as an inspiration to other women who could arise and take a more active role in the teaching work in the Solomons.

The conference included discussions and presentations about teaching and living the Bahá’í life. During the sessions, men cared for the 13 children who attended. Men also prepared the meals. An evening program of audio-visual and musical presentations attracted many non-Bahá’ís and a total audience of about 150.

More than 300 people attended a United Nations Day celebration October 24 sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Solomon Islands. The Solomons became the 150th member of the United Nations last September 17.

The Governor General of the Solomons, Baddeley Devesi, and the secretary of Foreign Affairs and UN representative, Francis Bugotu, headed the delegation of government commissioners and deputies, other UN representatives, British and Australian diplomatic personnel, representatives of religious and civic groups, teachers, students, and others. The celebration was held in the auditorium of the Solomon Islands Training College in Honiara.

The program included the Solomons’ national anthem, two other songs, a Bahá’í prayer for unity, and some remarks by Earl Cameron, who presided on behalf of the Bahá’í community. Mr. Bugotu was the featured speaker for the event.

The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum lunched with a number of prominent citizens of Belfast, Ireland, last September including Nobel Prize winner Mairead Corrigan and Kieran McKeon, the leader of an organization dedicated to the cause of peace.

The luncheon followed a Victory Conference for Northern Ireland in Belfast at which she was one of the speakers. The conference, held September 9-10, was attended by about 200 Bahá’ís from throughout the British Isles.

Also present at the conference were Continental Counsellor Adib Taherzadeh, representatives of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Ireland and the United Kingdom, and an Auxiliary Board member.

The conference produced 11 offers to pioneer to Northern Ireland by believers from the United Kingdom, and another 20 volunteers for teaching projects there.

Following the conference, a public meeting in the town of Carrickfergus resulted in two enrollments.

The next day, Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum met with the Lord Mayor of Belfast, presenting him with a copy of Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh. A photo of the presentation appeared in the province’s leading daily newspaper.

Thomas Craig (center), the mayor of Londonderry, Northern Ireland, plants a ‘tree for peace’ at a city park as Mrs. Vida Lake, chairman of the Spiritual Assembly of Londonderry, and Richard St. Barbre Baker look on. Dr. St. Barbre Baker, who was on a teaching tour last summer in Britain and Northern Ireland, is a Bahá’í who founded the worldwide conservation organization, ‘The Men of the Trees.’ In Londonderry he met with civic leaders and lectured to more than 60 people at the local university on ‘My Life, My Trees,’ mentioning the Faith in the course of his address. His activities resulted in considerable press coverage for the local Bahá’í community.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the United States is producing a number of proclamation materials for the United Nations' International Year of the Child, following the theme, "Love That Child." Promotional materials will include ads (such as the one at the right), posters, radio and television public service announcements, T-shirts, buttons, balloons, bumper stickers, and bookmarks. The campaign even has its own theme song. Materials can be obtained by writing the Baha'i Publishing Trust, 415 Linden Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois, U.S.A., 60091.

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Baha'i Faith

International Year of the Child
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Cover

This issue of Bahá’í News features a report on the West African Bahá’í Women’s Conference held last December 28-31 in Monrovia, Liberia. The conference logo, conceived and produced by K. Adalkalam, incorporates three symbols: a woman in prayer, representing mankind; the sun, representing the Sun of Reality; and a bird in flight, representing the Holy Spirit bringing spiritual education for the perfection of mankind.

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To All National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá’í Friends:

From reports in the news media you have no doubt learned of the disturbances in Írán. The followers of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh have in the land of its birth once again been subjected to severe persecution and active repression.

The National Spiritual Assembly compiled during the month of October 1978 a list of 93 cases dealing with personal injuries inflicted upon individual believers and of damages to houses, shops, crops and livestock, as well as to local Ḥażíratu’l-Quds. During the month of December organized mobs attacked Bahá’ís and their properties in Shíráz and its environs. As a result of these attacks over 300 homes were either burned or destroyed, and some 200 looted. In these events 15 believers were beaten and wounded, and two were killed. Fortunately the intention of the attackers to destroy the Holy House of the Báb was not carried out, but the spirit of aggressive animosity towards the Bahá’ís spread to several centres throughout the province of Fars, including the town of Marvdasht, where 31 Bahá’í homes were looted and the imposing structure of the local Ḥażíratu’l-Quds reared by that community was razed to the ground.

Following these events, a wave of persecution spread to the north of the country. In several towns and villages of Áḏhirbáyján, and particularly in Mihán-du-Āb, the onslaught was severe. In the latter town the first target was the local Ḥażíratu’l-Quds, which was totally destroyed, and this was followed by the burning or looting of 80 homes and the brutal murder of two believers, a father and his son, whose bodies were then dragged through the streets, cut into pieces, and consigned to the flames.

The organized and violent assaults on Bahá’í lives and properties have emboldened and incited hooligans all over the country, and the oppressed Bahá’ís are constantly under threat of mass aggression and assault.

The acts of hostility against Bahá’ís have so far cost four lives, millions of dollars in loss of property, and the displacement of some 700 individuals who have become homeless. The spirit of the Bahá’ís, however, is very high, and acts of heroism and magnanimity have been reported, which historians will record for posterity.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Írán has instituted a special fund for the relief of the needy and suffering from among the believers in that country. The House of Justice has already contributed a sum of $135,000 to this fund, and it calls upon all friends in every land to offer of their substance, at this hour of need, to help their
tormented brethren in the Cradle of the Faith. All contributions should preferably be sent to the Universal House of Justice, which will ensure that the contributions are transmitted safely to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran.

The House of Justice further calls on the friends the world over to join it in fervent prayers for the protection of the Faith and the Holy Places and for the relief and deliverance of the beloved and steadfast friends in Iran. It particularly invites the friends to pray daily during the period of the Fast, supplicating Bahá'u'lláh that the distressing plight of the Persian Community may be mitigated and that their sorrows and deprivations may be transmuted into comfort and joy through His grace and bounty.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice

April 1979/Bahá'í News 3
On March 8, 1964, a cablegram was sent to the World Centre in Haifa, Israel, from Temuco, Chile: "JOYFULLY INFORM MASS TEACHING STARTED AMONG MAPUCHE TRIBES CAUTIN PROVINCE SOUTHERN CHILE.

The author of the cable was the Hand of the Cause of God Jalál Kháżeh, the first of several Hands of the Cause to visit and teach in that spiritually fertile region among the Mapuche and Araucanian Indians.

Since that message was sent, many wonderful things have happened among these friends in the far south of the world. Today there are close to 9,000 Mapuche believers and more than 90 Local Spiritual Assemblies in the provinces of Cautín, Malleco and Arauco.

The Mapuches have been represented since 1972 on the National Spiritual Assembly of Chile, and from among them have come an Auxiliary Board member and many assistants to the Auxiliary Board.

These friends have received the great bounty of having been visited and taught by the Hands of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, Abú’l-Qásim Faizi, Dr. Rahmatu’lláh Muhájir and Olinga, in addition to Mr. Kháżeh, and by Continental Counsellors Hooper Dunbar, Mas’úd Khámsí and Athos Costas.

In addition, there has been a small but constant flow of homefront and American pioneers to the area; presently, two pioneers from the U.S. are living in Cautín Province.

Instrumental in the beginning of the teaching work among the Indians in Cautín was Katherine Meyer, a pioneer from the U.S. and Knight of Bahá’u’lláh who was named an Auxiliary Board member for protection while living in the Mapuche region. She remained for five years among the Mapuches, radiantly accepting such hardships as walking many miles, sleeping on the ground for days at a time, and weathering an often inhospitable climate.

Miss Meyer serves as a strong and loving example of sacrifice for the pioneers who have followed her into the Mapuche area. She now lives in northern Chile very near the Aymará Indians who inhabit that part of the country.

Teaching work among the Mapuche tribes, who are isolated from other areas of the country by the great desert to the north, the Andes mountains to the east, and the Pacific Ocean to the west, has moved steadily forward, strengthened immeasurably by loving letters and cables from the Universal House of Justice, the Hands of the Cause, the Continental Counsellors and the Chilean National Spiritual Assembly.

One such letter came recently from the Hand of the Cause Mr. Faizí to a family of pioneers living in the area. At the close of this letter of love and support he said "...keep on, because you are
awakening a giant who is asleep. Such a tribe is the greatest asset to us. Once they are awakened they will arise to conquer. It is within their long-treasured powers to withstand the severest tests and to remove the greatest obstacles. Keep on. Depend upon Him. His unfailing aid will come ..."

Such messages are as a torch lighting the hearts of all the teachers and pioneers in the area.

The children of the Mapuche families are especially receptive to the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, and they can often be heard chanting “Alláh'u'Abhá” or singing Bahá'í songs as one passes a group of huts on the way to teach.

There are 10 regular children's classes in the countryside on various reservations; recently, the first Regional Bahá'í Children's Conference in Chile was held in the Mapuche community of Cerro Loncoche. Children are seen as an important part of any long-range teaching effort, and among the Mapuches they participate at all levels of community activity.

There are at present three Bahá'í Centers in Mapuche communities with two more under construction by local believers. During the course of the Five Year Plan 15 local endowments have been given to the Faith by Mapuche families, and these remote communities also are becoming conscious of the need and privilege of giving regularly to the Bahá'í Fund.

Most important of all, however, is the fact that the Mapuches have arisen to teach the Cause of God with great fervor and humility. Recently there were more than 1,100 enrollments in less than three weeks, due largely to the efforts of the local Chilean and Indian friends. The potential is enormous, as it is in similar areas throughout South America.

The Mapuche believers have played a truly important role in winning the goals of the Five Year Plan. Bahá'ís from the Chilian Mapuche region have made no less than four trips during the Plan to neighboring Argentina to teach among the indigenous tribes there. The National Spiritual Assembly of Chile is preparing to send the first Mapuche pioneer to southern Argentina, which is a goal of the Plan.

The 50 Local Spiritual Assemblies among the Mapuche Indians compares to a total of 115 throughout Chile itself, a number that far surpasses the Five Year Plan goal of 75. Recently, the annual Spring Bahá'í School was held for the first time in a Mapuche community (Loncopullé), and in the city of Temuco the National Spiritual Assembly purchased the first District Bahá'í Center in Chile.

Pioneers to the Mapuche region have found that mass conversion will sustain and expand itself alone if supported and encouraged by the friends. It is so natural that these tribal societies, which live so close together and recognize the great need for unity as a means for their survival, should be strongly attracted to the Faith.

Pioneers also have become aware that these indigenous peoples possess the love and purity of heart that will enable them to blaze forth with such intensity that the world will take notice and hear the call of their Cause, the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.
An interview Counsellor

It was in June 1973 when the International Teaching Centre, "destined (to) evolve into one (of) those world-shaking, world-embracing, world-directing institutions ordained by Bahá'u'lláh, anticipated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, elucidated by Shoghi Effendi," met for the first time in Haifa, Israel.

With the establishment of the International Teaching Centre, the Universal House of Justice brought to a successful conclusion a task made necessary by the passing of the Guardian in 1957 without an appointed successor. After prolonged consultation, that institution decided, in November 1964, that "there is no way to appoint, or to legislate to make it possible to appoint, Hands of the Cause of God." 2

The House of Justice found it imperative to establish the proper machinery for carrying forward the work of the Hands of the Cause of God. Therefore, one of the goals of the Nine Year Plan, the first Plan initiated by the Universal House of Justice, was to develop further "the institution of the Hands of the Cause of God, in consultation with the body of the Hands of the Cause, with a view to the extension into the future of its appointed functions of protection and propagation." 3

The initial step in the successful completion of this task came in June 1968, when the Universal House of Justice announced in a cable its "momentous decision establish eleven Continental Boards Counsellors protection propagation Faith . . . Adoption this significant step following consultation with Hands Cause God ensures extension future appointed functions their institution." 4

However, the function of coordination of these Boards, as well as the function of liaison between the Universal House of Justice and the Continental Boards, still devolved upon the Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land. These functions were expanded with the establishment in 1973 of the International Teaching Centre, "a development which," wrote the House of Justice, "at one and the same time, brings to fruition the work of the Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land and provides for its extension into the future, links the institution 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 responsibilities of the

Counsellor Florence Mayberry, a member of the International Teaching Centre.
The membership of the International Teaching Centre is made up of all of the Hands of the Cause of God and, initially, three Counsellors who reside permanently in the Holy Land. Florence Mayberry, appointed as a Counsellor in North America with the first contingent of Counsellors in 1968, was among those asked to serve as members of the International Teaching Centre.

"I remember the day I found out I had been appointed to the International Teaching Centre," Mrs. Mayberry said in a recent interview for Bahá'í News. "I ran the central office of the Counsellors for North America—I was a Counsellor at the time.

"I remember I had to make a phone call, but when I went to the telephone, picked up the receiver and started to dial, I realized that the line was open.

"A voice asked me, 'Is this Florence Mayberry?'

"I said, 'Yes, it is.'

"Then the voice said, 'Hold the line, please. This is Haifa calling—Mr. Wolcott wants to speak to you.'

"Well, that was quite a surprise. So Charles Wolcott, a member of the Universal House of Justice, came on the line, and he said, 'Hello, Florence? This is Charles Wolcott. Are you sitting down?'

"I said, 'No, I'm not.'

"So he said, 'Well, then sit down.'

"I had a chair handy, so I sat down, and then he told me that I was one of the three selected to be on the International Teaching Centre. Mind you, there had just been an International Convention and I had just come back from the Holy Land. Nevertheless, he asked me, 'Can you be back in Haifa next week?'

"I replied, 'Yes.' Just like that—no hesitation.

"The first thing I did was to call my husband, Dave. When I told him, there was not quite a minute's hesitation, and he said, 'Well, that means we'll sell our business.' That was his response.

"I left for Haifa, and I remember arriving in the evening at the hotel where the two other Counsellors for the International Teaching Centre were staying—Hooper Dunbar and 'Aziz Yazdi. I didn't see them right away, but they were waiting for me, downstairs in the dining room.

"We lovingly greeted each other, and then discussed—without really knowing what our responsibilities would be—what we might be expected to do.

"The next day we met with the four Hands of the Cause who were residing in the Holy Land—Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, Mr. Fúrútan, Mr. Faizi, and Mr. Haney. Although all the Hands of the Cause of God were to be members of the International Teaching Centre, the four Hands and the three Counsellors living in the Holy Land were to make up the administrative nucleus of the Centre.

"The day after that, we had a meeting with the Universal House of Justice. We went into the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh and had prayers together. Then we met in the pilgrim house at Bahjí. The House of Justice welcomed us all most lovingly, and discussed with us the organization of the International Teaching Centre.

"When the Counsellors rejoined the Hands of the Cause in Haifa in early fall to take up permanent residence, the House of Justice informed us that we would start immediately working on the basics of the next Plan—what would eventually become the Five Year Plan.

"There were many meetings afterward, when we had settled in Haifa. When you're with the House of Justice in such a meeting, it is a continual delight. They encourage the individual to speak out frankly, with whatever ideas are on his or her mind. In this way there is a free flow of ideas, and the House of Justice can draw freely upon each individual.

"You never feel constrained. You feel warm, you feel supported, you feel great confidence. This infallible body is a joy, a constant miraculous pleasure to observe.

"It's marvelous to consider that this supreme body of the Bahá'í world is so loving and so understanding and that it so warmly welcomes ideas from each individual. At the same time it carries the tremendous responsibility—the gift, one might say—of infallibility.

"When I am in the presence of the House of Justice, I experience the same spiritual feeling—almost ecstasy—that I felt in the presence of the Guardian, although he Guardian was a single individual and the House of Justice is a body of men.

"After we had consulted with the House of Justice, and it had outlined the basics of the Plan—that it would be five years long, that there were specific aspects of expansion and consolidation that needed to be addressed—we were
‘... there is a singleness of purpose that binds us together ... which is to establish the Cause of God on the face of the earth.’

asked to come up with proposals for about 115 individual plans for the same number of National Assemblies that were in existence at that time.

"That involved the monitoring of tremendous amounts of information. We drew on the Continental Boards. We drew on the minutes of the National Spiritual Assemblies. We drew on outside non-Baha'i sources—things like reference books and atlases.

"It was such a huge project, and so hectic. For instance, in the case of Singapore—I well remember this—we were first proposing to give little Singapore quite a large number of new Local Spiritual Assemblies to be formed. But our research quickly informed us that there were only eight civil communities in Singapore, so we had to revise our figures. We couldn’t get more out of the country than was there!

"We had to look into all kinds of books. We had to look at the past rate of accomplishments in different countries, to see what they conceivably might do in five years. We didn’t want to suggest goals that were too large or too small.

"Another thing we tried to do was to have even the new national communities send out international pioneers. That gave them dignity, for no matter how new the National Assembly is, it bears the same dignity as a long-established Assembly. Haiti is just as much a pillar of the House of Justice as is Iran, or the United States, or the Solomon Islands. Each National Assembly shares the dignity of responsibility.

"It’s very much the same process we’re going through now, with the new Seven Year Plan. We finished our work and forwarded a huge stack of material to the Universal House of Justice. What came from that infallible body, after much consultation and revision, was the Five Year Plan.

"But the formulation of a new Plan only happens every five or 10 or however many years. Our day-to-day work is quite different. The House of Justice outlined four areas for our activities when it announced the formation of the International Teaching Centre. These are:

- ‘To coordinate, stimulate and direct the activities of the Continental Boards of Counsellors and to act as a 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 traveling teachers and to work out teaching plans, both regional and global, for the approval of the Universal House of Justice.’

"Currently, a primary job of the Teaching Centre is the receiving, reviewing and analyzing of reports from the Continental Boards of Counsellors. We are the directing body for the Counsellors, so they report to us. We give advice to them and share with the House of Justice the information that they send us.

"We also read the minutes of the meetings of all National Assemblies, and often the House of Justice will share material with us in the same way we share material with it.

"We function under the House of Justice as a distinct institution with the obligations of protecting and propagating the Faith. A very important duty is to be as informed as possible about the conditions and events in this world.

"If we don’t know what’s happening, we can’t do anything. We can’t recommend what Bahá’í literature needs to be translated into such and such a language if we aren’t informed of the condition of the world. How could we recommend that pioneers go into a country if the Faith is banned there? Or even inform pioneers and traveling teachers about where there are problems in teaching the Faith?

"On the other hand, we have to be aware of where the fertile areas are, where teaching is possible, where people appear to be receptive. And it all comes down to keeping informed about what’s going on in the world.

"At the same time, though, it’s important to remember that above and beyond all the different jobs that each of us in the Faith performs, there is a singleness of purpose that binds us together. Whether you are a member of a Local Assembly or an isolated believer, whether you are a member of a National Spiritual Assembly, or whether you are a Hand of the Cause, a Counsellor, an Auxiliary Board
member, or even whether you are a member of the Universal House of Justice, there is a singleness of purpose that we all have, which is to establish the Cause of God on the face of the earth.

"We're all working for one Faith—not two or five or six. It brings us together. A singleness of purpose, a purity of motive, a purity of life, a greater degree of loving harmony—in other words, we are a new race of people. That is what is inside of us, our potential. Our job, no matter who we are, is to express this. Then the world will say, 'There. That's what I want to be. A Bahá'í!'"


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2. Wellspring of Guidance, p. 41.
3. ibid., p. 23.
6. ibid., p. 3.
Women—The Foundation of a New Human Society.

The focus of the conference itself was on the rural women of Africa. Topics such as “Equality of Men and Women,” “The Role of Women in Community Life,” “Living the Bahá’í Life,” and “Heroines of the Faith” were presented by pioneers and native believers who have become strong teachers in the Faith. Workshops corresponding to these subjects were conducted, and native women, usually quiet and shy, freely contributed their ideas and thoughts.

A highlight of the conference was the featured guest speaker, Dr. Jane Faily. Consultant to the Bahá’í International Community’s representative to the United Nations, a clinical psychologist associated with the University of Ottawa, Canada, and a distinguished Bahá’í teacher, Dr. Faily is traveling throughout the West African nations on a two-fold mission. Her initial assignment is to help village women develop educational programs for their children as well as for themselves. This is in support of the United Nations 1979 Year of the Child. At the same time, Dr. Faily’s position with the UN provides a unique opportunity for her to visit heads of state and important ministers in the West African nations to proclaim the Message of Bahá’u’lláh and the Bahá’í position of obedience to government and non-involvement in politics.

Dr. Faily’s first talk, directed to the village women, discussed their role in society. She told them of their ancestors, brought to America as slaves, and how they had changed the history of that nation. She spoke of their spiritual destiny and shared the vision of a new society where men and women will be equal.

Bahá’u’lláh, though a prisoner, spoke with the power of the Word of God, she said. When He proclaimed that men and women are equal, the Word went around the world. Now, all over the world, people are speaking of this equality, and women are arising to attain their birthright. She said that Bahá’u’lláh wrote that the world will not have prosperity, health, education, or peace until women take their equal station with men. Unless the mothers of the children become the agents to put these teachings into effect, there will be no progress.

She added that the greatest danger to civilization is not continued poverty or illiteracy, but war. The staggering costs of armaments are straining the economies of the “Third World” developing countries. Dr. Faily cited Bahá’u’lláh as saying that until the voice of women is heard in government, peace cannot be established.

Women are the mothers of humanity, she said. Now women must educate themselves, for how can a group that has always been considered inferior become leaders without education? The power of the Word of God awaits the efforts of women to demonstrate it in action.

Quoting the scriptures of the Bible and the Qu’ran, Dr. Faily assured the women of success. Don’t the scriptures tell us that the last shall become first and the first shall be last? That those who are high shall be brought low? And those who are brought low will be raised up? That the meek shall inherit the earth? She closed by inviting the women to join together in this work.

After Dr. Faily’s presentation the village women were asked to take the podium and give their response. Tears filled our eyes as they spoke. For most of them it was a new and strange experience. One after another, in simple language, the women expressed their commitment to teach their village sisters, educate their children and themselves.

One woman from Mali, Mme. Nazirou Tchiam, was particularly impressive. Regal in her bearing, with her infant tied to her back, she said, “I gave my heart to Bahá’u’lláh. I left a sick child at home to attend this conference. Before I came I did not understand and I did not do anything. Now I know what I must do. I must go back to Mali, where most of the Bahá’ís are men, and teach the women.”

A woman from Unification Town said, “It is important to teach village women as well as town women; otherwise, men in the cities will say, ‘You want to be equal because
you can read and write. Look at the village women. They are willing to be submissive." If all the women aren't taught," she said, "prejudice will come between the women. Now we must recognize we are important and qualified, for all humanity comes through the woman."

And from Nigeria: "This is the time for women to be outstanding in the world; men are already qualified. Now women must be, too. Men should be happy now, because women can share. In Africa men have been doing everything. In the Bahá'í Faith we learn women are equal with men. Now we must put this into practice."

Our primary duty, to teach the Faith, was emphasized by Thelma Khelgati, a Counsellor for West Africa. As she pointed out the goal of the conference, to raise up the Bahá'í women of Africa, she reminded them that their unique qualities and abilities are largely unused. The Universal House of Justice said the problem is a lack of confidence among women. As an example to the friends, she introduced Mrs. Tani, a native woman who answered the call of the Guardian in 1953, pioneered to Togo, became a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, and helped raise up many new believers in that country.

In between the talks and workshops we were able to find a few hours to explore the city of Monrovia. Teeming with people, the city is a cacophony of sounds. Crowds of people and autos with bleating horns fill the streets. Women balance bundles of laundry, cardboard trays of eggs, basins filled with produce or other mysterious packages on their heads. Men in business suits mingle with children selling peeled oranges on street corners. Open stalls filled with native crafts and bolts of colorful fabrics stand side by side next to modern banks, specialty shops and restaurants. Of particular interest to the women at the conference were the tailor shops where one can purchase beautiful African dresses encrusted with embroidery.

The contradiction in prices told a story of values. Hand-made native gowns, after bargaining, could be purchased for next to nothing, while foodstuffs, canned
goods and frozen vegetables brought prices that could rapidly deplete even an American's pocketbook. The streets are filled with taxicabs, all painted bright yellow... Raise your hand, a cab stops, and for 30 cents you can join six others in a compact car to be taken anywhere in the city.

At the conference we shared African food served in the university cafeteria. Mounds of country rice, served at lunch and dinner, and a small bowl of a delicious sauce or stew were accompanied by heavy bread, margarine and hot "tea"—a concoction of sugary water and tea-flavored evaporated milk. Whether it was the heat or the joyous atmosphere, it all tasted good.

Late into the night we'd sit in the dormitory lounge, sharing precious moments with the pioneers, friends whose home is now Africa. The faces of those young women I can't adequately describe. There is a maturity and strength of spirit there that tells a beautiful story.

Another highlight of the conference was the participation of high-ranking government officials. The Hon. J. Jenkins Peale, minister of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism, opened the conference with a message of welcome from the President of the Republic, Dr. William R. Tolbert Jr. A woman senator who had been out of the country immediately prior to the conference, learned of it upon her return. She arrived one morning, uninvited, but very welcome. She told us the issue of women's equality is dear to her heart, and she felt compelled to join us and offer her support.

The featured speakers at the Saturday night public meeting were Dr. Faily and the Hon. Edward Kessely, minister of Post and Telecommunications. Dr. Kessely, a Liberian who received his doctorate in political science at the University of Chicago, expressed his surprise at having been invited to be the guest speaker. Coming from the political sphere and not being a religious leader, he said, he thought an error had been made.

One of the fundamental tenets of religion, he said, must be the active promotion of peace and harmony amongst
men. The manner in which he presented his topic, "Religion—An Opiate of the People, or God's Revelation to Man?" whether knowingly or unknowingly including principles and ideas taught by Bahá'u'lláh, gave the impression that he had found the answers to questions he himself had asked. He concluded with the statement that religion, far from being an opiate of the people, is the only vehicle capable of raising the standards of humanity, individually and collectively.

After a standing ovation for Dr. Kessely, Dr. Faily paid tribute to his insight. "I have rarely heard a statesman with a finer vision of the spiritual meaning of society," she said. She expressed her pleasure at sharing the platform "with a gentleman who expressed his surprise at having been invited to address a religious body, and then so eloquently demonstrated his excellent qualifications to do just that."

The conference came to an end. Vans and cars filled the road. Bags, sacks, suitcases and bundles were stowed on top of and inside the vehicles, under seats and between legs.

The women of Nimba County, who live deep in the interior of Liberia close to the border of Guinea, piled into a "pick-up" for the bone-jolting six-hour trip to their village. I was determined to go there. There had been a sudden expansion of the Faith in Nimba within the last three months. Many new Assemblies had been formed, and Counsellor Khelgati suggested that I could be of help. The National Assembly asked those of us who could stay and teach to meet with them, and I asked to go to Nimba.

The Nimba women, all new Bahá'ís, had never left their village before setting out for the conference. They came with noble bearing, gentle smiles and songs about Bahá'u'lláh. They also brought a live chicken and a bag of rice, their donation to the Fund! This prompted an auction that raised more than $1,500!

Something special happened between the village women and me. After reading the message to the conference from the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, I had given each of them a picture of the Holy Shrines. When the session ended, several of them sought me out to thank me. Others who had missed the meeting came to get their picture—and through that interchange we became sisters. I exchanged addresses with those who spoke English or French. The spirit brought us close.

I watched the Nimba women climb into their truck for the long journey home. I offered my hand to each one, and we said "Alláh-u-Abhá." We sang together, and when their interpreter told me they were saying goodbye and asking me to come to their village, I prayed that I would be allowed to go . . . to teach, to deepen, and to learn.

Next Month: Traveling and teaching in Nimba, Liberia.
The National Spiritual Assembly of New Hebrides announced in November that two important goals of the Five Year Plan have been achieved—incorporation of the National Spiritual Assembly itself and two Local Spiritual Assemblies. Preparations for winning these goals were begun as long ago as 1974.

After many hours of consultation with government officials, and after surmounting many legal obstacles, the incorporations were approved under French law, giving the Bahá'í institutions official company status and the right to hold property. Three national properties have since been transferred to the name of the National Spiritual Assembly.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of New Hebrides announced in September that the number of localities in its jurisdiction where Bahá'ís reside had risen to 42, exceeding the Five Year Plan goal of 40.

The election August 6 of the first Spiritual Assembly of Middle Bush, Tanna, had raised the number of Assemblies in New Hebrides to 14, only one short of the Five Year Plan goal. Seven members of the Spiritual Assembly of Middle Bush are women.

The President of New Hebrides and members of its Representative Assembly were present October 24 in Port Vila for a United Nations Day observance sponsored by the Spiritual Assembly of Port Vila.

Auxiliary Board member Palene Hnaloane and two doctors from the Vila office of the World Health Organization spoke to the gathering of 48 adults and 10 children.

Mr. Hnaloane's address focused on the Faith's involvement with the United Nations through the Bahá'í International Community.

Upon receiving news of these victories, the Universal House of Justice cabled the following message to the National Spiritual Assembly: "Hearts filled with joy news formation first Assembly Middle Bush. Delighted that New Hebrides community has exceeded locality goal and is within reach Assembly goal. Offering prayers Shrines further victories."

Twenty non-Bahá'ís were among the 58 people attending the meeting including the President of the country and members of its Representative Assembly.

Visitors look over Bahá'í literature during a United Nations Day observance October 24 at the Bahá'í Center in Port Vila, New Hebrides.
United States

More than 400 people, Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís, were present at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, November 25 for a ceremony recognizing the listing of the House of Worship in the United States National Register of Historic Places.

The designation was granted to the Bahá'í House of Worship by the federal government on May 23, 1978, exactly 134 years after the Báb declared His Mission to Mullá Husayn in Shiráz, Persia.

In the keynote address, Douglas Martin, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, referred to that country's contribution to the construction of the House of Worship.

During most of the years of construction, Canada and the U.S. were a single national Bahá'í community.

Canada also supplied the architect for the House of Worship—the late Louis Bourgeois, a French-Canadian.

Edna True, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in North America, whose mother, Corinne True, was a prime mover behind the Temple Project in its early days, assisted Warren Burmeister, the president of the Village of Wilmette, in unveiling a plaque marking the House of Worship's new designation.


Nicaragua

"Strengthening the Local Spiritual Assembly" was the theme of a regional institute planned and hosted by the Spiritual Assembly of Granada, Nicaragua, in collaboration with the Auxiliary Board.

Despite adverse traveling conditions brought about by an outbreak of civil strife in the country, 43 Bahá'ís including 13 youth and children attended the day-long institute last September 3. Seven communities in the southeastern area of Nicaragua were represented.

Among those at the institute were Auxiliary Board members Edith McLaren from Nicaragua and Leonardo Del Campo from Costa Rica.

They led discussions on "The Importance of the Local Spiritual Assembly" and "Basic Responsibilities of the Local Spiritual Assembly."

A mock election was held during the last hour of the institute, after which the new "Assembly" elected its "officers."

One of the friends expressed pleasure at actually putting into practice what was learned at the institute. "Because we were actually going through the election process, I could see the answers to my questions," she said.

On the day following the institute, Auxiliary Board member Del Campo and a team of two adults, two youth and two children from Granada taught in a nearby village where four residents declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh.

—Lorna Bergner

Forty-three Bahá'ís including 13 youth and children attended a regional institute September 3 hosted by the Spiritual Assembly of Granada, Nicaragua, in collaboration with the Auxiliary Board. Auxiliary Board member Leonardo Del Campo (second from left in back row) came from Costa Rica to participate. Auxiliary Board member Edith McLaren of Nicaragua (not shown) also attended. Nearly all the adults at the institute are members of Local Spiritual Assemblies.
The Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts related a number of inspiring stories of dedicated service to the Cause during a National Teaching Conference for Alaska held October 13-15 in Anchorage.

Mr. Robarts triggered a significant response when he asked the believers in Alaska to pray for neighboring Canada. The result of his request was that those attending promised to pray regularly until the end of the Five Year Plan for achievement of the goals in Alaska, Canada and the United States.

In addition, volunteers arose to fill all of Alaska’s remaining foreign teaching goals, while others offered to travel and teach within Alaska itself. “We are expecting still greater results,” said a report from the conference, at which nearly $5,000 was donated to the National Bahá’í Fund.

Nearly 200 youth from five countries were present last August 4-7 at the sixth Bahá’í International Youth Camp in Guyana.

The camp’s theme was “Would You Give Your Heart to Bahá’u’lláh?” Attending with young people from Guyana, Surinam, Trinidad, the United Kingdom and United States were members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Guyana; the two Auxiliary Board members for Guyana, Ivan Fraser and Edward Widmer, and the Auxiliary Board member for Tobago, Miss Helena Frank.

On the final day of the conference, more than 60 offers to travel and teach in Guyana were received by the National Teaching Committee. As a result, several teaching projects were launched immediately, leading to some 558 enrollments and the formation of seven new Local Spiritual Assemblies.

Guyana has won all of its goals of the Five Year Plan and is aiming for a 25 per cent increase in the number of believers in each locality by Ridván. Some communities already have achieved this goal.

Before the youth camp ended, the National Youth Committee of Guyana gave gifts to those who had come to Guyana from other countries to teach, to two Guyanese youth who are homefront pioneers in the interior, and to an Amerindian youth who had traveled a long distance to represent her tribe and community at the camp.

The camp’s program centered around “sacrifice,” with most of the talks given by the youth themselves. The camp also included a workshop on Bahá’í laws along with music and fellowship.

Below, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’í of Guyana recently presented a copy of the book, Foundations of World Unity, by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to Trevor Gordon-Somers (left), the United Nations representative in Guyana. Shown making the presentation (left to right) are Jennifer Dewar, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly; Samuel Sukrah, and Kenneth Brisport. An account of the presentation appeared in the Guyana Chronicle on September 21, with a brief article outlining the Bahá’í International Community’s activities since its affiliation with the UN in 1948.
Dr. Victor de Araujo and his wife, Betty, Bahá'ís from Greenburgh, New York, made a significant contribution to proclamation efforts in the Fiji Islands during a visit there October 19-24.

Dr. de Araujo is the full-time delegate of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations. His visit resulted in press coverage, radio interviews, and courtesy calls to diplomatic missions.

The week's major event, a reception/luncheon in Suva, drew several Fijian officials from the government, judiciary and United Nations agencies. Also at the gathering were six members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Fiji Islands and three Auxiliary Board members. Dr. de Araujo spoke about Bahá'í principles and the Faith's involvement in the United Nations.

Both Dr. de Araujo and his wife, who is a freelance artist and alternate representative for the status of women to the UN, were the subjects of articles in the Fiji Times newspaper. Both were interviewed on Radio Fiji, their visit coming shortly after a formal request by the National Assembly to the Fiji Broadcasting Commission to feature the Faith regularly on Radio Fiji's religious programming schedule.

The de Araujos made courtesy calls at the British, Australian and American diplomatic missions in Suva. These interviews were valuable in bringing the principles and world stature of the Faith to the attention of the heads of these missions.

On October 21, the de Araujos met with the National Spiritual Assembly. The evening before, they had delighted a large audience at the National Hazíratú'l-Quds with a slide program outlining Dr. de Araujo's work as representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the UN.

Excitement was high in Fiji with the recent dedication of several physical manifestations of the growth of the Faith in these small Pacific islands.

The friends attending the dedication of the Sigatoke Bahá'í Teaching Institute last October 28 were buoyed by the presence of all six members of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Australasia.

Counsellor Dr. Peter Khan of Australia spoke briefly, after which three of the most active women Bahá'í teachers in Nadroga inspired those present with some of their teaching experiences.

Earlier, the dedication of the new local Hazíratú'l-Quds at Tabwewa, Rabi Island, took place during a three-day weekend of special activities October 7-9.

The new building is situated high above the village of Nuke, overlooking the bay and surrounding islands. It is constructed of timber fixed on concrete piles, and painted a soft green outside and white inside. Flowers and attractive signs decorate the structure and grounds.

The guest of honor at the dedication was Mr. Rotan, a distinguished member of the Ranaban community on Rabi Island, who addressed the friends and symbolically cut the ribbon across the door.

A beautiful and inspiring program was presented in which the children sang in three languages and performed dances symbolizing the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh about love, unity and being a Bahá'í.

Yet another Bahá'í Center was dedicated September 23 in Naisogovau, Tailevu.

Aura Sanchez, the first Bahá'í in Colombia, South America, who declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh some 50 years ago after hearing of the Faith from an American who was in that country. Mrs. Sanchez taught the Faith to her family, all of whom have become dedicated Bahá'ís. She has donated her home in Bogota as the National Bahá'í Center, reserving only a small part of it for her own living quarters. Mrs. Sanchez was visited last year by Joseph and Natalie Reyes, Bahá'ís who traveled to Colombia from Chicago, Illinois.
Dorothy Hansen (right), a pioneer from the U.S. to Ghana, reads a Bahá’í prayer to Mrs. Laura Fernandez of Liberia at a seminar on ‘Women in Development’ sponsored by Ghana’s National Council on Women and Development at Trinity College, Legon, Ghana, last September 4-8. Mrs. Hansen was a guest of Ghanaian Supreme Court Justice Annie Jiagghe during the conference at which women from West Africa gathered to hear reports on the progress of women in the country’s governmental, educational, economic and social institutions. She distributed Bahá’í prayer books and Bahá’í pamphlets on the equality of men and women to delegates from Ghana, Liberia and Benin. One of her poems, ‘Seminar Report,’ about the status of women in developing countries, was read at the closing session and later on national television in Accra during an interview about Mrs. Hansen, her poetry and the Faith.

More than 560 Bahá’ís from 14 countries and many communities throughout Malaysia gathered December 16-19 for the South East Asia Bahá’í Regional Conference at Kuching, Sarawak Province, Malaysia.

The themes of the conference were teaching, living the life, and “the mighty forces of life within the Cause of God.” Marco Kappenberger, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland and Bahá’í representative to the United Nations office in Geneva, addressed the large gathering on the work of the Bahá’í International Community.

Malaysia, which already has won every goal and supplementary goal assigned to it during the Five Year Plan, was spurred to further action when the National Spiritual Assembly of Malaysia announced an additional goal of sending out 17 traveling teachers before the end of the Plan. More than 17 people arose at the conference to fill this goal.

More than 560 Bahá’ís from 14 countries and many local communities gathered for the South East Asia Bahá’í Regional Conference held December 16-19 in Kuching, Sarawak Province, Malaysia. Conference attendees explored the themes of teaching and living the life.
From August 15-31, Mechelen, a Belgian city dating to the 13th or 14th Century that once was the seat of government of The Netherlands, was the site of a teaching campaign carried out by Bahá'ís from nine countries.

The Faith was proclaimed at a large fair where the Bahá'ís had a booth, and at a folk concert at which six Bahá'í musicians performed.

A unity feast and picnic was attended by 17 Bahá'ís and six seekers. The following week a Bahá’í booth was placed in the center of the city. At a public meeting, Marc Vloebergh spoke of his experiences in Africa as a United Nations representative, and in India as a participant on a Bahá’í teaching project.

During the campaign in Mechelen many people heard Bahá'u'lláh for the first time. Some gave their addresses, as they had become interested in the Faith. Follow-up firesides are being held.

Loni Bramson (left), a Bahá’í pioneer to Belgium from the U.S., and Helen Vloebergh of Australia talk over teaching plans at a public meeting August 26 in Mechelen, Belgium, that was part of a two-week teaching campaign in that city by Bahá’ís from nine countries.

The Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone cuts the ribbon at the entrance of the new local Bahá'í Center following its dedication in the village of Faleasui-Uta, Western Samoa. On the left is Chief Ligi, chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly, and at the right is Sam Ale Ale, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Western Samoa. Eight new Bahá’í Centers have been opened in Western Samoa during the Five Year Plan and two more will be completed shortly.

April 1979/Bahá'í News 21
Abdu'l-Bahá's Journey in America

Allan L. Ward
In the last six months attacks have been launched against Iran's Bahá'í community, the largest religious minority in the country.

Over 500 homes have been razed or burned down
More than 1,000 people are homeless
Orchards have been seized, depriving farmers of their livelihood
A clinic run by Bahá'ís was dynamited
Bahá'í centers in dozens of towns have been invaded, records and literature confiscated
Individuals and families have been threatened, beaten, and in several cases driven to mosques and forced to recant their faith
Several Bahá'ís have been murdered
Threats have been made to demolish the house of the Báb, a shrine in Shiráz sacred to Bahá'ís all over the world
The house where Bahá'u'lláh, Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, was born in Teheran has been repeatedly raided and is now occupied by armed men
A number of Moslem leaders have been inflaming popular passions by calling Bahá'ís heretics and traitors

Echoing such sentiments, Mansour Farhang of Sacramento State University, appearing on the public television network in the United States on February 8, accused the Bahá'ís of perpetrating crimes against the Iranian nation.

As happens in all persecutions and pogroms, the perpetrators blame the victims.

Since its beginning over a century ago, the Bahá'í Faith has been viciously attacked by the most bigoted elements of Islamic society.
Well over 20,000 men, women, and children have been martyred for their faith.

WHY THE ATTACK ON BAHÁ'ÍS?

The Bahá'ís believe that:
Divine revelation is progressive and did not cease with Mohammed;
Bahá'u'lláh is the messenger of God for this age;
All religions are one in essence;
It is everyone's duty independently to search after truth;
Men and women have equal rights;
Everyone has the right to education;
Mankind is one;
Poverty must be eliminated and wealth limited;
Wars must cease.

The Bahá'í community has no clergy.
It is governed by freely elected Assemblies.
The Bahá'í community is non-political.
It shuns partisanship and works for reconciliation and brotherhood.
The Bahá'í community is law-abiding. It is firmly opposed to all violence.

American Bahá'ís in some 7,000 localities across the nation raise their voices in protest against the cruel and senseless oppression that their Iranian co-religionists have suffered for so long and continue to suffer.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS
OF THE UNITED STATES
Wilmette, Illinois
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Cover

More than 20 years of painstaking research into 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the United States in 1912 are reflected in Dr. Allan L. Ward's exciting and illuminating new book, 239 Days: 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Journey in America. One of the best-remembered aspects of that historic visit is the Unity Feast in New Jersey, an event that is recalled in an excerpt from the book that begins on Page 2 of this issue.
Abdel-Bary's Journey in America

(For the following issues in American journals, the text is written in a manner that conveys the essence of the journey and the events. The text is not transcribed due to the nature of the image.)
wants a good time!" Then He grew serious. "To live near Me," He said, "one must have My aims and objects. Do you remember the rich young man who wanted to live near Christ, and when he learned what it cost to live near Him—that it meant to give away all his possessions and take up a cross and follow Christ—then," the Master laughed, "he fled away!"

"Among the disciples of the Báb," He continued, "were two: His amanuensis and a firm believer. On the eve of the Báb's martyrdom the firm believer prayed, 'Oh let me die with You!' The amanuensis said: 'What shall I do?' "What shall I do,'" mocked the Master. "What do you want me to do?' The disciple died with the Báb, his head on the breast of the Báb, and their bodies were mingled in death. The other died in prison anyway, but think of the difference in their stations!

"There was another martyr," continued the Master after a moment, "Mirzá Abdu'lláh of Shíráz." Then He told us that Mirzá Abdu'lláh had been in the Presence of Bahá'u'lláh only once, "But he so loved the Blessed Beauty" that he could not resist following Him to Tihrán.

Mirzá Abdu'lláh reached Tihrán in the midst of that bloodiest of massacres. ... Bahá'u'lláh had been cast into a dungeon. There, in that foul cell He sat, weighted down by "The Devil's Chain"—eleven disciples sitting with Him, bound by the same chain. In it were set iron collars which were fastened around the neck by iron pins. Every day a disciple was slaughtered and none knew when his turn would come. The first intimation he had of his immediate death was when the jailer took out the iron pin from his collar.

Mirzá Abdu'lláh entered Tihrán and inquired of the guard at the gate "where Bahá'u'lláh resided." "We will take you to Him," said the guard. And some men took Abdu'lláh to the dungeon and chained him to Bahá'u'lláh. "So," the Master said, "he found his Beloved again!"

One day the jailer came into the dungeon and took the pin
from Mírzá Abdu'lláh’s collar.

"Then," said the Master, "Mírzá Abdu'lláh stepped joyfully forward. First, he kissed the feet of the Blessed Beauty—and then—"

The Master’s whole aspect suddenly changed. It was as though the spirit of the martyr had entered into Him. With that God-like head erect, snapping His fingers high in the air, beating out a drum-like rhythm with His foot till we could hardly endure the vibrations set up, He triumphantly sang "The Martyr’s Song."

"I have come again, I have come again,
By way of Shíríz I have come again!
With the wine-cup in My hand!
Such is the madness of Love!"

"And thus," ended ’Abdu'l-Bahá, "singing and dancing he went to his death—and a hundred executioners fell on him! And later his parents came to Bahá'u'lláh, praising God that their son had given his life in the Path of God."

The Master sank back into His chair. Tears swelled in my eyes, blurring everything. . . . A smile of exultation played on His lips. So low that it sounded like an echo He hummed the Martyr’s Song.

The rest of the week ’Abdu'l-Bahá spent in instructing the friends and visitors who flocked to His doors in Montclair and in making a brief trip to Newark. After early morning prayers ’Abdu'l-Bahá usually went to the market Himself to purchase food for the day; He managed most of the meals Himself, especially if guests were present, as there usually were.

After He breakfasted at Mr. Charles Edsall’s home on Wednesday, June 26, and returned to His house, He found several of the ladies who had come down from New York hard at work washing dishes and cleaning floors. ’Abdu'l-Bahá laughed and said, "Look! How the power of the Blessed Beauty works!"

In Newark, on Thursday, as they walked through the park, the Persian friends were aware of passersby staring at the unusual scene of the American friends following in reverence after ’Abdu'l-Bahá. On Friday, when He took a group of the friends by streetcar to the park in Montclair, He led them to the empty bandstand, and seated them saying, "factious persons . . . are trying to imprison Me again on My return to the Holy Land." When the friends suggested it would be better for Him not to return, He replied, "My source is the Holy Threshold, and my return, too, is to the same. Had it not been for His aid and assistance, would these people sitting on your right and left have had any care for you and Me? . . . What are we and why are we showered with these favors? Where is Persia and where is America? . . ."

He then walked to a nearby hotel, and two ladies, seeing Him, asked to be introduced and proceeded to ask Him about the history and teachings of the Faith. When they said that He seemed to be extremely wealthy, He responded, "My riches are of the Kingdom and not of this world. . . . Although I have nothing, yet I am richer than all the world." A couple passing by stopped to listen and joined the conversation. They gave their names to Mr. Edsall so they could be invited to meetings.

Maḥmúd noted, that day, "He ['Abdu'l-Bahá] used to say, ‘Had I sufficient rest and repose and a little relaxation of thought you would have seen how the hearts would have been attracted and the souls set aglow.’"

It was not, however, His talks on spiritual development that found their way into the New York Times on Sunday. In an article headed, "PROPHET’S DASH FOR TRAIN: Abdul Baha in Spectacular Rush from Montclair," the Times reported:

Special to the New York Times / Montclair, N.J., June 29—The departure of Abdul Baha, leader of the Bahaist

On the previous page, 'Abdu'l-Bahá at Green Acre, Eliot, Maine, August 1912.

Left, with a group of Baha’ís in Lincoln Park, Chicago, 1912.
'Abdu'l-Baha left Montclair at 8:30 A.M. on Saturday, June 29, and, after transferring to four different streetcars, arrived at Roy Wilhelm's home in West Englewood, New Jersey. This was the large outdoor gathering—the Unity Feast—to which 'Abdu'l-Bahá had invited the friends before He left New York. He rested as the friends arrived and sat in a circle in the shade of the large trees. Then He spoke to individuals as He walked among them. Addressing the entire group He said, "This is a new Day and this hour is a new Hour in which we have come together. . . . True Bahá'í meetings are the mirrors of the kingdom wherein images of the Supreme Concourse are reflected. . . . First, you must become united and agreed among yourselves. . . ."

When He had finished, the meal was ready; but just as it was announced, thunder was heard, and large raindrops began to fall. 'Abdu'l-Bahá walked to the road, taking a chair, and several friends grouped around Him. As He sat, His face turned upward, a strong wind began to blow, the clouds began to disperse, and the sun shone through. Then He rose and walked back into the grove. After the meal of Persian food 'Abdu'l-Bahá anointed the two hundred fifty guests with attar of roses. After dark, as the friends sat on the lawn with candles, 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke, ending as He walked into the darkness, "Peace be with you. I will pray for you." 13

On Sunday morning, June 30, 'Abdu'l-Bahá left for the home of Mr. Topakyan, the Persian Consul General, in Morristown. On His way there He stopped in Englewood at the home of the minister who had come to see Him the day before. After talking a few minutes, He continued His trip to Morristown. Concerning the afternoon activities, 'Abdu'l-Bahá’s translator, Dr. Amin Farid, wrote:

The Consul-General of Persia, Topakyan, gave a barbecue in honor of Abdul-Baha and his Persian suite, at his delightful summer home and garden at Morristown, New Jersey. The journey was accomplished in an automobile from the home of Mr. Roy C. Wilhelm, in West Englewood, through beautiful meadows of New Jersey, and the whole day was spent most pleasantly at the Persian consulate, which is a building in the garden built after the old style of Persian architecture. Among the guests were some prominent men from New York and some society folk to interview him on all sorts of questions. He spoke that forenoon to those persons on the advance of materialism and its evil attendants or concomitants. The dinner was entirely Oriental in character, a barbecue a la Perse. 4

On returning to New York that night, Mahmúd recalled, "the Blessed One did not allow us to prepare supper. After partaking of a little bread and watermelon, He went to bed."

2. Ibid., pp. 208-10.
3. Diary of Juliet Thompson, National Bahá’í Archives, Wilmette, Ill., entry for June 29, 1912.

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Traveling and Teaching in Nimba County

(Mrs. Jene Bellows of Skokie, Illinois, who represented the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly last December at the West African Bahá’í Women’s Conference in Monrovia, Liberia, has written the following account of a teaching trip to Nimba County, Liberia, that was undertaken after the conference.—Ed.)

When my mother, Rose Gronsund, and I left the United States to attend the West African Bahá’í Women’s Conference in Liberia, it was with the shared conviction that the trip was foreordained. We hadn’t planned to go to Africa. The opportunity presented itself more as an idea than as a possibility. There were too many obstacles to overcome. So we approached the prospect of going with an attitude of “if it’s meant to be, it will happen”—and we were on our way!

Many Bahá’ís have traveled to Africa, and often. But this was our first time and we were filled with anticipation. Could it really be happening? Africa! A magic name, a magic continent already rich in Bahá’í history.

When I think of Liberia and the Bahá’ís there, vivid colors—bright and warm—flash in a kaleidoscope of pictures in my mind. I want to share the feelings as well as the facts, but I ask myself if I can understand, let alone describe, the special spirit of the friends we met, their dedication, loving hearts and generous hospitality.

Those of us who stayed on to teach after the conference met with the National Assembly of Liberia and received our assignments. It was noon when Hoda and Heshmat Naddafi, Ranjit Singh Bal and I left Monrovia for the interior of Liberia.

Bal and I were to assist with consolidating the new communities that had recently sprung up in Nimba County, an area of Liberia bordering on Guinea. Hoda and Heshmat, young newlywed pioneers who had recently arrived from Iran, live in Sannequellie, the Nimba County seat. They, along with three native Bahá’í youth of that region, had found many new believers in the villages and formed several Assemblies.

If this teaching trip was a new experience for me, it opened a whole new world to Bal! Bal and I first met on the conference grounds. It was a sunny morning. Several of the friends were gathered under a huge shade tree during a break in the sessions. I, assuming they were all Bahá’ís, spoke of my plan to go directly from the conference into the interior to teach the Faith. Bal offered to join me. As we talked I realized that he wasn’t a Bahá’í, or at least he was not an enrolled Bahá’í, for every word he said assured me he was one of those souls that Bahá’u’lláh had prepared for His Cause. It was just a matter of clearly giving him the Message.

I remember telling Bal that if he believed enough to want to teach the Faith, he believed enough to join us. How his eyes sparkled when he said, “Of course, I am a Bahá’í, and I will go with you!” After we deepened on the Teachings he told me of his background.

Bal is a high school chemistry teacher in Monrovia. Previously a Sikh (Hindu), he had recently come to Liberia from India. He had long since left behind the Sikh customs and traditions. Always a believer in unity and the oneness of mankind, he had found the way to work for his belief. The formalities over, we made our travel plans.

It takes more than six hours by taxi to reach Sannequellie, over miles and miles of gritty red dust and ruts. Rubber trees march in rows in every direction as far as the eye can see. Our team passed through villages named Kakata, Tumutu, Totota and Tetata. Fortunately the traffic was minimal, for every time we met an oncoming car we had to close the windows to keep from choking on the red dust. At times we would catch up to a slow-moving vehicle. With no space to pass, we’d follow for miles with the windows closed, perspiration running down our faces. But the trip was a delight! There is no feeling to compare with the spirit of Bahá’u’lláh! The prayers had been said, we had our guidelines from the institutions, and we knew that whatever happened from that moment on, we were in the mainstream of the Covenant. All would go according to God’s Plan. This was true freedom!

We stopped at a village for a watermelon break, visited pioneers, and arrived in Sannequellie late in the afternoon. Hoda and Heshmat live in a small room in the government-owned guest house. With no trouble, accommodations were found for all of us. We were to leave for the villages early the next morning.

That evening we worked out our plans and packed our provisions. We each carried a sheet, towel, mosquito netting, blanket (for it’s cold in the high country at night) and other necessities. Warned that the village food could make us ill (the village water
comes from the rivers, and our “civilized” stomachs would not be able to handle it), we carried cheese, bread and water. Erickson Napeh, one of the youth who had brought the Faith to the villages, was to be our interpreter.

After prayers and a substantial breakfast, prepared by Heshmat on a single burner kerosene stove, we walked into the center of town to the “parking station” in search of a taxi, truck or anything that might be going in our direction. It was hot and noisy, and I was grateful to be wearing a long African dress; it kept the flies off my legs.

As time passed, tired of standing, I sat next to a young native woman also waiting for a ride. We began to talk. She told me about her school and her family and I told her about Bahá’u’lláh, His Mission, and our mission to her part of the world. She eagerly asked questions. Then I asked her name. “Yah,” she said. “Yah is my name!” “What a special name!” I said, and told her of the Greatest Name. “Ya-Bahá’ul-Abhá,” I said, and Yah repeated it. We hugged each other and laughed! How happy we were! Then my new-found friend asked how she could become a Bahá’í. We made an appointment to meet at Hoda and Heshmat’s house after our return from the villages, and it was time to leave for Tiehyee.

This was the dry season. During the rainy season torrential rains batter Liberia with no let-up. This goes on for weeks and even the good roads give way. The corrugated road to Tiehyee was no exception. We traveled in a pick-up truck, jammed together with other travelers, hip bones rubbing against hip bones. With no room for arms to hang down at the sides, we held onto bars supporting the roof. Speed was at a premium as we crept over log bridges, worked our way around deep crevasses, and climbed through forests, finally to emerge on the flat plain of Tiehyee.

The truck left us in a haze of dust. We didn’t have to wait long. Curious people began to gather. We smiled. They smiled. We reached out our hands to those nearest us—and then I heard “Alláh-u’Abhá!” Erickson introduced me to the vice chairman of the Spiritual Assembly, who immediately set out to find us lodging.

Everywhere we went I was struck by the beauty of being greeted with “Alláh-u’Abhá!” From the moment we were met at the airport to the moment of our departure we heard the greeting on every side. It served to deepen our awareness of what it can
mean to live in a Bahá'í society. We belonged. We fit in. We were at home wherever we went and our numbers seemed greater than they actually were.

Our small party—Bal, Erickson and I—expanded as we walked through Tiehyee. Like the Pied Piper we gathered the children. Mr. Matala, the chairman of the Local Assembly, welcomed us to his home, and Gono, one of his three wives, gave me her bed. The village houses are built of mud bricks. Some of the larger buildings have corrugated metal roofs, and some of the roofs are thatched—made of palm fronds and branches. The Matala house was especially grand, with several rooms for sleeping and one central sitting room. Wooden benches and six-inch high stools served as furniture. The cooking was done outside.

Gono helped me rig the mosquito netting over the bed and we spread my sheet on the straw mattress. All this had to be accomplished quickly, or time would slip away and it would be difficult to arrange in the dark of night.

We had been told that immediately upon arrival in the villages we would be offered baths. How welcome and necessary! Gono, who had quietly taken me in hand the moment I arrived at her house, escorted me to the bath house, a circle of sticks nearly chin high, with a narrow entrance. There in the center she placed a huge bucket of steaming water and offered me a lappa—a two-yard length of cloth that serves many purposes in village life. Knotted around the waist, it is a skirt. It is a wrapping for bundles to be carried on the head, a sling to tie baby to the back, and, in this case, a shower curtain! After Gono, using sign language, had explained the details of privacy in the village, and assured herself that the lappa did, indeed, cover the opening to the bath house, she squatted nearby as guard. But not until we had giggled together about my height! The bath house walls were just barely adequate.

Most of the men and women work on the farm lands until sundown, so the village was nearly deserted. That afternoon Gono, the children, and a few other Bahá'í women gathered around us for a deepening class. Because of the bad roads, not
many Bahá’í teachers had been to visit them, and the Assembly had not yet met. While we talked together and answered questions, we discussed the need to celebrate the Feast every 19 days. “But,” they asked, “we have no prayers in our language. How can we pray?” Bal set to work making a wall calendar while Erickson translated the “Remover of Difficulties.” And we prayed together.

Meetings begin late in the villages. The women must prepare the evening meal after returning from a long day in the fields. This is no simple chore. The water is carried from the river, and kassaba root, previously pared, boiled and laboriously pounded into a pulpy mass, is cooked into a stew over an open fire. The “stove” is made of three rocks placed in a triangle upon which an iron kettle is balanced. We were offered their food, but explained that we had brought our own, since we had come as uninvited guests.

At each of the meetings men, women and children gathered. James and Barclay, two young men from Sannequelle, arrived in time to help teach songs learned at the conference. The friends asked many questions and were most interested in the marriage laws. This gave us an opportunity to speak of the equality of men and women. The men were reminded that they should help the women with the children and relieve them of some of their physical burden so they could have time to be educated.

The chief of the village attended one meeting. He listened as we talked of the duties of the Spiritual Assembly and showed he understood the concepts. When we were asked when we would build a Center for them, the chief said the Bahá’ís must prove themselves. They must make their own decisions in their meetings and build their own Center, he said.

We asked the Spiritual Assembly to meet. The male members went into the house, but the women stayed behind. When we told the women that they, too, as members of the Assembly, must attend the meeting and offer their thoughts in consultation, they joined the others, only to return in 15 minutes! “How can we hold the Feast when we don’t have prayers or Writings in our language?” was again their appropriate question.

The time came to leave Tiehyee, and Barclay volunteered to stay behind. The young men had translated the Remover of Difficulties, the short obligatory prayer and a children’s prayer. Barclay would teach the words to the friends; it was a beginning.

Top, women and children in the village of Gorton pounding the kassaba root, a staple of the Liberian diet. Above, Erickson Napeh and Ranjit Singh Bal (left to right) who accompanied the author on her teaching trip to the interior of Liberia.
We left behind seven new believers.

When I think back to our days spent in the villages, my thoughts turn to feelings. I feel the warmth of the hospitality and the sincere appreciation that we had come to visit them. I feel the many warm handshakes we exchanged—first the grasp of the hand, the firm shake that always ended with a snapped finger. And I think of Gono and feel her love. Gono and I were truly sisters. She told me of her daughter who had died at childbirth the week before. This had kept her from attending the conference. She offered to sleep near me in case I needed her, and when we left the village to walk through the bush to Gorton, she followed us. I turned and saw her standing there and went to her. There were tears in her eyes, and we hugged, this tiny frail lady and I.

To reach Gorton, the next village to be visited, we walked through the bush and crossed the river several times, balancing on footbridges one or two logs in width; there were no hand railings—this was not easy! The boys carried my cameras in case I fell in the water. I enjoyed their polite teasing. Concerned that I might not be physically up to handling the trip, they kept saying, “We’re nearly there!” After about an hour and a half we began to see signs that we were at last approaching Gorton.

The Bahá’í Faith had been in Gorton for about three months. The community is active and strong. The Center is immaculate. Pictures of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the Shrines adorn the white-washed walls. Most of the Nimba women who attended the conference came from Gorton. When we entered the village we heard choruses of “Alláh’u’Abhá!” Children rushed to greet us, the men came with outstretched hands. Bringing up the rear were the women, walking slowly in their stately fashion, their faces wreathed in smiles. Again we were at home.

It wasn’t long before I learned the reason for the maturity of this community. Shortly after the teaching had taken place in Gorton, missionaries from a Christian church arrived and told the friends that Bahá’u’lláh is the anti-Christ. The friends, new to the Faith and frail, became afraid and turned away. But Cooper Baymie had been elected to the new Spiritual Assembly. He felt it was his responsibility to find out the truth, and he remembered the pictures of the Temples and Shrines he had seen before his declaration. With this in his mind, he set out for Monrovia to discover the
facts. It was a long journey. Eight hours by car, if one has a car. Cooper visited the Bahá’í Center there, and asked his questions. Assured that Bahá’u’lláh is the Promised One, he returned to Gorton, and soon all the believers had returned to the Faith.

The missionaries came again to Gorton, many of them, from all over Nimba County. They sent many people to talk to Cooper to try and change his mind—certain that if they could turn him away, they would turn the others away as well.

Later, Cooper told me what had happened. He said, "I told them I am a Bahá’í. I will listen about any religion, but I will not leave the Bahá’í Faith and join the Christian religion because the Christians fight one another." Finally, the pastor himself came to see him. "Young man," he said, "why do you so much love the Bahá’í Faith?" Cooper answered, "Because Bahá’u’lláh is not against anything. The Bahá’ís don’t criticize anything. So many of your members come here, but they fight each other ... and they say bad things. The Christians have deacons, pastors, priests—single people who talk all the time. You take the collections and love only your own members." The pastor replied, "The faith you are in is not a religion. There are many liars." Then Cooper ended his story. "I told him, 'Pastor, I will not become a Christian. I have found the right place to go. Alláh-u’Abhá.' And the pastor went away."

That night the village turned out in force for the meeting. The Center couldn’t hold the crowd. When the friends raised their voices to sing "The Bahá’ís of Gorton—We Are All One," the bass voices of the men underlined the trill of the women and children and the sound filled the night.

Later, we deepened on the Five Year Plan and its relationship to the Covenant. The questions and answers stimulated ideas, and soon we were in consultation. They spoke of their plans and their needs. There was no room for doubt. The believers in Gorton knew what it means to be a Bahá’í. Before we left their village they showed us land they had set aside to build an even larger Center, told us of their section of farm land dedicated to the Fund, and apologized that they meet only four times a week for prayers: Wednesday night, Friday night and twice on Sunday!

The meeting came to an end. Quietly, the friends made their way back to their houses. Small kerosene lanterns made barely discernible spots of light in the dark night. I followed the custom, and once inside my room, closed the wooden shutters over the glassless windows, to keep out the night creatures—but not until I
had taken one last look at the shapes of the village, round and square houses silhouetted against the star-filled night. Soon all the sounds faded away and the village was wrapped in quiet. Occasionally a snore was heard, a dog barked at an imagined intruder, or a baby’s cry echoed across the compound. The air was so still I could hear the mother’s soothing voice, and then all was quiet again.

The first morning sounds warned us of approaching day. Long before dawn breaks, the rooster starts his raucous song, his friends waken and join the chorus—goats bleat, chickens chuckle and chuck, pigs root and scuff against the house walls. The voices of the women are the next heard, along with the clang of pots and pans. The acrid smell of wood smoke, ever present in the villages, gains strength in the morning air. There is no more sleeping. The village is alive and day has begun.

Aching bones testified to my night-long search for a spot of ease on the straw-covered pallet that served as a mattress. No point in trying to extend the night. Shivering in the cool, dew-laden morning air, I opened the shutters. The window picture-framed the view—dawn mist over low mountains, a family squatting around a fire, huddled in blankets, sharing the morning meal. Somehow it all seemed so private, and for a moment I felt like an intruder. Then came a soft scratching sound at my door. Someone quietly placed a huge papaya, a knife, and an enameled bowl for seeds and peelings next to the entrance. Breakfast! I felt welcome, and welcomed the new day.

Our final stop in Nimba County was Kinnon, close to the border of Guinea. Again the atmosphere was different. We felt very remote in Kinnon. To get there we traveled over roads that were practically impassable, merely paths through the bush. We arrived at dusk, and by the time housing arrangements were made, baths finished, meals prepared and consumed, it was quite late.

The meetings in Kinnon followed the same pattern. Songs, discussions of the need for translations of the Writings, and immediate concerns with Bahá’í laws and teachings. Always we talked of the blacks in the United States, descended from the same ancestors as the villagers. We spoke of the Bahá’ís in the deep south, and those who are not yet Bahá’ís. When we explained that the photographs we were taking would be used to teach the Faith to their relatives in the United States, descendants of slaves taken in chains from Africa, they applauded.

As always, the meetings closed with loving smiles. As always, we told them of the Teachings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá regarding hospitality and thanked them for their loving example. Eight more villagers joined the Faith in Kinnon.

Our return trip was uneventful. Bal and I left James at a fork in the road where he set out for yet another village to continue his mission for the National Assembly. Erickson came with us to Sannequelle. Yah came to find us at Hoda and Heshmat’s, and everything was complete. We said our good-byes and, happy-sad, left for Monrovia.

Is it presumptuous to say I felt close to Bahá’u’lláh there? Over and over my heart sang the words, “Armed with the power of Thy Name, nothing can ever hurt me. With Thy love in my heart, all the world’s afflictions can in no wise alarm me.”

It took many hours to reach Monrovia. We were stopped several times by the police, dropped passengers along the way, and picked up others. Perhaps because it was Sunday, it was a day for accidents. We saw several, and as we approached the city, our taxi collided with one in front of us—both cars were demolished, but no one was hurt! And I remembered the words of Bahá’u’lláh I had been singing all day. Nothing could harm us! We still had work to do!

A new Assembly was formed in Mount Barclay the night we returned from Nimba. Our last night in the country we joined the National Assembly members and Hilda Robinson, a Bahá’í from Tuskegee, Alabama, in a ceremony to dedicate property for a new Bahá’í Center in the suburbs of Monrovia. Every day, and every night, there is work to do, as the Faith moves steadily forward in Liberia.

We will never forget those precious days there, the pioneers who shared their homes and hearts with us—James, Erickson, the Naddafis who brought the Faith to Nimba County—and the beautiful believers in the villages. Nor will we forget Bal, the new believer who, upon finding a new Light, wasted no time in bringing it to others.
"Arise for Victory" was the theme of a National Teaching Conference held last January 20-21 in Bang Pra, Sriracha, Thailand.

A highlight of the conference came when the 30 friends who were able to attend learned that Thailand's Five Year Plan goal for new localities had been exceeded by 35.

The conference was preceded by a Unity Feast hosted by the Local Spiritual Assembly of Bangkok.

The themes of conference sessions included "The Mystery of Sacrifice," "The Courage to Teach," and "What Bahá'í Means to an Individual."

Following a discussion of Thailand's remaining Five Year Plan goals, 12 believers arose to teach and went immediately into the field.

One hundred people attended a ceremony November 12, the anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, to dedicate the Bahá'í Center of Mombasa in southern Kenya. The guest of honor for the occasion was Mr. Muhoya, provincial education officer for the Mombasa area.

Two Bahá'ís spoke, and Mr. Muhoya gave a short address, officially opening the Center. Refreshments were served as the guests toured the new building, which was decorated with special displays for the occasion.

Many of the guests at the dedication ceremony were representatives of other Bahá'í communities in the coastal region of Kenya.
The Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'llāh Muhājir presided at a two-day teaching conference last November 25-26 at the National Bahá'í Center in Lisbon, Portugal.

More than 80 believers attended the conference which was organized in a few days after news of Dr. Muhājir’s visit was received.

While Dr. Muhājir was overjoyed to learn that the Portuguese friends had won all of the country’s Five Year Plan goals, he reminded them that the Plan wasn’t over yet and that many victories could yet be won.

Following consultation among the friends, the members of the National Spiritual Assembly and Dr. Muhājir, a “Five Month Plan” was drawn up and accepted by the National Spiritual Assembly.

The Plan was designed to harness the energy and enthusiasm generated by the conference and use it through the remaining five months of the Five Year Plan to consolidate the victories won and increase the number of Bahá’ís in each community.

The following message was sent from the conference to the Universal House of Justice:

“Hand Cause Dr. Muhājir two Auxiliary Board members assembled with 70 friends launched five-month plan teaching, consolidation involving minorities. Formation 30 local teaching committees, 10 new believers each locality, two travel teaching groups inside Spanish frontier, uplifted instant, whole-hearted acceptance. Supplicate prayers.” National Spiritual Assembly Portugal
The Chief of the Reserve has offered the community hall for further Bahá'í firesides and children's classes, and the Curve Lake Bahá'ís have planned a series of activities that will include visits to other Reservations and active participation in the teaching work in the area.

In December, Chile attained its Five Year Plan goal of establishing a Local Spiritual Assembly in every province when a new Assembly was established on Robinson Crusoe Island in the Juan Fernández group in the Pacific Ocean.

That victory, together with the re-establishment of two Assemblies on Chiloé Island in the Southern Archipelago and a new Assembly in Puerto Aysen, was the result of a determined teaching program.
Ceremony in Samoa
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Cover

Another historic milestone in the history of the Cause of God was realized last January 27 when the cornerstone of the Mother Temple of the Pacific Islands was laid on a verdant hillside overlooking the city of Apia, Western Samoa. Presiding at the ceremony were His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II, head of state of Western Samoa who has been a Bahá’í since 1968, and the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, the representative of the Universal House of Justice. A complete report of the ceremony begins on Page 4.
A message to Bahá’í scholars from the Universal House of Justice

Bahá’í scholarship is of great importance in the development and consolidation of the Bahá’í community. Historical research, orientalism and Islamic studies are obvious fields in which Bahá’ís can render great service to the Faith; there are many others. Indeed, it is not difficult to visualize the House of Justice, as Bahá’u’lláh’s World Order unfolds, requiring the services of distinguished Bahá’í scientists in all fields.

Inevitably a number of problems will confront Bahá’í scholars, who will themselves have to discover the solutions, both empirically and otherwise. Nonetheless it may be useful to offer at this early stage of the development of Bahá’í scholarship a few thoughts on these matters.

It has become customary in the West to think of science and religion as occupying two distinct—and even opposed—areas of human thought and activity. This dichotomy can be characterized in the pairs of antitheses: faith and reason; value and fact. It is a dichotomy which is foreign to Bahá’í thought and should be regarded with suspicion by Bahá’í scholars in every field. The principle of the harmony of science and religion means not only that religious teachings should be studied in the light of reason and evidence as well as of faith and inspiration, but also that everything in creation, all aspects of human life and knowledge, should be studied in the light of revelation as well as in that of purely rational investigation. In other words, a Bahá’í scholar, when studying a subject, should not lock out of his mind any aspect of truth that is known to him.

It has, for example, become commonplace to regard religion as the product of human striving after truth, as the outcome of certain climates of thought and conditions of society. This has been taken, by many non-Bahá’í thinkers, to the extreme of denying altogether the reality or even the possibility of a specific revelation of the Will of God to mankind through a human Mouthpiece.

A Bahá’í who has studied the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh, who has accepted His claim to be the Manifestation of God for this Age, and who has seen His Teachings at work in his daily life, knows as the result of rational investigation, confirmed by actual experience, that 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 his 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. It is a revelation of such staggering magnitude that no Bahá’í at this early stage in Bahá’í history can rightly claim to have more than a partial and imperfect understanding of it.

Thus, Bahá’í historians would see the overcoming of early misconceptions held by the Bahá’í community, or by parts of the Bahá’í community, not as “developments of the Bahá’í Faith”—as a non-Bahá’í historian might well regard them—but as growth of that community’s understanding of the Bahá’í Revelation. In scientific investigation, when searching after the facts of any matter, a Bahá’í must, of course, be entirely open-minded, but in his interpretation of the facts and his evaluation of evidence we do not see by what logic he can ignore the truth of the Bahá’í Revelation which he has already accepted; to do so would, we feel, be both hypocritical and unscholarly.

Undoubtedly the fact that Bahá’í scholars of the history and teachings of the Faith, believe in the Faith, will be a grave flaw in the eyes of many non-Bahá’í academics, whose own dogmatic materialism passes without comment because it is fashionable; but this difficulty is one that Bahá’í scholars share with their fellow believers in many fields of human endeavour, and the Bahá’í principle of the harmony of religion and science compels all Bahá’ís to protect themselves from prevalent diseases resulting from the divorce of faith and reason.

The sundering of science and religion is but one example of the tendency of the human mind (which is necessarily limited in its capacity) to concentrate on one virtue, one aspect of truth, one goal, to the exclusion of others. This leads, in extreme cases, to fanaticism and the distortion of truth, and in all cases to some degree of imbalance and inaccuracy. A scholar who is imbued with an understanding of the broad teachings of the Faith will always remember that being a scholar does not exempt him from the primal duties and purposes for which all
human beings are created. Not scholars alone, but all men are exhorted to seek out and uphold the truth, no matter how uncomfortable it may be. But they are also exhorted to be wise in their utterance, to be tolerant of the views of others, to be courteous in their behaviour and speech, not to sow the seeds of doubt in faithful hearts, to look at the good rather than at the bad, to avoid conflict and contention, to be reverent, to be faithful to the Covenant of God, to promote His Faith and safeguard its honour, and to educate their fellow-men, giving milk to babes and meat to those who are stronger.

Scholarship has a high station in the Baha’i teachings, and Baha’i scholars have a great responsibility to a growing, divinely-guided world society. The ascertainment of truth and the acquisition of a fuller understanding of the subjects of their scholarship are worthy and high endeavours. But Bahá’u’lláh has seen fit to dwell at some length on the way to offer the fruits of scholarship and expose error:

"Thou hast written that one of the friends hath composed a treatise. This was mentioned in the Holy Presence, and this is what was revealed in response: Great care should be exercised that whatever is written in these days doth not cause dissention, and invite the objection of the people. Whatever the friends of the One true God say in these days is listened to by the people of the world. It hath been revealed in the Lawh-i-Hikmat: ‘The unbelievers have inclined their ears towards us in order to hear that which might enable them to cavil against God, the help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.’ Whatever is written should not transgress the bounds of tact and wisdom, and in the words used there should lie hid the property of milk, so that the children of the world may be nurtured therewith, and attain maturity. 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. God grant that authors among the friends will write in such a way as would be acceptable to fainminded souls, and not lead to cavilling by the people."

Elsewhere He has written:

"'Consort with all men, O people of Bahá, in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship. If ye be aware of a certain

truth, if ye possess a jewel, of which others are deprived, share it with them in a language of utmost kindliness and goodwill. If it be accepted, if it fulfill its purpose, your object is attained. If any one should refuse it, leave him unto himself, and beseech God to guide him. Beware lest ye deal unkindly with him. A kindly tongue is the lodestone of the hearts of men. It is the bread of the spirit, it clotheth the words with meaning, it is the foundation of the light of wisdom and understanding. . .’”

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh: CXXXII)

And again:

"‘Should any one among you be incapable of grasping a certain truth, or be striving to comprehend it, show forth, when conversing with him, a spirit of extreme kindliness and goodwill. Help him to see and recognize the truth, without esteeming yourself to be, in the least, superior to him, or to be possessed of greater endowments.’”

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh: V)

As more and more Bahá’ís enter the world of higher learning they will have the opportunity of exerting great influence in bringing about in human consciousness and outlook that harmony of religion and science which is so great a principle of their Faith. The distinction desired by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for all Bahá’ís is certainly for attainment by Bahá’í scholars, who by following the exhortations of Bahá’u’lláh to moderation, kindliness, tact and wisdom, may restore scholarship to that high station of dignity and admiration which it formerly held and which is confirmed by the utterances of Bahá’u’lláh.

June 1979/Bahá’í News
A ceremony in Samoa

With great joy and dignity, the cornerstone is laid for the Mother Temple of the Pacific Islands

More than 500 believers were present at Tiapapata, near Apia, Western Samoa, January 27 as the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, representing the Universal House of Justice, and His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II, head of state of Western Samoa and the first reigning monarch to embrace the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, presided at the laying of the cornerstone of the Mother Temple of the Pacific Islands.

Others attending the historic ceremony included members of the family of the Malietoa; two members of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Australasia, Suhayl 'Alá'í and Howard Harwood; representatives of 16 National Spiritual Assemblies; heads of several departments of the Samoan government; representatives of the churches of Samoa, and about 80 Bahá'í visitors from other countries.

The new Bahá'í House of Worship—one of two whose construction was to begin as a goal of the Five Year Plan—will occupy a site on a verdant hillside near the royal residence outside Western Samoa's capital city. It was designed by Husayn Amanát who also was the architect for the permanent Seat of the Universal House of Justice at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel.

The dedication ceremony took place in the midst of a three-day celebration marking the 25th anniversary of the establish-

This small silver box, measuring about 6 centimeters (2-1/2 inches) in diameter, contains Dust from the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. It was placed inside the foundation stone of the Mother Temple of the Pacific Islands by the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, who represented the Universal House of Justice.
His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II, (above left), head of state of Western Samoa, spreads fresh cement, then places the foundation stone of the Mother Temple of the Pacific Islands in position.

The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, (above right), representing the Universal House of Justice, places a small box containing Dust from the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh into a niche in the foundation stone of the Mother Temple of the Pacific Islands, and cements it into place. The ceremony took place last January 27 at Apia, Western Samoa.
growth of the Faith during her lifetime. She recalled that she did not even know where Samoa was until 1953, when the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, was preparing the goals of the Ten Year Crusade.

She talked about the important role of women in the world, praised the “distinguished, upright, courageous” people of Polynesia, warned her listeners against the inroads of materialism into their society, and told how the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is changing the hearts and lives of people in every corner of the world—particularly in the so-called “backward” countries.

On Saturday morning, prior to the cornerstone ceremony, a presentation entitled “Twenty-five Years of the Bahá’í Faith in Samoa” was made by Mrs. ’Alá’i. In the evening, the friends were treated to a slide program showing the status of the Faith throughout the world at the end of the fourth year of the Five Year Plan.

Sunday’s events included greetings from representatives of the National Spiritual Assemblies present, and a “Preview of the Seven Year Global Plan, 1979-1986” by Counsellor Harwood.

Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, during the closing moments of the celebration, expressed warm appreciation for the actions of His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II on the previous day.

“It is very, very difficult for a man in such a high position to do what His Highness did yesterday,” she said. “I think that because of this we must pray for His Highness—pray for his happiness, his welfare, the fulfillment of his hopes, and for divine love and protection to constantly surround him.” The Malietoa has been a Bahá’í since 1968.

Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum also spoke of persecutions against the Bahá’ís in Iran, contrasting that troubled country with the “paradise of a people who are not blood-seeking and not vicious” that she saw in the Pacific islands. She added: “Every time you give the Message to other people—every time another Pacific Islander accepts Bahá'u'lláh—remember that you are putting a compress on the burning wounds of your fellow Bahá’ís in Persia.”

Then, after brief closing remarks and greetings from Counsellor ‘Alá’í, the conference ended as all of those present gathered to affix their signatures to a special message to His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II, who had sent his loving greetings to the session. The message to His Highness read:

“Your Highness: The loving message of Your Highness to the friends gathered at the final session of the Conference held in conjunction with the historic ceremony of the laying of the cornerstone of the Mother Temple of the Pacific Islands was conveyed to us by the Counsellor, Mr. Suhayl ‘Alá’í. It moved all our hearts and we desire to express to Your Highness our deep love, our high esteem, and our gratitude for your gracious participation in that ceremony of such outstanding significance to the followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the world.”

His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II, head of state of Western Samoa and the first ruling monarch to accept Bahá'u'lláh, delivers an address during the ceremony last January 27 at Apia, Western Samoa, at which the foundation stone of the Mother Temple of the Pacific Islands was laid.

The text of the address delivered by His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II, head of state of Western Samoa, during the ceremony January 27 at which the foundation stone of the Mother Temple of the Pacific Islands was laid:

It is a joy for me today to be participating in the laying of the foundation stone of the Bahá’í House of Worship in
Samoa—an edifice which is the first of its kind to be erected in the Pacific.

This occasion represents a significant hour for the people of Samoa and most certainly an important hour for the Baha'is in the world and in the Pacific. For the people of Samoa, because it signifies another milestone in their dedication to the Cause of God and their worship of their Creator. It signifies a positive and forward step in the cause of universal brotherhood and the recognition of one single God, the common Father of all humanity. It is an important hour for the Baha'is because of the fact that the Teachings of this young Faith were brought to our shores only some twenty-five years ago. The Teachings of Baha'u'llah express the noble idea of the unity of God, the unity of His Holy Messengers—the great Redeemers of mankind, such as Krishna, Moses, Christ, Muhammad and Baha'u'llah—and the unity of all the peoples of the earth.

Humanity today is in desperate need of a unifying spirit; a spirit that will engender in the hearts and minds of every member of the human family the belief that we all “belong to the same household.”

The laying of the foundation stone of this House of Worship in the Pacific is the visible sign of such unity in our midst and, hopefully, this building will rise and become the emblem of a greater spirit of unity in our islands and in the whole of the Pacific. For almost fifteen decades Samoa has shown love for God and has founded a nation that is aware of its Lord. Over this long period many men of God have labored and toiled in our islands in an effort to bring us closer to that true spirit which requires us to be better human beings. Our Government is founded on God. We promote freedom of worship and know little of the prejudices that afflict many other countries of the world.

On this occasion, as head of state of Western Samoa and on behalf of the people of Western Samoa, I wish the Baha'is every success in this undertaking—the building of this House of Worship which will open its doors to people of all races and religious backgrounds. When completed, this edifice will undoubtedly strengthen and develop further that mysterious power in the spirit of man that, once it is attracted to the true worship of its Creator, will bring about happiness, brotherhood and unity.

Finally, a word to our gracious visitor, Madame Rabbani, the distinguished representative of the Universal House of Justice, who has come such a long way to be with us today. Many of us know her through observing the film, The Green Light Expedition. We have come to know of her spirit of dedication and self-sacrifice and of her services to humanity. Madame Rabbani resides in the Holy Land, the home of many Prophets of God, and we are very proud to have her with us at this ceremony. We extend to Madame Rabbani our heartfelt welcome to Samoa. May your stay here be a deep spiritual experience because the people of Samoa are lovers of those who serve God.

Soifua!

The text of the cablegram to Samoa from the Universal House of Justice on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of the Mother Temple of the Pacific Islands:

“Hearts overflowing joy occasion Silver Jubilee introduction beloved Faith Samoa, eyes Baha'i world focused your islands this auspicious occasion during course of which foundation stone Mother Temple Pacific Islands being laid. Moved express gratitude tribute Knight Baha'u'llah energetic efforts Samoan friends reinforced ever-swelling number pioneers itinerant teachers guided assisted by Hands Cause Counsellors and Auxiliary Board members resulting firm establishment Administrative Institutions Faith effectively operating Samoa. This conference marks climax twenty-five years devoted work and foreshadows even greater achievements years immediately ahead. Urge seize every opportunity weld all members Samoan Baha'i Community into dynamic coherent unit suffused with creative directing propelling forces proceeding from source Revelation Himself prove themselves worthy instruments engage in thrilling enterprise Cause Baha'u'llah. Offering fervent prayers Holy Shrines success deliberations. Universal House of Justice.”

The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum and His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II lead a procession to the site of the Mother Temple of the Pacific Islands near Apia, Western Samoa. Behind them are members of the Malietoa's family, government officials, and other distinguished guests who attended the ceremony at which the foundation stone of the new Bahá'í House of Worship was laid.
By the next morning, the crowd had grown to more than 400. Many of them had spent the night at the site under an open marquee, since the meeting house itself was not completely finished. A series of speakers—Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís—talked on Maoritanga (Maori cultural matters).

In the afternoon, Rúhíyyih Khánum spoke of unity as the central principle of the Bahá’í Faith.

"Any disharmony causes illness," she pointed out. "We should dwell on virtues, not faults, be positive, forget the negative things from the past, and work together toward the future," she said, as she enumerated many of the Bahá’í principles that call for a more unified world. She illustrated many of her points with examples from the countries she has visited and the cultures she has observed.

A traditional Maori “hangi” (an earth-covered oven) was opened that evening and all of the visitors shared the feast, which was followed by an open-air concert. Rúhíyyih Khánum also found an opportunity to meet briefly with the New Zealand National Spiritual Assembly, and to encourage its members to translate more of the Bahá’í Writings into the Maori language.

The final morning, Sunday, January 21, was devoted to a question and answer session, after which Rúhíyyih Khánum spoke individually with many of those who attended. Two persons declared their belief in Bahá’u’lláh during the meeting.

"All hearts were touched and deepened by her presence," said a report of the visit, which added the hope that Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum would soon return to New Zealand and again share with those friends more of her “love, wisdom, and experience.”
The Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone began an extended visit to Africa last January 14, and in the three weeks that followed, visited Kenya, the Ivory Coast, and Ghana. He was accompanied by Mrs. Featherstone.

Arriving in Kenya, Mr. Featherstone immediately turned to the Mombasa area on the southeastern coast. He visited the Kilifi Teaching Institute, and spoke later at the Hall in Mombasa to a public meeting attended by 1,000 people—more than 40 of whom were non-Bahá’ís. He met with the Bahá’ís and commented that there was a need in Mombasa, with much teaching activity and many new members in the nearby area.

The following day, January 16, the Hand of the Cause spoke at another public meeting, this time at the new Mombasa Bahá’í Center. Approximately 60 people attended, only 10 of whom were Bahá’ís. The visitors included the principal, a teacher, and many students from a Catholic school.

On traveling to Nairobi in central Kenya, Mr. Featherstone spent four days visiting surrounding Bahá’í communities, including Michi, Tamba, Karatina, Thika, and Nakura villages. Groups of four to 70 Bahá’ís attended impromptu meetings. Many of the villages are now making plans to build Bahá’í Centers, Mr. Featherstone reported.

Mr. Featherstone celebrated the Feast of Sultán on January 19 in the village of Thika where 30 believers from two communities held reports from the National Spiritual Assembly of Kenya had 1,118 Local Spiritual Assemblies, more than 5,000 localities where Bahá’ís reside, 122 endowments, and 70 Bahá’í Centers, with another 25 to 30 Centers presently under construction.

The Hand of the Cause ended his visit to Kenya by addressing a group of nearly 100 people at the Nairobi Bahá’í Center on the evening of January 21. He spoke of the final months of the Five-Year Plan and of the challenges and opportunities of the new Seven-Year Plan. During a brief meeting with the National Spiritual Assembly, he encouraged the Kenyan believers to increase their proclamation activities through presentations of the Faith to public officials, and through the press, radio, and television.

The Featherstones next traveled to the coastal town of Abidjan in Ivory Coast. His first meeting there was held January 23 at the local Bahá’í Center. Forty-five people attended.

Mr. Featherstone spent the next four days traveling to Bahá’í centers, visiting the Abidjan and Bouake areas. At Abidjan, more than 150 Bahá’ís from three villages attended a meeting that included dinner. “There was obviously much training going on with the children, who could sing many songs about the Faith,” Mr. Featherstone commented.

He spoke on one occasion to 30 youth, four of whom became Bahá’ís after the meeting, and attended a dinner with 40 prominent local officials and citizens.

On January 28, Mr. and Mrs. Featherstone traveled to Ghana, where they met the next day with the National Spiritual Assembly. Mr. Featherstone was interviewed on the national radio service, and a local newspaper printed an article about the dedication of the new Bahá’í Centers in Obeng Yaw and Okai-Kroni villages. Each of the two ceremonies drew about 30 people.

Mr. Featherstone traveled January 30 to the villages of Sekondi and Adiembra with Mrs. Thelma Khelghati, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Western Africa. They attended the dedication of a new regional Hazíratu’ll-Quds in Adiembra. A container holding soil from the vicinity of the Shrine of the Báb, some rose petals from within the Shrine, and a stone from the site of the new building for the Seat of the Universal House of Justice were cemented into the floor of the building by Mr. Featherstone and Mrs. Khelghati.

The following day, Mr. Featherstone flew to Kumasi and spoke to 70 people at a public meeting at a university. While in Kumasi, he was interviewed by the local newspaper; met with the Queen Mother of the Ashanti people, spoke to a group of Auxiliary Board members and their assistants, and met with believers from Kumasi and nearby areas.

Mr. Featherstone later spoke at a conference at the Bahá’í National Center of Ghana in the coastal town of Accra. The conference was attended by delegations of Bahá’ís from Togo and Benin. Mrs. Featherstone spoke to the 80 people gathered there about her remembrances of Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Faith. A lengthy question and answer period followed her talk. The following day, February 4, Mr. Featherstone met with four Auxiliary Board members and 13 of their assistants.

The Featherstones left for Nigeria on February 6. “It has been wonderful meeting these strong believers whose roots are well-established in the Faith,” Mr. Featherstone commented.

June 1978/Bahá’í News
Around the World

United States

With the Five Year Plan nearing an end, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States announced on April 11—the 67th anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's arrival in America—the completion of another major domestic goal of the Plan, the opening of the 7,000th locality in which Bahá'ís reside in the U.S.

The goal was won at 2:42 p.m. that day when the National Teaching Committee received news of the opening of Upper Ojai, California, to the Faith. Six more localities were added by the end of the day.

The last 100 localities were opened within a three-day period.

Two days before the locality goal was won, the U.S. International Goals Committee reported that every one of its overseas pioneering goals was either filled or in the process of being filled, and that the goals would be won by the end of the Plan at Ridván.

The U.S. goal of 1,400 Local Spiritual Assemblies was won last November 26. The total as of April 11, when the locality goal was won, was 1,481.

More than 100 people including approximately 40 non-Bahá'ís attended a proclamation event March 3 in the goal community of San Gabriel, California, that featured music by John Ford Coley, Leslie and Kelly, Bob Gundry, and 'Friends.' After the concert, John Ford Coley gave a brief fireside and told how he became a Bahá'í. The event was coordinated by the Los Angeles Teaching Committee and by Jan Uebel, a homefront pioneer to San Gabriel. A follow-up fireside was held the next weekend at the San Gabriel Valley Bahá'í Center.

Sri Lanka

One hundred-fifty Bahá'ís from every region of Sri Lanka—many of whom were new believers of Sinhalese background—attended a National Teaching Conference last December 23-25 in Kandy. Interest in the conference had been encouraged by a series of five special teaching projects that were launched in November by the National Spiritual Assembly of Sri Lanka.

Earlier, a highly successful winter school organized by the National Youth Committee attracted 70 people. It was held October 28-30 at Namunukula. Again, most of those participating were Sinhalese.

Just prior to the conference in Kandy, the new District Haźratu'l-Quds in that city was officially dedicated. It has already become the center of much activity in the area.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Surinam and French Guiana took the opportunity to meet with the Granman (chief) of the tribe of Saramaccaners—one of the four principle Bush Negro tribes of Surinam—because 17 Local Spiritual Assemblies have been established recently among villages in this group.

In November, through the efforts of Alibe Mimba—a member of the tribe and also a member of the National Spiritual Assembly—a meeting was arranged with Granman Aboikoni at his residence and seat at Assidonhoppo, far up the Surinam River.

The arrangements were made by courier-delivered cassette tape recording, the usual method of transmitting information throughout the Bush Negro tribal area since few members of the tribes can read and write.

To get from the capital city of Paramaribo to Assidonhoppo, the eight members of the National Spiritual Assembly who were able to make the trip first traveled to Botopassi by small chartered airplane. There they transferred for the long upriver trip to a river boat that the National Spiritual Assembly owns and maintains for teaching work.

News of the National Assembly’s planned trip was broadcast throughout the area on the national radio service, so that the group stopped at several of the Bahá’ís villages along the river as they traveled. The boat tied up only briefly at most of the villages, but the Assembly was able to step ashore and visit at three of them. The boat reached Assidonhoppo at nightfall.

The audience with the Granman was held at 7:30 the next morning. The Granman told the Assembly members that they were most welcome, and then pointed out that he had instructed his people that when they accept a new religion, they must also accept its tenets and laws without clinging to any of their old religious ideas. He then asked for an explanation of the principles and laws of the Bahá’í Faith. After it was given, he indicated that he was content with what he had heard.

The National Assembly presented the Granman a copy of The Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh, and an illumined, calligraphic rendering of the Hidden Word that reads, “O Son of Spirit! My first counsel is this...” It had been translated into the Saramaccaner language and framed.

When the passage was read aloud to him, the Granman was visibly moved and expressed profound thanks to the Assembly, thereby ending the audience.

As evening approached, it was time to take “official” leave of the Granman’s hospitality. When the delegation met again with him, he told the Assembly that he had decided to personally inform all of the captains of the villages in the Saramaccaner tribal region that the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Surinam and French Guiana had called upon him and that he had given his official permission for the proclamation and teaching of the Bahá’í Faith; all were to cooperate with them.

“A more clear and beautiful statement could not be expected,” a report of the occasion pointed out.

That evening, the Granman attended a showing of the film, The Green Light Expedition, part of which had been made in his area, and a film that had been made at the Fourth International Bahá’í Convention. Also viewing the show were several village captains who were visiting the Granman as well as many other residents of Assidonhoppo and nearby villages.

Early this year, the first public display on the Bahá’í Faith on the island of Santa Cruz de Tenerife (off the coast of Portugal) was set up in the goal city of Orotava. Manning the display (left to right) are Sr. Hayati, Sr. Eladio Martinez, and Sra. Chaos.
Ninety-five adults and 50 children attended the annual South West African Bahá'í Summer School last December 25-31 in Cape Town, South Africa.

Believers came from the Western Cape, the Port Elizabeth area, Eastern Cape, Durban, Orange Free State, Witwatersrand, Potchefstroom and Mafeking as well as from Swaziland and Rhodesia.

Also attending was Mrs. Meherangiz Munsiff of London, England, who was on a teaching trip in the area.

The school's emphasis was on the accomplishment of the goals of the Five Year Plan. A highlight was Mrs. Munsiff’s recollection of her pilgrimage to Haifa and her memories of the beloved Guardian.

A notable feature was the improved teaching of the children. On the last evening, the children entertained with songs and prayers along with a short play they had prepared themselves.

The Cape Town youth presented two plays based on the openings of the books *The Flame* and *Thief in the Night*.

Four teaching teams, formed following a special institute last July, have succeeded in introducing the Faith to previously unopened areas of Upper Volta.

A team that taught in the Pô and Tibele regions in the southern part of the country achieved its greatest victory among members of the Gourounssi tribal group, where 506 new believers joined the Faith and seven new Local Spiritual Assemblies were established. Prayers were translated into the Kassena language, used in the region, and then recorded on cassettes so the new Bahá'ís could memorize them easily.

A team that taught in the Ouakara and Tougan area was also successful with 25 enrollments in the predominantly Muslim area. Other teams are working in the Koupela, Fada Ngourma and Kantchari areas in the east, and in the Diebougou and Gaoua areas in the southeast.
For the first time in the history of the Faith in Papua New Guinea, a National Bahá’í Youth Conference was held last October near the capital, Port Moresby.

The two-day conference was planned and conducted by the country’s first National Bahá’í Youth Committee, appointed in July 1978 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Papua New Guinea.

More than 100 believers from 19 communities, the majority of them youth, attended the conference. Publicity included two announcements on Papua New Guinea’s national radio station.

The conference included deepening on Bahá’í administration, Bahá’í consultation, teaching the Faith, Bahá’í principles, and the significance of the Faith in today’s troubled world.

Although pioneers from Port Moresby and Kwikila assisted in the program, most of the talks were given by the youth themselves. During an evening social meeting, traditional dances were performed and slides of Bahá’í Holy Places shown.

As a result of the conference, four persons in Port Moresby declared their belief in Bahá’u’lláh.

A special effort by the Bahá’ís of Spain to increase the amount of radio programming about the Faith has had significant results, according to a recent report of the Radio Department of the Bahá’í National Audio-Visual Committee of that country.

In six months, the station in Fuengirola-Marbella has transmitted 813 minutes of Bahá’í material; Tarragona-Reus, 154 minutes; Madrid, 120 minutes; Cartagena, 87 minutes; Tenerife, 50 minutes, and Valencia, 44 minutes.

Furthermore, a program called “Spiritual Vibrations” continues to be broadcast over Radio Bilbao every Thursday at 8:45 p.m., and selections from The Hidden Words are heard every morning. In Sabadell, a series of 30- and 60-second Bahá’í spot announcements will begin soon.
The Bahá'ís of Bekora, Cameroon, gathered for a recent 19 Day Feast. The village has about 20 adult believers who hold regular teaching and deepening meetings, have a program for teaching the Faith in nearby villages, observe Feasts and Holy Days, and hold dawn prayers. The regular children's classes are attended by about 60 children.

Thirty-one women from six communities attended a two-day Regional Conference for Bahá'í Women last December 18-19 at the National Hašírat-u'l-Quds in Victoria, Cameroon Republic. Teaching, deepening, and the education of children were among the topics covered in conference sessions.

Eighty Bahá'ís attended a National Teaching Conference December 28-30 at City Commercial College in Mankon. Sessions emphasized teaching, deepening, and consolidation, with building self-supporting communities. The construction of local Bahá'í Centers without outside aid also was discussed.

Following the conference, a special two-day session on the development of Local Spiritual Assemblies was presented by Larry Kreader, a traveling teacher from the United States. Those who attended this course found it particularly interesting and valuable.

John R. Johnson (standing third from left), a pioneer from the United States, is shown with members of the first Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Londa, Cameroon Republic, and children of the Londa community. Mr. Johnson reports that Cameroon has surpassed its Five Year Plan goals of 300 Local Assemblies, 850 localities open to the Faith, and 50 endowments.
The Maharajah of Mandi, India, Jogindar Sen, graciously received a Bahá'í delegation sent to him in January, and arranged a dinner party at his palace so the Bahá'ís could explain the Faith to 20 prominent guests. The Maharajah had met Queen Marie of Rumania and was aware that she had been a Bahá'í.

The Bahá'ís, who had traveled to Mandi in Himachal Pradesh State to proclaim the Faith, also met with other prominent people in the city, including the principal of the Boys' High School. Before the Bahá'ís could tell the principal about the Faith, he began to tell them of the principles he believes mankind requires. When the Bahá'í teachers told him of the coming of Bahá'u'lláh, he asked for an enrollment card.

The principal arranged for the Bahá'ís to speak to all of the 1,000 students at the school, and separately to the school's 60 teachers. Many of the teachers asked for enrollment cards, and for literature to read.

More than 50 Bahá'ís attended the first Bahá'í Conference of the Andaman Islands (east of Madras, India, in the Bay of Bengal), held January 7-9 at Port Blair. Speakers dealt with such topics as the life of Bahá'u'lláh, Bahá'í Feasts and Holy Days, the importance of prayer, living a Bahá'í life, the Bahá'í Fund, and the Administrative Order.

A highlight of the conference was an appearance by B.R. Tumata, Andaman Development Commissioner, who told of his great love and respect for Bahá'ís and for the Bahá'í Teachings. He expressed a wish that the Faith would grow greatly in the Andamans and would reach every soul, because, in his words, "ten honest Bahá'ís are equal to ten thousand others."

Much of the conference proceedings, including portions of Mr. Tumata's address and a talk on the importance of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh given at a public meeting, were broadcast on the Andaman government radio system and reprinted in the local newspapers.

1979 began in spectacular fashion for more than 250 Bahá'ís from all parts of Australia who participated in the 10th Australian Bahá'í Youth Conference at Melbourne's Monash University.

More than 20 nationalities were represented at the week-long gathering whose daytime activities ranged from talks and book reviews on a wide range of Bahá'í subjects to addresses by Counsellors and Auxiliary Board members and group discussions led by members of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Evening programs included a seminar on the needs of children, a concert, a dramatic presentation, and a folk dance that was turned into a disco.

The conference marked the half-way point in the Victorian Teaching Campaign. Fourteen youth volunteered to join teaching teams and help in that effort.

A 'University Teaching Project' last October in the city of Chandigarh, North India, led to 30 declarations within a week including at least one university professor and two exchange students from Africa. The campaign was organized under the auspices of the National Youth Committee of India.

The following cable was received from the Universal House of Justice:

"Warm Bahá'í greetings friends attending National Youth Conference Stop As society sinks deeper morass confusion conflict moral degradation incumbent Bahá'í youth consult their unique role Bahá'í community raise level awareness spiritual responsibilities followers Greatest Name these crucial times and responsibility youth assist win goals during closing weeks Five Year Plan Stop Praying Shrines success deliberations sacrificial efforts."
Twenty-three new Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed in Canada between December 22 and January 15, 15 of which are on Indian Reserves. A vast increase in the level of teaching, maintained in the face of inclement weather, was responsible for the victories.

The Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts participated in some of the several meetings across Canada at which Bahá’í’s pledged their efforts to win the goals. Counsellors Lloyd Gardner and Angus Cowan of the North American Board, Auxiliary Board members and assistants, and members of the National Spiritual Assembly and national and regional committees helped maintain the momentum.

‘Participation was universal,’ said a report from Dr. Hidayatu’llah Ahmadyyih of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Central America, who was in Canada to help its National Spiritual Assembly organize the campaign.

‘...It is difficult to find words adequate to convey the degree of devotion and dedication of these beloved friends and their willingness to sacrifice everything in the path of Bahá’u’lláh,’ wrote Dr. Ahmadyyih. ‘They traveled long distances in spite of severe climatic conditions—low temperatures, dangerous snow-covered and icy roads—to gather in meetings where some arose to pioneer on the homefront and many volunteered to participate in teaching projects aimed at the formation of Local Spiritual Assemblies. No obstacle was too great.

‘In Saskatoon, North Saskatchewan, where the temperature dropped to minus 35 degrees, more than 65 believers attended a meeting and all of them participated in a six-day teaching project that resulted in the formation of nine Local Spiritual Assemblies. In the south of Saskatchewan, near Regina, of similar cold climate, many of the friends—the majority of them Indian—participated in a six-day project that formed four Assemblies. All these Assemblies are on the Indian Reserves.

‘In Vancouver, British Columbia, more than 200 believers attended a meeting, and many of them volunteered to participate in the teaching projects. In Nanaimo, Vancouver Island, more than 70 believers attended a meeting; three groups were brought up to Assembly status through homefront pioneering and many people volunteered to participate in the teaching projects.

‘In New Glasgow, near Halifax, Nova Scotia, more than 60 believers gathered in a meeting and some volunteered to participate in short teaching projects. In Montreal, Quebec, more than 100 believers from central and eastern Quebec and the Ottawa valley attended a meeting where the beloved Hand of the Cause John Robarts also spoke and encouraged the friends in the teaching work. Nearly all those who were present volunteered to participate in two-week teaching projects in their respective regions.

‘In southern Ontario, nearly 180 believers gathered at a meeting in the National Center (in Toronto) and a few arose to pioneer to the homefront goals and many volunteered to participate in the teaching projects. In a meeting held in Kitchener, although the weather was very cold and the roads were covered with snow, more than 200 friends attended, and a few arose to pioneer to homefront goals. Seventy-nine people volunteered to participate in the teaching projects.’

Three Bahá’ís from the U.S. were among the participants early this year in a highly successful teaching campaign in Canada’s British Columbia Province.

Donald Whyte, a 20-year-old Native American, and Mrs. Susan Emmel and her 16-year old daughter, Lisa, all from Colorado, were in British Columbia from January 26 to March 27.

During the first month of their stay, British Columbia witnessed the opening of 33 localities to the Faith, the formation of three Local Spiritual Assemblies, and the enrollment of more than 130 new believers.

The second month saw 28 localities opened, surpassing the campaign goal of 25 that month.

The U.S. believers taught in Prince George, Quesnel, William Lake, on Indian Reservations surrounding those areas, in the Vancouver area, and in Chilliwack, Ashcroft, Merrett, Penticton, Vernon, and nearby areas.

They were interviewed on a half-hour television program to be shown on Cable TV, and participated in a day-long proclamation at the community college in Prince George.

When the team arrived at the Stone Reserve, there was one non-Indian Bahá’í there and no Indian believers. Soon afterward, 18 Indians embraced the Faith and an Assembly was formed. One of those who was enrolled was the chief, Jim Myers, whose brother also was among the new believers.
The Bahá’í International Community and Office of the Representative of the Bahá’ís of the United States participated again this year in the annual Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) associated with the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI). More than 500 representatives of NGOs associated with the UN attended the conference March 22-23 at UN Headquarters in New York City. Its theme was “The UN and NGOs—Partners for Peace—Mutual Responsibility and Mutual Opportunity.”

This year’s conference co-chairmen were Dr. Will C. van den Hoonaard, alternate representative of the Bahá’í International Community to the United Nations, and Dr. Philip Oke of the Christian Peace Conference. Dr. van den Hoonaard has been serving as vice-chairman of the Executive Committee of NGOs associated with DPI.

During the conference, Dr. van den Hoonaard shared the platform with Kurt Waldheim, secretary-general of the UN, and with Dr. Estefania Aldaba-Lim, special representative for the International Year of the Child (IYC). He also chaired a number of workshops with other members of the UN Secretariat and NGO representatives.

Many favorable comments were received from participants for the manner in which the conference was chaired. A special tribute came from Mrs. Sally Swing Shelley, chief, NGO section, Department of Public Information, who in a letter expressed her “deep gratitude” to the Bahá’í representative “for being such an outstanding Conference chairman.”

At a reception and during the sessions, Bahá’í representatives, five from the Bahá’í International Community and four from the UN Office of the Bahá’ís of the U.S., had many opportunities to mingle with other participants.

The Bahá’í representatives were Dr. Victor de Araujo, Dr. van den Hoonaard, Mrs. Mary Sawicki, Cary Littlefield and Mrs. Deborah K. van den Hoonaard (Bahá’í International Community), and Dr. Wilma Brady, Mrs. Nancy Mondschein, Ms. Janis Peri, and Dr. Hussein Ahdieh (UN Office of the Bahá’ís of the U.S.).

A total of 1,528 Bahá’ís from 206 Local Spiritual Assembly areas attended a Regional Teaching Conference last December 23-25 at Uvira in eastern Zaire’s Kivu Province.

One delegation of more than a dozen believers walked to the conference from their homes in Lulenge—a journey of 14 days in each direction.
Bahá’í News

Bahá’í Year 136
July 1979

Bahíyyih Khánum
‘The Greatest Holy Leaf’
The Shrine of Bahíyyih Khanum.
The Greatest Holy Leaf.
On Mt. Carmel in Haifa, Israel
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Cover

It was 47 years ago this month that Bahá’íyl Khánnum, the Greatest Holy Leaf, described by the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, as ‘one of the nobler figures intimately associated with the life-long work of Bahá’u’lláh,’ ascended to the Abhá Kingdom. We present in this issue a touching tribute to this most remarkable woman penned by the Guardian himself shortly after her passing. It begins on Page 5.
To the Bahá'ís of the World
Dearly-loved Friends,

The decline of religious and moral restraints has unleashed a fury of chaos and confusion that already bears the signs of universal anarchy. Engulfed in this maelstrom, the Bahá'í world community, pursuing with indefeasible unity and spiritual force its redemptive mission, inevitably suffers the disruption of economic, social and civil life which afflicts its fellow men throughout the planet. It must also bear particular tribulations. The violent disturbances in Persia, coinciding with the gathering in of the bountiful harvest of the Five Year Plan, have brought new and cruel hardships to our long-suffering brethren in the Cradle of our Faith and confronted the Bahá'í world community with critical challenges to its life and work. As the Bahá'í world stood poised on the brink of victory, eagerly anticipating the next stage in the unfoldment of the Master's Divine Plan, Bahá'u'lláh's heroic compatriots, the custodians of the Holy Places of our Faith in the land of its birth, were yet again called upon to endure the passions of brutal mobs, the looting and burning of their homes, the destruction of their means of livelihood, and physical violence and threats of death to force them to recant their faith. They, like their immortal forebears, the Dawn-Breakers, are standing steadfast in face of this new persecution and the ever-present threat of organized extermination.

Remembering that during the Five Year Plan the Persian friends far surpassed any other national community in their outpouring of pioneers and funds, we, in all those parts of the world where we are still free to promote the Cause of God, have the responsibility to make good their temporary inability to serve. Therefore, with uplifted hearts and radiant faith, we must arise with redoubled energy to pursue our mighty task, confident that the Lord of Hosts will continue to reward our efforts with the same bountiful grace He vouchsafed to us in the Five Year Plan.

The teaching victories in the Plan have been truly prodigious; the points of light, those localities where the Promised One is recognized, have increased from sixty-nine thousand five hundred to over ninety-six thousand; the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies has grown from over seventeen thousand to over twenty-five thousand; eighteen new National Spiritual Assemblies have been formed. The final report will disclose in all their manifold aspects the magnitude of the victories won.

In the world at large the Bahá'í community is now firmly established. The Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God, the Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth, is bearing a precious fruit in the development of the International Teaching Centre as a mighty institution of the World Centre of the Faith; an institution blessed by the membership of all the Hands of the Cause; an institution whose beneficent influence is diffused to all parts of the Bahá'í community through the Continental Boards of Counsellors, the members of the Auxiliary Boards and their assistants.
Advised, stimulated and supported by this vital arm of the Administrative Order, 125 National Spiritual Assemblies are rapidly acquiring experience and growing in wisdom as they administer the complex affairs of their respective communities as organic parts of one world-wide fellowship. More and more Local Spiritual Assemblies are becoming strong focal centres of local Bahá’í communities and firm pillars of the National Spiritual Assembly in each land. Even in those countries where the Bahá’í Administration cannot operate or has had to be disbanded, countries to which have now been added Afghanistan, the Congo Republic, Niger, Uganda and Vietnam, the believers, while obedient to their governments, nevertheless staunchly keep alive the flame of faith.

Beyond the expansion of the community, vital as it is, the Five Year Plan witnessed great progress in the spiritual development of the friends, the growing maturity and wisdom of Local and National Assemblies, and in the degree to which Bahá’í communities embody the distinguishing characteristics of Bahá’í life and attract, by their unity, their steadfastness, their radiance and good reputation, the interest and eventual wholehearted support of their fellow citizens. This is the magnet which will attract the masses to the Cause of God, and the leaven that will transform human society.

The conditions of the world present the followers of Bahá’u’lláh with both obstacles and opportunities. In an increasing number of countries we are witnessing the fulfillment of the warnings that the writings of our Faith contain. “Peoples, nations, adherents of divers faiths,” the beloved Guardian wrote, “will jointly and successively arise to shatter its unity, to sap its force, and to degrade its holy name. They will assail not only the spirit which it incubates, but the administration which is the channel, the instrument, the embodiment of that spirit. For as the authority with which Bahá’u’lláh has invested the future Bahá’í Commonwealth becomes more and more apparent, the fiercer shall be the challenge which from every quarter will be thrown at the verities it enshrines.” In different countries, in varying degrees, the followers of Bahá’u’lláh at this very hour are undergoing such attacks, and are facing imprisonment and even martyrdom rather than deny the Truth for whose sake the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh drained the cup of sacrifice.

In other lands, such as those in Western Europe, the faithful believers have to struggle to convey the message in the face of widespread indifference, materialistic self-satisfaction, cynicism and moral degradation. These friends, however, still have freedom to teach the Faith in their homelands, and in spite of the discouraging meagerness of outward results they continue to proclaim the Message of Bahá’u’lláh to their fellow citizens, to raise high the reputation of the Cause in the public eye, to acquaint leaders of thought and those in authority with its true tenets, and to spare no effort to seek out those receptive souls in every town and village who will respond to the divine summons and devote their lives to its service.

In many lands, however, there is an eager receptivity for the teachings of the Faith. The challenge for the Bahá’ís is to provide these thousands of seeking souls, as swiftly as possible, with the spiritual food that they crave, to enlist them under the banner of Bahá’u’lláh, to nurture them in the way of life He has revealed, and to guide them to elect Local Spiritual Assemblies which as they begin to function strongly, will unite the friends in firmly consolidated Bahá’í communities and become beacons of guidance and havens of refuge to mankind.

Faced by such a combination of danger and opportunity, the Bahá’ís, confident in the ultimate triumph of God’s purpose for mankind, raise their eyes to the goals of a new Seven Year Plan.

In the Holy Land the strengthening of the World Centre and the augmentation of its worldwide influence must continue:

- The Seat of the Universal House of Justice will be completed and designs will be adopted for the remaining three buildings of the World Administrative Centre of the Faith.
- The Institution of the International Teaching Centre will be developed and its functions expanded. This will require an increase in its membership and the assumption by it and by the Continental Boards of Counsellors of wider functions in the stimulation on an international scale of the propagation and consolidation of the Faith, and in the promotion of the spiritual, intellectual and community aspects of Bahá’í life.
- The House of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in ‘Akká will be opened to pilgrimage.
- Work will be continued on the collation and classification of the Sacred Texts and a series of compilations gleaned and translated from the writings of the Faith will be sent out to the Bahá’í world to help in deepening the friends in their understanding of the fundamentals of the Faith, enriching their spiritual lives, and reinforcing their efforts to teach the Cause.
- The ties binding the Bahá’í International Community to the United Nations will be further developed.
- Continued efforts will be made to protect the Faith from opposition and to emancipate it from the fetters of persecution.

Each National Spiritual Assembly has been given goals for these first two years of the Plan, designed to continue the process of expansion, to consolidate the victories won, and to attain, where circumstances permit, any goals that may have had to remain unaccomplished at the end of the Five Year Plan. During these first two years we shall be examining, with the Continental Boards of Counsellors and National Spiritual Assemblies, the conditions and possibilities in each country, and shall be considering in detail the capacities and needs of each of the rapidly differentiating national Bahá’í communities before formulating the further goals towards which each community is to work following the opening phase of the Plan.
Throughout the world the Seven Year Plan must witness the attainment of the following objectives:

- The Mashriqu’l-Adhkár of Samoa is to be completed and progress will be made in the construction of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár in India.
- Nine new National Spiritual Assemblies are to be brought into being: eight in Africa, those of Angola, Bophuthatswana, the Cape Verde Islands, Gabon, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia and Transkei; eight in the Americas, those of Bermuda, Dominica, French Guiana, Grenada, the Leeward Islands, Martinique, St. Lucia and St. Vincent; and three in the Pacific, those of the Cook Islands, Tuvalu and the West Caroline Islands. Those National Spiritual Assemblies which have had to be dissolved will, circumstances permitting, be re-established.
- The Message of Baha’u’llah must be taken to territories and islands which are as yet unopened to His Faith.
- The teaching work, both that organized by institutions of the Faith and that which is the fruit of individual initiative, must be actively carried forward so that there will be growing numbers of believers, leading more countries to the stage of entry by troops and ultimately to mass conversion.
- This teaching work must include prompt, thorough and continuing consolidation so that all victories will be safeguarded, the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies will be increased and the foundations of the Cause reinforced.
- The interchange of pioneers and travelling teachers, which contributes so importantly to the unity of the Bahá’í world and to a true understanding of the oneness of mankind, must continue, especially between neighbouring lands. At the same time, each national Bahá’í community must aspire to a rapid achievement of self-sufficiency in carrying out its vital activities, thus acquiring the capacity to continue to function and grow even if outside help is cut off.
- Especially in finance is the attainment of independence by national Bahá’í communities urgent. Already the persecutions in Iran have deprived the believers in that country of the bounty of contributing to the international funds of the Faith, of which they have been a major source. Economic disruption in other countries threatens further diminution of financial resources. We therefore appeal to the friends everywhere to exercise the utmost economy in the use of funds and to make those sacrifices in their personal lives which will enable them to contribute their share, according to their means, to the local, national, continental and international funds of the Faith.
- For the prompt achievement of all the goals and the healthy growth of Bahá’í community life National Spiritual Assemblies must pay particular attention to the efficient functioning, in the true spirit of the Faith, of their national committees and other auxiliary institutions, and, in consultation with the Continental Boards of Counsellors, must conceive and implement programs that will guide and reinforce the efforts of the friends in the paths of service.
- National Spiritual Assemblies must promote wise and dignified approaches to people prominent in all areas of human endeavour, acquainting them with the nature of the Bahá’í community and the basic tenets of the Faith, and winning their esteem and friendship.
- At the heart of all activities, the spiritual, intellectual and community life of the believers must be developed and fostered, requiring: the prosecution with increased vigour of the development of Local Spiritual Assemblies so that they may exercise their beneficial influence and guidance on the life of Bahá’í communities; the nurturing of a deeper understanding of Bahá’í family life; the Bahá’í education of children, including the holding of regular Bahá’í classes and where necessary, the establishment of tutorial schools for the provision of elementary education; and the encouragement of Bahá’í youth in study and service; and the encouragement of Bahá’í women to exercise to the full their privileges and responsibilities in the work of the community—may they fittingly bear witness to the memory of the Greatest Holy Leaf, the immortal heroine of the Bahá’í Dispensation, as we approach the fiftieth anniversary of her passing.

As lawlessness spreads in the world, as governments rise and fall, as rival groups and feuding peoples struggle, each for its own advantage, the plight of the oppressed and the deprived wrings the heart of every true Bahá’í, tempting him to cry out in protest or to arise in wrath at the perpetrators of injustice. For this is a time of testing which calls to mind Bahá’u’lláh’s words ‘‘O concourse of the heedless! I swear by God! The promised day is come, the day when tormenting trials will have surged above your heads, and beneath your feet, saying: ‘Taste ye what your hands have wrought!’ ‘‘

Now is the time when every follower of Bahá’u’lláh must cling fast to the Covenant of God, resist every temptation to become embroiled in the conflicts of the world, and remember that he is the holder of a precious trust, the Message of God which, alone, can banish injustice from the world and cure the ills afflicting the body and spirit of man. We are the bearers of the Word of God in this day and, however dark the immediate horizons, we must go forward rejoicing in the knowledge that the work we are privileged to perform is God’s work and will bring to birth a world whose splendour will outshine our brightest visions and surpass our highest hopes.

*The Universal House of Justice
Naw-Rúz 1979*
This month marks the 47th anniversary of the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s illustrious sister, Bahiyyih Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf, described by the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, as “next to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, among members of the Holy Family... the brightest embodiment of that love which is born of God and of that human sympathy which few mortals are capable of evincing.” The soul-stirring tribute to the Greatest Holy Leaf that begins on the following page was written by the Guardian himself shortly after her passing and is reprinted from The Bahá’í World, Vol. V (1932-34) - Ed.
'How staunch was her faith, how calm her demeanor, how forgiving her attitude, how severe her trials. . .'

Brethren and Fellow-Mourners in the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh:

A sorrow, reminiscent in its poignancy, of the devastating grief caused by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's sudden removal from our midst, has stirred the Bahá’í world to its foundations. The Greatest Holy Leaf, the well-beloved and treasured Remnant of Bahá'u'lláh entrusted to our frail and unworthy hands by our departed Master, has passed to the Great Beyond, leaving a legacy that time can never dim.

The Community of the Most Great Name, in its entirety and to its very core, feels the sting of this cruel loss. Inevitable though this calamitous event appeared to us all, however acute our apprehension of its steady approach, the consciousness of its final consummation at this terrible hour leaves us, whose souls have been impregnated by the energizing influence of her love, prostrated and disconsolate.

How can my lonely pen, so utterly inadequate to glorify so exalted a station, so impotent to portray the experiences of so sublime a life, so disqualified to recount the blessings she showered upon me since my earliest childhood—how can such a pen repay the great debt of gratitude and love that I owe her whom I regarded as my chief sustainer, my most affectionate comforter, the joy and inspiration of my life? My grief is too immense, my remorse too profound, to be able to give full vent at this moment to the feelings that surge within me.

Only future generations and pens abler than mine can, and will, pay a worthy tribute to the towering grandeur of her spiritual life, to the unique part she played throughout the tumultuous stages of Bahá’í history, to the expressions of unqualified praise that have streamed from the pen of both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of His Covenant, though unrecorded, and in the main unsuspected by the mass of her passionate admirers in the East and West, the share she has had in influencing the course of some of the chief events in the annals of the Faith, the sufferings she bore, the sacrifices she made, the rare gifts of unfailing sympathy she so strikingly displayed—these, and many others, stand so inextricably interwoven with the fabric of the Cause itself that no future historian of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh can afford to ignore or minimize.

As far back as the concluding stages of the heroic age of the Cause, which witnessed the imprisonment of Bahá'u'lláh in the Síyáh-Chál of Tihrián, the Greatest Holy Leaf, then still in her infancy, was privileged to taste of the cup of woe which the first believers of that Apostolic Age had quaffed.

How well I remember her recall, at a time when her faculties were still unimpaired, the gnawing suspense that ate into the hearts of those who watched by her side, at the threshold of her pillaged house, expectant to hear at any moment the news of Bahá'u'lláh's imminent execution! In those sinister hours, she often recounted, her parents had so suddenly lost their earthly possessions that within the space of a single day from being the privileged member of one of the wealthiest families of Tihrián she had sunk to the state of a sufferer from un conceived poverty. Deprived of the means of subsistence, her illustrious mother, the famed Navváb, was constrained to place in the palm of her daughter's hand a handful of flour and to induce her to accept it as a substitute for her daily bread.

And when at a later time this revered and precious member of the Holy Family, then in her teens, came to be entrusted by the guiding hand of her Father with missions that no girl of her age could, or would be willing to, perform, with what spontaneous joy she seized her opportunity and acquitted herself of the task with which she had been entrusted! The delicacy and extreme gravity of such functions as she, from time to time, was called upon to fulfill, when the city of Baghdád was swept by the hurricane which the heedlessness and perversity of Mírzá Yahyá had unchained, as well as the tender solicitude which, at so early an age, she evinced during the period of Bahá'u'lláh's enforced retirement to the mountains of Sulaymáníyíih, marked her as one who was both capable of sharing the burden, and willing to make the sacrifice, which her high birth demanded.

How staunch was her faith, how calm her demeanor, how forgiving her attitude, how severe her trials, at a time when the forces of schism had rent asunder the ties that united the little band of exiles which had settled in Adrianople and whose fortunes seemed then to have sunk to their lowest ebb! It was in this period of extreme anxiety, when the rigours of a winter of exceptional severity, coupled with the privations entailed by unhealthy housing accommodation and dire financial distress, undermined once for all her health and sapped the vitality which she had hitherto so thoroughly enjoyed. The stress and storm of that period made an abiding impression upon her mind, and she retained till the time of her death on her beauteous and angelic face the evidences of its intense hardships.

Not until, however, she had been confined to the company of Bahá'u'lláh within the walls of the prison-city of 'Akka did she display, in the plenitude of her power and in the full abundance of her love for Him, those gifts that single her out, next to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, among the members of the Holy Family, as the brightest embodiment of that love which is born of God and of that human sympathy which few mortals are capable of evincing.

Banishing from her mind and heart every earthly attachment, renouncing the very idea of matrimony, she, standing reso-
lutely by the side of a Brother whom she was to aid and serve so well, arose to dedicate her life to the service of her Father's glorious Cause. Whether in the management of the affairs of His household in which she excelled, or in the social relationships which she so assiduously cultivated in order to shield both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whether in the unfailing attention she paid to the every day needs of her Father, or in the traits of generosity, of affability and kindness, which she manifested, the Greatest Holy Leaf had by that time abundantly demonstrated her worthiness to rank as one of the noblest figures intimately associated with the life-long work of Bahá'u'lláh.

How grievous the ingratitude, how blind the fanaticism, how persistent the malignity of the officials, their wives, and their subordinates, in return for the manifold bounties which she, in close association with her Brother, so profusely conferred upon them! Her patience, her magnanimity, her undiscriminating benevolence, far from disarming the hostility of that perverse generation, served only to inflame their rancour, to intensify their fears. The gloom that had settled upon that little band of imprisoned believers, who languished in the Fortress of Ṭabíbbiyyih, the twin pillars who, all throughout the years in which she basked in the sunshine of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's spiritual victories were, perhaps, among the brightest and happiest of her life.

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in quarters directly connected with Sultan 'Abdu'l-Hamid and his advisers, upon the trials and investigations to which it gave rise, upon the rigidity of the incarceration it reimposed, and upon the perils it revived. Suffice it to say that but for her sleepless vigilance, her tact, her courtesy, her extreme patience and heroic fortitude, grave complications might have ensued and the load of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's anxious care would have been considerably increased.

The decline of her precious life had by that time set in, and the burden of advancing age was beginning to becloud the radiance of her countenance. Forgetful of her own self, disdaining rest and comfort, and undeterred by the obstacles that still stood in her path, she, acting as the honoured hostess to a steadily increasing number of pilgrims who thronged 'Abdu'l-Bahá's residence from both the East and the West, continued to display those same attributes that had won her, in the preceding phases of her career, so great a measure of admiration and love.

And when, in pursuance of God's inscrutable wisdom, the ban on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's confinement was lifted and the Plan which He, in the darkest hours of His confinement, had conceived materialized, He with unhesitating confidence, invested His trusted and honoured sister with the responsibility of attending to the multitudinous details arising out of His protracted absence from the Holy Land.

No sooner had 'Abdu'l-Bahá stepped upon the shores of the European and American continents than our beloved Khánum found herself wellnigh overwhelmed with thrilling messages, each betokening the irresistible advance of the Cause in a man-
ner which, notwithstanding the vast range of her experiences, seemed to her almost incredible. The years in which she basked in the sunshine of 'Abdu'l-Bahá’s spiritual victories were, perhaps, among the brightest and happiest of her life. Little did she dream when, as a little girl, she was running about, in the courtyard of her Father’s house in Tihrán, in the company of Him Whose destiny was to be one day the chosen Center of God’s indistructible Covenant, that such a Brother would be capable of achieving in realms so distant, and among races so utterly remote, so great and memorable a victory.

The enthusiasm and joy which swelled in her breast as she greeted 'Abdu'l-Bahá on His return from the West, I will not venture to describe. She was astounded at the vitality of which He had, despite His unimaginable sufferings, proved Himself capable. She was lost in admiration at the magnitude of the forces which His utterances had released. She was filled with thankfulness to Bahá’u’lláh for having enabled her to witness the evidences of such brilliant victory for His Cause no less than for His Son.

The outbreak of the Great War gave her yet another opportunity to reveal the true worth of her character and to release the latent energies of her heart. The residence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Haifa was besieged, all throughout the dreary conflict, by a concourse of famished men, women and children whom the maladministration, the cruelty and neglect of the officials of the Ottoman Government had driven to seek an alleviation to their woes. From the hand of the Greatest Holy Leaf, and out of the abundance of her heart, these hapless victims of a condemnable tyranny, received day after day unforgettable evidence of a love they had learned to envy and admire. Her words of cheer and comfort, the food, the money, the clothing she freely dispensed, the remedies which, by a process of her own, she herself prepared and diligently applied—all these had their share in comforting the disconsolate, in restoring sight to the blind, in sheltering the orphan, in healing the sick, and in succoring the homeless and the wanderer.

She had reached, amidst the darkness of the war days, the high water-mark of her spiritual attainments. Few, if any, among the unnumbered benefactors of society whose privilege has been to allay, in various measures, the hardships and sufferings entailed by that fierce conflict, gave as freely and as disinterestedly as she did; few exercised that undefinable influence upon the beneficiaries of their gifts.

Age seemed to have accentuated the tenderness of her loving heart, and to have widened still further the range of her sympathies. The sight of appalling suffering around her steered her energies and revealed such potentialities that her most intimate associates had failed to suspect.

The ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, so tragic in its suddenness, was to her a terrible blow from the effects of which she never completely recovered. To her He, Whom she called "Aqá," had been a refuge in time of adversity. On Him she had been led to place her sole reliance. In Him she had found ample compensation for the bereavements she had suffered, the desertions she had witnessed, the ingratitude she had been shown by friends and kindred. No one could ever dream that a woman of her age, so frail in body, so sensitive of heart, so loaded with the cares of almost eighty years of incessant tribulation, could so long survive so shattering a blow. And yet, history, no less than the annals of our immortal Faith, shall record for her a share in the advancement and consolidation of the world-wide community which the hand of 'Abdu'l-Bahá had helped to fashion, which no one among the remnants of His Family can rival.

Which of the blessings am I to recount, which in her unflinching solicitude she showered upon me, in the most critical and agitated hours of my life? To me, standing in so dire a need of the vitalizing grace of God, she was the living symbol of many an attribute I had learned to admire in 'Abdu'l-Bahá. She was to me a continual reminder of His calm resignation, of His munificence and magnanimity. To me she was an incarnation of His winsome graciousness, of His all-encompassing tenderness and love.

It would take me too long to make even a brief allusion to those incidents of her life, each of which eloquently proclaim her as a daughter, worthy to inherit that priceless heritage bequeathed to her by Bahá’u’lláh. A purity of life that reflected itself in even the minutest details of her daily occupations and activities; a tenderness of heart that obliterated every distinction of creed, clan and colour; a resignation and serenity that evoked to mind the calm and heroic fortitude of the Báb; a natural fondness of flowers and children that was so characteristic of Bahá’u’lláh; an unaffected simplicity of manners; an extreme sociability which made her accessible to all; a generosity, a love, at once disinterested and undiscriminating, that reflected so clearly the attributes of 'Abdu'l-Bahá’s character; a sweetness of temper; a cheerfulness that no amount of sorrow could cloud; a quiet and unassuming disposition that served to enhance a thousandfold the prestige of her exalted rank; a forgiving nature that instantly disarmed her most unyielding enemy—these rank among the outstanding attributes of a saintly life which history will acknowledge as having been endowed with a celestial potency that few of the heroes of the past possessed.

No wonder that in Tablets, which stand as eternal testimonies to the beauty of her character, Bahá’u’lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá have paid touching tributes to those things that testify to her exalted position among the members of their Family, that proclaim her as an example to their followers, and as an object worthy of the admiration of all mankind.

I need only, at this juncture, quote the following passage from a Tablet addressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the Holy Mother, the tone of which reveals unmistakably the character of those ties that bound Him to so precious, so devoted a sister.

"To my honoured and distinguished sister, do thou convey the expression of my heartfelt, my intense longing. Day and night she liveth in my remembrance. I dare make no mention of the feelings which separation from her has aroused in my heart, for whatever I should attempt to express in writing will assuredly be effaced by the tears which such sentiments must bring to my eyes."

Dearly-beloved Greatest Holy Leaf! Through the mist of tears that fill my eyes I can clearly see, as I pen these lines, thy noble figure before me, and can recognize the serenity of thy kindly face. I can still gaze, though the shadow of the grave separates us, into thy blue, love-deep eyes, and can feel in its calm intensity, the immense love thou did'st bear for the Cause of thine Almighty Father, the attachment that bound thee to the most lowly and insignificant among its followers, the warm affection thou didst cherish for me in thine heart. The memory of the ineffable beauty of thy smile shall ever continue to cheer and hearten me in the thorny path I am destined to pursue. The remembrance of the touch of thine hand shall spur me on to follow steadfastly in thy way, the sweet magic of thy voice shall remind me, when the hour of adversity is at its darkest, to hold fast to the rope thou did'st seize so firmly all the days of thy life.
Bear thou this my message to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, thine exalted and divinely-appointed Brother: If the Cause for which Bahá'u'lláh toiled and laboured, for which thou did'st suffer years of agonizing sorrow, for the sake of which streams of sacred blood have flown, should, in the days to come, encounter storms more severe than those it has already weathered, do thou continue to overshadow, with thine all-encompassing care and wisdom, thy frail, thy unworthy appointed child.

Intercede, O noble and well-favored scion of a heavenly Father, for me no less than for the toiling masses of thy ardent lovers, who have sworn undying allegiance to thy memory, whose souls have been nourished by the energies of thy love, whose conduct has been moulded by the inspiring example of thy life, and whose imaginations are fired by the imperishable evidences of thy lively faith, thy unshakable constancy, thy invincible heroism, thy great renunciation.

Whatever betide us, however distressing the vicissitudes which the nascent Faith of God may yet experience, we pledge ourselves, before the mercy-seat of thy glorious Father, to hand on, unimpaired and undivided, to generations yet unborn, the glory of that tradition of which thou has been its most brilliant exemplar.

In the innermost recesses of our hearts, O thou exalted Leaf of the Abhá Paradise, we have reared for thee a shining mansion that the hand of time can never undermine, a shrine which shall frame eternally the matchless beauty of thy countenance, an altar whereon the fire of thy consuming love shall burn forever.

SHOGHI

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the merciful throughout the West. July 17, 1932
More than 350 Bahá'ís from all over Pakistan attended the National Bahá'í Winter School held last December 25-29 in Hyderabad. Among the faculty members was Dr. Manúčhihr Salmánpur, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Western Asia. Four 90-minute classes each day covered a multitude of Bahá'í topics, while an evening public meeting held during the school session celebrated United Nations Human Rights Day.

More than 350 Bahá'ís from all over Pakistan attended the National Winter School held last December 25-29 in Hyderabad. Four 90-minute classes per day covered many Bahá'í topics.

Heading the faculty of the school was Dr. Manúčhihr Salmánpur, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Western Asia. He delivered an inaugural address that outlined the purpose of Bahá'í schools, and also led classes and workshops on the Administrative Order. Other speakers included Auxiliary Board members and members of the National Spiritual Assembly, plus six other distinguished Bahá'í teachers.

During the school, on the evening of December 27, a public meeting was held to mark United Nations Human Rights Day. A guest speaker was M.A. Kaka, an official of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education in Hyderabad.

Other UN Human Rights Day observances were held during December in Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Karachi. Several hundred guests attended the various meetings, and all heard Bahá'í speakers explain the Bahá'í principle of the equality of human opportunity.

Barbara Joyce and Roy Massey, pioneers to St. Martin, French Antilles, are beginning their fourth year of weekly Bahá'í television programs. Theirs was the first regularly scheduled Bahá'í TV series to be broadcast in the West Indies. A year ago, the beginning of the series' third year was celebrated with the first telecast in color. Videotapes of the programs are shared with Bahá'í communities as far away as Samoa. Copies for broadcasting may be obtained by contacting Barbara Joyce, Media Committee, Box 189, Philipsburg, St. Martin, N.A.
Liberia/Guinea

Forty-three women attended a Women’s Tea last February 25 sponsored by the National Bahá’í Women and Children’s Committee of Liberia and Guinea.

The tea, commemorating the International Year of the Child, brought together women from various religious groups, service clubs and government ministries to share ideas and plans for IYC. It was held at the Bahá’í National Center in Monrovia, Liberia.

Eugene Ugbomah, the local United Nations public information representative, spoke about the needs of children around the world, and explained how UN agencies are taking steps to meet those needs.

Bangladesh

More than 150 persons participated in the first Bahá’í National Teaching Conference for Bangladesh held February 23-25 at Rajshahi. The conference theme was “The Oneness of Mankind.” The opening address was delivered by Emran Ali Sarkar, a member of the national Parliament and chairman of Rajshahi Municipality, who warmly welcomed the Bahá’ís and wished them success in their spiritual undertaking.

About 35 Bahá’ís from Finland and Sweden gathered for a teaching conference last January 20-21 hosted by the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Mariehamn and the Åland Islands (situated between Finland and Sweden).

The conference theme was “The Precious Gift,” and all sessions dealt with teaching the Faith.

At the final session, entitled “Great News,” many of the friends shared happy news of victories won for the Faith in other countries.

A Unity Feast held during the conference attracted five seekers. A special gift of the conference was a declaration of belief in Bahá’u’lláh by Eija Mäkitalo, a resident of Mariehamn.

Prior to this conference, two members of the Spiritual Assembly met with the newly-elected Speaker of Parliament (who also is the mayor of Mariehamn and the representative from Åland to the Nordic Council), presenting him with a copy of the book, Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era.

The 40-minute visit was cordial, and the Speaker asked many questions about the Faith.
The first Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Imphal, Manipur State, India was formed in March 1979. Shown with Assembly members is Auxiliary Board member Gautam Das (back row, middle). To his left is Ganesh Shenoy, an Auxiliary Board member from Sikkim. One member of the Imphal Assembly was not present when the picture was taken.

A teaching campaign in eastern India's Manipur State has resulted in the formation of two Local Spiritual Assemblies. Manipur State was mentioned in India's Five Year Plan goals.

The campaign, initiated by Auxiliary Board member Gautam Das, focused at first only on the English-speaking population, as the Baha'i teachers could not speak the Manipuri language.

Soon after it began, the first Spiritual Assembly of Imphal, the capital of Manipur State, was formed. Afterward, the localities of Lamsang and Moirang were opened to the Faith, and an Assembly was formed in Moirang.
More than 20 believers attended Sierra Leone's Bahá'í Summer School last December 19-23 at the Bo Teachers' College. Among those who participated in the four-day school was Auxiliary Board member Charles Bullock (second from left in the back row).

The Rev. Michael Chandoo of the Grenada Presbyterian Church, a good friend of the Bahá'í Faith for more than three years, invited a Bahá'í, Graeme Stratton, to give a presentation on the Faith last March 4 at the church.

Mr. Stratton accepted the invitation, spoke about progressive revelation, the oneness of religion and mankind, Bahá'í education, the Fast, and the Bahá'í calendar. He also summarized briefly the history of the Faith.

Throughout the program, the Rev. Chandoo emphasized the unity of mankind and of religion. After the talk he told the congregation that they should now be "better Christians, or converts to the Bahá'í Faith."

A public meeting was held January 20 in Figueira da Foz, Portugal, which recently elected its first Local Spiritual Assembly. Some 30 Bahá'ís and townspeople heard a talk by Auxiliary Board member Fedross Imani and saw a slide program about the Faith. The public was invited to the meeting through a display in the town's main square.

Nearly 50 people attended a three-day Bahá'í school last December 1-3 of the Island of Faro, six kilometers (3.7 miles) from Faro, Algarve's provincial capital on the southern coast of Portugal.

Among those participating in the school were Counsellor Anneliese Bopp and Auxiliary Board members Ana Costa and Fedross Imani. Its main theme was "The World Transformation."

Friends came from towns as far away as Viseu, some 500 kilometers (310 miles) distant. Several residents of the Island of Faro, along with three members of the hotel staff where the school was held, attended some of the sessions.

Pancho, a Chilean pioneer to Spain and well-known singer, performed; the children, aided by the National Youth Committee, presented sketches; and a fund-raising auction was held one evening.
Auxiliary Board member Napoleon Ojong, accompanied by pioneer Joseph Shepard, recently visited the village of Ebame, Cameroon Republic, to help with construction of its Ḥāẓratu'l-Quds. When they started at dawn to clear the ground, the friends from Ebame joined them and the building was started. Mr. Ojong is standing at the far left in this photo, wearing a white shirt.

An international team of traveling Bahá'í teachers hosted a teacher training institute April 13 at Mamfe, Cameroon Republic. In the front row (left to right) are Dorothy Hansen from Ghana, Auxiliary Board member Napoleon Ojong, and Sophie Lanya. Back row (left to right) are Peter Nsoh, Ralph Akale, Offiong Ekpe from Nigeria, Emmanuel Ayang, Gert Bindseil from Canada, Stephen Oku, Jacob Lange, and Bonnie Ojong.

Forty adults, two youth and 30 children attended a Winter Conference, "Communicating the Faith," January 24-28 in Petersburg, Alaska. The gathering at ANB Hall and elementary school covered topics ranging from "Knowledge, Volition and Action" to "Happiness," "Listening as Teaching," and "Teaching by Living the Life."

Also presented were classes on "conversational teaching," Muḥammad and the Quran, the importance of the love of God and of prayer, and music as a way of teaching the Faith.

A concert by the music group "Windflower" on the second night of the conference was attended by 11 seekers and more than 60 Bahá'ís. On the final evening, the Bahá'ís presented their own talent show.
More than 150 Bahá'ís from 15 communities in Senegal and three villages in The Gambia attended a deepening conference held last December 25 in Faranding, in the Casamance region of Senegal. It was the first conference ever held in the area, and was highly successful.

A day after the conference, villagers from a nearby locality that was not yet opened to the Faith requested that the Bahá'ís come to their village to teach them about the Faith. As a result, all of the inhabitants of the village embraced the Cause.

Besides representing a new ethnic group, the Local Spiritual Assembly established in the village was the 35th for Senegal, thus fulfilling that goal of the Five Year Plan.

The Regional Teaching Committee of the Department of Guatemala sponsors a regular Sunday afternoon Bahá'í children's class at the home of Mrs. Rosita Flowers, a Bahá'í pioneer from Belize, in Colonia San Francisco, Guatemala. Shown here with the children are three pioneers, one member of the National Spiritual Assembly, a member of the Regional Teaching Committee, and Mrs. Flowers.

After many prayers and much diligent searching, the Bahá'í community of Guatemala rejoiced last February in its ability to purchase a spacious new National Hazíratu'l-Quds in Guatemala City. The acquisition was made possible with help from the Universal House of Justice and many personal loans.

The happiness of the friends was truly felt in the 14-room building last May when it served as the site for the annual National Convention. It had been two years since the friends were able to hold the Convention at a Bahá'í Center. An earlier center, badly damaged in a severe earthquake in February 1976, later was sold.

Mayor Frank Fasi of Honolulu (second from left) proclaimed January 21 ‘World Religion Day’ in Honolulu and presented a copy of the proclamation to Bahá'ís from the Waianae community (left to right) Nancy Johnson, Edna Johnson, and Brice Taylor.
Above, a proclamation booklet prepared by the National Spiritual Assembly of Papua New Guinea containing a history of the Faith in that country is presented along with other Bahá'í books to His Excellency Sir Tore Lokoloko, the Governor General of Papua New Guinea, by Bahá'í representatives Mrs. Margaret Kila (left) and Mrs. Mitra Naraqi. Below, the Right Honorable Michael Somare, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, receives similar materials from Mrs. Naraqi and Mrs. Janet Kunik. So far six other ministers have been presented with the proclamation materials. All have received the Bahá'ís warmly and shown an interest in the Faith.

Iceland enjoyed a visit February 23-25 by Continental Counsellor Adib Taherzadeh. Addressing the Icelandic Bahá'í community, Mr. Taherzadeh discussed comparisons between the soul and the unborn child. He dwelt also on the present state of society and its immediate future.

We feed our love for Bahá'u'lláh, he said, by reading the Writings, and develop it further by serving the Cause.

On the final day of his visit, Mr. Taherzadeh called for pioneers to arise to fill Iceland's remaining locality goals, and 10 people responded.
More than 80 believers including Continental Counsellor Alfred Osborne and every member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Dominican Republic attended that country's fourth annual Bahá'í Winter School held last December 25-31 at San Cristobal.

In addition to a varied program of classes for adults, there were parallel programs for youth and children. During the evening sessions, the children presented skits and short original plays.

Bahá'ís from about 10 local communities attended the third National Women's Conference in the Dominican Republic held January 26-28 at Barahona.

After two full days of classes and consultation, the participants enjoyed a picnic at the beach before the close of the conference.

A National Children's Conference was held February 24-25 in Moca, Dominican Republic.

Since the conference was held just before Intercalary Days, planned activities included visits to a home for the aged and to a ward for indigent children at a public hospital. The residents at each place were delighted to receive the Bahá'ís, and asked them to come back often.

Nearly 30 youth from four communities in New Hebrides participated last January 13-19 in the first Bahá'í National Youth Conference at the Bahá'í National Center in Port Vila.

The Bahá'ís of New Hebrides held Summer Schools on December 23-26 in Santo and Tanna. Both schools attracted participants from many areas and were described as "tremendous successes" in reports of the gatherings.

In Santo, approximately 30 Bahá'ís and 10 children crowded into the home of Mr. and Mrs. Phil Beattie for the weekend. Participants came from Tasmalum, Big Bay, Santo, Palekula, Norsup, Fila Island, Erakor, and Port Vila.

The program included talks on the Manifestations of God, the Covenant, the Divine Plan, the role of women, the Bahá'í Fund, and Bahá'í laws. Quizzes and question-and-answer sessions were featured. A public slide program attracted 15 non-Bahá'ís.

The Tanna school was held at Nazareth village in Siwi, in a leaf hut hurriedly constructed on the opening day. Despite heavy rains and treacherous roads, 25 Bahá'ís from Lenakel, Imlao, Whitesands, and Siwi attended.

After the school had been in session for a few hours, three persons from Nazareth were enrolled, bringing the number of adult believers there to 10.

When the program called for a presentation on the formation and work of the Local Spiritual Assembly, the teacher brought together the Bahá'ís of the village and helped them to elect their Assembly.